



Discover the Next Chapter of Your Life's Story with the Tarot as Your Guide

Presenting the archetypes of the tarot in the style of Japanese graphic novels, *Mystical Manga Tarot* invites you on an adventure that will reveal the answers you seek. Based on the Rider-Waite system and beautifully illustrated by Rann, this deck is both easy to understand and captivating to use.

Mystical Manga Guidebook gives you a breakdown of the cards, explaining the symbolism and meanings found in each one. Featuring spreads and sample readings by tarot expert Barbara Moore, this book helps you uncover mystical opportunities and learn more about yourself as well as the people in your life.



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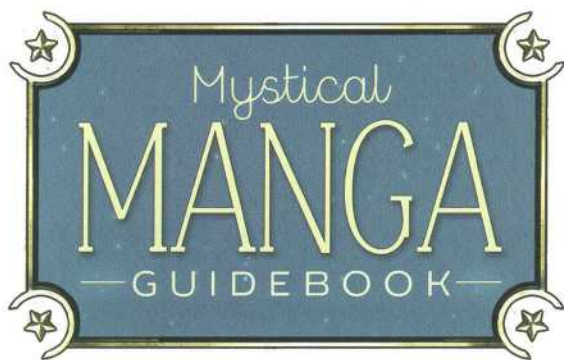
MYSTICAL MANGA GUIDEBOOK

MOORE & RANN



Mystical MANGA —GUIDEBOOK—





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Barbara Moore (Minnesota) has been reading and writing for as long as she can remember. In the early 1990s, at a party, someone put a tarot deck in Barbara's hands; she's held on tightly ever since. Tarot provides just enough structure so that we don't get lost as we explore the mysteries, plumb our dark corners, and locate our North Stars. She's published a number of books on tarot, including *Tarot for Beginners*, *Tarot Spreads*, *The Steampunk Tarot*, *The Gilded Tarot*, *The Mystic Dreamer Tarot*, and *Tarot of the Hidden Realm*. Writing is solitary work and is relieved by teaching tarot at conferences around the world. Barbara also loves working directly with clients, helping them uncover guidance and insight in the cards. Connect with Barbara online at www.tarotshaman.com.

Mystical
MANGA
—GUIDEBOOK—



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The Mystic Dreamer Tarot

Tarot of the Hidden Realm

Your Tarot Your Way

Introduction

Welcome to the *Mystical Manga Tarot Guidebook*, and congratulations on beginning your own magical journey. If you haven't already, take a look at the cards in your deck. Pick one that intrigues you. Lose yourself in the image. Ask it to reveal one of its secrets. Put the card back. Now ask "What do I need to know as I begin this journey?" Shuffle your cards and draw one. Just as you did with the first, get lost in the picture and imagine it is answering your question. If there are words or numbers on the card, what do they suggest to you? What story is the picture telling? How would you translate it to answer your question? If you've never done a reading before, well, you can't say that anymore because you've just done your first reading. Yes, it can be as easy as that. And yet there is so much more to learn!

One of the reasons tarot continues to fascinate so many people is because it is easy to use and it provides so many opportunities to dig deeper. Symbolism, tradition, esoteric practices, philosophy, mythology ... these cards are keys that open so many doors and will take you to unexpected and enchanted places. This book, the cards, and your own ideas and intuition are all you need for now. Later you might want to draw on more resources. There is an

appendix at the end that will give you some ideas of where to go next. But that is getting ahead of ourselves...

Before getting into the card meanings, it's helpful to have an overview of how to work with the cards. The first chapter will help you familiarize yourself with some of the common terms used in tarot as well as address some important ideas that you'll want to review before you start. After you have a handle on the basics, the second chapter dives right in to the main way that people use the cards: doing a reading. The chapter will cover beginning and ending a reading, asking good questions, how to interpret a spread in a way that creates a unified reading, and practice tips. The third chapter includes a collection of spreads. These first three chapters will give a good framework and will help the card interpretations make more sense.

