

# THE CARTOMANCER

## LAYER UPON LAYER:

*Charm Casting  
with the Tarot  
by Karen Krebber*

## THE SYBILLINE TAROT

*an interview with  
Holly DeFount*

## ASTROLOGY IN TAROT

*Review by Bonnie Cehamel*

## ON TIME AND TAROT

*by Wayne Limberger*

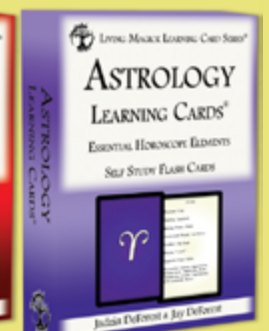
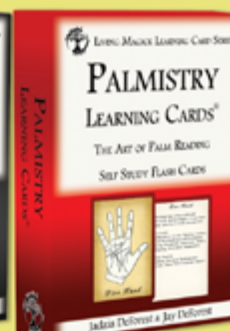
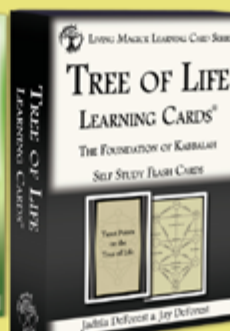
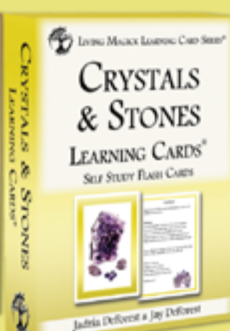
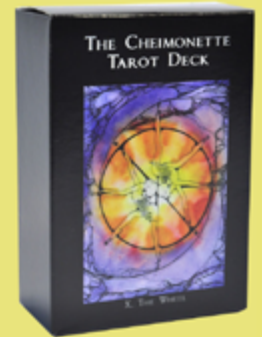
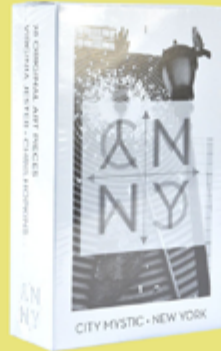
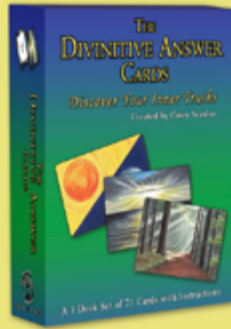
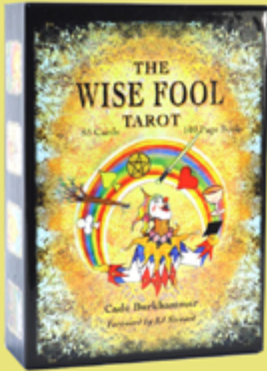
A QUARTERLY TAROT, LENORMAND & ORACLE JOURNAL





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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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## The Sybilline Tarot

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[www.SteeleWizard.com](http://www.SteeleWizard.com) and get your answer here in  
the next issue of The Cartomancer!*

# NEXT ISSUE

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November is the next issue, featuring the *Dark Goddess Tarot* by Ellen Lorenzi-Prince.





# EDITOR'S NOTE

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*C*hange is one thing that has come easily for me throughout my life. Now that I'm out of my Saturn Return, and feel officially like an adult, I'm seeking stability and security. I have the opportunity right now to pursue a career in fiction editing and writing. And I've decided to take it.

My new business is called Dax Editing Service, which you can find at <http://daxeditingservice.com>. I'm specifically editing for fiction authors in several genres. While beginning with copy editing and proofreading services, I've also found that I really enjoy developmental editing. If you're struggling with character arc, plot points, or writing fresh obligatory scenes, then please do get in touch with me.

So, if you've not already heard via our Facebook group, I have an announcement to make. Arwen Lynch Poe will be taking over *The Cartomancer* from the November issue onward. She has a great vision for this magazine and I'm very excited to have her step up and take the reins.

Many of you don't need an introduction to Arwen as she's been part of the tarot community for many years. She's an author, blogger, former president of the American Tarot Association, tarot reader, writing coach, and professional joy seeker. You can find her online at <http://tarotbyarwen.com>.

Over the next few months Arwen and I will be working together on the November issue. In the meantime you can still contact me for submissions or with questions via email or through the website <http://thecartomancer.com>.

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

Blessings,  
Jadzia DeForest

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Issue One — February

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*Many thanks to:*

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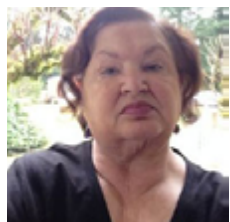
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# CONTRIBUTORS



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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-

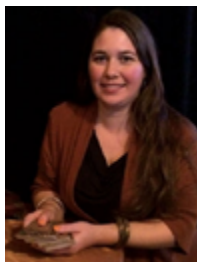
author, along with Brad Tesh, of *Seek Joy ... Toss Confetti* (through <http://Amazon.com>).

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.bonnielcehovet.blogspot.com/>.



MONICA BODIRSKY is a published artist, writer, tarot reader, and witch practitioner who has published two editions of the Lucky Lenormand Oracle and is currently working on a tarot deck. You can find out more about her Lucky Lenormand Oracle deck and

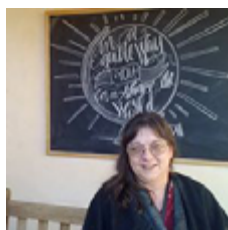
artwork via FB, Instagram or her website [http:// www.monocabodirsky.com](http://www.monocabodirsky.com)



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.

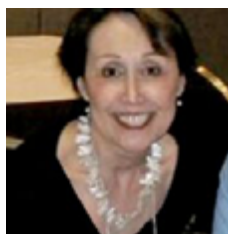
Her website is <http://www.JadziaDeForest.com>



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](mailto:psycardsusa@gmail.com), or visit [www.psycardsusa.com](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.SteeleWizard.com).





KAREN KREBSNER

I am a seer, diviner, card reader, writer, and all-around creative goober. I've been living and working in the San Francisco Bay Area all my life, and have been engaged in spiritual practices for about as long (or longer ;-)). I've been actively studying the Tarot for almost twenty-five years,

and have been providing insightful and creative readings publicly for over ten years. My Tarot and cartomancy studies are continuing, as are activities and explorations in several different spiritual traditions that have brought me into a closer relationship with my ancestral origins. I'm a pagan and an animist, and I believe that pretty much everything is alive and we're all in relationship with everything. It's complicated, my dears.

On the writing side, I have a Master's Degree in English Literature from San Jose State University with an additional emphasis in Creative Writing, and I've been an avid and passionate fan of Elizabethan drama since childhood. In addition to my cartomancy readings and blog work via The Muse's Darling web site ([www.musedarling.com](http://www.musedarling.com)), I'm also currently working on a graphic novel, several plays that explore the themes of identity, chaos, and vengeance, and other cool and interesting stuff that keeps me out of jail.



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 ATA's monthly newsletter. Wayne may be reached at [dubyah48@gmail.com](mailto:dubyah48@gmail.com).



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# AN INTERVIEW WITH HOLLY DEFOUNT CREATOR OF THE SYBILLINE TAROT

with Jadzia DeForest

I first met Holly at the Bay Area Tarot Symposium several years ago. I'd purchased her *Incidental Tarot*, I love the simple and pure feeling of the imagery in that deck, and was delighted to find *A Curious Oracle* at her table, which naturally had to come home with me too. Now Holly's working on something new and I'm so excited about it!

**JD:** What initially drew you to the tarot cards?

**HD:** From the earliest age I can remember, I was fascinated with the mystical. I grew up being the artist of the family, and in my teens I discovered the awesome intersection of art and mysticism in Tarot, specifically in the *Rider-Waite* deck. I was hooked! I taught myself to read the cards, started collecting decks, and halfway through high school I was drawing my own cards.

**JD:** What inspired you to create your own tarot and oracle decks?

**HD:** The inspiration was everywhere...I always knew it was bound to happen at some point in my life, though if left to my own devices I might never have mustered the ambition to finish a deck. I'd get too caught up in perfecting the concept

and all the details, and I'd stymie myself indefinitely.

*The name Sybilline Tarot is inspired by the mysterious ancient texts known as the Sybilline Books, a collection of oracular verse believed to have been purchased from a sibyl by the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus.*

**JD:** Tell me more about your past decks.

**HD:** Enter the *Incidental Tarot*! When I decided to challenge myself to create a piece of art every day in 2011, every new design I came up with seemed to resemble Tarot imagery. About 2 months into the

project, my friends convinced me to just go for it and create a deck. That's when I started putting symbolic and mystical intention into the images. Several years later, I revisited the other 290+ some images from 2011 and created *A Curious Oracle*. When I started going through the images again, I found that they were falling into their own system, independent of Tarot and Lenormand practices. The Oracle naturally emerged as a unique system which could be used on its own, or in conjunction with other divination systems. It's a great divining companion.

**JD:** You're also working on a new deck which our cover features your High Priestess card. Tell us more about this new project.

**HD:** This is my first finished card for a "slow Tarot" project I'm calling *The Sybilline Tarot*. The name *Sybilline Tarot* is inspired by the mysterious ancient texts known as the *Sybilline Books*, a collection of





oracular verse believed to have been purchased from a sibyl by the last king of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus. All of the original text of the *Sybilline Books* was lost, but the legend of these prophecies remained potent and inspired a later collection of eclectic, prophetic texts known as the *Sybilline Oracles*. I chose the name to reflect this ancient lineage of prophetic or divination knowledge, as deeply buried in our human consciousness as the original oracular utterances are now buried in the mists of history.

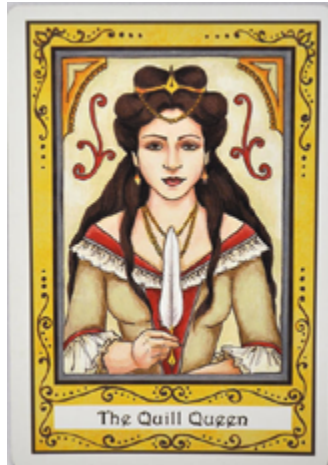
I hope that the symbolism and spirit of the deck will evoke the mystery and veiled lineage of our modern practice of divining.

**JD:** How did you decide the art medium you wanted to work in? And what is your process?

**HD:** I started working with collage toward the end of the *Incidental Tarot* project, and found that I really resonated with the process of assembling imagery, separating out the potent symbols, colors and textures, and reassembling them into my own compositions. But as fun as the process is, it wasn't quite enough for me as an artist; I needed to put my own spirit into those compositions, which I am doing by illustrating the collage anew, entirely by hand with inks and colored pencils. This breathes a whole new life into the work, and really gives it character from my vision as an artist.

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

**HD:** The *Incidental Tarot* follows the classic *Rider-Waite* pattern of interpretation, and so is appropriate to use in most standard spreads. I use it for simple three card readings, as well as the Celtic Cross and other more complex layouts. I actually love adding *A Curious Oracle* into my *Incidental Tarot* readings; it gives an added layer of emotional depth to the traditional meanings of the cards and positions.



**JD:** Why did you decide to self-publish your decks?

**HD:** I've always been kind of a DIY artist, and I partnered with a friend and independent publisher to help me set-up the Indiegogo campaign and negotiate with the printer for the *Incidental Tarot*. Since the trajectory of the deck went fairly quickly from conception to print to fulfillment, I wanted to streamline the process as much as possible, and didn't want to spend extra time proposing the project to publishers and negotiating the rights and all that. It worked out great, and though I've had to do a lot of marketing, sales and shipping efforts on my own, I've kept the overhead down and have retained all of the profits from sales, after the initial printing costs.

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

**HD:** There are actually a lot of resources available to artists and deck authors these days, even just five years after I self-

published the *Incidental Tarot*. There are lots of ways to print decks and the associated marketing materials at a reasonable cost, and without necessarily huge minimums. My best advice would be to get a website and/or a Facebook page for your deck up as soon as possible to introduce the project and tell the story of your process creating it, even if you only have the concept and name chosen. Develop a following for your work and keep them interested as you finish each of the cards. It will do you a great service when you are finally

ready to sell the finished product! It also helps to let other deck creators know about your project; they often have great feedback and tips on the process to offer as you go along.

**JD:** Do you have any other future projects that you're thinking about in the art, tarot, or oracle realms?

**HD:** I am actually working on a Lenormand deck project with my friend and seer-sister, Karen Krebser (<https://musesdarling.com/>). We're still in the planning phase, but we're hoping to integrate the artwork with verse and storytelling for a fun, unique spin on cartomancy.

**JD:** Where can readers find out more about your decks and art work?

**HD:** There is a website for each of my decks: <http://theincidentaltarot.com> and <http://acuriousoracle.com> where you can learn more about the cards, layouts, and their meanings. I've sold out of the first 3 limited editions of *A Curious Oracle*, though I currently have some imperfect "artist proof" decks for sale in my Etsy shop: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/ForgeandFountain>. I also have a jewelry company with my husband, Joshua Haiman called Forge & Fountain. We specialize in custom wedding rings and fine art jewelry, but also have a line of Tarot (and specifically *Incidental Tarot*) inspired jewelry, as well as our hand-forged necklaces, earrings, rings and bracelets. <http://forgeandfountain.com/>

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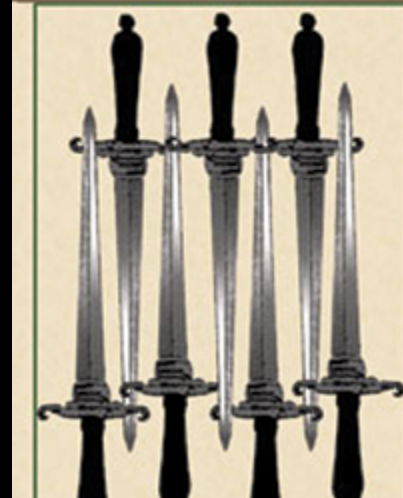
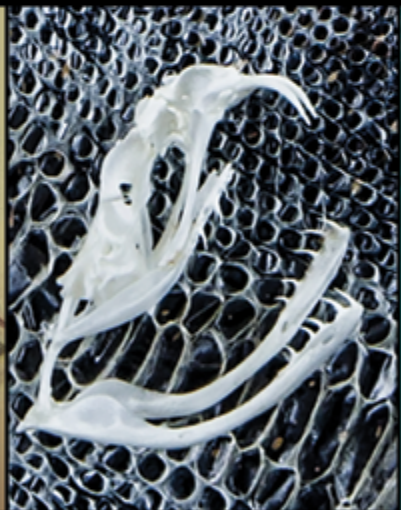


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# *Tarot Art*





# THE TAROT OF BONES

LUPA

*The Tarot of Bones* is the newest creation from artist and author Lupa!

