

THE CARTOMANCER

THE PRISMA
VISIONS TAROT

an interview with
James R. Cads

THE
MAGICAL
SCENT OF
TAROT

by Arlynn

FIFTEENTH
CENTURY
TAROT DECKS
RE-CREATED

by Sherryll E. Smith

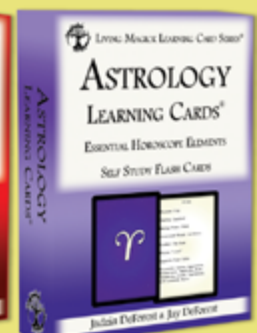
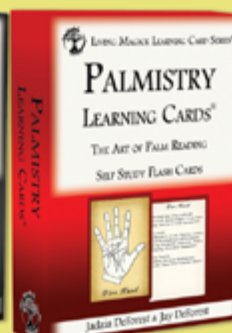
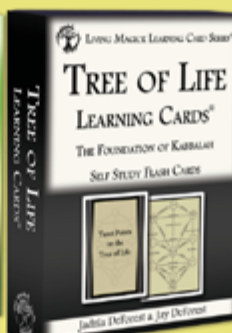
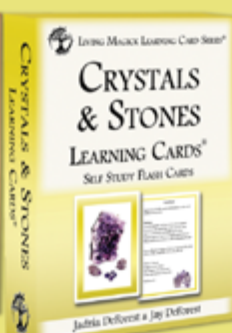
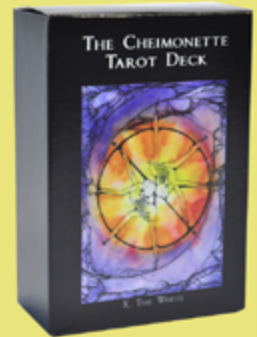
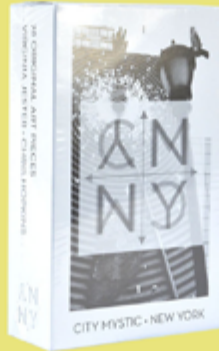
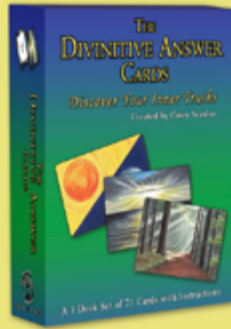
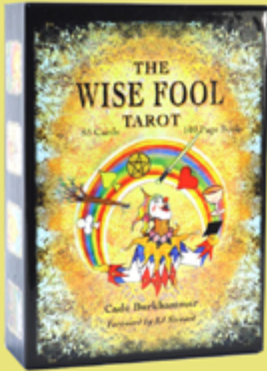
An Interview With
STEPHANIE
LAW
by Monica Badirsky

A QUARTERLY TAROT, LENORMAND & ORACLE JOURNAL



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The Cartomancer

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 and 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.

Reviews of new and classic decks from major publishing houses as well as independently published, limited editions by our in-house review staff.

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Prisma Visions Tarot

This issue's cover image is The Lovers from the *Prisma Visions Tarot* by James R. Eads. Read the interview on page 8.

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*Send your questions online through
www.SteeleWizard.com and get your answer here in
the next issue of *The Cartomancer*!*

NEXT ISSUE

August is the next issue, featuring the *Sibylline Tarot* by Holly DeFount.



EDITOR'S NOTE

I think we are finally settled into the new house, although there's still the missing kitchen box to find... And it's spring! Moving from the city to over an acre of woodland is a huge change. As I write this I'm looking out my office window to the lush green beyond.

I have it in my mind to someday create a tarot deck with the only artistic talent I have: photography (although the snapshot of my window does not adequately reflect this talent). And I think this property is going to be the perfect setting for that deck. There's even a creek for some water/Cups inspired backdrops. Plus we are less than a quarter of a mile from the Clackamas river.



The Northwest Tarot Symposium had another successful year! We'll be holding it again in 2018, March 2nd through 4th here in Portland, Oregon.

In this issue we have a couple of interviews. Cynthia Tedesco interviews author Benebell Wen while Monica Bodirsky brings us insights from artist Stephanie Law. For a treat in tarot history, check out Sherryl's article on Fifteenth-century tarot decks (including large images of the uncut sheets).

Interested in essential oils and the tarot? Check out Ailynn's article. How about the Hanged Man, market speculation, and Gurdjieff? Vivien Moon writes about how all of those subjects go together. And what *does* make a Tarot Professional? Wayne Limberger has some interesting thoughts on that topic.

If you have a book coming out or a deck you're working on let me know. The art section is here to stay, so send me your deck images through the website. We are also always accepting books and decks for review. Have something to write about? Send me your article proposal or submit your finished piece online.

Did you know that when you're logged into your account on *The Cartomancer* website (<http://thecartomancer.com/my-account/>) you can post reviews for the individual issues? I'd appreciate your comments on the main website as well as on Amazon.com if you're so inclined.

Cheers and I hope you enjoy this issue of *The Cartomancer*!

Blessings,
Jadzia DeForest

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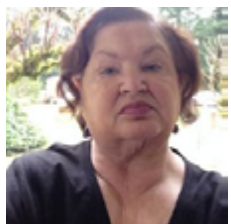
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Her website is <http://tarot-heritage.com/>



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 <http://Amazon.com>).

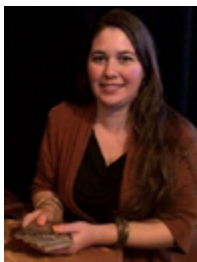
Her reviews and interviews can be found on her site (<http://www.bonniecehovet.com>), and on the Aeclectic Tarot website (<http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot>). Her writer's blog can be found here — <http://www.bonniecehovet.blogspot.com/>.



MONICA BODIRSKY is an award-winning Toronto artist who exhibits work nationally and internationally. She is an advisor, creativity consultant, community activist, and teaches at OCAD University in Toronto where she received her Bachelors Degree in design.



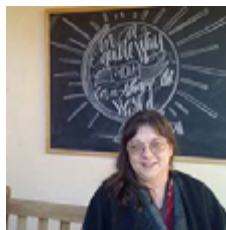
WAYNE LIMBERGER lives in New Hampshire and reads professionally in the Keene area. He has worked with tarot since 1972, is a member of the Massachusetts Tarot Society and the online Aeclectic Tarot forum, and has recently been published in the AMA's monthly newsletter. Wayne may be reached at dubyah48@gmail.com.



JADZIA DEFOREST has been reading tarot professionally for over ten years in the Portland, Oregon area. She's the owner and editor of *The Cartomancer: A Tarot, Lenormand, and Oracle Journal*, co-director of the Northwest Tarot Symposium, co-owner at Portlandia Fortune Tellers, and co-author of the *Living Magick Learning Cards Series*. In addition to reading tarot, Jadzia is a palmist and astrologer. She teaches classes on tarot, astrology,

and palmistry. Jadzia lives in the forest just outside of Portland with her husband and six spoiled cats.

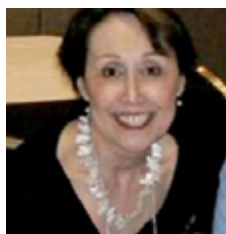
Her website is <http://www.JadziaDeForest.com>



CATT FOY introduced Psycards to the U.S. in 1988 and is the author of *Psycards—A New Alternative to Tarot*. She teaches classes, seminars, and makes appearances at mind/body/spirit events and bookstores in the western U.S. You can contact her at psycardsusa@gmail.com, or visit www.psycardsusa.com.



ERIC K. LERNER'S artwork has been featured in *Tarocchi Appropriati* (<http://www.arnellart.com/museodeitarocchi/msdk47.htm>) and his own *Radiant Spleen Tarot* (www.radiantspleen.com). He has published many articles and essays on tarot. He has taught classes on reading the Thoth tarot for MSN's Suite University and other groups. His e-mail is eric_k_lerner@hotmail.com.



CYNTHIA TEDESCO M.A.

Tedesco worked for many years as an Audiologist and Speech/Language Pathologist for the Lexington School For The Deaf. She is certified as a Kaizen-Muse Creativity Coach using skills as a professional tarot reader to assist clients in their creative work.

Tedesco's poems have appeared in *Apex of The M*; *Avocet*, *Barrow Street* (and former editor), *Black River Review*, *Caliban*, *The Cape Rock*, *Coffee House Poets Quarterly*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Italian Americana*, *Iodine*, *The Lucid Stone*, *Montserrat Review*, *No Roses Review*, *Outerbridge*, *The Panhandler*, *Space and Time*, *Talisman*, *Tamarind*, *Weirdbook* and *Yefief*. Her short story, 'Suitcases' was published and is archived at www.Archipelago.org Tedesco has a book of poems, 'Letters Found After,' published by Sesquin Press. She is currently working on her second book, 'Chthonic Luminosity' as well as the novel.

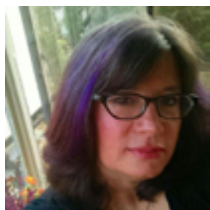
Tedesco lives in N.Y.C. with her husband and two Havanese dogs. The Tedesco's are serious collectors of vintage tarot decks. She can be reached at: INTUITIVEARTSENTERTAINMENT@gmail.com



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.



AILYNN currently lives in Portland, Oregon. She teaches tarot and magical aromatherapy as well as does Elemental Tarot Readings through New Renaissance Bookshop. She has designed a line of Magical sprays and perfumes that hold the energies of the tarot. These blends are sold in the Portland area. Ailynn can be reached at twoladiestarotnw@gmail.com or on Facebook at Two Ladies Tarot NW.



VIVIEN MOON has been reading Tarot since the age of 14, loves holding classes in coffee shops and also enjoys reading Lenormand. She lives in the Pacific Northwest with three unruly dogs, who love to lay at her feet as she writes Gothic fiction



Ailynn

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AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES R. EADS CREATOR OF THE PRISMA VISIONS TAROT

with Jadzia DeForest

This tarot deck caught my eye for several reasons. The dark but vibrant colors drew me in as did the style of artwork. Once I found out that each Minor Arcana suit formed a single image and story when laid out in sequence, I was overjoyed. What a fascinating tarot deck!

JD: When and why were you initially drawn to the tarot cards? & What inspired you to create your own tarot deck?

JE: The first pieces of *Prisma Visions* manifested sometime around 2013 in the form of an illustrated gig poster featuring a tarot reading and twelve tarot cards. Back then I had no idea what was to come of it, but I really enjoyed making these cards. I think what initially drew me to tarot is the idea behind the major arcana—that each card represents a different core human archetype and that we all take on the roles of each of these archetypes at different points of our lives. There is an underlying truth and beauty to tarot cards where art and function come together to offer some light and peace of mind.

JD: Tell me more about the *Prisma Visions*. What is the overall theme?

JE: Before *Prisma Visions* came *Light Visions*, which was a very limited run of two tone cards that came housed in a custom branded wooden box. For me this first deck was about creating a timeless deck, something that

Another reason for the panorama style is that it tells a story that wouldn't normally be seen when the cards are separated.

wanted to keep the timeless vibe but at the same time adapt it into something different and unique from the previous deck. For the minor arcana I developed a seasonal theme, in that each suit was tied to a different season of the year. My goal

was for this deck was for it to seem like it came from the world that I have been creating and developing in my other work for years. It's a magically realistic world full of swirling impressionistic color with a touch of surrealism. In my work I try to create places that are oddly nostalgic and familiar, comforting, mysterious and magical.

JD: How did you decide which art medium you wanted to work in? And what was your process? Also, I noticed when you lay out the cards of each suit in a row they create a continuous scene, which is really cool. What inspired that?

JE: Like most of my recent work, *Prisma Visions* was created completely digitally on





a drawing tablet. I have a background in traditional painting and printmaking and I use my knowledge of mark making and color from these mediums when working digitally to create work that can disguise itself as woodblock printmaking or oil painting. For a project at this scale it was important to create it digitally so that the cards remained consistent, both in developing a color palette and language but also in the design.

I created the Major Arcana cards first and then went onto developing the Minor Arcana. Each suit was created as a single panorama image and then divided into individual cards. Part of the reason I decided to create the Minor Arcana in continuous images was for the consistency of the deck. For me, being able to identify what the card is before reading the name is extremely important. Each suit was assigned a different color palette and theme that helped in identification. Another reason for the panorama style is that it tells a story that wouldn't normally be seen when the cards are separated. I wanted each suit to have its own narrative that the reader could interpret on their own. It adds another level to the deck when the

reader realizes that within the deck are four pieces of art that can be assembled like a puzzle to reveal a new story.

JD: Is there a best way to use your tarot deck for readings, and if so what is it?

JE: I like to use it for readings that require groupings of more cards. The chances of revealing cards from the same minor arcana suit are higher and sometimes they even line up to form an image which can be pretty eye opening in itself.

JD: Why did you decide to self-publish?

JE: Quality is really important to me and I wanted to have a part in every aspect of the process from start to finish. Working directly with the manufacturer allowed me to make small changes and edits when I needed to. It was also a huge learning experience creating a product that had several different aspects from silver edged cards to a clamshell box. Not to mention *Prisma Visions* was a project that I had put several years of work into, it is very near and dear to me and I couldn't imagine not self-publishing.

JD: Do you have any advice for those thinking of creating and publishing their own deck?



JE: Know what you want, do a lot of research on different types of printing processes, box options, etc. Most importantly, look at tarot decks of the past—study them and decide what you like and what you don't. Create a model and mock up of your deck, box, booklet. Being able to have it in your hands and visualize it before you go to production will enlighten you and save you lots of time down the line.

Find out more about James R. Eads and his tarot deck and artwork:

www.prismavisionstarot.com and www.jamesreads.com

We've also got an instagram @prismavisionstarot !