The fourth and fifth chapters provide the basic card interpretations. You will notice that the card meanings are purposefully short to create space for your own magic and your own intuition, as well as to play with the cards. This is important: while there are basic, commonly accepted meanings that many people use, there is no one and only way to interpret a card. If there were, we'd only need one book on the subject. The cards are symbolic and, like all good symbols, have layers of meaning. To make things more interesting, the commonly accepted meanings for many of the cards have changed over time. Tarot is a living tool that evolves to reflect changes in society and an expanding human consciousness. Please don't let anyone tell you that there is only one way to interpret any one card. Everyone's truth is different. My goal is to provide enough guidance so that you can access your own inner divine knowing, because that is where the real answers lie.

1

Glossary and FAQs

As with most subjects, tarot has some terms that aren't necessarily part of common language. They aren't difficult, but it helps to have them explained up front so that when you run across them in this (and perhaps other) books, you will know what they mean. Also, learning these words and key ideas will also begin to introduce what tarot is and how it works. If a word is used in a definition that is also in the glossary, it will be in bold.

After the glossary are a few FAQs that are really an excuse for me to tell you some important things you'll benefit by knowing. And they really are among the most asked questions.

Glossary

Arcana: Arcana is from the Latin word for "secrets."

Coins: Coins is a suit in a **tarot deck** that is part of the **Minor Arcana**. This suit is sometimes called other names such as pentacles, stones, or earth. This suit deals with the physical world, material items, money, resources, and health.

Court Cards: Court cards are found in each suit of the **Minor Arcana**. Each suit has its own: page, knight, queen, and king. In

some decks, these ranks are renamed. These cards represent people, aspects of someone's personality, or a role someone may play in a situation.

Cups: The suit of Cups in a **tarot deck** is part of the **Minor Arcana**. This suit deals with emotions, relationships, and creativity.

Divination: Divination is commonly thought of as seeing the future, although it can mean communing with the Divine or seeking spiritual guidance. This concept is discussed further in the FAQ section.

Layout: A layout is a diagram or a written description of how to lay the cards out on the table in order to do a **reading**. Usually each position in a spread includes a description of what that position represents, such as "you," "the past," "the future," and "advice." Also see **Spread**.

Major Arcana: The Major **Arcana** is a section of a **tarot deck**. It contains twenty-two cards that have a name and a number, such as 0, the Fool; III, the Empress; XVI, the Tower, etc. As the Major Arcana, these cards represent the greater secrets in tarot. These cards represent important life events and lessons, which are often circumstances beyond our control.

Minor Arcana: The Minor **Arcana** is a section of a **tarot deck**. It contains fifty-six cards. It is further divided into four suits: **Wands**, **Cups**, **Swords**, and **Coins**. Each suit contains an ace through ten as well as four **Court cards**. These cards represent the people and events of everyday life and are usually more within our control.

Querent: A querent is the person in a tarot **reading** who is asking the question or getting the reading. The **reader**, if she is reading for herself, may also be the querent.

Reader: The reader is the person who interprets the cards in a **reading**.

Reading: A reading is the act of laying out the cards and interpreting them in order to get an answer to a question or to provide requested advice or guidance.

Reversal: Some people shuffle their decks so that the cards are not all facing the same way. They do this so that when they lay the cards in a **spread**, some will appear upright or in a normal position (that is, the top of the picture is at the top) and some will appear upside down (with the top of the picture at the bottom). These **readers** then incorporate the reversals into the **reading**, often giving those cards different meanings. Not all readers use reversals; it is not necessary to use them in order to be a good reader.

Spread: A spread is a diagram or a written description of how to lay the cards out on the table in order to do a **reading**. Usually each position in a spread includes a description of what that position represents, such as “you,” “the past,” “the future,” and “advice.” Also see **Layout**.

Swords: Swords is a suit in a **tarot deck**, part of the **Minor Arcana**. This suit deals with reason, ways of thinking, and communication.

Tarot deck: A tarot deck has seventy-eight cards. The cards divide naturally into two smaller parts: the **Major Arcana** and the **Minor Arcana**. Some decks call themselves tarot, but they may have more or fewer cards and may not have the same structure described here. Whether these decks are still considered a tarot deck is an area for intense debate amongst tarot users.

Wands: The suit of Wands in a **tarot deck** is part of the **Minor Arcana**. This suit deals with will, projects, career, and passion.