Combining traditional RWS-inspired tarot archetypes and symbols drawn from natural history, it features assemblages of bones, moss and other natural materials. The traditional 78 cards are joined by the Happy Squirrel, symbol of chance and choice in readings and in life.

Lupa chose the bones for each card very carefully. Each suit is represented by a different type of bone: ribs for cups, long bones for wands, vertebrae for pentacles, and teeth or jaws for swords. The Court Cards feature skulls without mandibles to indicate that they are not as powerful as the skulls in the Major Arcana, who are intact with jaws and teeth. The species of skulls for each of the Court and Majors were chosen deliberately. Some, like the Fool's coyote skull, have a long association with each other. Others, such as the horn-bill skull for the Hermit, are a little more unusual.

*The Tarot of Bones Companion Book* provides an in-depth guide to the cards and why Lupa made these choices in its design. She includes several spreads designed for use with the deck. It's a valuable asset, especially for those who may not recognize the skulls on sight.

<http://www.thegreenwolf.com>





This magnificent deck holds true to the French tradition of the Lenormand system. For this, the images are very traditional pictorial representations from the late 18th Century. The illustrations use Parisian scenes and costumes that were common during the 1790's.

This period is apt, as it was the time that Mlle Lenormand was most active and famous for her fortune telling. As we know, Mlle Lenormand did not use these types of cards herself, but it is comforting to tie these images to images she would have recognized.

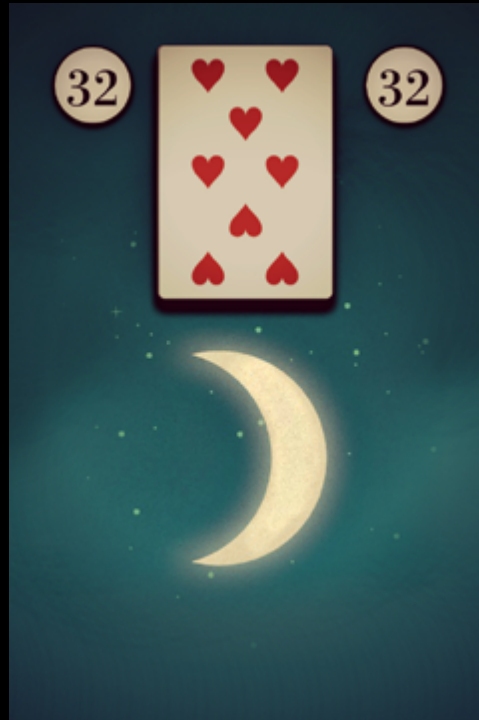
The cards, although using some very sumptuous images, are clean and uncluttered, leaving the subject of the card as the main focus. The cards also clearly show the card number and have fabulous playing card inserts too, especially the court cards. The Court cards are era appropriate Ladies and Gentlemen in gorgeous costume that compliment the overall theme of the deck.

Of particular interest, the Lilies card show beautiful pure white Asiatic lilies, the handsome red fox and the Rider on his horse:

The deck is bridge size, handles well and is the perfect size for The Grand Tableau: 2.25" x 3.5" (57mm x 89mm).

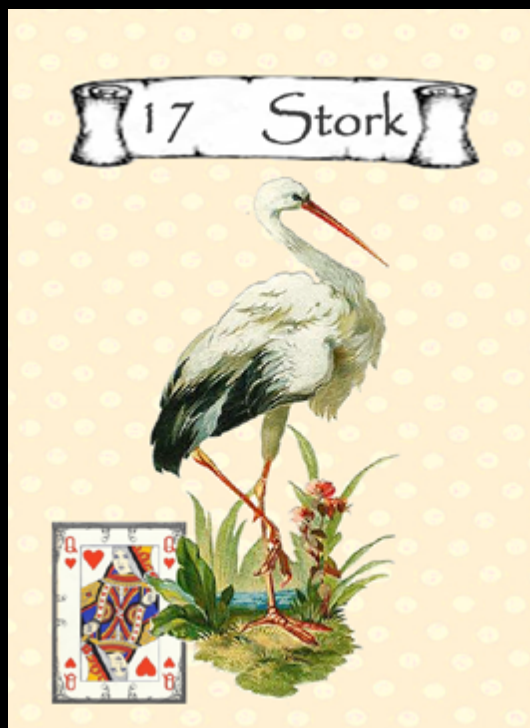
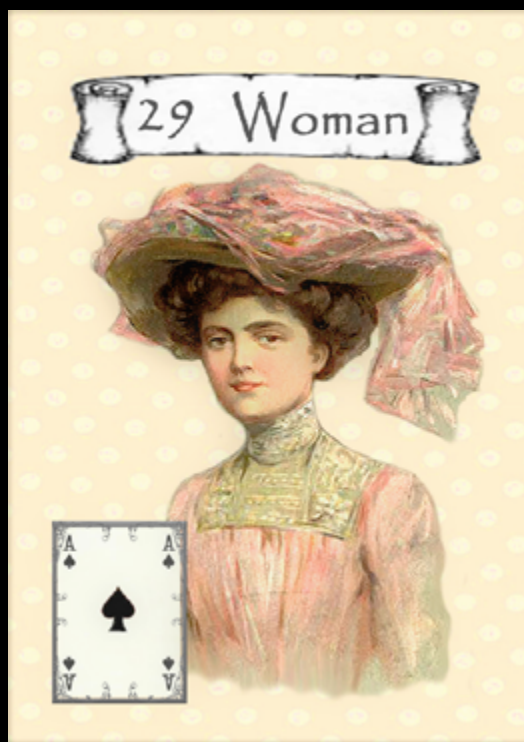
# CLASSIC LENORMAND

## ALEXANDRE MUSRUCK AKA THE LENORMAND EXTRAORDINAIRE



# DOTTY LENORMAND

LYNN BOYLE



The Dotty Lenormand is a 36 card deck with an extra Man, Woman & Scythe card gratis, so the reader can customise the deck to suit their taste. The extra people cards can be used for readings on same sex relationships, business partnerships or friendships. The design for Dotty Lenormand is a pretty vintage style on a pale apricot & white dotted background. The cards have no borders. The number & name of each card appear clearly in a scroll at the top of each card. The playing cards associated with each symbol appear in a frame in the bottom left corner. The images are softly pastel, clear & unambiguous. Each deck is mailed to the customer plastic shrink-wrapped & with a gift bag; the comprehensive 5 page card meaning document is emailed. Ongoing readers' support & reading exercises are posted in the Prophecy Toolbox study group on facebook.

Lynn Boyle from Sydney Australia, is a Lenormand, Tarot & Oracle reader, designer & teacher with (to date) 59 decks self-published & sold worldwide under business name Aquarius Wellbeing. Etsy store: [www.etsy.com/au/shop/AquariusWellbeing](http://www.etsy.com/au/shop/AquariusWellbeing) Or direct from the fb catalogue page: [www.facebook.com/Lenormand-Oracle-Cards-by-Lynn-Boyle-Aquarius-Wellbeing](http://www.facebook.com/Lenormand-Oracle-Cards-by-Lynn-Boyle-Aquarius-Wellbeing) Join the study group Prophecy Toolbox with over 3,700 members. [www.facebook.com/groups/prophecytoolbox](http://www.facebook.com/groups/prophecytoolbox)



This Tarot flash card deck was created with both the beginner and the advancing practitioner in mind. This is a full deck featuring all 78 traditional Tarot cards including 56 Minor Arcana cards and 22 Major Arcana cards.

It can be used as both a study tool and to do readings with, saving the need to refer to a book for each card's meaning.

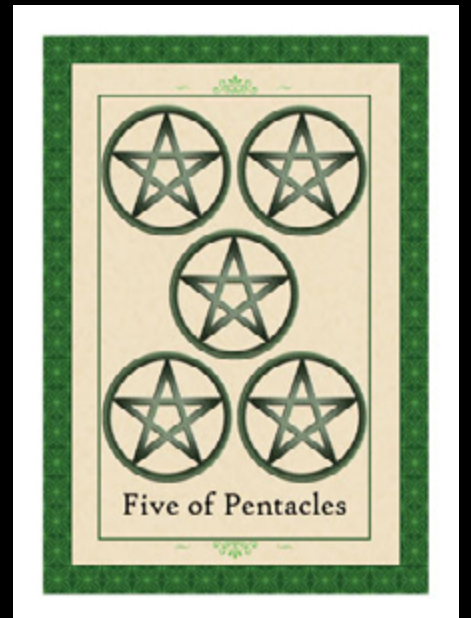
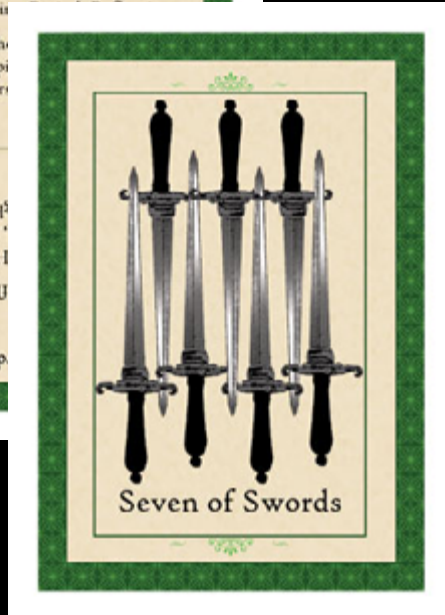
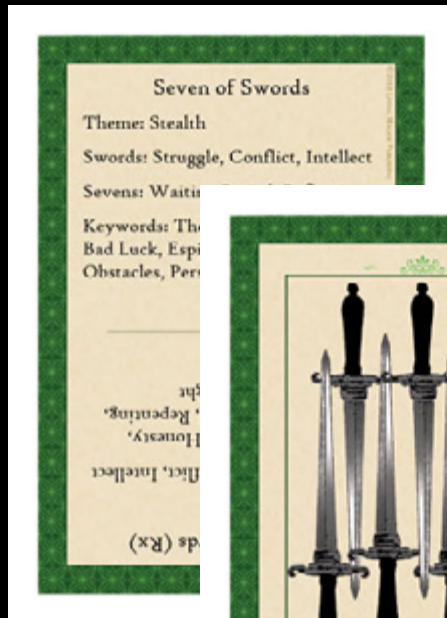
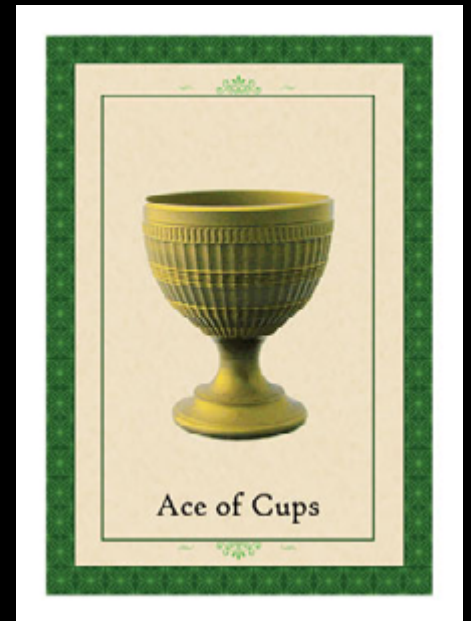
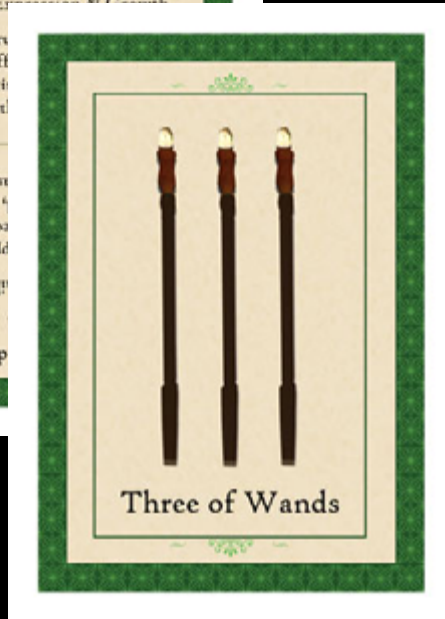
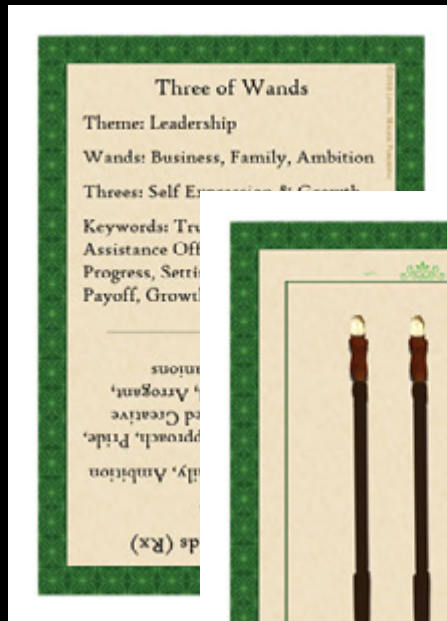
A booklet accompanies the deck that includes: How to use this deck, Numerology, Court cards, Suits and Elements, Terminology, Recommended Reading, and About Reversals.