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Monica Bodirsky
Lucky Lenormand
oracle deck



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Tarot Art



VENETIAN CARNIVAL TAROT

ROXANA PAUL



Venetian Carnival Tarot is a full 78 card tarot deck. The cards are borderless, and they have rounded corners. Due to the symmetrical backside design, the cards are able to be used reversed. The cards of size 2.76" x 4.72" (70 mm x 120 mm) are printed on high quality 330 gsm stock. The decks will come in a sturdy two-piece box and complete with a 120-page book. This is the first printing of this deck and book. This edition of the deck will only be available through the Kickstarter's campaign, signed and numbered.

Roxana Paul is an exhibited artist and Tarot designer. She has been a Tarot reader for five years as well as a member of the Tarosophy Tarot Association and the International Tarot Foundation. Her works draw upon her interest in mysticism, self-development and spiritual transformation with particular attention to the Tarot theme. She created the Maori Tattoo Tarot deck, which is recently released.

Kickstarter:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/351300853/venetian-carnival-tarot-mastering-the-art-of-divin>

The *Gothic Moon Tarot* cards are a traditional 78 card deck with a loose gothic theme, the cards have been described as dark yet warm. Each card has a moon phase that symbolises the card meaning and gives a little more awareness to the recipient. The main character is present in all the card suits as he goes through the trials and tribulations of life, happiness, sadness and abundance.

The Major Arcanas help us to explore our spiritual paths and self awareness, each card is full of symbolism that helps us find our inner strength.

Each suit is set in and around an area that follows through the suit. For example, the Swords cards are set in autumn around the Tower card, there are some very dramatic scenes that gets to the core of the Swords suit.

Some of the cards are very connected to each other. The Tower card is one of the two Towers that is featured in the Moon card and this is a theme throughout the deck.

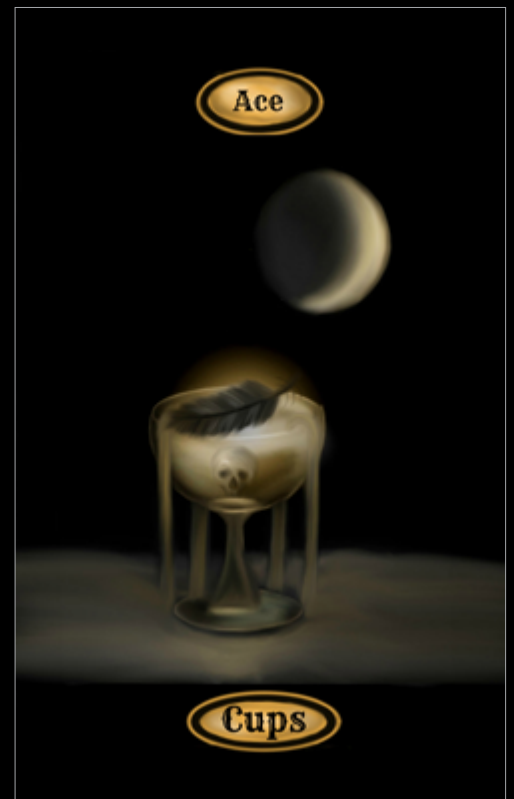
The deck is digitally hand drawn by the artist Jae Billingham whose own experiences have been based within the cards and authored by experienced Tarot card expert Ophelia Jade.

Website:

www.gothicartstudio.com

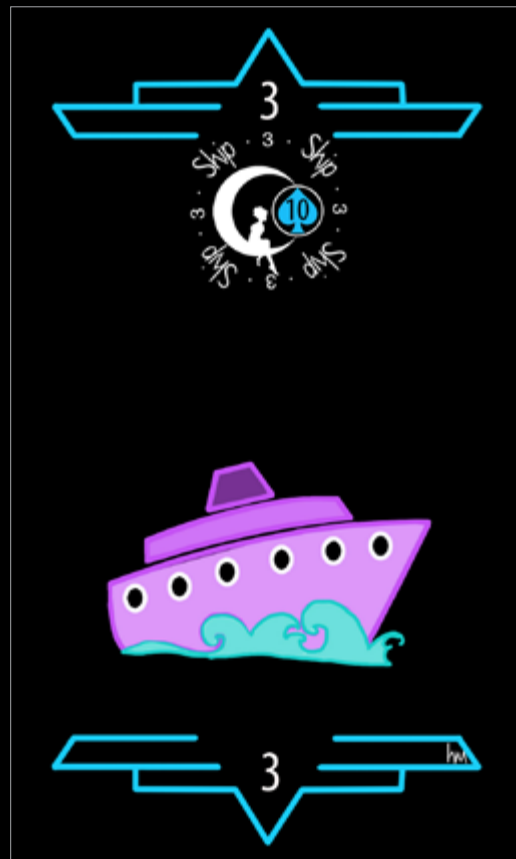
THE GOTHIC MOON TAROT

JAE BILLINGHAM



THE MAGIC MOON LENORMAND

HEATHER MENDEL



With each passing year, Lenormand is becoming more and more popular for oracle collectors and readers. *The Magic Moon Lenormand* oracle is Heather Mendel's fourth deck. Designed in her distinctive style, the elegantly simple objects make learning to read Lenormand easy, especially for beginners. Comprised of 36 cards, the deck is easier to learn to read than Tarot. Experienced readers find that combining Lenormand and Tarot in a single reading offers layers of nuance and possibility that a single oracle alone may not. The cards delight both readers and clients, containing merely what is essential for use. Starting with her signature black background that honors the mystery out of which all experience arises, the images are concise, the colors intense. The name and number of each card are easy to read. The color of the banner on each card reflects the suit (Spades, Clubs, Diamonds or Hearts) with which the Lenormand card is associated. An illustrated guidebook including reproductions of each of the cards, its meanings and connections as well as methods of use is in process. Are you new to Lenormand? This may be the perfect time to learn to use this amazing tool for developing your intuitive gifts.

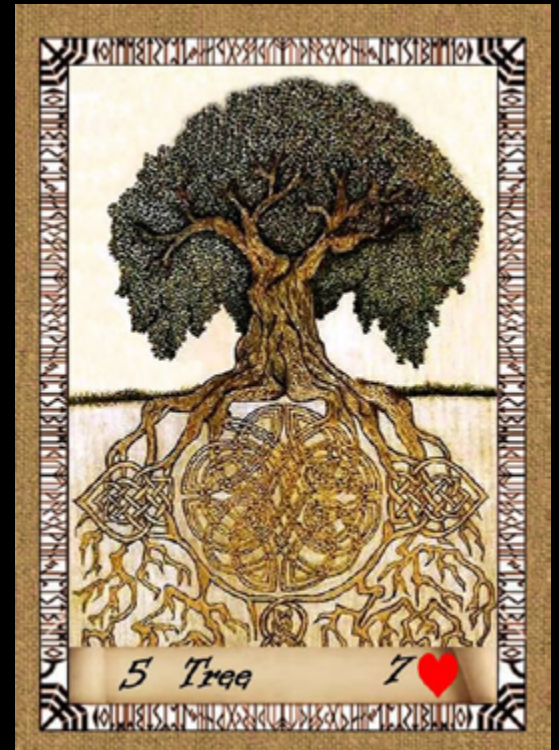
For details, please email Heather at heathermendel@gmail.com

The *Nordic Lenormand* is a 36 card deck with an extra Fox, Bear, Man & Woman card, so the reader can customise the deck to suit their reading. The extra people cards can be used for readings on same sex relationships, business partnerships or friendships. The design for the Nordic Lenormand is based on painted images from the Nordic countries of Scandinavia from Viking times 900s up to about mid 1880s. Each card has a thin tan “linen look” border & an edging of Rune symbols. The number & name of the card & the playing card symbols appear clearly in a scroll at the bottom of each card. The images are colourful without being garish, clear & unambiguous. Each deck comes in plastic shrink wrap & in a gift bag mailed to each customer. Ongoing readers’ support & exercises are posted in my Prophecy Toolbox study group on facebook.

Lynn Boyle lives in Sydney Australia, is a Lenormand, Tarot & Oracle card reader, designer & teacher with (to date) 57 decks self-published & sold worldwide. By from the Etsy store: https://www.etsy.com/au/shop/AquariusFortunes?ref=hdr_shop_menu Or buy direct from her catalogue page: <https://www.facebook.com/Lenormand-Oracle-Cards-by-Lynn-Boyle-376106535856381/> Or join the study group Prophecy Toolbox with over 3,500 members. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/prophecy-toolbox/>

NORDIC LENORMAND

LYNN BOYLE



78 TAROT ASTRAL - TAROT IN SPACE

ARTISTS COLLECTIVE



The 78 Tarot Project has created their fourth collaborative Tarot deck. *78 Tarot Astral - Tarot in Space* is a sumptuous delight of colour and amazing imagery, featuring the art of renowned Tarot and Oracle deck creators and artists such as Ravynne Phelan, Kiri Ostergard Leonard, Selina Fenech, Jasmine Becket-Griffith, alongside several talented artists who have self-published their own decks, like Joanna Nelson, Tanya Bond and Jessica Douglas. Firm favourites Larry Elmore, Meredith Dillman, Carla Morrow, Simona Candini, Leilani Joy, Enamorte, Italia Ruotolo and Scott Holloway have also participated, to name just a few.

Each artist has just one card, which means they have more time to dedicate to their interpretation of their assigned card. The end result is breathtaking—each image is a masterpiece, and the LWB features an artist interpretation, with the card meaning written by Trish Sullivan. *78 Tarot Astral* works both as a fully functional deck, and also as a mini gallery that you can hold in your hands.

There are the usual 22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana (fully Illustrated), with 3 bonus wild cards. It comes in a clam shell box with magnetic closure, and both the box and deck features silver foil accents.

Visit www.78Tarot.cards

The Wise Fool Tarot is a deck of 85 cards and comes with a 140 page booklet. Cade Burkhammer designed this deck to evoke deeply personal contemplative stories that encourage awareness and influence the evolution of the psyche. *The Wise Fool Tarot* exists to spark dormant wisdom, hidden truths, and to demonstrate the responsibility for new freedoms and the growing concept of life.

It is a modern interpretation of ancient archetypes. A non-RWS based deck, *The Wise Fool Tarot* uses modern imagery and includes cultural and ethnic diversity for this new era.

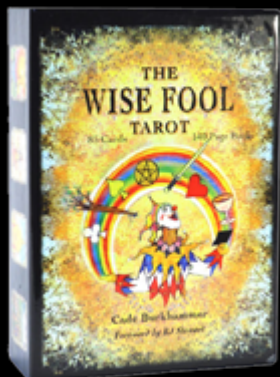
This deck was featured on *The Cartomancer's* cover in the very first issue in 2015.

THE WISE FOOL TAROT

CADE BURKHAMMER



Find it on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)!





Dear Stumped,

To help explain what you're feeling, the 6 of Swords reversed has appeared. Inertia, stagnation and confusion are some of the words you might also use to describe what you're feeling. Now that we've got a clear description of the 'what', let's look at the 'why.'

Part of what you're feeling is technically 'down time' in the Cosmic Chaos. Given the hectic ride civilization is experiencing, when you happen upon a still pond in your corner of Reality, don't question it, just enjoy it. You can even take advantage of it. Your situation is rife with old thoughts and ideologies that have become as tangled as that ball of yarn the kitten discovered hidden in your sock drawer. Rather than being able to follow clear 'You are here,' to the 'Nirvana 62 miles' signs, the headlights on your vehicle are not working and you're trying to navigate in Braille in the dark. Since Braille doesn't seem to be a strong point here, we're going to have to rely on what the upside down 6 of Swords suggests.

Bottom line is, the road ahead is under construction. There isn't a safe way to navigate this stretch of highway. But being stuck on the side of the road has some distinct advantages. Take a look behind you and see what has caused this delay. Look closely at the choices and decisions you made that brought you to a screeching halt. Did you see the 'construction next 5 miles' sign or were you tuning your radio? Next, what kind of baggage is blocking your rear view mirror? There is a way out. There is an on ramp. You just need a bit of clarity to find it. You need to refold your inner map to show

where you are and where you choose to go next.

As Swords are identified with the element of Air, this points to the thought process. Pay particular attention to your self-dialogue for a while. What are you repeating to yourself? What inner monologue is on a continuous loop that's programming your brain?

Once you identify that train of thought, you can derail it. Consciously with effort, you can deconstruct then reconstruct your self-programming to respond in a more advantageous manner.

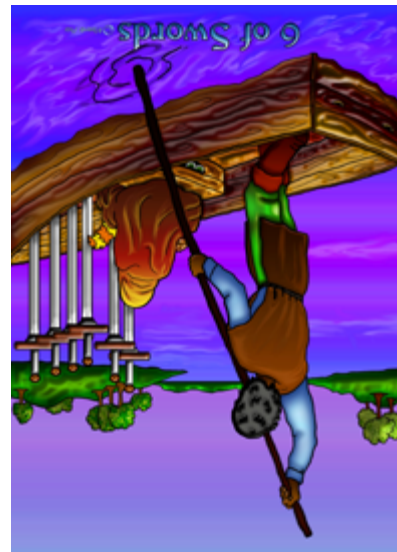
Remember to enjoy all parts of your Journey.

Sincerely,
The Wizard

Dear Wizard,

I feel stuck, as if something's holding me back. The feeling doesn't exactly inspire security and I'm wondering how to deal with this?

~ Stumped in Stockton



Articles & Stories

FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TAROT DECKS RE-CREATED

by Sherryl E. Smith

In the 1430s, you could go to the store and buy a pack of cards for playing the popular new game of Trionfi. What did those cards look like? Did they resemble the tarot cards that are familiar to us? We can't be sure because not a single printed tarot deck survived from the 15th century. All we have are a handful of gold-covered cards commissioned by wealthy aristocrats. Luxury decks like the *Visconti-Sforza* prove that by the mid-1400s tarot decks had 78 cards and the same 22 trump (major arcana) cards that we have today. But we don't know how closely these custom decks resembled cards printed for the masses.