FAQS

1. *Does the tarot tell the future?*

Some people scoff at tarot, saying, “Oh, I don’t believe in that stuff.” Those people are showing how little they know about tarot. Tarot is simply a deck of cards, so it seems silly to “not believe” in something that is physically right there in front of them. What they usually mean is that they don’t believe that seventy-eight pieces of cardstock can predict the future. They wouldn’t be alone, as many successful readers don’t believe this either.

In order to believe the tarot or anything, for that matter, can tell the future, you have to believe that the future can be predicted. Most people these days do think that it is possible to “predict” the future to some extent. *Predict*, after all, merely means to “estimate” that something will happen. We “estimate” all the time. For example, I may not know what I’m going to do on a specific day six months from now, but I have a pretty clear idea of what I’m going to do tomorrow. Similarly, if you look at a weather forecast for tomorrow, you have a certain measure of confidence in it. However, if the weather system is volatile, you know through experience that that prediction could change really quickly. Furthermore, while you have some confidence in a daily forecast, the further out you look, the less certain it is.

If your experience leads you to believe that the future can be predicted to some extent, then you might think that the cards can do that. You may also, when doing readings, note that if the situation looks chaotic or the time frame is further out, you know that the prediction may not be certain. The bottom line is that very few readers today believe that the distant future is set in stone and can be predicted. Most readers who believe that the future can kind of

be predicted also believe that the tarot can be used to find ways to proactively change outcomes. Free will is a powerful thing.

However, there are some readers who do not believe that tarot can or should be used to tell the future at all. These readers are more interested in using the cards to help people figure things out and make good decisions.

The answer to the question “Does the tarot tell the future?” is: It depends on what you believe. Tarot is a tool and you can use it however you like, if it fits in your belief system.

2. How does the tarot work? Where do the answers come from?

The answer is similar to the first one: It really does depend on what you believe. Some people believe that the cards and reader are guided by an unseen force, perhaps a deity, helping spirit, or ancestor. Some people take a more psychological approach and say that the cards create synchronistic moments that help the querent tap into their own unconscious to find the answers they seek. Others believe deeply and truly in magic and think that it makes sure that just the right cards come up to convey the needed message. And, of course, there are those with amazing psychic or intuitive gifts who believe that tarot helps them access those abilities more easily. There are many variations on these ideas, too.

Knowing what you believe is important. For one, it will help you learn to be a better reader. For example, if you take the psychological approach, you may really focus on learning about symbolism and even psychological techniques to make your readings more useful. If you believe that a deity guides your readings, then you probably can work on strengthening that relationship so you are more sensitive to the guidance when it is given. Until you are clear on how you think tarot works, your practice will be scattered and you may not make the progress you’d like. That’s okay,

though. Sometimes we need to explore things until we figure out what we believe. So don't let it stop you if you aren't sure; just be aware that you might have to shift gears if things aren't working for you.

3. Do you have to be psychic to read tarot?

Not necessarily. See question 2.

4. Can I use the tarot to spy on my ex or tell me if my boyfriend is cheating on me?

Using the cards to read about other people without their permission is an ethical issue. If you have the skills and believe it is possible, then yes, you, in theory, *could* spy on someone. Many reputable readers will not do that, though. In the first case, what your ex is doing is none of your business. In the second case, if you are even asking that question there are bigger issues with the relationship. There are better ways to use the cards that won't compromise your integrity.

5. Are tarot cards evil?

Nope. They are cardstock with images printed on them. In the same way that a hammer isn't inherently evil but can either build a house or hurt someone, the tarot can be used to find guidance or provide solace or it can be used to trick someone out of their money or worse.

6. Do the cards require special care?

All tarot cards really require is to be kept somewhere safe where they will all stay together and not get lost, dirty, bent, wet, or

burned. Beyond that, some readers believe that the cards pick up the energy of the people they read for and consequently “clear” them using various methods. Some pass the deck through the smoke of burning sage or incense, put them by a window under a full moon (or in direct sunlight), store them with a crystal (either one to absorb negative energy or instill positive energy), or put all the cards in order and reshuffle, just to name a few ways to cleanse them.