Each card is double sided with the symbol and name of the card on the front and the description on the back. The card descriptions include the theme, suit, number correspondence, and keywords for both the upright and reversed interpretations. The Major Arcana cards have astrological associations. Zodiac signs and Court theme are included on the Court cards.

Cards are 3.75" x 5.25" and come in a sturdy storage box. This deck in combination with the *Tarot Quick Reference Sheets* makes an excellent system for learning and deepening one's expertise in Tarot.

# TAROT LEARNING CARDS

## JADZIA & JAY DEFOREST



# TAROT OF THE BOROUGHS

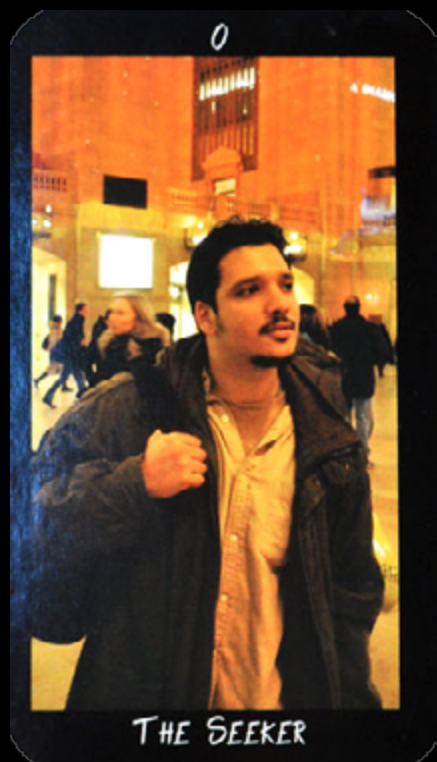
COURTNEY WEBER

*Tarot of the Boroughs* is a contemporary urban deck set in New York City created by professional Tarot reader and educator, Courtney Weber. It's composed of spectacular original photography and inspired by classic tarot symbolism. *Tarot of the Boroughs* replaces the esoteric with the familiar, easily taking the reader into the heart of the tarot's stories.

Following the common Major and Minor Arcana formats, *Tarot of the Boroughs* features New Yorkers from all walks of life, including well known writers, visual and performing artists, and many others. You'll find Moby as the King of Coins, Jonathan Ames as the Magician, Queen Mother Imakhu MuNeferet as the Queen of Cups, Larkin Grimm as the Page of Cups, and many others.

Visit:

<http://thecocowitch.com/1970/01/tarot-of-the-boroughs/>





The *Eternal Seeker* was born from the first NW Tarot Symposium. As the guest artist I created a poster for the event and “The Hermit Dude” came into being. As word got around, everyone seeing the art asked if this was the beginning of my new deck. It was not. I was wrapping up the *Wizard’s Pets Tarot* and had no intention of creating another deck ever. This is where the “never say never” bit comes into play.

After coming to terms with ‘denial’ being more than a river in Egypt, a second image that had haunted me for almost 5 years began to manifest. Knowing better than to argue vehemently with the Divine. I sat down and drew what became “The Oracle”.

This will first be a 33-card oracle based on the RWS Major Arcana. Rather than re-invent the wheel, there will be alternate titles for the images keeping in line with what the archetypes represent to me. After all, I’d created the *Steele Wizard Tarot* and added the extra cards to fill in the blanks and afford more clarity.

Now, the *Eternal Seeker* is blending all aspects of the traditional archetypes and beyond into Being what I consider the Next Step in divination.

Yes, eventually it will become a complete tarot...if I live that long.

<http://steelewizard.com/>

# ETERNAL SEEKER

## PAMELA STEELE





Dear Doubtful,

Never second guess yourself. You've learned to follow your instincts in reading tarot and the bottom line here is, take your own advice.

Consulting the tarot with your question, the Lovers reversed came first but the 9 of Pentacles immediately fell out on top of the Lovers to clarify the point. The Lovers reversed is all about emotional triggers and questioning your own choices, which is what you stated in your letter. The 9 of Pentacles is saying "Girl! You know better than that!" So let's have a look at what these kind, gentle morons were mirroring for your personal benefit and growth.

The Lovers is essentially the choice you make between the sacred and the profane. Reversed, the Lovers card is pointing out you questioning your choice to devote your time, energy, heart and soul exclusively to tarot. You chose tarot because it speaks to you at a core level you understand deeply. The images release meanings that may or may not be in the guidebooks to flow seamlessly into the

story your client most needs to hear. However, when a stranger approaches and asks "That's it? That's all you do?" it plants a seed of doubt particularly when other readers at the event may offer a variety of divination modalities. The question you're really asking is "Am I enough? Am I good enough?"

Enter the 9 of Pentacles to say, "Hell yeah!" Yes, the 9 can also carry along a vague sense that something is missing but that doesn't translate into you needing to pick up a sword when you're

so very accomplished with the bow. Unless, and this is a giant "but", you're not listening and are being called to pursue another path. Tarot can, and often does, act as stepping stones, or a bridge to expand and explore possibilities. It may or may not involve other forms of divination. It does mean you're entering a growth spurt and will be evolving. Think of it as divination puberty only without the zits and mood swings.

Give it a bit of time. What's manifesting will present itself soon enough and never, ever doubt your talent or ability.

Keep your eyes open and your ears on. What's yours

will come to you. Meantime, Keep the Faith,

*The Wizard*



Dear Wizard,

I've been reading tarot for over 5 years now and recently decided to put myself out there at a local psychic fair. The one question everyone seemed to have on their minds, besides the one they initially sat down to ask, was "Is tarot all you do?" as in "Don't you read palms, crystals, auras or runes too?"

I pride myself on giving clear, accurate readings focused on empowering the clients. Is it possible I'm missing something by not branching out but sticking to tarot?

~ Doubtful in Denver



# Articles & Stories

## LAYERS UPON LAYERS: CHARM-CASTING WITH THE TAROT

by Karen Krebsner

When I first began reading with the tarot many years ago, I found myself trying to memorize every book or pamphlet or later web site that provided definitions for what each card meant. I struggled with the nuances of each card and tried to convince myself that with practice I would become more familiar with the meanings of each card—and in many ways this is exactly what happened. I got more and more comfortable with the names, faces, places, images, atmosphere, and symbolism of the tarot, the *Rider-Waite-Smith* tarot, that is, and found that my own intuition was beginning to wake up to each card and its associated meanings, just as all those book authors promised it would. But slowly. And then I started to see decks coming out that were gloriously unique and individual, that took the tarot in new and different directions (I'm looking at you, *Mary-El Tarot*), that expanded both the symbolism and the art associated with the tarot in beautiful and sometimes disturbing ways. I tried to link these new experiences with what I already knew of the tarot, and sometimes the links came easily. Other times they defied any kind of connection and I would more often than not end up setting the new deck aside in confusion and going back to my comfort zone with one of the RWS decks.

When I began casting and reading with charms, it was apparent immediately to me that these two divination systems would talk to each other; more than that, they seemed to be designed to get chatty and bring out elements between themselves that either one would not do alone. So for almost two years now I have been providing daily tarot charmcasts on Instagram (at @upstartcrow1564), combining these systems in the great Cosmic Coffee House that is Instagram and seeing what comes up when I use them together. My knowledge of the tarot has deepened, and my understanding of collection oracles (which is what I cast with) has grown too. Now I'd like to share that combination with you, here.

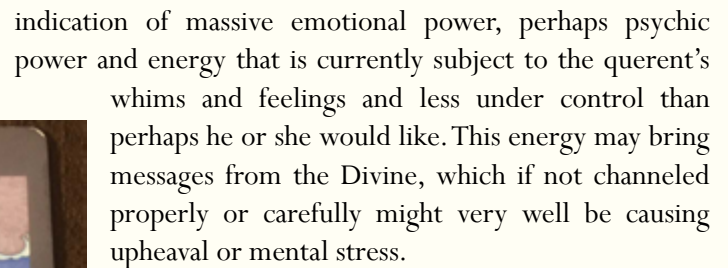
Here is a sample reading that will illustrate how the tarot and charms work together.

The deck I'm using is my current go-to, Ellen Lorenzi-Prince's masterful *Dark Goddess Tarot*. Each card of this amazing deck represents a different world goddess, showing the variety and depth of the sacred feminine throughout human history. The card I drew for this article is the Hag of Water, Ran, the Norse goddess of the ocean and the drowned. She rules under the waves, gathering the drowned into her realm, casting violent storms or sending following seas, depending on her mood. She is a crone, wise and temperamental, knowing all the secrets of the depths but often lonely. I associate this card with the King of Cups, with the mastery of the element of water that the King possesses, and it's easy to see how Ran exemplifies this role. In the image below it's clear that she is in command of her environment, gathering seafarers to herself by reaching her fingers up through the froth of the waves and pulling their ships down to her. If I were reading with only the cards, I would see this card as symbolic of immense power, but also of someone who is possibly using that power impetuously and without a judicious sense of what my mortal mind would consider "necessary" (that is to say, for a ship to come safely into port, bringing people and

So let's add some charms to it and see what comes up! I have a bag of over three hundred charms that I draw from when charm-casting: there are different-colored dice, runes, bits and bobs I've been given or that I've found, coins, a few crystals and other magical pieces, and charms that you might find on a charm bracelet.

That's the beauty of collection oracles: you get to make each item mean whatever you want it to mean!

So, when we begin to layer these meanings, we begin with the card: an



The position of the Mirror far off to the left shows me that the potential for any reflective pause is cast aside; it's present, which is good, but it's not being used at the moment, which is maybe less good.

One of the falling figures, one of the drowning ones, seems to be kicking at the Scales of Justice as he sinks to his death beneath the waves, so there may be an element of this experience that seems unfair, or that is out of balance with whatever else is going on for the querent. Or perhaps the

The Bone and the Hook might be read together in that the Ancestors are calling out to the querent, asking him or her to call on them, to reach out to them and ask for their help. Often the Ancestors can reach or access wisdom which we cannot in this realm, so reaching out to them for help might also be “key” in





this reading.

Berkana is often seen as a rune of healing, and given the placement of the rune at “the bottom of the sea” in the card might indicate that the purpose of this current emotional storm is a greater healing, and given the presence of the Ancestors, the healing might apply to them as well—whatever the querent is going through will have effects not only on them individually but on the entire lineage. That makes what the querent is going through even more “key.”

Right next to Berkana is the Large Leaf, which tells me that any healing will be aided by natural elements like herbal medicines or a visit to a respected homeopath. Sometimes mixing different types of healing can be very effective, bringing perspectives from a variety of healing sources to bear on whatever ails us. In this case, the Scales of Justice also provide influence here with the Large Leaf and Berkana, showing that reaching out and receiving assistance from a variety of sources with a variety of perspectives would be wise.

Ending with the Masculine Principle is especially effective here because it is a call to action, a prod to the querent to get help, to reach out to both doctors and spiritual advisors, and to also call on trusted friends and family who can provide differing opinions and perspectives from which the querent can then choose as he or she develops a larger plan of action for dealing with this powerful emotional event.

So we can see that adding charms to the initial card draw adds layers of meaning and connection to the reading, brings up hints about courses of action to be taken and possible sources of wisdom or aid, and perhaps even a to-do list to get started on to help them along on their healing journey.

© Karen Krebser

Ran, Dark Goddess Tarot by Ellen Lorenzi-Prince

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Monica Bodirsky

*Lucky Lenormand*

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# PSYCARDS: THE HOME

## THE SEVEN FUNDAMENTALS

by Catt Foy

*T*he 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 HOME

Examining the image on this card, we see a white cat, symbol of good luck, sleeping contentedly on front of a roaring fireplace. The fire is warm and inviting, the rug rich and soft. The room is neat, but lived in, with coffee or tea mugs at the ready on the table, with the teapot and a fresh loaf of bread, representing nourishment and conviviality. The basket in the background indicates plenty and security. Clearly we are in or very near the kitchen, the presence of many plates on the plate rail indicates that there is a family—or at least enough to share with visiting family or friends. The two mugs in close proximity imply a happy couple live here.

When it appears in a reading, this card obviously represents the home, but also more—a need for and satisfaction from being at home, feeling at home, feeling safe. It represents lifestyle, emotional security, family, pets and anything that contributes to the feeling of well-being in one's own home. It can represent an actual house, apartment or other abode, or simply the ideal of what “home” represents.

When I see this card in a reading in the upright position, I usually find that the individual is very happy in their own

home, or they are working toward creating that ideal. It can also, in certain cases, represent another person who represents the feeling of “being at home.”

Nick Hobson, creator of the Psycards, reminds us that all creatures have homes—foxes have holes and birds have nests—and that this card speaks to the need for security and stability. There is nothing so devastating as having no place to call home. Nick suggests that this card also reminds us of our roots—the home we were born into, and suggests that we may need to relive any childhood memories—good or bad—in order to grow.

When reversed, it can indicate an “upside down” feeling at home—indicating a recent or impending move, or a home life that is unstable. It often appears in readings of people who have been recently divorced, widowed, or separated from a significant other. Taken with the other cards it can point to discord in the home, possibly even violence. It may also point to a feeling of restlessness, or a current inability to feel at home anywhere. Look to the surrounding cards and listen to your inner intuitive voice and impressions for further clarification.