Back then, playing cards were printed using wooden blocks resembling large rubber stamps. Cards were printed in sheets of about twenty. A stencil was laid on the sheet for brushing on paint, then the sheets were cut up into individual cards and stacked into a deck. If there was a flaw somewhere, the entire sheet was recycled and often used in book binding. Occasionally, when a restorer disassembles an antique book, a sheet of tarot cards will be found glued inside the covers. Several of these sheets have made their way into museums and private collections, and are known by the name of the collection where they reside.

The Budapest/Metropolitan and the Rosenwald sheets are very important for re-creating the history of tarot. They could only be seen online until recently, when Belgian graphic designer and illustrator Sullivan Hismans faithfully reproduced both sets of sheets and printed them as decks. Hismans' decks are so accurate that it's impossible to find a discrepancy when comparing his cards with online images of the originals. Now we can hold a valuable piece of tarot history in our hands.

THE BUDAPEST SHEET

The tarot sheets held by the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest are the most significant. They are comprised of all the trump and court cards and the suits of swords and batons. Duplicate sheets printed from the same woodblock were sold to the Metropolitan Museum in New York City in 1922. A private collection in New York owns a small section of one sheet, and the Cary Collection of Playing Cards at Yale University owns another duplicate sheet plus a stencil used to color one of the sheets in the Budapest collection.

Out of the tens of thousands, if not millions, of decks printed in Italy in the 15th century, only a handful of uncut sheets survive. It's either an extraordinary coincidence that so many examples of cards printed from the same wood blocks were preserved, or this particular deck was very popular.

All the traditional 22 trumps are present, but some cards have slightly different designs. The Magician/Bagatto has a crowd of onlookers behind him. The Lovers are a courting couple with Cupid helping things along. This deck has one of the most cheerful and life-affirming Sun cards.

After examining the clothing on the court cards, I believe the deck was designed in the 1470s, but some of the styles go back to the very early days of tarot in the 1440s. Playing





card designs were very conservative. When one set of wood blocks wore out, designs were often copied onto new blocks. It's quite possible that this deck transmits a remnant of the earliest days of tarot.

Hismans reproduced the lines of the original woodcuts with pen and paper and digital drawing. Eight trump and court cards are partly missing from the original sheets and had to be hand drawn with pen on paper to complete them. The cups and coins suits no longer exist and were recreated using other sheets of cards in the Budapest collection.

The areas of stenciled color on the original sheets are faithfully reproduced. Hismans' applied paint to paper, photographed it then applied it digitally to the cards. The original yellow has faded to tan, and the red paint shifted toward orange, so Hismans gives us the original bright, cheerful colors. The two highest trumps, Justice and World have blue areas that may have been hand-colored. These have been duplicated exactly.

The card backgrounds are a photograph of textured paper that recreates the look of hand laid paper.

THE ROSENWALD SHEET

The sheet of cards held by the Rosenwald Collection in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC contains 21 trump cards and three Queens. The unique images on some of the cards lead historians to believe that these cards were meant for either a Tarocchino Bolognese or a Minchiate deck, rather than being a variant of a traditional tarot deck.

The Fool and Magician are conflated into one card with a Bagatto wearing a jester's hat. The allegory of Strength is

The Rosenwald Sheet





traditionally either a woman subduing a lion or a woman next to a broken pillar. This deck has the pillar image. The Devil has all the attributes of a medieval demon but manages to look like he's heading out to a costume party.

The numbering on this sheet is so badly botched, the sheet ended up padding a book cover. Number 8 is repeated on adjacent cards. The card maker fudged things by skipping 9, calling the next card 11, skipping 12, then giving up when he realized he was never going to get back on track. If he kept going, Death would be 15, which is obviously wrong since Death is always 13.

A close examination of the sheet showed Hismans that someone had tried rather clumsily to fill in missing lines with a pen. He removed these lines and filled in the gaps digitally. The background and the card backs are from a photograph of the card backgrounds as they exist now. The cards are 2 x 3.5 inches. Hismans followed the original guidelines when cutting up the cards, so their size varies slightly.

THE ENVELOPES

In previous centuries, cards were packaged for sale in heavy paper envelopes printed with ornate designs and the card maker's name and address. Hismans learned block carving in order to understand how the lines on the cards were made. He used this skill to carve unique envelope designs, paying tribute to the original printers by using designs from their cards: the Star, Sun, and Moon for the Rosenwald envelope; and the Fool's tree



branch for the Budapest deck. Each deck is signed and numbered on the inside of the envelope.

THE ARTIST

Hismans first discovered tarot about age fourteen when he started reading with a Grimaud Tarot de Marseille. This sparked a spiritual quest that led him to read Plato and hermetic and gnostic texts. Now he uses tarot for creative inspiration rather than divination.

His deep involvement with these two decks has sent him down a new road and shown him his life's mission. His current passion is to give new life to forgotten historical decks and to understand the lifestyle and beliefs of the people who used these ancient cards. Ultimately, he would like to create a completely handcrafted deck.

Only 250 copies of each deck were digitally printed on 350 gram card stock with a light glossy finish. They are sturdy yet flexible and not too thick. At 2.75 x 4 inches, the Budapest cards are slightly smaller than most decks, but shuffle easily and are very usable. If you're comfortable reading with the Tarot de Marseille, the Budapest deck makes a fun and intriguing alternative.

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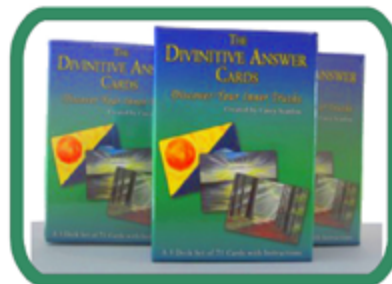
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PSYCARDS: THE BODY

THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS

by Catt Foy

The seven Fundamentals are those cards that relate to those elements of our lives that are common to each of us and nearest to our daily existence, reflecting background and environmental influences.

THE BODY

This card's image is the very image of strength and health, showing blood vessels, muscles and interconnective tissue. The background looks like a cross-section of bodily tissue in red and blue, representing veins and arteries, the ebb and flow, the rhythms of the human body and physical life. The creator of the Psycards, Nick Hobson, puts it more eloquently, "The organs, functions and control systems of this factory are designed to make one priceless and unique product: you."

Clearly this represents the physical self, as well as physical health and well-being. It indicates strength and stamina, a body in balance, in tune. When present in a reading, it can indicate there is a health question involved or that the interest at the present time involves the active participation of the body. The Body will often present itself in readings concerning pregnancy, illness or recovery, athletics and any changes in lifestyle which involve the welfare of the physical self. If the issue in question does not relate directly to the body itself, the presence of this card will indicate that there is physical strength available for whatever task is at hand, and that the querent will have the available stamina to complete it. It may mean the

querent is feeling especially good about his or her physical appearance or about their health condition, or perhaps has recently embarked upon a positive program of physical self-improvement. This card will frequently appear in the readings of athletes, dancers, laborers, and others whose occupation is dependent upon their physical abilities.

Nick reminds us that "perhaps the first message of the card is to remind us we are...fueled by pleasure and the functions of breathing, eating, secreting and excreting," as well as the pleasures of physical contact with others through affection and sexuality. If it occurs in close proximity to The Libido, for example, it can be an indicator of a passionate love life.

The Body card also reminds us to love our bodies—embrace our unique physical selves, bumps, bulges, curves and all. It also reminds us to recognize our body's rhythms—sleep cycles, intestinal regularity, monthly cycles and life change cycles like puberty and menopause.

When it appears reversed in a reading, it indicates that there is a physical lack of some sort, or the presence of disease or injury. It can also indicate the potential for disease, illness, or injury, especially if it falls in the future part of a reading and can act as a warning to the questioner to pay attention to things which affect his or her health. It can indicate a lack of proper diet or exercise, or that other stressors are impacting the person's physical well-being and they need to remember to take care of themselves so they can cope with any outside demands. Depending on the surrounding cards, it may indicate the abuse or addiction, especially if it falls with or very near cards like Destruction or The Beast.



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INTERVIEW WITH BENEBELL WEN

by Cynthia Tedesco

*I*nterview with Benebell Wen: author of *The Tao of Craft: Fu Talismans and Casting Sigils in the Eastern Esoteric Tradition and Holistic Tarot*.

CKT: What are the philosophical differences and similarities in the casting of talismans and sigils in the Anglo-American world as compared to the Eastern world?

BW: When we're talking about generalizations of what 'the East' does and what the philosophies of 'Western mystery traditions' are, within either categorization you're going to find a diversity of philosophical approaches, so for any one statement I make here, you're going to find a plethora of counter-statements. I'll try to make a few generalized remarks anyway.

In Eastern practice, the craft of sigils seems to be considered one of the many essential elements or tools of magical workings, whereas my observations of Western traditions is that sigils are one form of magic. In Western practice, you could very well cast a spell without any use of sigils, whereas in Eastern practice, by and large the majority of spells you would cast would necessitate the incorporation of a sigil or seal.

In Eastern practice, if you are a serious practitioner of craft, then you will have studied Fu talismans. To my best understanding, in Western practice, you could still be considered a serious practitioner of craft and not have worked with sigils at all.

Other than that, per my anecdotal knowledge, there are more similarities than there are differences. It's about writing as a form of powerful magic, calling by name spirits to control

*Craft is equal parts study
and practicum of the Tao.*



spirits, and using the sigil as a call signal for invocations or summonings.

CKT: What advice have you for creators of oracles?

BW: Determine whether your oracle system reflects the principle, 'As above, so below; as without, so within.' Every acupressure point on my palm corresponds with a specific part of my entire body, and I can access the whole through the points on my palm. Likewise every line and etch reveals a facet of my life path, past, present, or future. That's what your oracle system needs to be like. It must represent a body of universal law that governs both macrocosms and microcosms.

CKT: For artists and writers, how can sigils and talismans inspire the creative process?

BW: The talismanic sigil is a form of craft, so artists and writers who use craft to support their creative process can use sigils and talismans as that support. Otherwise, I'm not sure I am informed enough to answer this question. I suppose artists and writers can do as they will for inspiring their creative processes.

CKT: Concerning readers and creators of the art—what helps to develop psychic ability that can be controlled safely?

BW: Pacing your psychic development alongside wisdom and humility. Often, the mark of mastery and advancement is knowing when to hold back.

CKT: Pamela Coleman Smith's *Rider Waite Smith Tarot* has what has been called 'her signature initial' in the corner of each arcana. Do you consider that a sigil or a talisman?

BW: What I think of that doesn't matter. It's Smith's intent

that matters the most and, once the RWS deck is in your hands and you note the signature initial, it's what you think that matters. Personally, I never thought of it as a sigil. I thought of it as her artist's signature.

CKT: Professor Dow at Pratt was, for Pamela, a great influence upon her art. He urged her to use the black outlining techniques of Japanese artists and may I add, tattoo artists. Do you consider this 'appropriation of another's cultural heritage?'

If not why not, if so, why so?

BW: No. By and large I think the accusation of cultural appropriation is used more as a form of psychological projection, where the accuser has inner demons to battle but rather than battle those inner demons, tries to pull down others from achieving progress. I'm not saying cultural appropriation doesn't exist. It most certainly does as a horrible byproduct of imperialism and post-colonialism, but not every non-native use of something is cultural appropriation, is what I'm getting at.



CKT: The Golden Dawn, whose methods you expand upon in your brilliant text, *Holistic Tarot*, used many multi-cultural occult practices. Please tell us your own practice utilizing some, or all of the techniques described in your first book.

BW: I commence every formal tarot reading with an adaptation on the First Operation from the Opening of the Key. I use significators (or signifiers) in my readings. I observe the Golden Dawn astrological correspondences and will often cross-reference the astrological correspondences of cards drawn in a reading to either a birth chart, transits chart, or horary chart. I also work frequently at the intersection of I Ching divination and tarot.

CKT: We in The United States are a diverse people, Asian - Americans are one of the fastest growing groups, particularly where I live in NE Queens, NYC. How do you feel that will influence how Oracles are created, read and used in the immediate and distant future?

BW: I hope in the immediate and distant future, there will be more diversity among those who become professional tarot readers, those who publish tarot books, among deck creators, and even how people are depicted on tarot cards.

CKT: Please share with our readers how you came to tarot, oracles and Fu sigils and talismans? Are there oracles you favor? What is craft as it pertains to both the Eastern & Western traditions?

BW: As a child I'd lay out arrangements of poker cards and imagine that these arrangements prognosticated something important. I was fascinated by numbers, numerology, and possible metaphysical implications of adding certain numbers together, or dividing, or multiplying. If I made eye contact with a feral animal or saw a certain tree or found a certain stone, I'd imagine that these encounters were omens. I like to spot patterns and indulge in the belief that a microcosm can represent and even regulate a macrocosm, and vice versa.

So when I encountered tarot in junior high, I took to it quite naturally. As for Fu talismans, they've been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. However, I did not take an active interest in studying them until my adult years. In terms of oracles, I suppose I favor tarot and the I Ching.

Craft is the intensive study of unseen energy, of that which is commonly concealed from human physical senses and then it is an active, specialized engagement with that energy and learning to both understand and control that which you cannot otherwise experience objectively with your physical senses. Craft is equal parts study and practicum of the Tao.

CKT: Benebell, are you considering commercially publishing a Fu sigil and talisman deck or oracle of any kind in the immediate future?

BW: No, not likely. I'm a writer, not a deck creator. However, I do have a Chinese Oracle Bone Script Divination deck plus Guidebook on the etymological origins of Chinese script, its evolution from oracle bones to modern Chinese, and using oracle bone script for divination. It's a free deck. You can download the deck's digital files and the guidebook for free from my website and then use a third party printer to produce the oracle for yourself. Just check out www.benebellwen.com.