7. Will cards show if someone is going to die?

That’s a hard question. Most readers say, no, physical death (even if the Death card is present) is rarely indicated. The cards are symbolic and the Death card usually represents a metaphoric death ... the end of something, like a period of trouble, a job, or a relationship.

8. If the cards show an outcome that I don’t like, what can I do?

Most readers can (you will learn to) work with the information provided in a reading to find ways that you can shift the energy in a situation and change the outcome. There are, of course, some things that you cannot control, but the cards can also help identify when that is the case. If you work for a huge company and they decide to close your branch, you might not be able to stop that from happening, but there might be other options that you can explore with your cards. Or if your boyfriend broke up with you, there probably isn’t much you can do to “win him back” (nor should you want to control someone in that way), but there are plenty of situations where you can exercise your will and turn things around.

9. Why aren't there clear and agreed upon meanings for the cards? Aren't they sacred and unchanged from the start ... whenever that was?

Tarot started, as far as we know (based on the available historical evidence), in the mid-1400s and was used for playing a game called *tarrochi*, which is a trick-taking game like Bridge. The cards were not used for any sort of divination back then ... that usage evolved over time starting around the eighteenth century. Between the card game and actual divinatory practices, there is evidence that during the card games, people would create stories about why they drew certain cards: for example, how they are like the card they drew. The earliest versions of tarot decks used for fortune-telling differed from the earliest decks in design. Later, in the early 1900s, the two most popular decks were published: the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot and the Thoth Tarot.

The Thoth Tarot was designed by Aleister Crowley and painted by Lady Frieda Harris. It is very distinctive and is not as popular as the Rider-Waite-Smith deck. In fact, most decks today (in the United States), including this one, are either based on or heavily inspired by the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot. It is named for the publisher (Rider), the designer (Arthur Waite), and the artist (Pamela "Pixie" Colman Smith). Oddly enough, not many people use Waite's book about the deck to learn how to do readings. One reason may be because it is hard to understand, and some say that Waite was purposefully trying to obscure some of the meanings. Waite was part of the Golden Dawn, a secret society popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His beliefs are grounded in that group's teachings and focus quite a bit on Christian mysticism and some Jewish mysticism. Over the years, other readers have written books about the deck and have evolved the

meanings to reflect current belief systems and modern symbolic interpretations. Many modern readers don't consider themselves Christians, and, consequently, the heavy religious symbolism doesn't always resonate with them, which is why we have so many wonderful decks available to us now.

The study and use of tarot is rich and complex, which means it isn't always easy or clear-cut. But this is also why it is endlessly fascinating.

10. Do I really need to have a code of ethics?

There is no law that says you have to have a code of ethics. However, it is a good idea to know what kinds of questions you are comfortable answering and what your boundaries are. A lot of readers won't answer legal or medical questions, as they are not lawyers or doctors. Some readers won't read for or about someone who isn't present. Illegal activities are another area to think about. If someone wants to know if their embezzlement plan will work, you need to know if that is something you want to be involved in. What if someone wants to know if they'll get caught if they cheat on their spouse? What if someone wants to know what to do to make someone fall in love with them? What if someone wants you to tell them what to do, such as should they take this job, marry this person, skip this recommended surgery, etc.? How much responsibility are you willing to take in the course of a reading? People usually want readings when they are confused, upset, scared, angry, or in some other highly emotional state. They often don't know what to do and want someone else to make decisions for them. It's a tricky thing, being a reader, and it comes with a lot of responsibility. So having a code of ethics will help you know where you draw the line.

These are some of the commonly asked general questions. Other common questions are specific to the individual cards or how to do readings, and those questions will be discussed in the following pages.



2

How to Do a Reading (with Samples)

Doing a reading is the most popular use of the cards in the United States. In parts of Europe, tarot cards are still used to play tarocchi rather than for fortune-telling. *Fortune-telling* is the phrase usually used by contemporary readers to mean a reading that tells the querent their future in a way that sounds like whatever the cards say is inevitably going to happen. In this sort of reading, querents are like victims of fate, passively hearing what their lives will be like but with no power to shape their own destiny. Readers today, at least reputable ones, don't read like that. Instead, they recognize that people have free will and can make their own choices to shape their futures. Of course, some paths are easier to alter than others. In cases where changing the outcome isn't possible (such as when someone else has made a decision that affects you but that you cannot change), the reader will help the querent find productive ways of dealing with the situation rather than just stating a dire prophecy and leaving it at that.