© Catt Foy



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Tarot History & Divination

**Sherryl Smith**  
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# INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE PAYNE- TOWLER

by Cynthia Tedesco

*I*nterview with Christine Payne-Towler, author and deck collaborator of the *Tarot of the Holy Light*.

**CKT** - What influenced your decision to concentrate upon *The Marseille de Tarot* and other historical packs rather than the Anglo-American *RiderWaite Smith* and *Thoth* Tarots?

**CPT** - This was not a decision. It was simply an accident of the order in which my first Tarot books came to me. The Tarot masters Mouni Sadhu, Papus, Eliphas Levi, and CC Zain (Elbert Benjamine) cut the groove in which my lifetime studies would run.

**CKT** - In your collaboration with Michael Dowers you chose Alchemy in the footsteps of Jacob Boehme, please elaborate on this aspect of *Tarot of The Holy Light*.

**CPT** - I've always been struck by the resemblance between alchemical art and Tarot art. What I see in the alchemical art evokes our standard Tarot characters, only in Alchemy they are set loose in a magical environment undergoing radical psychedelic transformations. Alchemy offers a model for internal cultivation, inclining the practitioner towards disidentification with the fixed structures of the outer world while fostering an ever-increasing bond with the subtle spiritual life. Some say that alchemy was a way of importing the teachings of reincarnation into Christian Europe.

As Michael worked, he kept being attracted to the images from Boehme's circle, and they kept being uniquely apt for the task that Tarot serves. I was testing Michael's choices against the point of view of well-known classical references that Tarot also makes — to Biblical subjects, to the archetypes discussed by Boethius, to the three-worlds/triple-septenary cosmos

explicated by Dante, and other such expositions relevant to the times when Tarot first appeared. It soon became clear that Michael's artistic intuition was attuned to my own, so my vigilance relaxed and the project just flowed from there. Even the Hebrew kabbalists give Boehme credit for solidifying Kabbalistic philosophy within the Christian community in the 1600's. Boehme's illustrators are credited with inventing whole new techniques in the art of engraving, in order to communicate their astral and energetic "field theory" via ink on paper. So, of course, Michael would be drawn in and would want to use those images! Boehme was also highly literate in the astro-alpha-numeric references made by all the languages of the classics; Greek, Latin and Hebrew. Boehme's esoteric art declares itself with a precision and integrity that few other illustrations from his era can equal. I have chosen four cards that focus on the art and esotericism of Boehme to create the spread we are going to explore below.

**CKT** - What advice would you offer deck creators and authors in the collaborative creation of a tarot and what was your publication process like?

**CPT** - I don't know about others, but we have felt freed by the existence of print-on-demand for books and decks. Of course, there is nothing that substitutes for using a full-service card printing press that can make available all the card-making bells and whistles for a truly custom product. The downside is, they are hugely expensive. It's just not economically viable if you can't finance a print run of at least 1000 copies. As it turns out, the print-on-demand editions of our deck (what we call "standard size" editions in color or black and white) were greeted warmly by the Tarot-buying public. Now that we have reprinted the larger Deluxe edition again we are selling cards in several sizes, and everybody's happy.

In fact, it's a wonderful time to be creating in the Tarot world. Print on demand is nearly free, at least until you get to the stage where you can order up a proof copy. Card-making presses are springing up now that the steady growth potential of the field has proved there is money to be made there. Every nation is full of talented people who have the support skills to make new productions happen. The only caveat to all this is that 78 cards is a lot of images. A full 78-card pack will likely take years, not months, especially for a person who is doing the whole project by his or herself; the art, the writing, the distribution, and marketing. Don't quit your day job, but don't give up on your dream either. Time is your ally if you have fairly systematic work habits.

**CKT** - Please discuss, as an example, a spread that our readers can use to explore *The Tarot of The Holy Light*.

**CPT** - Of the cards that quote Boehme directly, I have selected four that grabbed me quite forcefully for this spread. These four cards are envisioned forming an inverted triangle (the descending triangle of Sophia's Moist Light). The fourth card anchors all the corners at the center, suggesting an evolutionary action the querent can take in response to the spread. Here's the pattern:

- 1 Upper left corner, The Magus
- 2 Bottom point, Hanged Man
- 3 Upper right corner, The Fool
- 4 Center card, Three of Cups

The spread is laid out in the designated order. The Trumps we are using stand at the beginning, middle and end of the Major Arcana sequence, according to the first 500 years of Tarot usage. This says to me that this spread serves as a self-examination session, between me, myself, and I. One can use it as a self-reflection tool or interior mirror. There is no outside influence or "other" position in the pattern. "The Royal We" is the focus here: How can I embrace the changes necessary to be appropriate and evolutionary within current circumstances?

1/ The first position represents "what I think I'm doing", in other words, my known self's conscious motives. We all have a story of ourselves that dominates our self-esteem and persona in the world. The card that appears in this place portrays an aspect of yourself that is volunteering to grow and change for the sake of solving or resolving the current situation.

2/The second position represents the upside-down, inside-out reality that we can only see when we somehow get outside the ego's bubble, looking in on ourselves from the perspective of the Unconscious. This turn-around point is called Metanoia, and it represents the inevitable transformation we experience when we shed our habitual self-description and see, maybe for the first time, our place in

the collective human process of coming awake to the higher life. This card will ask us to put aside our fantasies of being special, immune, or somehow already enlightened. Whatever card falls here asks us to dissolve and relinquish any resistance we might feel to the changes that are currently necessary.

3/The third card explains a higher view, a broader goal, which can only become visible when we have surrendered our self-willed egotism and volunteered to be an agent for humanity's continuing evolution. The "Fool for God" and the

letter Tau are historically linked to St. Frances, whose only interest was to manifest Divine Will in action, minute to minute. If he wasn't in possession of a clear mandate from heaven, then he would wait and listen, taking a spiritually humble and receptive stance until the sign he sought made itself evident. Consider the card that falls in this position as a designator of one's own spiritual instructions, after any personal agenda from the past has been metabolized and recast through the previous inversion and dissolving stage.

4/The fourth and central card represents the next external behavior or action one can take in the process of "getting to yes, consent, union, harmony, agreement."

The overall gist of the spread is to invite the ego to let go of its projections, demands, and expectations. Once one experiences that spiritual bath in the astral waters of the Hanged Man, the habit body is softened and made permeable, revealing our willingness to respond from our wiser, more tolerant, more humble self. The goal is to learn to consult the Divine Will voluntarily, rather than wait until we have tried and failed with every other strategy that the ego/will devises. It's not that the Magus is a bad person to be. There is no bad guy in this spread. The first card simply represents the known reality, whereas the other cards lead the user to see beyond the boundaries we habitually keep around ourselves.

In the cards I have named out, you can see the unmistakable signature of the Boehmite canon.

The Magus stands forward against the backdrop of a three-





worlds model that shows the visionary talent of Boehme's illustrators. This image shows The Magus consciously living in The Image of God.

In the Hanged Man we see another amazing visualization of the shimmering fields that represent human consciousness in Boehmite art. The Hanged Man is basting and marinading in the Three Worlds model again, but this time he is looking down on it from above, as if from the edge of outer space. This card stands at the very middle of the Trump sequence, so it represents the half-way point in the journey of the soul to enlightenment.

In the Fool card, we see a person who has trained himself to look to the Inner Light for guidance. His meditations are specifically designed to empty him of all striving, competition, unbalanced passion, or impulsiveness. At this point of the process (at the very end of the Trump sequence) he is no longer interested in advancing a personal agenda, so he waits in silence until the signal for action appears.

The central card—The Boehmite element in this card is the heart with the Cross in it, showing grapes growing out the top and the fountain of Water pouring down. In the middle the Dove of Spirit descends into the flames of Wrath (Boehme's word for stress, friction, dissent) which pours out

from the agitated and turbulent world of the ego living in time and space. The message is that without making some willing self-sacrifices, we will never learn the compassion and nurturance that the Holy Spirit has for us.

In fact, we are never alone when it's time to face the stressors of the world and merge with them, we are always accompanied by the Holy Spirit. This one image gives the entire theology, philosophy and psychology of Boehme in a nutshell: Do unto others as the Holy Spirit does unto us — face the reactive Wrath in full confidence that with Love all things are possible.

*CKT: Thank you Christine for our interview for readers of The Cartomancer Magazine.*

*Christine's work can be further explored at: [www.tarotuniversity.com](http://www.tarotuniversity.com)*

*Christine can be reached for private readings and tutoring at 360 849 4857.*

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# A BRIEF LOOK AT THE ACES

by Wayne Limberger

Few cards of such outward simplicity incite a wider range of debate than the four Aces. Many people see them as the beginning or first step in an enterprise symbolized by the nature of the suit, and thus emphatically positive. Those versed in esoteric number theory interpret their energy as potential rather than kinetic, the idea or impulse behind that first step and not the action itself. In that view, it represents the abstract Point, which has neither dimension nor direction, qualities that don't emerge until the Line (the number Two) makes its entrance.

The Aces are inherently neutral, suggesting a quiescent “seed state,” a fertile field that requires sowing and active cultivation in order to encourage germination and growth. One of the best descriptions I've seen of the concept is “a gift of energy” that the recipient must do something constructive with to optimize. The opposite meaning in this case, whether induced by reversal or by unfavorable placement in a spread, might be “looking a gift horse in the mouth.”

I recently did a reading for a woman who had retired the day before and was pondering what the future holds for her. The very first card in the “current environment” position was the Ace of Swords reversed.

It was clear that she really didn't have a clue yet what she wanted to do next. I told her that the reversed Ace showed the “idea behind the idea,” the disquieting suspicion—twice removed—that she needed to formulate some kind of plan but that she had yet to put two thoughts together on the

matter; she was swimming in a sea of vague uncertainty. A few cards later, the Ten of Swords showed up, which in the *Connolly Tarot* deck I was using implies not the “scorched earth” scenario of the RWS version but the prospect of facing too many conflicting choices. Since the Ten and the One (Ace) are entirely synchronous, I told her that she might have to back up and rethink her opportunities, and should try to avoid “holding them all by the pointy end.” The Ten is the Ace fully extended, with the corresponding tenfold increase in complexity and unwieldiness; better for her to take a faltering half-step forward soon than to wait too long for further detail that may paralyze her with indecision down the road.

On another occasion, I did a Celtic Cross for a man who had just taken a lucrative job at a prominent local company, but was considering making another career move after getting a year of experience under his belt. He wanted a forecast for the end of his self-imposed “apprenticeship” period, and he received the Ace of Wands in the near-future position, with Judgement as the outcome card. Although he thought it might be a bit premature, I told him that within the next few months it would be prudent to start positioning himself for such an eventuality, and that sometime not long after he might receive “an offer he can't refuse.” I seldom project beyond six months

with the Celtic Cross, so I wasn't prepared to be more definite as to date. I advised him that the Ace of Wands and Judgement are entirely compatible; one is the “little Fire” (elemental principle of the Wands suit) and the other is the “big Fire” (primal elemental Fire) figuratively burning in his belly, suggesting that he should soon start maneuvering in small ways to prepare for the main event. He asked me if they were “good cards,” and I told him that, for his stated purpose, I thought they were.

In what I call the “diminishing energy flow” model of Minor

Arcana sequencing that is derived from the qabalistic Tree of Life and its “descent of Spirit into Matter” paradigm, the Ace stands at the top of the heap with nowhere to go but downhill into concrete manifestation. It represents the pure “root” of its element, a pristine state of Being but not yet of Doing. It holds the essence of the entire series in a nascent state of readiness. This is perhaps best expressed in the “Naples





Arrangement” presented by Aleister Crowley in *The Book of Thoth*, in which he contemplates the experience of the Point (the Ace) as it navigates the “way-points” represented by the numbers Two through Ten, gathering substance—as well as inertia—as it travels, and eventually reaching perfection (but also exhaustion) at the end of the series.

As I see it, the Ace is a good place from which to launch a project (and I sometimes do use the “launchpad” metaphor), but not a place to linger in hope that something will be handed to you with no effort on your part. You could be waiting in vain, and squandering a golden opportunity.

The Aces in the *Thoth* deck display potent reservoirs of raw elemental power due to their color schemes, dramatic moods and compelling geometric compositions, while the *Waite-Smith* designs showing angelic hands emanating from clouds suggest the Higher Consciousness that the Magician taps and channels earthward with his “above-and-below” gesture, as well as the motive force animating the Wheel of Fortune (which prefigures the cyclical urge of all the Tens), and the individualizing drive behind the Sun, the ultimate vehicle for the “I” of the personal Ego. All of these cards are alternate expressions of the number One, either directly or by numerological reduction. They share an archetypal mandate with the Aces of their corresponding element.

It should be noted in passing that the numbers One through Ten, added together, produce 55, which reduces numerologically to Ten and then back to One. The number Five is the “number of Man,” an active number that when doubled gives the idea of a complete cycle of evolution and involution. There are some very neat symmetries in all of this.

How delighted one ought to be upon receiving an Ace in a reading should be tempered by how supportive and sympathetic the next couple of cards in the spread are to its elemental agenda. An Ace needs a “can-opener” to release its full potential, and stimulating cards of a compatible nature following it fulfill that purpose. The Ace is more a stage-setter than a featured actor. Think of it as the dispatcher who sets the wheels in motion rather than the teamster who steers the load to its destination. Without it, the journey wouldn’t get underway, but the Ace as such never sets foot past the starting gate.