CKT: Your website offers a generous cornucopia of free or modestly priced lessons on all things Oracular plus your significant skills as a reader of oracles. When at your website



we find reviews of both decks and texts. Would you share your website address with our readers?

BW:

www.benebellwen.com



CKT: What are your plans for projects in the future? Is there additional information you would like to share with *The Cartomancer* readership?

BW: I will be rolling out different online multimedia courses on cartomancy, tarot, craft, and other metaphysical or esoteric subject matter, so keep on the lookout for that! If you follow me on Twitter or Instagram, that's probably the best place to get me-related news.

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WHAT MAKES A TAROT PROFESSIONAL?

by Wayne Limberger

*P*rofessional (adjective): 1) undertaken or engaged in as a means of livelihood or for gain; 2) following as a business an occupation ordinarily engaged in as a pastime.

The ‘Holy Grail’ for many tarot enthusiasts is eventual mastery of the robust skills and polished style of a ‘tarot professional’, while also making enough money to consider it a career. But the pedigree of a professional tarot reader is markedly less conventional than that of the ‘learned professions’ such as doctor, lawyer, or educator. Acquiring the experience and knowledge to operate confidently and effectively with tarot cards in a counseling environment is more often an informal and anecdotal journey than a carefully structured one.

At one end of the spectrum is the part-time reader who takes compensation for readings and works as an on-call consultant, often at a local New Age shop or psychic fair. This

person may make enough to stay supplied with new decks and books or enjoy an occasional night out, but it won't put anyone through college. Yet this reader can be considered a 'professional' working for gain. At the other end is the widely-known practitioner with an office, a business phone, a slew of published works and a waiting list of satisfied clients, along with an annual income in the upper five figures or beyond.

In between is a vast sea of PayPal-dependent on-line and phone-line readers who serve the public need for instant gratification without the burden of having to travel to a 'sit-down' session (although 'semi-professional' might be a more precise description for someone who reads tarot in their pajamas!) While there are many competent, serious-minded people plying the waters of internet tarot reading, the lack of immediate client feedback can result in a lopsided monologue rather than the rich dialogue afforded by face-to-face contact, skirting the borders of 'tarot lite'.

By itself, receiving a certificate of achievement from an institute of tarot education doesn't guarantee proficiency in actual practice, although it can burnish one's image when hung above a reading table and perhaps earn its bearer a larger fee. Being published in an internationally-distributed journal or newsletter—either gratis or for payment—doesn't automatically confer professional status either, although it certainly augments one's credentials. Having all the trappings of a successful diviner without the 'heart' to make a meaningful difference in the life of a single seeker, while potentially lucrative, may be the least credible expression of all, deserving of the epithet 'for entertainment only'.

It's the heart and not the income I want to talk about here.



Tarot reading aligns well with the ‘caring professions’, although relatively few readers are formally certified in a counseling or therapeutic discipline. At its most over-reaching it risks being dismissed as ‘armchair psychology’ that may do more harm than good. As long as the reader keeps in mind that he or she is a purveyor of possibilities that may emerge as probabilities as the reading unfolds, and strives to provide clients with situational awareness and developmental insight in the service of personal growth or decision-making, that line is seldom crossed.

The ideal qualities of a successful reader—professional or amateur—are often debated. Compassion is high on the list, as are warmth and honesty of the empowering rather than deflating variety (not, “No, you won’t get what you want”, but “Here’s how you might try”). An engaging manner and a light touch are also admirable traits to bring to the table, while a strong grasp of language skills and a natural storyteller’s easy delivery are decided advantages.

These talents are best groomed ‘in the field’ over a long campaign of client encounters.

Another earmark of the tarot professional is the poise to navigate daunting time constraints—at least in ‘live’ venues. A 20-minute reading session ‘on the clock’ for a stranger will demand more focus and precision of the reader than a casual, hour-long meander through the cards for a friend across the kitchen table. The ability to change directions ‘on a dime’ when an initial line of inquiry proves unproductive, and to switch gears between practical and psychological perspectives without missing a beat, are signs of a seasoned veteran.

The effective handling of difficult clients also deserves mention.

When confronted with a sitter who says “No” to every observation offered, the professional may agree in principle that the client knows the circumstance of the matter best, but will still work the reading around from different angles to cast the original points in a different light while keeping to the main story-line shown in the cards. Creative imagination will often succeed in coaxing that “Aha!” reaction from the sitter where literal delineation falters, and the use of metaphor, analogy, shared cultural references or other storytelling tropes can illuminate an otherwise dim corridor.

‘Readiness’ is another well-honed instrument in the professional reader’s tool box. He or she arrives for a series of back-to-back readings with a number of already-randomized decks of various types to suit different tastes, and a variety of spreads on tap to cover any type of question. A brief mini-

lesson in the basics of the process has been memorized and mentally rehearsed in the event a nervous client needs hand-holding. Something as simple as giving the sitter advance notice that certain cards may seem alarming at first glance if and when they appear in the layout goes a long way toward defusing potential anxiety before it gets a grip. We can all envision the following scenario. Client: “What’s THAT? Death? . . . DEATH??? You mean, like, actual ‘death’ . . . ?” The most sensitive readers learn something new about the human condition from almost every client interaction even after decades of practice, and are open to changing their ways to absorb that experience.

The best face-to-face readers have a finely-tuned sense of the ‘theater of tarot’, explaining to the sitter why certain steps in the process (“Shuffle and cut with your left hand to your left” or “We’ll leave the last card face-down for now”) are more dramatic flourishes than essential aspects of the system. Reading tarot cards in public is as much a performance art as it is a means of offering useful guidance.

A final word about intuition. Many readers consider it the ‘be-all and end-all’ of interpretive skills, even to the point of preferring it untainted by any kind of ‘book learning’. But ‘intuitive vision’ is a slippery and overused cliché that can mask a weak command of the fundamentals that make tarot such a remarkably expressive and penetrating form of divination. Considered from a story-teller’s viewpoint, the ‘Three I’s’—inspiration, imagination and ingenuity—will often stand the professional reader in better stead than a pale gloss of soft-focus insight that eludes more profound and vigorous analysis. Books are the concentrated wisdom of generations of tarot experts and should not be dismissed lightly. A blend of intuitive and analytical styles is usually the most effective way to serve the client’s needs. Crawl first, swaddled in your keyword blanket, stand and walk on your own with confidence later, and then fly!

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THE MAGICAL SCENT OF THE TAROT

by Ailynn

It was a rainy afternoon and I was feeling frantic. The energies of anxiety and fear had been my constant companions lately and I had almost grown accustomed to their presence. A lot was going on and yes, most of the energies were positive. I was taking a new direction in my life, and the prospect seemed terrifying. I decided to have a conversation with the cards. What message did they wish to convey? As I shuffled the deck I thought about my question. It was a simple question but got straight to the point. How was I to proceed on my path?

Patterns began to appear, a clear and precise message, as I laid out the cards in a Celtic Cross. Swords filled my reading. Maybe I was a bit too much in my head. When I got to card number two 'that which crosses', the familiar Nine of Swords appeared. Yes, the Nine of Swords often appeared in my personal readings. I call this card 'The Nightmare' because of the anxiety and fear it represents. My remedy to the Nine of Swords is to walk through the fear. This card told me that I had to continue to move forward on my journey. Go ahead and take the next step. I needed to re-establish my center. I needed to trust myself and stand true in my beliefs. The truth of the matter was that I was getting ready to teach my first tarot class and I did not have the confidence and grounding that I so needed. I had also drawn the Seven of Cups. It told me I was not clear about who I was. All the confusion I felt was due to the overabundance of air in my reading causing fear, anxiety, and a lack of grounding.

As I thought about my circumstance, I knew what was needed. Being an aromatherapist, I grabbed all my earth-based essential oils and went to work on a blend for grounding. I needed to be strong and centered in self. I needed to trust and believe in my truth. I blended the oils of patchouli, cypress, vetiver, clary sage, cedar, juniper, and orange.

Most of these oils are earth-based in essence, but a bit of

orange, a fire oil, would help to call in the energies of passion and creativity. This would be the perfect magical blend to help me to take that next step.

On this day my Queen of Pentacles Spray was born, as was the beginning of a new adventure. An adventure that has led me thus far to a new me and to the discovery of many treasures about the world and myself.

You see, as an essential oil enthusiast, I have learned that there truly is magic in the oils. Essential oils, in comparison to human blood, are in essence the life force, or energy that dwells within a plant. These oils contain spirit and are wonderful gifts that have blessed us throughout time. For as long as there have been rituals and spiritual endeavors, there has been the use of plants, oils, scents, incense, and herbs. Think of the Egyptians and their use of plants, oils and herbs for beauty, magic, spiritual works, and the burial of their royalty. Plants are our allies and they wish to work with us and guide us on our journey of personal healing.

Let's take a look at the magic of the oils and how they relate to the tarot. As we look at the four suits within the tarot, we can relate to their elemental correspondences. The suit of Pentacles, relates to Earth, Cups relate to Water, Wands relate to Fire, and Swords to Air. As Sandra Kynes states in her book *Mixing Essential Oils for Magic: Aromatic Alchemy for Personal Blends*:

In a sense (no pun intended), plants bring us into elemental balance. Their roots are in the soil (earth), growing skyward (air), nourished by rain (water), and as alchemists themselves they transform the sun's light (fire) into the energy that we need. Finally through the essential oil they bring us the essence of life (spirit).

Each oil has a prevalence of an elemental energy, for example, eucalyptus oil holds the energy of Air. Think of how your lungs relate in correlation to the element of Air. Without the workings of our lungs we would not breathe. Eucalyptus oil has healing properties that help to open up the lungs and bring in clarity to the breath. In the same sense, eucalyptus brings in clarity of the mind and spirit, therefore being an oil of the suit of Swords. Getting the picture? If working with a Minor Arcana card, or an abundance of a suit in a reading, I would choose oils to either pull in more of that particular suit's energy or I would choose to counteract the energy of that suit, or reduce its energy. Such as water cooling fire.

Working with the elements is not the only way to bring about a blend for the cards. One of my favorite ways to blend is using the magic of Morphology, or 'The Doctrine of

Signatures'. In this manner, we are looking at where in the plants anatomy the essential oil is derived from. Let's take a look at anise essential oil. Anise essential oil comes from the seed of the plant. The seed represents new beginnings, potential, change, and cycles. Sandra Kynes speaks of how the seed has the ability to travel, to move through the wind or rain, to be carried to a new location, hence we have the essence of change. Anise oil calls in the powerful energy of the potential to become.

Oils that are derived from roots bring the energy of grounding, stability, protection and a connection to our personal roots, our ancestors. Leaves and twigs call in growth, energy, and the power to reach out.

Wood and bark oils are for strength, power and protection. They are strong. The bark, the outer layer of the plant, brings protection from the elements as well as protection from insects or a potential invasion from fungus and mold.

Resins relate to the life blood of the plant seeping out. These oils bring vitality, life, and protection. Let's not forget the fruit of a plant, such as the orange. As Sandra Kynes mentions in her book:

All we have to do is look at the word fruition, to see that the oil from the fruit brings in the power of manifestation and success.

The orange plant is magical in that it produces three essential oils. An oil from its leaves and twigs known as Petitgrain, an oil from the rind which is true orange essential oil, and an oil from its flowers known as Neroli. Flower oils bring about the energy of beauty, unfoldment, attraction, and fertility. Think about in the plant kingdom how the flower attracts the bee with its sweetness and beauty. Plants have the power to attract and to repel.

As you can see there is magic in the oils. Each essential oil also holds individual magical properties. There are oils for protection and intuition, money and power, beauty and attraction. The list goes on.

So how do these magical oils work with the tarot? Well herein lies the magic. I was in a Wheel of Fortune year, when I decided I wanted to reduce the number ten to the number one. I wanted to work with the Magician throughout this year

to manifest the changes that I desired.

I called upon the power of the Magician and created a magical blend.

We all have heard how scents bring back memories. I think of scents as creating new memories. I work with a scent three times per day. Each time I use the scent I recall the qualities that I wish to manifest in order to proceed on my path. With the Magician, I wanted to manifest my potential to succeed in my chosen field. So I made a list of accomplishments for the year. I created an affirmation for myself and created my Magician blend. I chose a seed oil for my beginning. A seed for potential. Seeds are fire oils and bring the energy of change, transformation, and new beginnings. The essential oil of anise was my seed of potential. I also chose some leaves

and twigs for growth and the power to reach out. Some wood and bark for strength and protection. A flower oil to attract that which may be needed and a fruit for the manifestation of my desires. I made sure the Magician blend contained essential oils to represent all four elements because the Magician has the use of all four elements before him. Herein was the blend. A magical blend that I worked with throughout the year to my benefit. My year of the Wheel was magical to say the least, and my accomplishments were completed just as I had written them out on paper.

When working with the tarot, I like to pull in all five senses. I often wear jewelry or dress the elemental energy of the card I have chosen to work with or as I should say, the card that has chosen to work with me. Carrying a stone to touch and feel the energy and then adding in the perfume of the card can bring about profound shifts.

Each card within the tarot has its own personal perfume. By breathing in this perfume, this scent, your nostrils carry the magical energies to the brain and into your bodies system. The oils can also penetrate through the skin into your blood therefore adding the energies of the plant into your personal being. You then can become The Magician, the Queen of Cups, the Ace of Wands, The Emperor. You can use the spirit of the oil to pull in an elemental energy of a card or as mentioned before you can reduce the energy of a card by




bringing in an opposing element.