Reading in a way that recognizes individual autonomy and choice creates a far more interesting and empowering experience. Helping a querent find his or her power is like giving someone a fully charged magic wand. Maybe the wand doesn't work like the ones in the Harry Potter stories, but there really is something magical about finding ways to take control of your life. A good reading does just that.

Parts of a Reading

A reading consists of a few important things: a reader, a querent, a deck of cards, a question, and a spread. Some of these are pretty simple, but the question and the spread require more explanation.

A reader is needed to read the cards. A querent is needed to ask the question. If you are reading for yourself, you are both the reader and the querent. A deck of tarot cards is, naturally, required, although it need not be a physical set of cards because you can also use an app (and there are some good ones out there, particularly those produced by the Fool's Dog).

A question is helpful to give focus to a reading. The question can be very specific, such as "Which job offer would be a better fit for me, job A or job B?", or general, such as "What do I need to know right now?" For some readers, the question doesn't matter much to them and some even tell the client to simply think about their question but not say it out loud. Other readers actually don't want a question at all and simply lay the cards and convey whatever information they see. As you are learning to do readings, try all kinds of methods to see which one or ones you like best.

While some readers won't ask for a question, most readers prefer to ask for one and to have as much background as the querent

feels comfortable sharing. Because the cards can have many aspects to their meanings, having a clear question allows the reader to use the most appropriate meaning for the question. Some people like to “test the reader” by refusing to interact with them, saying “you should just know.” However, most readers feel like this is the same thing as going to a doctor and not telling her what is wrong and just expecting a diagnosis and a cure. In both a tarot reading and a medical examination, the more information provided and the more cooperative the querent or patient, the better job the reader or doctor can do.

When beginning a reading, spend time discussing the situation under consideration in order to discover what the real question is because sometimes it isn’t apparent, even to the querent. This is time well spent and will help you to craft a question that will allow you to provide the best information possible. As you work on the question, keep in mind your belief system and ethical boundaries. Your belief system will steer what kind of readings you will do. Remember questions 1, 2, and 10 from the FAQ section.

After finalizing the question, you can then select or create a spread to use that will answer the question. In the next chapter, you will find a small collection of spreads as well as basic instructions for creating your own. Picking the right spread is just as important as the question. For example, if you are asking about which of three vacation destinations to pick, using a Past-Present-Future spread wouldn’t be the most efficient to get a clear answer. Instead, a spread designed to compare and contrast possible options would be more useful.

Extra Touches

A reader, a querent, a deck, a question, and a spread are all you really need to do a reading. However, there are extra touches that you can add to your reading. These are not necessary and some of the ideas may not mesh with your belief system. Take a look and if any sound interesting, give them a try. When exploring tarot and developing your reading style, experimentation and a willingness to try new things is almost as important as knowing what you believe. While the reading is the central focus, how you begin and how you end are also important. The way you start sets the mood and intent, and the way you end brings a sense of closure to the experience.

Beginnings

A tarot reading can be very casual, two friends at a coffee shop with their cards spread out among mugs and pastries (being careful not to get the cards sticky!), or it can be a full-blown mystical experience ... or anything in between. No matter where you fall on that spectrum, the reading has to start somehow and many people find it useful to cultivate a sense of intent and focus. This can be done by simply being silent for a moment and taking a few deep breaths to calm the mind or by performing a ritual where a sacred space is created and spiritual guides called in or by saying a silent prayer. Another simple, symbolic act is lighting a candle, which represents the desire for illumination or revelation. While all these actions look different, they all do the same thing—give the reader space and time to clear their mind and commit their attention to the reading. A reflective beginning, honoring the work you are about to do, also helps the querent prepare to receive the informa-

tion. Creating a sense of ceremony or ritual, no matter how small or low-key, lets the mind know that something special is about to happen and alerts the spirit that you are entering a liminal space, a place that is outside of ordinary time, where the conscious, rational mind settles down and lets the spirit and intuitive self take center stage.