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# MID-CENTURY TAROT

by Sherryl E. Smith

Mid-twentieth century is a rather murky time for tarot. The first few decades of the century saw the Golden Dawn introducing tarot to Americans, and Aleister Crowley creating a sensation on his speaking tour. The first American tarot book was published in 1917, and correspondence courses were available from Paul Foster Case's Builders of the Adytum and C. Z. Zain's Servants of the Light. American tarot had a decidedly esoteric flavor back then. From the 1930s through the 1950s, tarot coasted in that groove with little creative innovation. But we have a few scattered hints that the general public was interested in another kind of tarot.



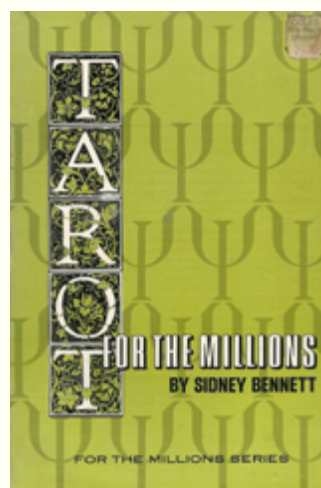
The March 1930 issue of *Mentor* magazine contained a witty and entertaining article on the history of playing cards. Several paragraphs on tarot history had everything backward, including the inevitable mention of gypsy fortunetellers. But at least tarot was being written about in a general interest magazine.

Macy's department store sold a deck in the 1950s, probably

the *Waite Smith*, accompanied by a booklet with solidly researched tarot history by Geoffrey Mott-Smith, a legendary expert in contract bridge. His booklet gave surprisingly contemporary advice, warning that tarot cannot predict the future and should only be used intuitively for problem solving.

By the late 1960s, underground cultural currents were starting to affect tarot. We think of the 1960s as a time of great social change, but the counterculture was a youth phenomenon pretty much confined to college campuses on either coast. This social revolution didn't seep into mainstream America until the 1970s. Tarot experienced the same seismic shift.

The tarot scene blew wide open in the 1970s. A greater variety of decks were available, and books were being written for the curious beginner. Feminists, witches and residents of California communes redesigned tarot to reflect their lifestyles. This revolution was made possible by a few pioneers in the 1950s and 1960s who nudged tarot toward the mainstream.



## Tarot for the Millions.

Until late in the century, being interested in topics like astrology, yoga, meditation or tarot put you in the lunatic fringe. *The Sherbourne Press* in Los Angeles went on a crusade to bring these subjects out of the closet with their *For the Millions* series. *Yoga for the Millions*, *Reincarnation for the Millions*, and a dozen more small paperbacks attempted to

make these fringe topics understandable to middle America. Their book *Tarot for the Millions* was written by Sidney K. Bennett, a Los Angeles freelance writer with friends in the movie industry. She believed tarot was all about predicting the future, so her book is sprinkled with amusing anecdotes about skeptics who were amazed when her predictions came true. Her card meanings closely follow A. E. Waite, and she warns us to never take money for a reading and never alter the message of the cards just to keep the client happy.

**Sybil Leek** was a British-American witch with a flair for self-promotion. Known as “the grooviest witch”, she was a popular talk show guest who introduced a user-friendly version of witchcraft and divination to the general public. Her autobiography *Diary of a Witch* is a fascinating tale of



growing up in an eccentric family where Aleister Crowley was a frequent weekend guest. She served an apprenticeship in Britain's New Forest studying herb lore with gypsies while being initiated into traditional covens. A book tour brought her to the United States where an enthusiastic audience helped her make the transition to prolific author and spokesperson for all things witchy.

*The Sybil Leek Book of Fortune Telling* takes readers on vicarious adventures to gypsy tea rooms in New York, crystal ball gazers in Brighton and Voodoo ceremonies in Harlem. Sybil assures nervous mainstream Americans that tea leaf reading, crystal ball scrying and cartomancy are perfectly normal activities that have been practiced for thousands of years. Each chapter ends with easy to follow instructions so you can try these yourself.



The tarot chapter gives us a glimpse of the 1960s scene. We're told that tarot has had a bigger social impact than any other type of fortunetelling. It's no longer considered eccentric for hostesses in New York and Beverly Hills to hire tarot readers for after-dinner entertainment. Tarot decks were becoming much easier to find and could be purchased for two or three dollars, while a session with a professional fortuneteller cost between five and ten dollars. For Sybil, fortunetelling was the whole point of card reading. The best tarot readers have an innate gift for seeing the future and only use the cards as props. For the rest of us, she gives brief instructions on how to conduct a reading using the Celtic Cross, and assures us that if we stick to just reading for our friends, we can't go wrong.

**Rolla Nordic** was another British witch whose career paralleled Sybil Leek's. Details about her life are hard to find, but it seems she was born about 1900 and claimed to be among the witches who cast spells during World War II to influence the outcome in Britain's favor. She became an influential teacher of tarot and runes. After



publishing her book and deck in 1960, she came to the United States where she continued to teach and make television appearances until about 1992.

Her black and white deck, illustrated by Paul Mathison, combines influences from the *Waite Smith* and *Marseille* decks, and was meant to be colored by her students. She borrowed card imagery from both the Insight Institute and Servants of the Light, organizations that offered correspondence courses in esoteric tarot. Her deck and book *The Tarot Shows the Path* have been reprinted several times. Most of the book is comprised of divinatory meanings for the major arcana accompanied by Bible quotes and affirmations. The minor arcana receive brief fortunetelling keywords.

Nordic was less a public figure than Sybil Leek, but she had a profound impact on her students who greatly respected and revered her. In her own quiet way she disseminated tarot to American wisdom.

**Eden Gray** is truly the mother of contemporary tarot. After a successful career as a stage and film actress, she presided over a metaphysical bookstore in New York City. Her 1960 book *The Tarot Revealed* was the first beginners' book to give simple reading instructions and spreads with no occult embellishments. The three books she published during the 1960s were blockbusters and are still in print. Her books are illustrated with line drawings of the *Waite Smith* deck and her card meanings were lifted from Waite's book. These books became the template for subsequent how-to-read books, and were instrumental in establishing the *Waite Smith* deck as the default American tarot.

Gray's down-to-earth, casual style reassured folks who were nervous about tarot that anyone with common sense and compassion who memorized the



card meanings in her book could give a competent reading. Gray died in 1999 at age 97, a few years after being honored by the International Tarot Society.

**Decks:** Throughout the 1960s the *Waite Smith* deck dominated the American market. A few European decks were available, like the *Grimaud Tarot de Marseille* and the *Grand Tarot Belline*, but the market didn't offer much variety until the 1970s. David Palladini's *Aquarian Tarot*, a blend of Art Deco and psychedelia, is one of the first *Waite Smith* spin-offs, where an artist adheres closely to the original imagery



while giving it a creative interpretation. Piatnik of Vienna went full-on psychedelic with a wildly colorful deck designed by Pointer. Jack Hurely and John Horler, fixtures in the San Francisco tarot scene, self-published a black and white deck meant to facilitate free-association. Their deck was published in 1974 but had its genesis in the Esalen Institute's hot tubs at Big Sur, California during the 1960s.

Let's honor these mid-century trail-blazers who introduced tarot to mainstream society, made it accessible to everyone, and laid the foundation for the incredibly diverse and creative tarot scene we enjoy today.

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# YOU'RE NOT HIS TYPE

## FROM PCS: A NOVEL

by Cynthia Tedesco

Arthur Waite stopped by this morning. He seemed pleased with my progress and I was pleased by his pleasure. Having stayed a whole five minutes, he insisted he had a very important meeting to attend and wished me a pleasant day. It was an extraordinary visit in its way as 'the great man' deemed to drive to the country from London to spend a few minutes with me and 'his tarot.' He used words like; my tarot, my Ace of Pentacles, my Two of Wands, my, my and my!

However, it may prove to have been a visit with quite another purpose. I walked with him to his motorcar. We talked of the weather, he promised to send me more art supplies (and they are dear), I inquired into the health of his family and so forth. At the door of his car he turned to face me directly and said the strangest thing, "Do get in touch with the American Embassy, I hear they have information for you." With that he got into his car, waved and was gone.

What can the American Embassy have by way of information for me other than news of James? Tomorrow I will have to call for an appointment and arrange for Edy to take charge of Gordon the day I go to London. Who do I ask for? I will mention Arthur Waite and see if his name brings forth whomever I must see. It would be horrible to come away more confused than ever from such a meeting. I would call today but I doubt a Sunday chat will sit well with the staff of the American Ambassador. Be this as it may, if I am correct, and I am sure I am, how did Arthur Waite come to know about James? Does Arthur move in diplomatic circles as well as occult ones? Does James? What do I really know about

James? What does the American Embassy know about James or about me for that matter? Why would this presumed inquiry of mine be of interest to them?

Next Day....

My call was expected!

"Oh yes Miss Smith, I'll put you through to Mr. Grimes."

It took a bit of time for this Mr. Grimes to take my call. He was pleasant and a bit too eager to speak to me in person rather than by phone. He identified his position at the Embassy as secretarial whatever that may mean in embassies. I have an appointment for Wednesday at four for tea. This Mr. Grimes wishes to meet me at the Windsor Hotel's Rose Tea Room. I was hesitant to accept and hearing my hesitation he assured me that Mrs. Grimes would also be present. How charming, a couple that is staff at the American Embassy.

I am suspicious. But of what am I suspicious? Now I feel The Fool for not having asked the obvious... what is it you want to see me about Mr. Grimes?

Edy will take charge of Gordon on Tuesday afternoon so I can take the train to London and sleep overnight in my studio to be ready for Secretary Grimes. Edy assures me this is the proper way to address Grimes. She was very impressed with my appointment with a Secretary. I do believe my status has risen within the household.

I must get back to work. Hopefully Arthur will send those art supplies soon.

The Rose Tea Room at the Windsor Hotel was lovely and lavish. Mrs. Loretta Grimes, also lovely, though a large, big-boned blond woman with a red hat, sat at a table towards the back of the restaurant. Secretary Grimes, on the other hand, was a small man with indistinct, unremarkable features, stood (presumably to add to his stature and not pretending to be a waiter) behind one of four chairs at the table which had a card on it that said, 'Reserved by the American Embassy.'

Secretary Grimes chose to be blunt and not a bit cryptic. He asked me what I knew about James. I told him about my experiments locating James by use of my pendulum. I did not tell him about meeting James in Brooklyn nor about Coney Island. Nothing distinctly personal. He asked if I believed I'd located James. I told him the Hagia Sophia neighborhood in



Turkey. I was not an open book but I did give him what I knew from my divination.

Mrs. Grimes seemed to wake up suddenly when she heard about my use of the pendulum and my tarot project but I chose to ignore her as she had ignored the conversation up until then

Secretary Grimes was about to grill me about James but I interrupted him.

“Secretary and Mrs. Grimes,” (who knows, perhaps she was not his Missus at all, nor any other, but I played my role as they theirs), “what is this all about? What is James to the American Embassy? What is your relationship to Mr. Arthur Waite. You do know he recommended my contacting your Embassy. May I have the courtesy of an explanation before interrogation?”

Both Grimes’ had the decency to blush, Loretta a deep crimson and Secretary Grimes a momentary flush of pink. He should use rouge... pink becomes him.

“We know Arthur for many years and have called upon him for his unique erudition. We have mutual interests. Our countries are friends and rely on each other for many reasons. Arthur has been generous to both America and Britain. He knew of your contact with James because he was in my office when I was given a letter written by you to the said James. I read that letter Miss Smith and Arthur observed the return address as yours. A lucky coincidence indeed!”

“The said James?” I was shocked by the equivocation of name.

“Yes, your James goes by many names. Few know his real name, I and Mrs. Grimes are not among of them. He is an investigator for America and therefore England. That’s what I know. I have been told he’s gone missing. No one has heard from him for an alarming amount of time. Diplomacy between Britain and America has been swift, thus confiscation of one of your letters. Our apologies. Mrs. Grimes and I are very thankful for your experiment because it gives some level of confirmation as to where to search for your James. We ask if you should get news of him you relay it to Mr. Waite who will get it to the proper office. Speaking of Mr. Waite, he requested we give you a very heavy package of art supplies that he has provided for you. They are awaiting you at your studio. May Mrs. Grimes and I offer you a ride home?”

Secretary Grimes’ delivery was very precise and quick. My thoughts were a jumble and I struggled to reply.

“I think not. I think I shall sit a bit. Thank you, my letter, I want my letter.”

Both Grimes’ were not surprised by my answer nor my request. Mrs. Grimes placed the letter on the table in front of me and bent as she was leaving to whisper in my ear, “Forget him, Honey, you’re not his type.”

I returned to Edy and Gordon in a sorry state. Loretta had ‘hit the mark’ with her singular comment. I am not his type. Nor he mine. I had been foolish and obsessed. I will work hard. I will forget James once and for all. If I am to be obsessive it should be about my work.

However, James could not so easily be put aside. No, Loretta could not let the matter rest. She sent me a brief letter about

a week later requesting I receive her for a reading regarding a ‘mutual friend.’

I kept her letter but did not answer her. I worked. I worked in an angry frenzy. I completed my tarot project with feelings of outrage and tears. Arthur Waite’s involvement, however remote (or not) was also embarrassing. Completion of so difficult a project should be with satisfaction and happiness. Those were not my feelings. I wanted to be done with the whole of it, the tarot project, Arthur Waite, the Grimes’ but most of all, James.

I went back to London. I needed the bustle, the people and most of all, the anonymity of a big city with my tiny studio nesting within it like

a robin’s blue egg. Friday I answered Loretta’s letter. It had been over two weeks since our encounter. I gave her an appointment for Saturday, next day. Rude of me to keep her short-leashed but so be it.

When I opened my door to her hand knocking on it I was greeted by a wholly different Loretta Grimes. She wore no make-up. She did not wear a red hat and most of all, she was not silent. Immediately she thanked me for seeing her. I urged her to sit at my table now ready for a reading with my completed tarot. She thanked me profusely while taking up





the cards and carefully examining them.