There is much magic in this world to behold. The tarot gives us guidance and it is up to us to determine how to use this guidance. Do we embrace the path we are on, or do we wish to move in a different direction? What obstacles might lie ahead, and how can we surmount them? Do we need to be more grounded, or do we need to speak our truth and bring in clarity? Is compassion the key, or is there a need for that creative spark? On the day I laid out the Celtic Cross spread and saw all the Swords that lay before me, I realized the power of the cards. Not only did I see the fear, anxiety, and confusion lying there in front of me, I saw the power of the elements. On that day the element of air brought me clarity and gave me my voice. I stepped through my fear with the power of the element of earth and the divine help of our plant world through the gift of their essence in essential oils. Today, I am a tarot teacher, a reader, and I have a line of oil blends that continue to produce their magic for myself and others.

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Tarot, Birth Cards, and You
Keys to Empowering Yourself



Bonnie Cehovet
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PEERING INTO THE SHADOWS

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANIE LAW

by Monica Bodirsky

It is easy to get transported into Stephanie Law's world. Her *Shadowsapes Tarot* is comprised of mythical and captivating environments painted in stunning detail. First published in 2010 by Llewellyn, the deck is enjoying continued success and popularity as new audiences discover her work.

Law's choice of colors and complex compositions make the cards incredible stand-alone art pieces that collectively express the archetypal journey of tarot beautifully. From the serenity of the Seven of Pentacles to the high energy of the Knight of Wands, each card is a portal into an inviting and secret world. The well-written, accompanying LWB was co-authored by tarot empress and expert Barbara Moore, and it offers keen and concise insights making it a pleasure to use.

As an accomplished, professional artist, Stephanie Law's process is becoming a rarity. Each piece of art is a painstakingly detailed hand work—quite surprising given our current digital preferences. Many artists find using Photoshop and Illustrator a quicker and easier way to create due to accessibility and illusion of creating professional-looking artwork simply. To see an artist still using physical materials, knowledge, and dedicated to hand work is heartening. There is a sense of warmth, grace and vulnerability in her paintings, and the discipline required and number of hours spent is apparent.

A graduate of the University of California, Berkeley with a double BA in Fine Arts and Computer Science, Stephanie Law is a well-published artist, and illustrator with a comprehensive list of clients, as well as numerous gallery shows. Her work appears on books by authors such as Catherine Asaro and David Riche, and she is



also the author of her own instruction books on how to paint mythical landscapes and creatures.

I approached Stephanie Law for an interview not only because of her tarot art, but also so she could share the process and background behind her mystical worlds. Despite her hectic schedule—she kindly offered to answer a few questions just before and during one of her many professional trips.

MB: Hi Stephanie, thank you for speaking with me. I am familiar with your watercolor fantasy art and find it enchanting, but I especially enjoy your *Shadowsapes Tarot* deck. When did you first begin identifying as an artist?

SL: From as early as I can remember. The very first response I ever gave to people when asked what I wanted to be when I grew up was “an artist”, and I can't ever remember not associating with that.

MB: I find your *Shadowsapes* deck and artwork beautifully dreamlike and intensely detailed. The work is soft and romantic and somewhat reminiscent of pre-Raphaelite works. Are there specific artists who have

inspired you?

SL: Yes, the pre-Raphaelite artists have definitely inspired me. Among my favorites were Edward Burne-Jones, John William Waterhouse, and Edward Robert Hughes.

The Golden Age of Illustration also provides inspiration for



me. J.C. Leyedecker, Edmund Dulac, and Kay Nielsen.

MB: When I see your fantasy landscapes and mythical creatures I am also reminded of a more recent phenomenon, the *Dungeons and Dragons*, role-playing games and many of the fairy tales I grew up with. Were you ever or are you a gamer?

SL: Was and are! And an avid reader. I started my illustration career doing art for role playing and card games, and so I suppose it's not surprising that some of those images evoke that feeling for you. I worked as a freelancer in those arenas for several years before I started to find my own path in creating projects that were directed by my own inspiration. The tarot deck was the first long-term project of that sort that I embarked on.

MB: I noticed you had a double major from Berkeley in Fine Arts as well as Computer Science. Did you enjoy studying both simultaneously and was computer science helpful either directly or indirectly to your current arts practice?

SL: I was in college at a time when the Internet was just getting off the ground as a space for artists. I was studying computer science because I had been told over and over that art wasn't going to be a viable career, and so I thought that I would be relegating art to the hobby-sideline. There were very few artists online yet, with the exception of a few of us who had a nerdier side (or nerdier other-half who could assist). I started putting my art on the Internet because I had the skill-set to do so, and because it was fun, but as the Internet evolved, it quickly became apparent that this was a very possible career path that no one had anticipated a decade earlier. As it turned out then, strangely, my computer skills were very directly helpful in launching my art career and positioning me at the right time with the right set of skills to get a jump start on being able to directly reach my audience in a way that artists had never before been able to do.

MB: How did you evolve from being an artist involved as a games community member to an artist who creates a tarot deck, and what inspired the transition?

SL: As I started to move away from freelancing game art, I noticed that more and more of the artwork I did for my own pleasure centered around my love of mythology and folklore. When my audience interacted with me, I often heard the suggestion for a tarot deck, and it was a subject

I was interested in. When I delved into it more, I realized that it was a very good match for the type of art I was creating, primarily in the way the major arcana was centered around archetypes. Archetypes are the core of mythology. In the study of folklore, when you break down a tale to its core components, it is made up of archetypes, in the story structure, and in the characters. Because of this, my love of mythological subject matter synched up very well with the structure of the tarot.

...its role is to remind people of what lies beyond the reflective surface of their lives. It can inspire to action, and to betterment, and an understanding that it's our responsibility to externalize the beauty that we take in.

MB: You mentioned that the *Shadowscales Tarot* was your first long-term project. What was the most challenging part of this huge project?

SL: The hugeness of it!

It was the most extensive project I had ever embarked on at that point (and actually even now afterwards). It was very intimidating to tell myself that I was going to create 78 pieces of artwork for a single project, and to consider how long that would take me, and whether my style would change drastically during that interim.

MB: How long did it take you to create all 78 pieces of art for *Shadowscales* from inception to completion?

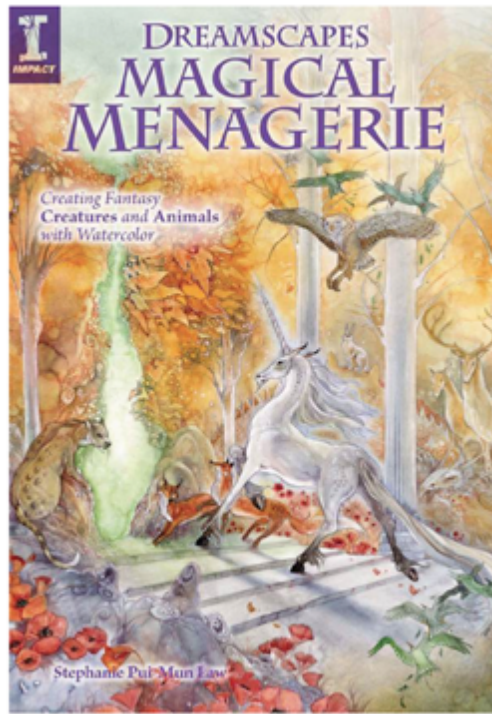
SL: It took about 3.5 years, and then another year after that for the publication process. I didn't work on it exclusively during those 3.5 years. I was still doing quite a bit of freelance work in between cards, but it worked out very well because each card didn't spring fully-formed into my mind. It required quite a bit of research for the meanings and symbols I wanted to put into the image. It needed time to simmer at the back of my mind. I would do my research and let all the images lurk in my brain while I worked on other projects (that required less brainstorming because that part was dictated by art directors), and by the time I was done with a freelance painting, I had something in mind for the next tarot card, and I could quickly sketch and paint that piece. Each tarot piece took about 2 weeks in this way, although the actual painting process was only about 2 to 3 days.

MB: You must hear a great deal from your fans about your captivating deck and how much it affects them.

SL: Yes, I love hearing from fans and how the images and using the deck has touched their lives. It's always amazing for me to know that an image that has resonance with me as I was creating it can have a similar resonance with someone seeing it. It's that amazing sense of communication, which is what creating art is all about.

MB: You have produced so many paintings that contain such a diversity of striking landscapes; do you have any favorite places or locations that are particularly inspiring to your art?

SL: Oh yes, an artist's surroundings always make their way into their art. It might not be an exact transcription of their world, and it's been filtered through their sensibilities, but I find it interesting that you can always see a hint of what the world looks like that surrounds an artist, by looking at their artwork. For myself, California woods are present in nearly every tree I paint, in the sinuous way they wind across the pages. There are more specific locations that have also inspired some pieces. Sometimes as I say it's not the specific direct copy of that place, but more the sense and feeling



that those places evoke. There is a lake in Ontario that my family visits, and that very lonely and beautiful place with the cry of loons at dawn and dusk was the inspiration for the Hermit card.

MB: Certainly your love of nature is apparent in your art. What do you enjoy the most about being a professional illustrator?

SL: The best part about being an illustrator is to do what I love every day. I love painting. I can't get enough of it and of creating images, and so to be able to do that all the time, I can't think of anything better!

MB: If loving your work is the best part, what do you think is the biggest challenge?

SL: Balancing my schedule is the biggest challenge. Being a professional artist means dealing with a lot of paperwork as well, and the not-so-artish aspects of being a professional. Also, juggling my other roles and responsibilities, as a mother in particular, as a dancer, and finding a way to keep all of these elements in balance.

MB: Stephanie, what is your process like? Do you work daily and on a schedule or do you work organically when on deadline? Also do you tend to work on several pieces simultaneously or only one at a time?

SL: I paint daily. I have a 7-year old daughter, so the schedule conforms to school hours, as well as in the evenings after she has gone to sleep, much more structured than before she was a part of the picture. I also work only on one piece at a time. Some artists work on many at a time, but my mind has always been very streamlined focused. I can't think or be inspired by a secondary concept until I have finished the one before me.

MB: This is a bit difficult to answer simply, but what do you feel is the major contribution of illustration and art in your opinion?

SL: It's a question I wrangle with quite a bit. For myself, I have a need to create, and I think most artists have this. An audience is nice, but in the end, it's all about the fact that we need to get these images out of our heads and onto paper. Sometimes I feel like my need to create art is a compulsion, and I am grateful that the world appreciates what I put out



there! But then I receive a letter from a fan, who tells me how my work has helped them in dealing with an emotional situation, or how it has touched them and reminded them of a wonderful experience/person/dream. Or how it inspires them to create their own beauty. At times like these I feel that art making is not so much a selfish endeavor, and that its role is to remind people of what lies beyond the reflective surface of their lives. It can inspire to action, and to betterment, and an understanding that it's our responsibility to externalize the beauty that we take in.

MB: Do you have any advice for artists who wish to create their own tarot or oracle deck?

SL: Plan your deck in advance. If you want to have a cohesive deck that makes sense when you're finished, it has to happen with forethought. This doesn't mean you have to sketch out each and every card right from the start, but it does mean you should think about your overall themes. How do you want to approach the minor arcana and the suits?

There's the vertical structure of the minor arcana as you proceed from the Ace up to the King, but there's also the horizontal structure and how the Aces across all four suits synch up and relate to one other. Understand in your own mind how you plan to deal with this for your deck before you start any sketching. For the majors, how do you want to structure that, and what kind of recurring imagery do you want to have so that your deck has a theme?

This might sound daunting, but by clarifying these questions in your own mind ahead of time, it lays out the roadmap for the cards as you create them. Once you have this basic structure worked out, then you can start doing the cards and know that you have a framework for everything to exist within.

Another thing to keep in mind is to not start immediately on your favorite cards. It's a huge project to take on 78 pieces of artwork. There will be some that you think of as your favorites and that you're excited to get started on. There are others that will frustrate you and which you won't know how to approach. When you come across those, take your time, and find your own resonance with the meaning. Don't just rush something, but really try to find your own connection and turn it from something that is unreachable to you, to something that you've internalized and transformed into meaning. Try to mix up the ones you are excited to do, and

those harder ones so that you have a good mixture, and so that you aren't left with a pile of daunting cards to finish at the very end.

Finally, find your own reason for creating each of the cards. When you have resonance with the artwork, your audience will feel it on the other end. It will resonate with them, and be that much more meaningful!



MB: Thank you for your time, wonderful insights and advice and I look forward to seeing more of your work soon. Do you have other projects you would like to share with your fans, and if people would like to connect where can they find you?

SL: I've written a series of watercolor technique books that are published by Impact Books, called *Dreamscapes*, and mostly these days I am focused on working on my own independent projects. I have another deck that is in the works called the *Dreamdance Oracle*, and I just published an

art book on Kickstarter last year called *Descants & Cadences*. I've also been working with various galleries across the country and I have a couple of upcoming shows that I am busy preparing for, one at Krabjab Studio in Seattle in June, and another at Haven Gallery in NY in December.

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FROM PAMELA'S JOURNAL

FROM PCS: A NOVEL

by Cynthia Tedesco

I was working on my Minor Arcana's 'loss themes' when news of Gretchen's death arrived. I sent a telegram to Martin with my condolences... hollow words! I can't sleep, I can't work but must work and am, appropriately, working around endings, reversals in life, crushed ambitions, love affairs, the whole gambit of losses. We shall work in honor of Gretchen. I am sure she'd be horrified, but there it is.

Gretchen would have much preferred I didn't do the Tarot project at all. Ever the pragmatist, Gretchen embraced life and did not shrink from illness and death. She enjoyed each day as is and enjoyed Tea Leaf readings though, for fun only of course, although she knew those hazy shapes created images that had meaning. To lose such a young, vibrant wife when you, yourself, are well past your middle years, must have devastated Martin. Gretchen made him so happy and he also held her happiness foremost.

Hopefully I will hear from Professor Dow as to James' whereabouts. The pendulum has narrowed my search to the area directly surrounding or, perhaps within, the Hagia Sophia, but will he stay put? I doubt he will, but I must hope he will come back to England post haste and relieve my need to go to Turkey in search. He knows I've no money for such an undertaking and it would appear, though appearances can deceive, that he has abundant resources.