Endings

For many people, a reading is a sacred act, an invitation for the Universe to converse with them and offer guidance from a larger prospective. Just as whatever opening ritual or habit you use to begin sets the stage for that experience, how you end the reading provides a sense of closure. The ending ritual or action completes the circle, allows a moment to really hear and integrate the information, and express gratitude for the guidance given. Readings can range in time from a few minutes to an hour or more and contain lots of information. Sometimes the information or talking is necessary to get to the real meat of the reading. Just like a well-written book or essay will sum up the core points in a conclusion, at the end of your reading, take a moment to consolidate the information, perhaps in a single sentence along with a few action steps. Another way to symbolically end the reading is to blow out the candle, if you lit one to start.

Shuffling

In addition to the actual beginning and ending actions, there are other aspects of the reading process that can be used to help ease the mind and spirit into an open state of receptivity. For example, before laying out the cards, the reader must shuffle them. Each reader has his or her own favorite way. Try several methods and

decide which you prefer, then do it the same way every time. For example, if you riffle shuffle, maybe you will shuffle three or seven times (these numbers often carry symbolic significance to people) before laying the cards out. Another possibility is to shuffle your usual number of times, fan the cards out facedown, and let the querent select the number of cards required for the spread you will use.

As you are learning to read the cards and are developing your reading style, you will probably try lots of different things before you settle into “your” way of reading. Don’t worry that however you do it the first time will dictate that that’s how you have to do it every time. Just like an artist learning to paint, you have to see how the medium feels in your hands and reacts to your natural rhythms and skills before you find your way. The important thing is to keep these ideas in mind as you move forward.

Laying Down the Cards

After determining the question and the spread, once you’ve formally begun the reading and shuffled the cards comes the big moment: laying down the cards for the reading and interpreting them. Any seasoned reader will tell you that reading the cards is much more than simply learning what the cards mean and interpreting them one by one. If you’ve even had a computer-generated reading, you know what I mean. The program simply lists out the meaning from the book. No attempt is made to modify the meaning to suit the position in the spread, the question asked, or the surrounding cards. Perhaps those readings give some information, but they often feel flat and lifeless. That’s because a reading is more than the sum of its parts ... everything—the cards, the positions, the question—works

together to create something unique, something that no author can write up in a book.

In fact, as a tarot teacher, the most common question I get from students is this: I know the card meanings, but my readings feel disjointed and I don't know how to make a unified answer ... How do you do that? The answer is twofold. First, practice. There is no substitute for this. This is how you learn to extrapolate the card meanings and adapt them to the situation you are reading about. At the end of this chapter, I'll give you ways that you can practice even when you don't have anyone to read for. The second part of the answer is to learn how the cards relate to each other. This comes with practice, true, but as you practice and gain experience, you will learn about these relationships between the cards. Just as there are no set-in-stone card meanings, there are no set-in-stone rules for card relationships. I will share my method that you can try for yourself. Perhaps it will make sense to you or maybe it will inspire you to come up with your own method.

Once you've shuffled and are ready to lay out the cards, you will find that you can either lay the cards faceup or facedown. Some readers like to lay the cards facedown, flipping them over one at a time as they interpret them. This certainly creates a sense of drama, but to me it seems like a missed opportunity. If you lay the cards faceup, then you can see all the cards at once and begin to get a sense of the relationships between them and the larger story they are working together to tell. This helps create the framework that will unify the answer. Each part of the deck (the Major Arcana and the Minor suits) represents different energy. Also, the numbers have symbolic meanings that can be used in the spread as a whole not just in terms of the specific card they appear

on. To begin a reading, first look at all the various parts to start sketching in the broad strokes of the interpretation. The parts are listed below and, although they are in a specific order (because writing is linear, after all), they don't need to be done in this order. After you have experience with them, you won't be going through a list in your head but rather noticing what is present (and what isn't) will become second nature.

Look for Major Arcana cards. These cards represent energy and events beyond your control. If there is a disproportionate number in the reading, then you have less control over events and are likely in the midst of learning an important life lesson.

Analyze the suits that are present in the reading. Keep in mind what kind of energy each suit represents:

Wands: Will, passion, drive, projects, career

Cups: Emotions, relationships, intimacy, creativity

Swords: Intellect, reason, communication

Coins: The physical world, the body, the senses, resources

Are the four suits equally represented? If not, what does that say about the situation? If many Swords are present, then the querent may be too much in her head. Lots of Cups... perhaps she's extremely invested in the situation or being overly emotional.