“These are extraordinary Miss Smith! I am familiar with the Marseille and Lombardy packs but have never seen such evocative tarot images! I must congratulate you!”

I was silent but sat next to her at the table. I offered no tea, no drink, nothing. She, being no fool, understood my hesitation and handed me my pack. I knocked the pack on my table three times to ‘bring it back to me’ and started to shuffle repeatedly as I asked, “And your question is?”

She hesitated then tearfully said, “You see Miss Smith, your James is my brother. We have different fathers. His died shortly after James was born and our mother remarried and had me three years later. I’m sorry Mr. Grimes obscured that truth for you. I am not Mrs. Grimes. I work for the Embassy but I can’t say what it is I am employed to do. James’ role at the Embassy is as murky as mine and frankly I do not know exactly what he’s hired for but I have an idea... I’m well aware of his gifts. I’m also all too familiar with his – shall we say vulnerabilities, as he is of mine. After all we grew up together. I need to know if I am in danger. James has a habit of ridiculing me. He thinks taking that tone will protect me. He implies I am a receptionist at the Embassy. A pretty face to put the hoi polloi at ease while showing them to their meetings. Nothing could be further from the truth but I can say no more. He tries to take care not to draw attention to me as I do for him. Yet, it’s unavoidable.”

Rephrasing her question so it would not be a ‘yes-no’ one I asked: “What can Loretta do to protect herself from the danger she is currently in?”

I gave her the cards and asked her to shuffle and cut the deck into thirds with her non-dominant hand. She replied, “Does it matter? I am ambidextrous.”

“Are you an artist too?” I asked inquisitively but with sarcasm for I am able to make use of either hand and was reluctant to share that ability with her.

“You could say that.” She obviously would say no more on the matter but proceeded to shuffle all the while staring into my eyes and then cut the deck with her left hand. I asked her

to restack the deck in any order she wished.

Her Cards:

The Past: The Empress

The Present: The Two of Swords

The Future: The Queen of Cups

All cards were reversed. I righted them and took note of it without comment and began:

“Let’s start with the Present which is the Two of Swords. Here we see a woman seated and blindfolded holding the crossed swords across her chest. The sea is behind her. She is unaware of her surroundings in this moment. She is not in harmony with herself nor is she in balance with the situation – the danger you perceive yourself in. You are at odds with law enforcement and possibly the military. There is duplicity with someone you know and believe to support you. This person is not on your side. You may want to take a break and re-consider your sympathies. Does this make sense to you so far?”

Loretta nods silently, her face has paled.

“Moving back in time we consider The Past that leads to the present situation just described. Here we see a pregnant Empress in lush surroundings. Ordinarily when upright she is creative and abundant but the card is not well disposed. Your mother? She is somehow involved in the matter. While protective of you and possibly James as well, she is a very controlling person. Has she also gambled and lost a great deal of money in the past? Are you trying to regain lost wealth and position to please her? She’s a ‘loose cannon.’ In her desire to protect you she can place you in danger.

“Now we shall move into The Future: There is yet another woman involved. The Queen of Cups. Ordinarily she is helpful, intuitive, a great benefit to you. No more. She should not be trusted. She is self-serving and divisive. She does what serves her at any expense to others. She will do you damage. Avoid her.

“To summarize we have, as I see this reading, are difficulty with institutions the Embassy must deal with all the time: the law and the military. There are two woman who wittingly as in the Queen of Cups or unwittingly as in The Empress, have and will put you in a dangerous situation.

“May I ask, since it is obvious that you have been in danger before, that you consider what options have served to protect



yourself. You seem to believe you have two choices, the Two of Swords, but it would appear two women are those swords and you are hesitating to act. This reading urges you to remove yourself from their influence immediately without hesitation.”

Loretta was silent but studied the cards carefully. I asked her if she wished me to check for the likely outcome but she said, “No.” Just no. Nothing more.

I did go on to describe the card meanings in their upright positions but Loretta teared up at that point and I stopped. We sat in silence for several minutes as she studied her cards and I handed her a handkerchief. She gave it back to me as she bent to retrieve her own from her purse on the chair to the side of her. Her right arm sleeve rode up a bit and I could see an ugly scar on her wrist.

“Perhaps it’s time for tea? Please let me offer you some mediocre biscuits and a good cup of tea?”

“That’s kind of you, Miss Smith, but no, I should be going. This has been most helpful. You are very good at this. I shall speak of your talent to others who may be in need of your services. I’ve much to do. Thanks to you I know what to do. Don’t look so puzzled... be grateful the cards didn’t reveal more or you might be put in danger. I couldn’t let you pull more cards. May I call you Pamela? Hopefully we will meet again under more auspicious circumstances but right now I must act quickly.”

At that point in her farewell she was at the door rummaging in her purse looking for something to offer to pay me with. I immediately stepped towards her and put my hand on hers shaking my head, “No, no payment is necessary but don’t tell others that I didn’t charge you!”

She smiled, almost laughed. I could hear the sound of her shoes on the steps to the outside door as she left. I looked out my window and saw a car had been waiting for her. It was a lavish, ostentatious red one. I couldn’t see the driver from this distance but I knew it was James

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# THE MAGICIAN'S MAZE

## A PERSONAL TALE

by Monica Bodirsky

Believing in magical things when we were young was natural, but many of us become cynical when we discover the 'hard cold facts' of life and exit our innocent wonder years. Some work in professions that are devoid of any spirituality or creativity and magic can seem nothing more than a distant memory. As a professional artist, and tarot reader who identifies as a witch, it may seem surprising that even in my life, magic can become mundane. While art usually keeps me in that place where unexpected, magical things can happen, life happens.

A difficult year, and, sadly one of many, I've had my boundaries challenged repeatedly by personal tragedy, negative people, and my own shadows. But the Magician card began a major shift in my life. Though I have often pulled this card in readings over the past forty years, this recent and repeated appearance felt different.

Years ago I created a collage of the Magician using an image from a women's craft magazine from the 60's. I photographed the image and then made a large, digital print of it on linen to accentuate the feminism aspect. She held my attention for a while, was part of an exhibition, then, I sort of forgot about her, until recently when moving studios, the linen unrolled.



*There are so many layers of meaning to tarot cards and though distracted at times by mundane occurrences in life, I always embrace new lessons, even if it takes a while to see them as lessons.*

For me the constant appearance of a single card is generally interpreted as ... "you really aren't listening to this message and it will keep showing up until you act on the message!" I tried to ignore this card as a bit of a nuisance, like the telemarketing calls I sometimes receive, the Magician kept showing up everywhere peddling or rather juggling his wares. Billboards, street performers, random imagery, everywhere I looked the Magician seemed to beckon. Even when I switched decks and shuffled like a card shark, the Magician card, calmly made it's way to the front of the line showing off a collection of elements, one hand in the 'as above', the other, in the 'so below' position. Sometimes people who have been reading for a long time need incessant repetition

to get their attention, and, as with many readers I accepted that image finally as a need to make the time to sit down and seriously check in. Well as soon as I returned from New York.

Before attending Ruth Ann and Wald Amberstone's Readers' Studio for the first time last April, I asked what to expect, and, of course, pulled the

Magician card. I made a note and could tell interesting things would unfold. I unexpectedly met someone I hadn't seen in years travelling to the conference, met several of my favorite tarot and oracle card artists who were very encouraging, was given a healing by a generous and kind magician, met so many wonderful people, and, sold many of my second edition

Lucky Lenormand Oracle decks. Naturally, not to be ignored, the Magician emphasized his presence when I won the talented illustrator Callie French's original Magician artwork in a draw. I was thrilled not only at receiving this beautiful artwork, but that the universe hadn't gotten bored and walked away because I was procrastinating.

One of my favorite 'go to' tarot books, by Sallie Nicholls is *Jung and Tarot: The Archetypal Journey*, and when I returned from New York, I picked it up immediately and turned to the Magician chapter. The first thing that jumped off the page was:

"Is he the ego consciousness that creates illusion or the self-awareness that dispels it? Is he man's will or divine intention? The answer is that he is both. For it is

through consciousness that we become entangled in the world of things and categories, and it is through consciousness that we extricate ourselves from its confusions. The Magician creates the maze and he guides us through it.” (Nicholls P67).

Message received.

I stood at the entrance of the maze and reflected. The Magician card has always been a reminder to be self-reliant but not selfish and the elemental tools speak to me of potential, even if unrecognized. The shadowy side of the performing Magician is that of a trickster, juggler or the stage illusionist who can pretend to perform magic but only offers smoke and mirrors. Both the light and shadows need to be embraced if a deeper understanding can occur.

Being a professional artist requires frequent introspection, and I don't shy away from my own shadows so I stepped into the maze. To examine the meaning of the card at this stage in my life, the first question I asked was, 'Am I working to manifest my desires in an ethical way and am I using the tools at my disposal?' Ruled by Mercury, the Magician card encouraged me to re-evaluate how I communicate, integrate and translate cumulative experiences in all aspects of my life.

I looked at all the available tools I had been collecting and realized that I had gathered more than I realized and now it was time to evaluate. I began taking stock of our space – literally giving away, moving things, washing, cleansing, scrubbing, organizing, clearing, and this intense activity helped me gain a refreshing objectivity about everything.

Next, I looked at my life and re-evaluated how I communicated externally and what was being reciprocated if anything. At this point I felt like I was stuck in the middle of a potentially never-ending maze. But gradually and calmly I continued. People I had left behind because of miscommunications were welcomed back into my space, and those who had been tolerated despite being unsupportive, negative and intensely self-centered, were finally purged. Art techniques I had foolishly discarded were picked up again

and art approaches that no longer served me were cast-off. Healthy boundaries were gradually being re-established and my tarot reading practice re-invigorated. I examined my priorities to ensure they aligned with my goals and doors I didn't know existed, let alone closed, flew open. My spiritual practice became integrated with my writing, art and tarot reading in a way I had never envisioned and I began to see the exit from the Magician's maze.

There are so many layers of meaning to tarot cards and though distracted at times by mundane occurrences in life, I always embrace new lessons, even if it takes a while to see them as lessons. Thanks to an insistent Magician I have been kept on my toes. Certain cards may appear and re-appear throughout my life and though the message may appear similar, the context is different. Rather than travelling a straight line or circle, my life feels more like an upward spiral that leads me to re-examine patterns in my life from an evolving perspective. While writing this I dropped my sketchbook and it opened to the Magician sketch I am creating for a tarot deck. The drawing is now complete and having made my way through the Magicians' maze, and I'm ready to manifest the next lesson on my journey.



*Jung and Tarot: The Archetypal Journey*, Sallie Nichols, 1980, Red Wheel/Weiser Books, York Beach, ME.  
*The Magician: Creator and Trickster* P67

Accompanying photos taken by Monica Bodirsky

Artwork

1. *The Magician* — Callie French 2011

2. photo left to right. *The Magician* from Robert Place's *The Alchemical Tarot Renewed* — Fourth Edition (2015), Centre — Cerridwen — *The Magician* from *Animals Divine* by Lisa Hunt (2005), and Patrick Valenza's *il Bagatto*, from his *Trionfi della Luna — Testo Italiano* (2016).

3. Monica's sketchbook — *the Magician* (work in progress)

© Monica Bodirsky



# OF TIME AND TAROT

by Wayne Limberger

Those who delve even casually into divination with the tarot realize early on that, while the cards often excel at answering questions involving “What? Why? How?” and perhaps even “Who?” (if only in terms of gender and approximate age), they are markedly less effective in addressing “Where?” and “When?” We are concerned here with the last of these considerations.

A number of attempts have been made to attribute time spans to the cards of the tarot. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn used the corresponding astrological signs to peg the twelve zodiacal trump cards to the months of the year, and others have since attempted to bring the seven planetary trumps into this arrangement by applying the essential dignity of the seven traditional planets in their associated signs of rulership. (For example, in this model the Aries period corresponds to both the Emperor and the Mars-linked Tower.) Similarly, the system of 36 Chaldean decanates or “decans” was employed to assign three of the 36 non-Ace minor cards to each of the twelve months of the natural zodiac, beginning with the 2, 3 and 4 of Wands in Aries (March-April), the 5, 6 and 7 of Pentacles in Taurus (April-May) and the 8, 9 and 10 of Swords in Gemini (May-June), with revolving Cups, Swords and Pentacles-led sequences arising at each cardinal point around the rest of the wheel\*.

Three of the four court cards of each suit were overlaid upon the signs in a slightly skewed fashion, starting with the Queens around the cardinal points and continuing with the fixed Knights and mutable Kings of the succeeding elements. The Aces and Pages of the suit were given an entire seasonal quarter of the heavens, elementally keyed to the middle fixed sign of their quadrant (Ace and Page of Pentacles reside in the Spring quadrant, Wands in Summer and so forth)\*\*. This looks very impressive in theory but, as a practical means of pinning the likely outcome of a reading to a specific point in time, the results are often sabotaged by the contextual

limitations of the question. Even though an outcome card (or other chosen signifier) may well zero in on a specific target period for final closure of the matter, that span of time may not be even remotely plausible within the known or reliably assumed scope of the situation.

The same is true of the practice of relating Wands to the shortest elapsed time (days or less), while Pentacles can stretch into years; Cups and Swords are sometimes exchanged, with one or the other expressing weeks or months. The numerical value on a card is taken to identify the number of temporal units within the range, from 1 to 10 hours, days, weeks, months, quarters or years. The court cards don’t partake of this system, except to the extent that the standing Pages and mounted Knights may be construed as generally more rapid in their action, while the seated Queens and Kings are more deliberate\*\*\*. Similarly, the lower-numbered minor cards can be equated to a near-term result and the higher-numbered cards to a more distant one.