I have tried to put James out of my mind and heart. Thoughts of him are always with me. Why am I doing this to myself?! He, apparently, has no desire to see me or he would get in

touch. Losing Gretchen, however far away we were from each other geographically, has left the indelible impression of how fragile life is. I too, could be in the cold earth and would James even care? It's daunting. It's painful. I hurt so! I would seek confirmation of my conflicting thoughts and emotions by asking for a reading, but Edy is such a poor reader and this is definitely not London with its many options. Perhaps I should make the Two of Pentacles the signification of the reading? Dare I read for myself? I will consider it. If one is in The Golden Dawn society one does not do The Opening of The Key reading but once a year. This though, would be a smaller reading, though not Mr. Waite's so called Celtic Cross...no, I will have to think up something that is more specific to my issues. I'm almost tempted to try automatic writing. Is my search for James realistic or is such mere folly? While my own tarot deck certainly 'speaks' to me more than any other, I am loathe to work with it incomplete. I shall have to consider my options. I should probably visit London for a reading. Many that I know there are gifted readers. I know traveling to Turkey is impossible. My thoughts are so conflicted. Gretchen would advise me to stay put and get on with my life sans James, thoughts of James, and if he were to turn up, to send him away. Am I obsessed with him? Oh Gretchen, I need you so much now!

Next Day...

If I am honest with myself, I will see that I am already an 'old maid, spinster, over the hill,' in short, past the accepted norms for marriage. Amongst those I know, even those for whom an intimate marriage is unacceptable, a marriage takes place. Sometimes those marriages, based on mutual 'outside of marriage needs' work out best and have lasted the

longest. Arrangements take place because of society's dictates regarding an heir. But there can be no heir from me. I am utterly barren. Barren too in appearance. I can't imagine my round body, dark and dusky in an evening gown, let alone a wedding dress. Am I like the 'older woman' in The Lover's Card? Does she symbolize me? Hungry for love? Much too forward? Is she distracting the beautiful youth from the innocence of the young maid?

Edy and so many others in the theater are frank and open about their desires. I am silent. No one desires me and I see no reason to humiliate myself in public.



It's simply awful that I have thrown myself at James, the only man I have ever been so attracted to. He rejects me. I hunger all the more for him. I am without fortune, I am without beauty, and I can never have a child. Only Martin and Professor Dow must suspect my confused desires. Gretchen understood. Never judged. Now she is gone. I have never felt more alone. I have only the project and I am taking things one day at a time. With my tarot project a day is crammed full of work that for other artists would take many weeks. The distraction is keeping me alive. My life is in this tarot itself!

3rd Day

However...truth be told I am distracted by...this sounds crazy...even to me. I am distracted by tiny objects. When I go to pick up something...a book, a scarf, a bracelet, a necklace, anything at all; I perceive their former owners. My 'things,' being mostly second hand, from second hand shops or from the kindness of leading ladies of the stage. These images come in symbols, but 'seeing the symbol' I divine the messenger. I am so tempted to engage conversation by automatic writing but my father's warnings against mediumship are holding me back. I did not seek this but here it is. So much is imbued within us by those here and those who have ties to us by ancestry, objects, desire, and message. Yet I deny the message. Shall I pursue mediumship? I'm ashamed that the questions that come to mind are: Is James alive? Will he contact me? Is he alright? When shall we meet again? So it goes, a round of essentially endless James questions.

Could I read for another? Would my tarot bridge the divide between the living and the dead? If so, how so? Or are objects the key to contact? Mr. Doyle believes in mediumship and Mr. Houdini does not. I know Mr. Doyle to be correct, but can we be sure we are contacting whomever we wish to or some malevolent sprite? The tarot structure protects us, to my mind perhaps too much so. However automatic writing...maybe not so greatly. My synesthetic drawings come close to mediumship in a way. Perhaps that combined with the mystery of James' whereabouts and the 'sense' of objects giving me their acquired influences...a hint of male or female, appearance, disposition, occupation (sometimes) and much else, has created a 'bridge' in me that invites crossing. Must I answer this 'call' immediately? Can I consider it further? I feel those on 'the other side' as intimate friends.

However I do not sense James. That is probably a good sign, that he lives. It's overwhelming and draining. I've work to complete. I can't be distracted now. Not now. Perhaps later.

4th Day

While out shopping for tea and coffee (I got lucky and found an excellent grocer) a fellow customer was commiserating with a friend or neighbor on the death of her husband. A Medium was mentioned! A Mrs. Grant. I waited until they left and asked the shopkeeper if he knew of a Medium named Mrs. Grant. He was reluctant to speak so I knew immediately she might be a customer of his. Is she in the directory? Did he have her address? I am so obviously not a detective but my grocer was kind and offered me her address. However, he cautioned me to write to her first for an appointment and I was not to mention him but to say a 'Mrs. Hilda Clark' recommended her to me. I assured him I would and left that shop not only with a wonderful coffee but with Mrs. Grant's address. I will write to her now and put the letter in the next post. Hopefully she will not make me wait too long.



5th Entry

Mrs. Grant waited a full week to write back to me. My appointment is for tomorrow! Edy shall have to watch Gordon. She will be annoyed, not over Gordon, rather over not accompanying me to the Medium. It turns out Mrs. Grant's home is an apartment over the grocer! Sly man! My Medium must be his wife or a relative. In the country it is unusual to find a woman living alone in a rented apartment! Such are the mores' of life here. A Medium in the country is most unusual, I should say a Medium with a public reputation. To hold a salon with friends and family is one thing, a public reputation still another. Every Medium has a methodology for preparation but what the seeker sees is a practiced presentation. Can Mrs. Grant divine what my heart aches to know...is James alive or dead?

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THE HANGED MAN, MARKET SPECULATION AND NEPTUNE

A FUN SATURDAY NIGHT OUT

by Vivien Moon

During a social event (one of those required-figures events you attend for your spouse), someone I had never met before stepped up and asked if we might have a quick chat. Of course, I obliged.

“Oh, good,” they replied. “It’s about the Tarot.”

As I took a breath to deliver my, ‘I Don’t Talk Tarot at Social Events’ speech, they leaned in and whispered, “It’s about the Hanged Man.”

The urgency in his voice, the serendipity and relevance of his question to my own life at that moment—proper cloak and dagger stuff.

The chairs by the bar turned out to be exceedingly comfortable.

The Seeker, as it turns out, had been considering a change in jobs for quite some time to the field of market speculation. Part of their career investigation led to reading *Astro-Cycles & Speculative Markets* by L.J. Jensen, *The Law of Success* by Napoleon Hill and several works by the philosopher George Gurdjieff. And, unexpectedly, the Hanged Man card or references to it kept appearing in unanticipated ways.

In particular, my Seeker was pondering the possible connections between the Hanged Man card and some of the Gurdjieff writings.

Gurdjieff wrote that ‘man spends his life in a sort of waking sleep’ and in *Beelzebub’s Tales* to his grandson, he writes that “kundabuffer is responsible for making mankind see things the wrong way”. A gross oversimplification of kundabuffer is a force that prevents one from seeing truth when the truth would cause all hope to be lost.

The Seeker wondered if I felt the Hanged Man represents these ideas in any way. Gurdjieff believes, as do I, many people are easily duped by spiritual teachers because they want someone to show them the way to live a meaningful life. And anyone reading this knows that’s just not how it works. Those embarking on a spiritual journey need to do the work themselves.

So, how to reconcile the card and the concepts?

XII can be a rough guy to size up. Every Tarot teacher I had put a different spin on this card and every reading it shows up in means you’ve got to look at the surrounding cards and then look that much harder at the context. What the 12th card of the Major Arcana is called is not always consistent. There are decks which cast XII as The Victim, The Drowned, and Vision. Visual representations of the card differ as well. The man may be hanging serenely, while in other depictions he is flailing about. He is usually suspended by one foot, in some both, yet in some decks he is hanging by the neck.

Meanings for XII wildly vary. The *Waite-Smith-Coleman* deck is what I cut my teeth on so when discussing Tarot, I always refer to the 12th card as the Hanged Man and base my interpretation on the WSC’s Little White Book. In an upright position the Hanged Man means: wisdom, trials, circumspection, discernment, sacrifice, intuition, divination, prophecy.

The symbolism of the Hanged Man is broad and deep. I could go on for days, but suffice it to say these are the symbols I keyed on during the conversation with the Seeker.

Basically, Gurdjieff attempts to explain how to increase energy in various ways to minimize day-dreaming and absent-mindedness. But the Hanged Man offers no such thing—he’s a description of the condition, not a definition of how to heal the issue itself.

The Hanged Man is obviously upside down. Since the Seeker was considering a job change, I pointed out he’s suspended from what looks like a living tree, not gallows made from dead, dry timber. The ‘tree’ reminds one of the staves from the Minor Arcana suit of Wands. Wands are the suit of business, represent Fire, and consequently the astrological signs of Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius. However, the planet that rules the Hanged

Man is Neptune, the astrological sign being Pisces, which of course is a water sign. I see this as seeking balance.

The Seeker mentioned they were very much aware of the inverted four, as Gurdjieff’s student’s writings titled *The*

Fourth Way is something they'd also read. But what did the inverted four mean in the context of Tarot?

Numerologically speaking, when the Hanged Man appears in a spread there are, ironically, four things I take into consideration.

First, the number 12 when added together and reduced: $1 + 2 = 3$, three being the number for growth.

Second, the man's legs form an upside down/inverted number 4—which in Tarot is the number of completion. More growth is needed before completion can be attained and this involves rethinking what you believe to be true. Belief systems, values and priorities are all up for scrutiny and some will have to change before enlightenment can be achieved.

The third component I look for is the Hanged Man's relation to other Major Arcana cards with which it vibrates. One, two and the sum thereof, three. And, of course, zero.

The number one gives us card I, The Magician. His wand points to the sky in an effort to pull and manifest divine energy. Number two gives us II The High Priestess. She holds in her lap a scroll of knowledge that is, in part, the result of The Magician's endeavors. The sum of $1 + 2$ of course is three—III The Empress depicts a woman who has received the divine energy and is knowledgeable, fruitful, and emotional, and aware of her outer life.

Finally, there is The Fool. His 'number' is 0, which isn't a number at all. It is null, it is the absence of anything. It is the ether from which the Magician is attempting to manifest anything and everything. It's often the beginning. And it's worth noting The Fool is ruled by that would-be troublemaker, Uranus.

The sum of the numerological aspects of the Hanged Man reveals a beautiful dance. From chaotic, sometimes manic energy of 'nothing' the ether is tapped, the energy is received and transformed into knowledge and then understanding. The Hanged Man completes the equation as he is capable of achieving an inner awareness all by himself, as those embarking on a spiritual journey must. Even if the Querent is at present undergoing a period of inaction or appears to be in a stasis, the presence or absence of the above mentioned Major Arcana cards and their positions in a spread reveals vital information about the presence or absence of energies vital for growth.

On a whim, I brought up an image of the Hanged Man on my phone and handed it to the Seeker. "What else strikes you about this image?"

"The colors," he answered.

Color plays an important role in the *Rider Waite Smith-Coleman* deck.

The Hanged Man's nimbus is yellow—which denotes intellect—as are his shoes. Figure it out then walk the walk. He's wearing a beautiful, blue puffy shirt (Seinfeld would be proud)—spirituality and intuition—reminiscent of The High Priestess's robes.

However, since the Seeker introduced the topic of Gurdjieff and his concept of kundabuffer, for our discussion I found the significance of the color red most interesting.

Red is the color of energy rushing (think of life-giving blood flowing through your veins). The Hanged Man's leggings are red, as are The Magician's robes and, not at all coincidentally, red is the color of the base chakra in kundalini. Gurdjieff's concept of kundabuffer sprang from kundalini. In kundalini practice, being in an inverted position pulls the energy from the base chakra to the brain. But according to the Seeker, Gurdjieff believed kundabuffer is responsible for making mankind see things upside down and the wrong way. The Seeker then laughed and said they had to confess some believe Gurdjieff created kundabuffer to poke fun at kundalini. This was one reason why they were so perplexed by the card.

Some interpretations of XII may suggest that 'seeing things upside down' is the upright meaning of the card and also suggest it is a card of inertia. This is, however, never my experience with the Hanged Man.

The flow of energy is clear and enables the activation of reasoning/figuring it out/the crown chakra. Don't think for one second because there isn't any apparent physical movement of the figure that energy isn't flowing. It's active rest before activity. And, more importantly, what the Querent is mulling over isn't going to be revealed by the Hanged Man. Basically, Gurdjieff attempts to explain how to increase energy in various ways to minimize day-dreaming and absent-mindedness. But the Hanged Man offers no such thing—he's a description of the condition, not a definition of how to heal the issue itself.

After discussing the card, its symbols and right-side-up-only divinatory meanings (we had limited funds for drinx-n-snax. You would think an open bar would be mandatory at these kinds of functions), we then moved on to astrology and what prompted the Seeker to ask about the Hanged Man in relation to astro-market speculation.

In a word: Neptune.

Neptune, the planet that rules the Hanged Man in the

modern astrology system the Seeker uses, slowly guides a generation to its destiny. If Neptune is in the Second House of one's natal chart, they will have difficulties with speculation. The Seeker went on to explain the fifth house of a natal chart is where we see the success or failure of money made through speculation. Neptune in the fifth house assures success unless affected, in which case over-optimism could be your enemy. If Mars, Saturn, Pluto, or Uranus are involved in the fifth house, losses will likely occur.

It was then something clicked for the Seeker. The discussion circled back to Uranus, foe of the speculator's fifth house, ruler of The Fool's chaos from which The Magician is trying to manifest 'something.'