There is another cartomantic convention, running slightly counter to the above, which holds that Fire cards (usually the suit of Wands) are fast-acting and of long duration; Air (Swords) cards are fast-acting and of short duration; Water (Cups) cards are slow-acting and of short duration; and Earth (Pentacles) cards are slow-acting and of long duration. These concepts can also be brought to bear on the elemental partitioning of time as described above.

The problem with all of this fine-tuning is that, for an event that is anticipated to come to a head within a period of days or weeks (such as hearing back on a job application), it would be completely irrational to project an outcome years into the future based solely on the testimony of the cards, unless the most reliable prediction is actually “Never!” The only recourse a reader has is to introduce a “fudge” factor:

“Well, the cards say ten years, but we both know that isn’t realistic, so I’m going to assume that it really means ten weeks.” This, of course, blows the whole carefully constructed rationale out of the water.

One fall-back solution is to assume that the effective duration of a reading will cover a limited period of time, and that the outcome will manifest within that range of dates. (For example, one could postulate that the unfolding of a Celtic Cross prediction will normally occur within three months, but might take up to six months in exceptional cases.) However, here’s a simple substitute that will get you “into the ballpark” without relying on single-card interpretations or broad generalities.

# Astro-Tarot Decanate Tableau

Cardinal									Fixed									Mutable									First Quadrant - Northeast								
Aries – Emperor (IV)*						Taurus – Hierophant (V)*						Gemini – Lovers (VI)*																							
2 of Wands			3 of Wands			4 of Wands			5 of Pents			6 of Pents			7 of Pents			8 of Swords			9 of Swords			10 of Swords			Ace/ Page of Pents								
Queen of Wands**				Knight of Pentacles**						King of Swords**						Queen of Cups**																			
Cancer – Chariot (VII)*									Leo – Strength (VIII)*						Virgo – Hermit (IX)*						Second Quadrant - Northwest														
2 of Cups			3 of Cups			4 of Cups			5 of Wands			6 of Wands			7 of Wands			8 of Pents			9 of Pents			10 of Pents			Ace/ Page of Wands								
Queen of Cups**				Knight of Wands**						King of Pentacles**						Queen of Swords**																			
																		Third Quadrant - Southwest																	
Libra – Justice (XI)**						Scorpio – Death (XIII)**						Sagittarius – Temperance (XIV)**																							
2 of Swords			3 of Swords			4 of Swords			5 of Cups			6 of Cups			7 of Cups			8 of Wands			9 of Wands			10 of Wands			Ace/ Page of Cups								
Queen of Swords**				Knight of Cups**						King of Wands**						Queen of Pents**																			
Capricorn – Devil (XV)*									Aquarius – Star (XVII)*						Pisces – Moon (XVIII)*						Fourth Quadrant - Southeast														
2 of Pents			3 of Pents			4 of Pents			5 of Swords			6 of Swords			7 of Swords			8 of Cups			9 of Cups			10 of Cups			Ace/ Page of Swords								
Queen of Pents**				Knight of Swords**						King of Cups**						Queen of Wands**																			

Segregate the 40 minor cards—Ace through 10 of each suit—from the deck. Thoroughly shuffle and cut this sub-pack in your usual manner, then deal a line of four cards face-up (sequence doesn't matter). If all of the cards are Wands, expect resolution of the issue within hours. If there are two or three Wands cards, the event should occur within a few days; if there are two or more Swords, it will transpire within a period of weeks; if there are two or more Cups, expect it to happen within months; if there are two or three Pentacles, the time-frame will be one or more quarters; and if all four cards are Pentacles, the outcome will most likely be years away. If you get two pairs or no pairs, reshuffle and pull again; if this happens twice, go to the next paragraph. The numbers on the cards aren't figured in unless there are multiples of a single number across the set, in which case that number of units should be considered the likely target period within the established range (e.g. two or more 3s in a sequence dominated by Swords cards would be interpreted as 3 weeks). If the date range derived in this manner is inappropriate for the context of the question, go to the next paragraph.

Alternately, judge according to your own experience (and your querent's intuitive grasp of the situation) which time-frame will provide the most reasonable outlook for

advancement of the matter to its conclusion: hours, days, weeks, months, quarters or years. If unsure, use a "best estimate" or perform several spreads to cross-check each option. For example, the answer to a question about when the hiring decision will be made for a previously-submitted job application would not reasonably fall within a window of "hours" or "years," and "months" or "quarters" could also be a stretch. "Days" or "weeks" are obviously better choices.

The most valuable take-away from this discussion is that the reader will benefit from cultivating a certain amount of flexibility and ingenuity in bringing the card-based timing scenario into line with any overriding situational constraints, to the point that a rational forecast can be delivered.

*\* The accompanying diagram renders the zodiacal wheel into a bar design that relates the minor cards to the corresponding court and trump cards by sign and quadrant.*

*\*\* For a thorough explanation of the Golden Dawn decan system, Corrine Kenner's Tarot and Astrology is a good place to start.*

*\*\*\* This is not the place to discuss the distinction between the enthroned Kings of the Waite-Smith deck and the horse-mounted Kings (also called "Knights") of the Golden Dawn and Thoth systems.*

© Wayne Limberger



# CHOOSING ART MEDIA FOR CREATING YOUR OWN TAROT DECK

by Eric K. Lerner

Understanding how the media you employ to create your tarot art will appear when it is printed digitally or mechanically is invaluable in producing a tarot deck that does justice to your vision. Artwork that is created digitally generally reproduces better than traditionally produced works do. If that is the way you wish to go, you are probably on fairly safe ground. However, for those of us who prefer a hands-on approach to illustration, it is important to consider how different media appear when being electronically reproduced.

What your work looks like does not always synch with what will be printed. This concept is not new. For instance the famous illustrator Dulac (who illustrated early editions of *Arabian Nights*) used inked black ink lines in his watercolor and gouache illustrations. The print technology of his epoch employed three plates: cyan, yellow and magenta. Hence no true black. Dulac caught on to this. His inked black lines reproduce in a soft evocative manner being they are not true blacks in printed form. I have known more than one artist who has gone nuts trying to reproduce this effect in his original artwork. How could someone from the Dark Ages get inked lines to look this way? They did not. They took on that appearance in the printing. Understanding that enabled Dulac to produce distinctive illustrations.

You are trying to create something beautiful for people purchasing your deck, so here are some guidelines to consider when choosing your media.

## PAINTS

The following paint media tend to scan and reproduce well: tempera, distemper, casein, gouache, and acrylic. Note that tempera and distemper involve substantial learning curves and if you are not already proficient in their application, starting with a large project is probably not the best idea

unless you appreciate baptism by fire.

Casein is surprisingly easy to work (but quick drying). You can build the color through successive thin layers. Allow the underlying application to dry first. Stock up on extra emulsion to thin the paints with, that and water. It is designed to work primarily on stiff supports such as illustration board. It produces stable rich solid colors but can be manipulated to achieve the appearance of watercolor.

Gouache appears similar to casein and should be thinned with ox gall and/or water to enable smooth handling.

Acrylic was developed to be more user-friendly than casein and tends to reproduce well especially when mixed with a matte medium.

In all cases, remember that purple (violet, lilac and all its chronies) is a notoriously difficult color to reproduce. Often it appears either as Prussian blue or crimson and that is in a good case scenario. (In tarot, purple frequently symbolizes royalty and sometimes pestilence, so you may be inclined to use it). If you decide to employ it, scan test strips first and run them through your printer to save time color correcting in Photoshop. Often it helps to mix a little white with purple.

Metallics and iridescents do not scan or photograph well because they reflect light from both scanners and flash photography and result in fuzzy or broken areas of color. (When I editioned my first handcrafted deck, *The Radiant Spleen Tarot*, the artwork had all been done with metallic and iridescent inks. I spent more time correcting the images in Photoshop than I did creating them.) Avoid them!

For gold, mix vermilion, Naples yellow and white. To mimic a cool gold, a tiny amount of cerulean blue may be added. To make it pop more, use a hairline outline of red, yellow or white. For silver, use a twenty-percent hue of cool gray. A tiny amount of cerulean blue can also add to its vibrancy. White outlining increases its pop. Warm gray tends to reproduce brownish. Only consider using it if next to a large area of mid to dark tone blue or green for contrast, and even then, it may not look so hot. Paynes gray tends to appear muddy in reproduction when mixed with white.

Oil paints do not reproduce as well photographically as you might think. They tend to have sheen. One art instructor I know recommends using a thin coat of matte varnish before photographing or scanning oils. Many of the effects such as impasto or sfumato that you may use oils to achieve do not photograph that well. If you're joined at the hip with oils, you may really wish to consider hiring a professional photographer who is experienced in photographing fine art.

Watercolors achieve mixed results in reproduction. Scanning and photography magnify flaws such as pooling and spotting. It is a good idea to scan a pre-existing watercolor you've done first to see if you are happy with the result.

Non-professional paints often give good results. These include craft paints, house paint and poster paints. Craft paints can prove an excellent option for a novice painter. They handle easily, come in a wide variety of colors and dry quickly. They produce good results with techniques such as dry brushing and double loading brushes. One caution: do not paint complimentary colors over one another wet on wet as you will very often end up with a muddy brown. Allow the underlying color to dry first. Plus they thin well with water and work with most acrylic retarders and mediums. House paints give solid opaque areas of color and work very well with stencils and masking tape. Poster paint also gives solid opaque areas but don't always handle as well as craft paint. (Avoid metallics and iridescents with all these.)

## INK

Black ink is a pretty safe bet. There are a wide range application tools, such as markers, rapidograph pens, dip pens, brushes, etc. Washes can be used to add tone. Color may be added with safe paints or colored inks. When doing commercial illustration, I found it satisfactory to add color digitally. The trick is to use the multiply mode in applying color in Photoshop. That way you do not obscure your black lines.

Illustration markers tend to scan well. Be careful of banding or pooling when applying overlaid strokes. Using a circular motion when laying in the color reduces this effect. However, there is a workaround for this in Photoshop. Select the area using the magic wand set for contiguous color with a tolerance of between 20 and 40 and then fill the area with the desired color to achieve a solid fill. (Select the color you want using the eyedropper tool.)

Avoid metallic or iridescent inks unless you are prepared to spend much more time doing corrections in Photoshop than you did creating the original image.

*Textured papers can be problematic, especially lace, metallic and translucent papers. When planning on incorporating specialty papers or fabrics, do a test scan before using them throughout a project.*

## PENCIL

Pencil does not generally reproduce that well on its own. (Pencilled lines are inked over in many forms of commercial printing. Think of the old comic book and animation processes in which pencil drawing were prepared to be inked over.) Particularly harder pencils like a standard 2B tend to scan pretty wishy-washy. Softer pencils tend to reproduce better, but the results can be a bit capricious. If you've really determined to use pencil, scan and test print a sample drawing first and makes sure that you are pleased with the results. Colored pencils, even watercolor pencils, do not have the vibrancy, clarity or continuous tone of ink or paint when reproduced.

## PASTELS

Chalk pastels are matte and blend well. They may be an option. Remember that textured pastel paper may produce broken areas of color that become more apparent in scanning. Oil pastels like oil paints may prove to have too much sheen. Adding a little mineral spirits produces an ink wash effect. Be careful with the metallic and iridescent oil pastels. Consider substituting similar matte colors.

## AIRBRUSH

Airbrush became a big favorite for slick magazine illustrations before the advent of digital art. It reproduces well and offers subtle blending effects. Like tempera painting you need to commit to learning how to do it!

## PRINTMAKING

Woodcut, linocut, lithography and silk screen tend to reproduce well.

Etching and engraving can prove problematic. Very often, subtleties of different line values get lost. One only has to compare an original imprint of Albrecht Durer's Melancholia with a book reproduction to see how much does not transfer. The original imprints demonstrate three-dimensional depth created through varying depths of burin incisions and inking that achieves distinct spatial planes in the image. You simply don't discern this three dimensionality in photo mechanical reproductions.

Textural and tinting effects of aquatint and softground do not necessarily scan or photograph that well. Most printmakers



I know spend a lot of time photoshopping their scans to get approximations of their originals.

Look, etching is my favorite media. I've learned the hard way that you do an etching to create an etching not an illustration. Given the amount of time you commit to an etching, you are much better off using pen and ink if your end product is going to be offset or printed through computer.

Gelatin, clay and other monotyping processes may yield mixed results. Generally, if you are using flat inks or pigments, the results may prove acceptable. (I have found that the aforementioned craft paints are excellent for gelatin monotyping.) Scan and print a test of a print you like first to see that type of result you are likely to get.

## COLLAGE

Continuous tone images such as photographs and magazine illustrations and line art tend to scan well. But be careful to choose magazine clippings that are printed on fairly thick paper as the image on the verso of the paper may show through when scanned.

Solid colored paper also tends to scan well. (Again be careful with purple and its permutations.) Textured papers can be

problematic, especially lace, metallic and translucent papers. When planning on incorporating specialty papers or fabrics, do a test scan before using them throughout a project.

The same should be noted for found objects and organic textures. Dried leaves and flowers often scan well, but test them first. If you use insects, don't put them on a scanner because you will crush them, unless you are using just the wings. Also, use a matte decoupage glue, methyl cellulose, acrylic matte medium or archival glue stick for adhesive. Some adhesives will add too much shine.

In the next article I will discuss paper selection, backing your cards and trimming them.