It takes 84 years for Uranus to orbit the sun, and historically this planet's cycle has coincided with epic changes in society, economics, and the ways people think. When Uranus is in the 8th and 9th degree of Gemini, big things happen. The founding of Jamestown, the Declaration of Independence, and World War II/D Day are notable, more recent examples of its influence.

In the year 2017, however, Uranus is in Aries which portends a new direction for humankind as well as innovative ways to implement it. Also present is the dwarf planet Eris. This celestial event happens only once every 500 years, and when these guys get together dramatic events occur, both good and bad. Whatever you thought to be self-evident—well, forget it. Change is coming. Big, sweeping, massive change.

The current transit of Eris, which began in 1926, has hosted two Uranus-Eris conjunctions. The first meet-up began with the Wall Street Crash of 1929 leading to the Great Depression, the rise of Adolph Hitler, and the outbreak of World War II. Uranus and Eris aligned in June and September of 2016. In June, Brexit occurred and in November, within a month of the second conjunction—this time with both Uranus and Eris retrograde—Donald Trump was most unfortunately/supposedly/questionably elected President of the United States. Could the monkeying with the US election process be the massive event that occurred during the actual conjunction, we pondered?

The Seeker also added that although Uranus has been square to Pluto for three years, that is ending. The message is: values and guiding principles are changing. In a very basic sense, what we considered to be 'reality' will be pushed to the limit and radically changed.

And, the change that's coming? It's not a choice. This change is imperative for survival.

"It seems Number 12's time, for me, anyway, has run its course." The Seeker and I sat in silence for a few moments and reflected. His words rang true for me as well.

I do a daily draw with at least three of my Tarot decks and when the Seeker posed their question I'd been thinking just a few days' prior about XII. The Hanged Man, who had been a visitor for approximately a year, was being replaced by The Tower reversed as of late.

And, what did that tell me?

My employment contract was about to end and a long-standing, personal relationship was dissolving. My living situation was in flux and could change radically based on how the employment situation played out. Of course, having to establish a new support network of friends is in the mix there, too.

I knew these things were coming to a head, I'd had fair warning and thought about these things during meditations with the Hanged Man. But now it was time to face that these things weren't changing; the changes were already in play. I'd thought about actions that should be taken in the event one or all of the scenarios should come to pass.

I had my playbook so to speak. Now, Uranus and Eris were slapping me in the face and the Seeker was giving me a gentle nudge. It was time to pull the Hanged Man and reacquaint myself with the plans and decisions I'd made during those past meditations

Although he did not disclose the reasons why XII and our discussion of associated numerology and astrology rattled him so deeply, it was evident a wake-up call took place for the Seeker. As we parted, I wound up thanking him for the chat as heartily as he thanked me.

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TAROT AND DILOGUN

COMPARING TWO DIVINATION SYSTEMS

by Eric K. Lerner

*H*istorically, Tarot began as a card game in Medieval Europe. It gained popularity as a means of fortune telling in the 18th Century. Prior to then, there are not significant references to cartomancy being used as a divinatory tool. When read by a skilled interpreter, tarot reveals specific situations, psychological states and likely outcomes. A reader offers her clients valuable insights that can inspire personal evolution and even revolution. Many readers have deep religious beliefs and may recognize tarot as a component of their religious practices. However, tarot was not historically developed as a component to any particular religion's methodology, and there are certainly some very fine secular humanist readers.

Religious forms of divination are still practiced. In an increasingly multi-cultural environment, we hear about many and become curious about them. One of these, dilogun, originated with the Yoruba People of Southwest Nigeria and was transported to and evolved the New World in religions such as Santeria (Cuba) and Candomble (Brazil). It is a religious rite that provides effective oracular consultation. Only priests consult it for others. In Santeria, a priest undergoes an elaborate initiation and adheres to a novitiate of one year and a week before she can divine for others. Additional training continues beyond the novitiate. The goal of dilogun is to reveal the will of effective demi-gods, called orisha, as well as ancestors both genetic and spiritual. A reading marks appropriate offerings to secure good fortune or alleviate negative energy. The system is governed by a religious conviction that powerful unseen forces influence our lives and can be encouraged to act on our behalves. Like in tarot, a good dilogun reading analyzes the client's emotional, physical, and social situations. The reading provides pertinent analysis and advice, but it does so in the context of a specific religion.

When reading tarot, a reader may employ a ritualized

structure that can include specific prayers and gestures. These are determined by the reader herself, and are not held to be universally necessary in tarot praxis. Dilogun readings adhere to a strict ritual structure.

Dilogun readers employ sixteen consecrated cowry shells and a few other objects, to participate in oracular discourse. A reader prays over them before reading. The prayers are typically recited in Lucumi (creolized Yoruba,) although an increasing number of readers speak them in Spanish or English to facilitate the clients' understanding of the prayers' meaning. The prayers begin with petition to God Almighty, deceased and living members of the priest's family (both spiritual and genetic) as well as those of the client, and orisha. (Omission of this step likely indicates the reader is a fraud. It should be noted that when performing successive readings the priest may employ a gloss phrase beginning with the second reading that indicates the opening prayers have already been stated.) Often offerings of cigar smoke, water and/or alcohol to the spiritual owner of the shells accompany prayers. Finally, living spiritual brethren are acknowledged, and the orisha are asked to facilitate good and alleviate bad fortune. The client is asked to make a statement that she wishes to participate in a dialogue with the orisha of her own free will. The client is invited to hold the shells in her own hands briefly while meditating on concerns. She may state these orally to the priest if she wishes.

Now the actual reading commences. The priest casts the sixteen shells to indicate the first part of a composite odu. Odu may be translated as 'container of knowledge'. Odu are the units of meaning in a reading. (There is a seventeenth possibility in which no shells fall open. That indicates a grave circumstance in which no guidance can be offered. Often, the client is referred to a babalawo, by a priest, or a master dilogun reader when this occurs.) The priest may begin to offer interpretation at this time, but a second casting determines a precise composite odu. They incorporate proverbs, mythological stories, situational descriptions, predictions, and recommended offerings to orisha and/or ancestors. At this point in a consultation, the priest hands the client two small objects such as stones—one light and one dark—to shuffle between her hands. When one rests in each the client's hands, the reader casts of the shells one or two times to determine which hand to choose. A light colored object indicates good fortune and a dark one negative energy. Precise determination as to the type of energy governing either type of fortune is achieved by repeating this step with different pairs of objects. The casting procedure is repeated once more to indicate what spiritual entities (either the dead

or orisha) preside over the reading. Additional odu may be cast in the course of the consultation for further insight. Each time the shuffling procedure determines positive or negative energy. Finally, there is one more casting in order to guarantee that the necessary dialogue is complete.

The reading typically takes about an hour or more time, yielding substantial amounts of information. Also, specific remedies in the form of offerings are prescribed, and these are understood to be contracts with the orisha or ancestors in order to ensure the client's continued evolution and well being.

Now that the reader has been informed of the basic procedure of a dilogun consultation, we can examine how that compares to tarot. Key differences emerge immediately.

- Dilogun relies on fixed proverbs and narratives similar to tales of Greek Gods, heroes, and everymen. These are components of each odu's corpus. They are used to provide insight into the client's circumstances as well as educate the client about the history and behavior of the orisha. Tarot readings generate narratives as the cards are revealed. The reader becomes author of a unique story through her interpretative skill. Some readers may use myths or folktales to illustrate the meaning of a particular card or card combination. However, there are not pre-existing stories liturgically prescribed to cards.

- Dilogun typically does not invite the client to immediately respond to the oracle visually. Most clients lack the education to grasp correspondences between the number of open-mouthed shells and their meanings. Hence, a trained interpreter must offer information every step of the way. Tarot cards have immediate visual signification. They provoke client response. While not all tarot decks' minor arcana feature narrative illustration, all major arcana and court cards do. It is hard to imagine that a client can behold images such as a Priestess, Lightning Struck Tower, or actor of a court card and not form some subjective response about its meaning.

- Dilogun reminds us of a bygone epoch when divination was solely the domain of an educated priesthood. It is not a tool to be used without intensive training. A tarot deck may

be acquired by anyone who wishes to interpret it whether or not she educates herself about it or receives formal training.

- Each dilogun and tarot are emblematic of the cultures in which they evolved. Historically Yoruba did not have a written alphabet until the Nineteenth Century when the British introduced theirs'. While very accomplished in sculpture, decorative fabric weaving and batik, Yoruba did not practice pictographic arts. Europeans had access to printed materials starting in the medieval era, and Christian denominations used pictures to promulgate religious stories

and philosophy since the 1st Century AD. One theory about the origin of major arcana in tarot is that they emerged from Christian allegorical art.

- Finally, dilogun prescribes specific spiritual remedies when the offerings are marked. Tarot suggests strategies to either achieve success or mitigate loss.

Practically, the question arises when one should seek one type of reading versus the other. For most Cartomancer readers, tarot is a good deal more accessible. Most of us hopefully are acquainted with talented readers who offer meaningful counsel. Finding a competent dilogun reader requires many to expose themselves to a different culture and its worldview. Most santeros speak Spanish as a first language,

and many are of Afro-Hispanic descent. Most do not have a taboo about providing counsel to outsiders. If one cannot speak Spanish, make sure when making an appointment that the reader speaks English. Often getting a dilogun reading is the first point of entry for someone who will eventually practice Santeria as her religion. However, many who seek counsel do not necessarily aspire to either change their religions or follow one.

Readings involve a contract on the part of the client with the orisha to make an offering. That is a genuine commitment, and before getting read by a santero, the client would do well to ask herself will she follow through on it. Realistically, most are fairly simple to provide, such as offerings of food, flowers, candles, etc. It is the responsibility of an ethical priest to



explore the simplest means of propitiation for someone naïve about Santeria. However, there can be grave circumstances in which animal sacrifices or even initiations are marked to ensure the client's future happiness.

Realistically a client facing severe challenges should expect that getting a tarot reading will identify these and offer challenging strategies for dealing with them. In both dilogun and tarot, the gravity of a reading is proportional to that of the client's circumstances.

If you are curious about Santeria, first educate yourself through books and media. Know something about what to expect. Dilogun readings are well known to provide effective remedies to life's challenges, and most santeros are compassionate people who genuinely want to help. Also, if you decide to get a first dilogun reading, please do not ask a question about initiation. Any question asked in the presence of dilogun must be answered by dilogun. For instance, if someone asks if she should become a Santeria priest that question must be answered. A priesthood initiation costs around \$15,000.00 and requires substantial commitment. Only ask a question about an initiation if you are truly willing and able to accept yes as an answer. In fact, it is probably a good idea in getting any type of reading to only ask questions

to which you are willing to hear any answer.

A litmus for an outsider to choose a dilogun over a tarot reading may be that her problem has not found remedy through either tarot reading or professional intervention such as that provided by a doctor or lawyer. Therefore she may be open to a new culture and religion in order to satisfy her dilemma.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge Baba Funké ibaé, Obabi Sabborissa, Ogun Relekun, and Obaladé for invaluable insights into dilogun. I especially thank Ajaguna, and finally Yemaya in Cuba and Oshun in Oshogbo for delivering the gift of dilogun to mankind.

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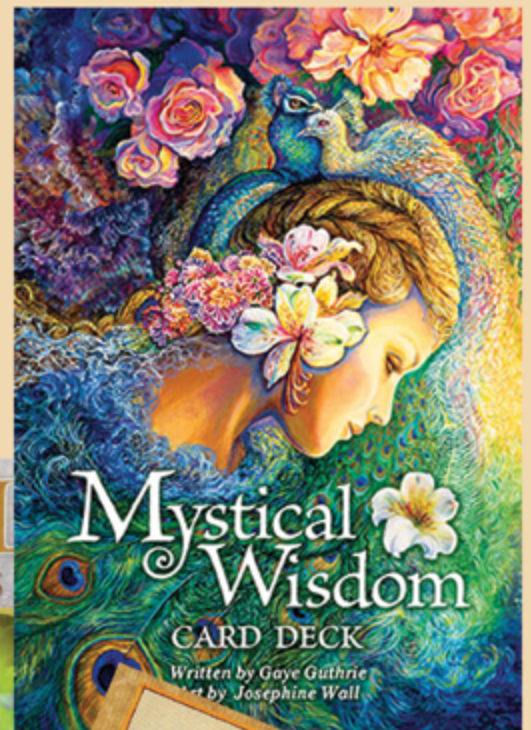
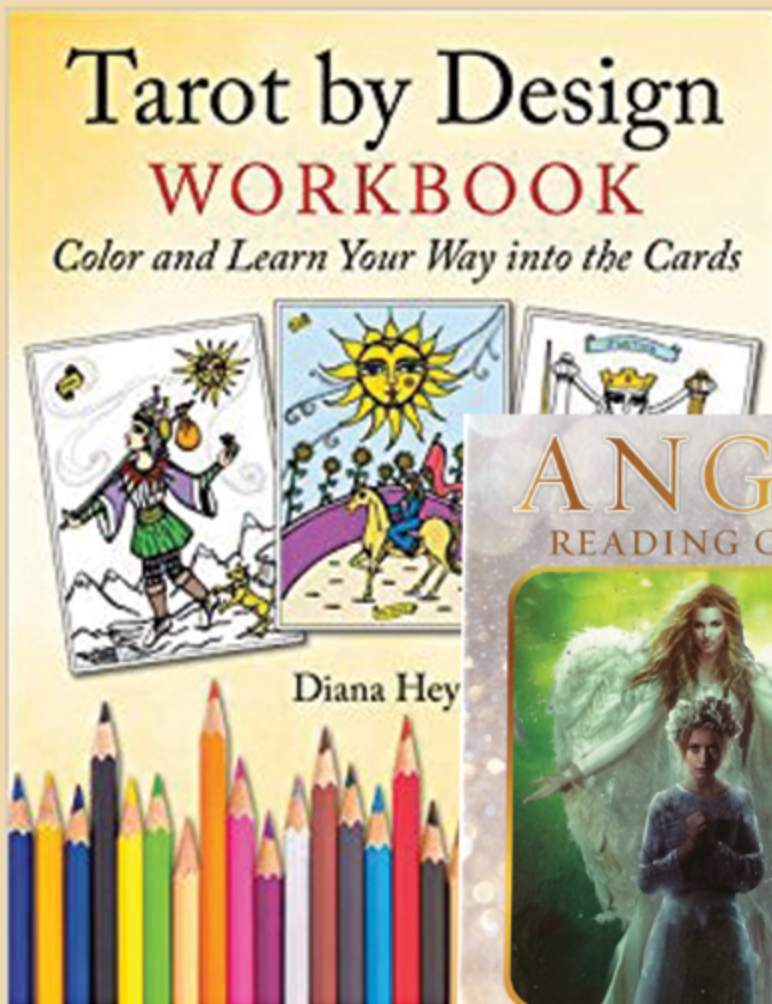
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Reviews



THE DANILOFF TAROT THIRD EDITION

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Artist: Alexander Daniloff

Third Edition

Self-published - 2016

www.daniloff-art.it

I have Alison Cross (TABI) to thank for bringing this deck to my attention. (I must be a bit slow on the uptake—this is the Third Edition, the first of which came out in 2012!). This is a traditional 78 card deck, based on Rider-Waite imagery, with an extra card entitled ‘Carte Blanche’—the quintessential ‘wild card’ that is



interpreted as the reader desires (or taken out of the deck if the reader does not wish to work with it). In the first two editions of this deck, Carte Blanche was shown as a curtain. I prefer this version, which is a textured light gray color. Note: There is no companion book or LWB for this deck.