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# Reviews

## ASTROLOGY IN TAROT

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

Author: Alison Coals

Self-published - 2017

ASIN #B073H6Y6B2

*A*strology In Tarot is a 108 page e-book by Astrologer and Tarotist Alison Coals. It is all text, with no scans of Tarot cards. Not all Tarot readers use astrological associations, as Coals points out in her introduction. But when a reader does decide to use them, they do bring another layer of understanding into a reading. Coals also points out that there is more than one astrological system that can be applied to the Tarot, and that the system that she uses is a modification of the system developed by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

Coals notes that not all decks lend themselves to an astrological overlay. It is up to the reader to decide if they

want to use astrological associations in a reading, and which deck they wish to work with.

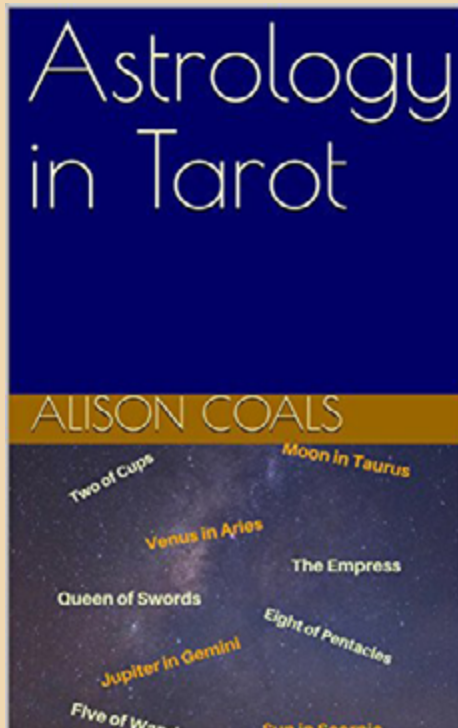
In her prelude to addressing each of the cards, Coals presents the reader with the qualities associated with each of the planets, along with the qualities associated with each of the signs of the zodiac (starting the year at 0 degrees Aries). There is also a chart of each of the signs under Cardinal, Fixed, and Mutable, and a chart showing the twelve Major Arcana that are associated

with the twelve signs, and the seven Major Arcana that are associated with the seven planets. The Fool, the Hanged Man, and Judgment are considered to be elemental trumps, associated with Air, Water, and Fire respectively.

Each individual Tarot card is presented with their astrological associations: for example, the Fool is associated with the element of Air, and linked to the planet Uranus (one of the rulers of Aquarius, an Air sign), followed by a short discussion of how the attributes of each association play out in the card.

The Minors start with the Twos through Tens. Each card is presented with the card number and suit name, the associated planet, along with the sign that the planet is in, and an approximate date that the card rules. For example, the Two of Wands is Mars in Aries, and rules from the 20th to the 29th/30th of March. This is followed by a discussion of how all of this plays out in the card.

In the Court Cards, the Golden Dawn system assigns Cardinal attributes to the Queens, Fixed attributes to the Kings, and Mutable attributes to the Knights. The presentation for the Kings, Queens, and Knights includes the main energy for the card, along





with how the attributes work with it. For example, the Queen of Wands is listed as someone who is versatile and creative. She is associated with Aries, a Cardinal Fire sign, and sometimes with Leo, a Fixed Fire sign.

The Aces and Pages are not assigned planets or signs in the Golden Dawn system. Aces are seen as pure elemental quality: Ace of Wands: primal Fire, Ace of Cups: primal Water, Ace of Swords: primal Air, Ace of Pentacles: primal Earth. Pages are associated with the Aces. There is a very nice chart in this section listing the associations between the four quadrants, the four seasons, and the Aces/Pages. An example here would be Aries / Taurus / Gemini, Spring, Ace / Page of Pentacles. Basically what we are seeing here is the seasonal attributes over-laid on the basic energy of the Aces and Pages.

The Appendices include a chart listing the astrological correspondences for the Major arcana (planet, sign, and element); a chart listing the astrological correspondences for the Minor Arcana; a chart listing Court card astrological correspondences (for the Golden Dawn and for an alternative system); the astrological correspondences for the Aces and Pages; references (decks and books); a short bibliography; and a listing of useful resources.

The tone of writing is very light and airy—too light for me, but Coals does get her points across. I would have preferred her to stick with the Golden Dawn system, rather than tossing in different systems as she went along. You probably need to know that I know a minimum of astrology, and while I understood and could follow what Coals was saying, I don't see the need for adding the astrological layer to a reading. Were I to do so, I would be more inclined to use the Kabbalah and astrology as mutual layers. Astrologers

will find this book easy to follow, and of benefit. Those with little to no astrology background will be able to follow the book, but could get easily sidetracked.

© Bonnie Cehovet



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# TAROT FOR ONE

## THE ART OF READING FOR YOURSELF

Review by Jadzia DeForest

Author: Courtney Weber

Weiser Books - 2016

ISBN #978-1-57863-595-5

[www.redwheelweiser.com](http://www.redwheelweiser.com)

*T*arot for One is a 256 page book on how to read the tarot for yourself.

Many readers, especially those who are very familiar with the card's meanings, find that they have a difficult time reading for themselves. Often tarot readers wonder if they are projecting their hopes or fears onto the cards and the outcome. Interpreting spreads from an unbiased position can become challenging. So Weber wrote this book

on how to master the art of the self-read.

This book includes a section called The Fool's Journey: The Story of Tarot and Your Place in it. Full of anecdotes and examples of each card in movie scenes and TV series, makes this journey through the Major Arcana quite engaging.

The other sections of the book are Court Cards; Numbered Cards of the Minor Arcana; Recognizing the Voice of Tarot; Reversed Cards; Other Tools: What's Missing from Your Tarot Reading? Plus How to Interpret Tougher Cards; When Not to Read Tarot for Yourself; Practice Spreads.

Weber includes information on the history of tarot and a basic overview of how the cards work. Although reversals are discussed, she leaves it up to the reader whether to use reversed cards or not.

Given the information in *Tarot for One*, and Weber's easy to follow writing style, I'd recommend this book for the someone just beginning to learn tarot as well as the professional who'd like to get a better handle on reading their own cards.

A note to beginners: this book does not include an in depth section on the Minor Arcana card meanings. It does however cover the Major Arcana and

the Court Cards in some detail.

A large section of this book is in a workbook style that leads the reader through exercises on finding the voice of the tarot and your personal associations for each card.

Weber goes in depth about how to avoid your own bias and get to a place of confidently being able to read the cards for yourself.

There's a section of spreads specifically designed for self-readings toward the back. They include topics of love life, career, conflict resolution, and looking at the future.

*Tarot for One* is illustrated with the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot throughout. Charts give a great visual aid to many of the exercises in the workbook section.

One of the things I found most interesting about this book is Weber's inclusion of these topics: yes / no questions; how to tell timing; and how to tell which possible variation on meaning a reversed card is taking on.

I don't want to go too much into the techniques that Weber uses. I'll just say they are simple yet brilliant, and if you want to learn the Art of Reading for Yourself then you should add this book to your shelf.

© Jadzia DeForest





# TAROCCHI APPROPRIATI

Review by Bonnie Cehovet

International Collaborative Project

Limited Edition

Museo Dei Tarocchi - 2015

The *Tarocchi Appropriati* is a 22 card, majors only deck and 96 page companion book that is a collaborative project under the auspices of the Museo Dei Tarocchi, hosted by Morena Poltronieri, in collaboration with Ernesto Fazioli, and overseen by Tarot historian Giovanni Pelosini. This is a Limited, Special Edition of 100 sets. The cards and companion book are packaged in a special, ribbed, corrugated box with the cover art on the lid (which carries the Museo's Hot Wax Seal).

Note: There are two additional cards—a title card, and a card listing the artists. The booklet is available in English, translated by artist Arnell Ando (*Transformational Tarot*). Cover art is by Jessica Angiulli.

This deck is an homage from the hosts of Tarocchi Appropriati (Morena Poltronieri and Ernesto Fazioli) to a time in Tarot history when nobility enjoyed playing parlor games with the cards. I loved the background given in the accompanying book—how the presence of the Tarot in Bologna was later than it was elsewhere, and that

it was not always performed in verse. Each trump of *Tarocchini Appropriati* was inspired for a different lady, and was presented in two distinct parts—the first being the correspondences between the trump cards and the ladies, the second, in prose, provided an explanation of the proposed correspondence (which was at times



rather wicked or cheeky).

The artists and their corresponding cards are listed at the beginning of the companion book, with artist bios at the back of the book. They represent an international artistic talent:

Giovani Monti – The Fool

Lucio Mondini – The Magician

Caterina Forest – The High Priestess

Martino Barbieri – The Empress

Octavio Monaco – The Emperor

Alain Giannotti – The Pope

Eric Lerner – The Lovers

Claire Santi – The Chariot

Paride Cevolani – Justice

Jari Casagrande – The Hermit

Mariarita Frazzoni – The Wheel of Fortune

Tiziana Bertacci – Strength

Antonello Mantovani – The Hangman

Ornella Lamberti – Death

Giovanni Pelosini – Temperance

Rebecca Mietzelfield – The Devil

Francesca Ricci – The Tower

Payal Anil Padmanabhan – The Star

Rita Minelli – The Moon

Adolfina De Stefani – The Sun

Patricia Brown – Judgement

Franco Coletti – The World

The cards are presented with a small black and white scan, the artists interpretation of the card, and a poem from poet Jari Casagrande (who also was the artist for The Hermit). Tarot historian Giovanni Pelosini contributed the card Temperance. I love this way of looking at the Tarot—and hope that you do also!

The cards are 2.75” by 5”, on matte cardstock (my favorite cardstock!). The card backs are done in a muted brown and gold, and are not reversible. The card faces are borderless, and include the card number and title.

Ruota di Fortuna: “Continuous movement of life, I find you constantly,



even if hidden among crickets and owls who rejoice. I know where to look, when the dark corners of memory require your eyes. You know where to find me, whenever I whisper of the love that brought us together ... Friends of the heart ... Sisters forever”.

The Death: “Arcana XIII is obtained from the masque headgear carved wooden with a clan c.1875 (Size: 100 X 100 cm—mixed media: Acrylic on canvas). It is a shamanic headdress topped with a totem animal. To protect people in the journey between life and death. To enter into another world, where chaos reigns supreme. Where good is in constant struggle with the evil dark forces of nature. It is the realm of the night, the womb, with felines looking hungry at coops with feathers that camouflage the head...Feast on a solemn transformation. A royal banquet. Death and then unmentionable passing—until it reaches the extreme point where fingers are touching, in a magical exchange that sets off sparks of new life. Roar. Rattle. Dance. It is a shamanic headdress topped by a totem animal, an object to overcome the illusion of life, believing in death, attempting a new journey. Vision quest.

Life does not die.”

The Lovers: “My musical inspiration for composing the Amanti card was the punk music of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Ultimately it was the determining factor in employing digital media. When presented with the project, I pulled cards for both my friend Alain Giannotti and myself to let Tarot itself determine what we would do. He got Papa and I Amani. Initially I aspired to use a piece of classical music for inspiration. But the more studies I did, the more impossible I found it to decide to just one musical composition. For me, the meaning of the Lover’s card is distilled as conflict.

In Marseilles inspired Tarots the lover is trying to choose between two very different women while he feels hapless victim to an arrow of fate about to crash through his consciousness in making his choice. Classical music excels in expressing pure emotional states or mimicking natural phenomena. A single composition that gave voice to Amanti would have to implode. Increasingly I realized many punk songs did an excellent job of such turmoil. Having been a performer on that musical scene myself I remembered how we put together cover art for our 45’s, gig posters, and cassette inserts. We used crude collage. If we had a lot of finesse maybe we used glue sticks, manicuring scissors and ball point pen to attack our material. More likely we used clear scotch tape, blunter craft scissors, and a photocopier. Digital composition is the closet thing to an equivalent today.”

I am very honored to be reviewing this deck. I want to personally thank Arnell Ando for doing the translation into English that allowed me to share in the wisdom that it presents. The work that the Museo de Tarocchi hosts is incomparable. This deck in particular is one that will appeal to Tarot artists, historians, and collectors.

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## ***Tarot Conferences & Symposiums***

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### **Bay Area Tarot Symposium (BATS)**

San Jose, California

[www.dodivination.com](http://www.dodivination.com)

### **London Tarot Festival**

May 20th, 2017

London UK

<http://tarotconference.co.uk/tarot-festival/>

### **North Star Tarot Conference**

February 9 - 11, 2018

Eagan, Minnesota

[www.tctarotcollective.com](http://www.tctarotcollective.com)

### **Northwest Tarot Symposium**

March 2 - 4, 2018

Portland, Oregon

[www.nwtarotsymposium.com](http://www.nwtarotsymposium.com)

### **Readers Studio / Tarot & Psychology Conference**

TBA 2018

Queens, New York

[www.tarotschool.com](http://www.tarotschool.com)

### **Tarot Festival in the Castle**

June 3rd, 2017

Zurich Switzerland

[www.tarotconference.co.uk](http://www.tarotconference.co.uk)

### **TABI Tarot Conference**

The British Isles

[www.tabiconference.com](http://www.tabiconference.com)

### **Tarosophy Tarot Conventions**

September 15 - 17, 2017

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

[www.tarotassociation.net](http://www.tarotassociation.net)

### **Tarot Guild of Australia International Conference**

Date: TBA

Melbourne, Australia

[www.tarotguild.org.au](http://www.tarotguild.org.au)

### **UK Tarot Conference**

October 13 - 14, 2017

London UK

[www.tarotconference.co.uk](http://www.tarotconference.co.uk)

## ***Tarot Associations***

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### **American Tarot Association**

[ata-tarot.com](http://ata-tarot.com)

### **Tarot Association of the British Isles**

[www.tabi.org.uk](http://www.tabi.org.uk)

### **Tarot Professionals**

[www.tarotassociation.net](http://www.tarotassociation.net)

### **Tarot Guild of Australia**

[www.tarotguild.org.au](http://www.tarotguild.org.au)

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