The cards come packaged in a fold-out type box—the two short sides fold in, one of the longer sides folds up over

them, and the other longer side is cut envelope style, and slips into a slot in the first longer side. Very uncomplicated, and stays together well. The box is an antique cream color, which brings to mind, literally, antique decks. The deck



itself is shrink wrapped. The sequence of the cards is interesting: Major Arcana, followed by Aces through Tens, followed by the Court Cards. The suits are not broken down—there are four Aces, followed by four Two's, etc.

The cards are 2.75" by 4.75", of



professional quality card stock, with a smooth finish. Force (Strength) is VIII, Justice XI. (Note: In previous decks there were two versions of Force and Justice, so that the reader had a choice of numbering. That was discontinued in this edition.) Other changes include

rounded corners (as Ali (Alison Cross) points out—this saves wear and tear on the deck!), a new border design, and a redesigned card back (which is reversible). The card size has also been brought to a standard Rider-Waite size (the first two editions featured taller cards.)

The Major and Minor Arcana have a deep gold border, surrounding the imagery. The Major Arcana show the card title (in Italian), and number (in Roman Numerals) across the bottom of the card. The Minor Arcana pips show the card number (in Roman Numerals) in varying positions at the top of the card. The suit names are not used. Aces and Court Cards show a white background, with no border, numbers or text.

The art work is Rider-Waite based—but not exactly. We see the Magician (Il Mago) with a mask to the side of his face. The Hierophant (Il Papa)

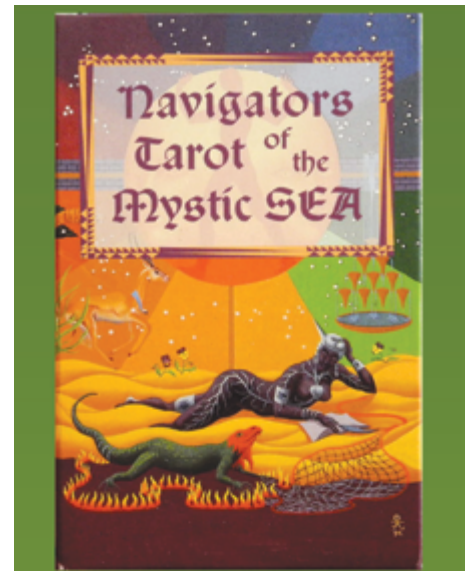


feel to it. While the white background for the Aces and Court Cards was a bit disconcerting at first, I do like that they are defined in this manner. This deck is appropriate for all kinds of work (divination, meditation, and ritual work come to mind—but the deck is not limited to them). For me, this deck is a keeper!

© March 2017 Bonnie Cehovet

has the crossed keys in front of him, but not the two kneeling figures. The Chariot (Il Carro) shows the charioteer and the two horses, but no chariot. The Hermit is seated, not standing, with a lamp hanging to his right. He is holding an open book, and looks fairly uncomfortable. (This is one of my birth cards, so I note it in every deck that I work with.) The Tower only shows one figure falling. There are more differences, which really do not affect the readability of the deck (it is gorgeous and easy to work with!), but take it out of the running as a teaching deck.

This is a beautiful deck that a lot of thought has gone into. I love the antique



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TAROT BY DESIGN WORKBOOK

COLOR AND LEARN YOUR WAY INTO THE CARDS

Review by Jadzia DeForest

Author: Diana Heyne

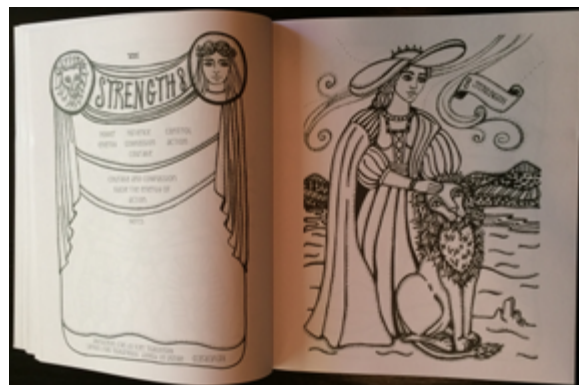
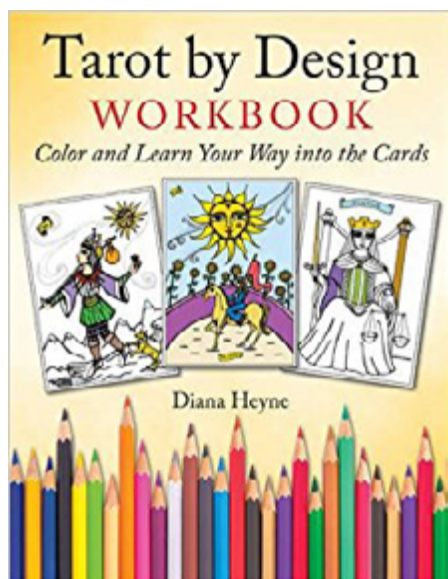
Weiser Books - 2017

ISBN #9781578636075

www.redwheelweiser.com

Can you think of a more fun way to begin learning the tarot? If this had been available when I was starting to learn, I'd have totally colored in every single card in this workbook.

Tarot by Design Workbook, Color and Learn Your Way into the Cards is designed specifically for those beginning their journey into tarot. There is a short introduction where Heyne writes about how to use the workbook followed by



the introduction she writes:

To begin, spend a moment really looking at and noticing the details and emotional tone of each image. Who are the characters in the image? What seems to be happening? How does it make you feel?

With the amount of time that it takes to color in one image it would seem that this learning approach would be quite viable. Especially if you have a focused approach.

I've been asked many times for recommendations for children's tarot decks and books. I would highly recommend this workbook for children. Even the rhymes for the Major

Arcana cards in this book are simple enough for children at a reading age to understand.

While *Tarot by Design* would be suitable for children, I think it is also a great way to approach learning tarot for adults. Any student could pick up a RWS inspired deck and apply what they've learned from this workbook to that deck.

© Jadzia DeForest

two pages dedicated to each card.

On the left page there are several card keywords, and for the Major Arcana a brief rhyme, and at the bottom is a short list of the reversed keywords.

The right page has a ready-to-color card image that fills the entire space.

The book measures 10 by 8.5 inches,



which is a comfortable size for its use.

The first section is the Major Arcana 0 through 21. Then each suit's Ace through King in this order: Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles.

These original tarot card images combine *Rider-Waite-Smith* and *Tarot de Marseille* imagery and symbolism. The Minor Arcana are especially modeled after the RWS deck. The Major Arcana are a mix of the two styles.

Heyne encourages beginners to approach the cards on an intuitive, kinesthetic level. But, she also wants you to consciously color each card. In

MYSTICAL WISDOM

Review by Jadzia DeForest

Artist: Josephine Wall

Author: Gaye Guthrie

US Games Systems, INC- 2016

ISBN: 9781572818323

www.usgamesinc.com

If you are not familiar with Josephine Wall's artwork then you've not stepped foot into a metaphysical store in a very long time! I first became aware of her art about ten years ago in the form of greeting cards. They were some of my favorites.

Wall's wonderful, surreal, detailed, and colorful artwork makes the *Mystical Wisdom* card deck fun to work with.

These 46 cards are large at 3.75 by 5.5 inches, borderless, and printed on a nice cardstock. Each card title is at the bottom and under the title is a short inspirational phrase.



It comes in a two-piece box with a 64-page black and white booklet. The

booklet is the same size as the cards and has a color cover.

The author, Gaye Guthrie, is a lifestyle coach who works with the Angelic realm. Her goal is to create positive change in people's lives and this deck certainly reflects that intention.



The only card that could be seen as negative in this deck, is titled Seven Deadly Sins. All of the other cards deal out inspiration, guidance, and hope.

There are three angel cards: Archangel Gabriel, Archangel Raphael, and Angel of Miracles. The rest of the cards are either animal energies or keywords: Dragon, Dove, Owl, Dreams, Choices, Gratitude, Leadership, etc.

Two of my favorite cards in this deck are New Beginnings: Begin Your New Life. Which features an elaborate phoenix with a peacock feathered tail.

The other one that I really like is Epiphany: Seek Clarity. Again a bird-like image with a dancing woman with wings, a bird mask, and peacock feathers. I'm sensing a theme.

The booklet further explains

Epiphany:

To experience an epiphany is to have a sudden realization or spiritual flash that will change the way you view yourself and others around you. You get to see the situation more clearly, as if someone just switched on the light. With this clarity, you can see the truth. You will also gain a sense of control within yourself to make positive decisions that will bring about happy and joyful outcomes.

Mantra: Yeah! I can see clearly now.

Nearly every card has a similar write-up followed by a mantra in the booklet.

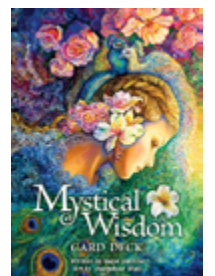
The guidebook has a table of contents and each card is listed alphabetically which makes it very easy to find what you're looking for.

There's an introductory section titled How to Use the Mystical Wisdom Cards. This section is followed by a page dedicated to each card in the deck. The last section is titled Reading the Cards. It includes one, three, and four card spreads. The last spread is a twelve card Celtic Cross.

If you enjoy working with positive message decks or enjoy Josephine Wall's artwork this is worth adding to your collection.

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ANGEL READING CARDS

Review by Jadzia DeForest

Artist: Amalia I. Chitulescu

Author: Debbie Malone

US Games Systems, INC - 2015

ISBN: 9781572818620

www.usgamesinc.com

For those looking specifically for an angel oracle deck this is one I recommend. Published by US Games Systems with artwork by Amalia Chitulescu and written by Debbie Malone.

I really enjoy the modern aspects to this angel deck, especially the Parking Angel, Bully Prevention Angel, and Angel of Travel. Of course the *Angel Reading Cards* has traditional angel cards such as: Guardian Angel, Angel of



Healing, and Angel of Harmony.

The artwork looks like photo and drawing mixed media collage that blends well. A lot of the clothing is modern jeans and shirts. There are a few more whimsically dressed figures on appropriate cards.

Malone states in the guidebook that the angel you need is only a thought away. The intention is to use this deck to focus in on the type of angel guidance you need in your life at any given time. The cards can also be used for inspiration.

In the guidebook you'll find spreads for the Daily Angel Inspiration Layout, Angel Guidance Layout, and An Angel for Every Day Layout.

The full color booklet dedicates two pages to each card. On the left page is the card image, title, and a brief meaning. On the right page

there's a several paragraph write-up followed by an affirmation. The back of the guidebook has a section for notes as well.

I am impressed with the booklet's quality. The paper is thick and glossy. It's very user-friendly with a full table of contents. There's also the beautiful touch of gold-foil on several elements.

The set contains 36 cards, a 92 page guidebook, and is packaged in a nice custom box.

The cards measure 3.75 by 5.5 inches and have a thin gold gradient border. The booklet is 4.75 by 7.25 inches, full color, and easy to navigate.

It can be a little difficult to shuffle the over-sized cards, but the large format clearly shows the detailed artwork.

This is a practical angel deck with many cards that are relevant to everyday life. It creates a bridge between day to day life and the more spiritual realm.

I could see using the *Angel Reading Cards* deck for personal divination as well as readings for clients.

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June 3rd, 2017

Zurich Switzerland

www.tarotconference.co.uk

TABI Tarot Conference

The British Isles

www.tabiconference.com

Tarosophy Tarot Conventions

September 15 - 17, 2017

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

www.tarotassociation.net

Tarot Guild of Australia International Conference

Date: TBA

Melbourne, Australia

www.tarotguild.org.au

UK Tarot Conference

October 13 - 14, 2017

London UK

www.tarotconference.co.uk

Tarot Associations

American Tarot Association

ata-tarot.com

Tarot Association of the British Isles

www.tabi.org.uk

Tarot Professionals

www.tarotassociation.net

Tarot Guild of Australia

www.tarotguild.org.au

VENDORS
WORKSHOPS
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NORTHWEST TAROT SYMPOSIUM

WWW.NWTAROTSYMPOSIUM.COM

MARCH 2ND - 4TH, 2018