On the other hand, what does the absence of a suit mean? For example, in a reading about a romantic relationship, you would expect to see a few Cups. If there aren't any, that tells you something about the relationship. Again, the earlier analysis of the question or purpose of the reading will help prepare you to interpret the spread. Because you have spent time thinking of the situation, you have some idea what to expect or what might indicate a problem.

Wands and Swords are considered active. This means the energy is active, it moves, it creates, it acts; it also indicates swift movement. That is, if this energy is present, it is moving around, making things happen and happen quickly.

Cups and Coins are considered passive. That is, the energy is passive, it is still, it is reactive, it is shaped; it also suggests slower movement. Passive energy waits for something to happen, hence the idea of slowness, and then reacts.

Look at the numbers on the cards. Multiples of any particular number in the spread have meaning and reflect the theme of the reading. Here are some commonly used interpretations for the numbers:

- Aces:* New beginnings or opportunities
- Twos:* Relationships, choices, or decisions
- Threes:* Creativity, growth, or teamwork
- Fours:* Stability, structure, or stagnation
- Fives:* Conflict, loss, or chaos
- Sixes:* Communication or problem-solving
- Sevens:* Reflection or assessment
- Eights:* Movement, speed, or power
- Nines:* Completion or solitude
- Tens:* Endings

The numbers can be used in another way. People have some control over their lives but not total and complete control. When a situation is in an early stage of development, it is easier to change course. For example, in a relationship, if two people have just begun dating, it is easier to end the relationship at that stage. If they've been going out for a while, they may have planned vaca-

tions or bought season tickets to the theater; this makes ending the relationship more complicated. If they've moved in together, they have even stronger financial ties that will require more effort to separate. If it is the week before the wedding, it will be harder yet for them—for any number of reasons—to change course. Therefore, it is useful to know how close a situation is to resolution, as that will let you know to what extent you can control or change that particular outcome.

Multiple aces, twos, and threes: A situation is in early stages of development

Multiple fours, fives, and sixes: The middle phase of development

Multiple sevens, eights, and nines: The situation is nearing resolution

Multiple tens: Wrapping up loose ends, final ending

Most readers want to strengthen their intuition. Analyzing a spread as described above might seem counterintuitive to that goal, but it is not. This practice is like yoga. After you spend time disciplining your body, your mind can achieve Zen-like states that it could not have without the physical experience. After analyzing a reading in such a systematic way, the rational part of your mind feels satiated and relaxes, allowing your intuition to chime in without your logical side getting in the way.

Once you've analyzed the different aspects of the deck present in the reading, look at the visual pattern made by the images on the cards. This is a great way to let your intuition take center stage. Step back and look at your reading as one large picture. Look at the colors. What do they tell you about the situation? Look for repeated symbols and consider their significance. Squint

and look at your reading as if it were an impressionist painting. From a distance, what image emerges?

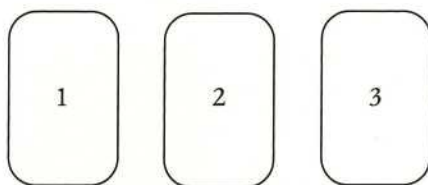
After these steps, take a moment to consolidate everything you've learned and sort out the framework. Then you are ready to move on to the card-by-card interpretations, although you will still be keeping in mind everything you've learned so far and will continue to pay attention to the relationships between the cards. If you are using a larger spread, you can break the spread into sections and read one section at a time. Then you finish up, as discussed above, by wrapping it up with a clear sentence or two and action steps or advice, if appropriate.

Practice Spreads

That's the theory. Let's see how this all works in practice with a few sample readings.

Past-Present-Future Spread

We will start with one of the most common and basic readings, a three-card Past-Present-Future spread.



- 1.) Past influences
- 2.) Present circumstances
- 3.) Probable future/outcome

The situation and question: Stacy is thinking of taking a month leave from her job to take a solo road trip. She's never done anything like this before and wonders if the experience will be a good one.

1.) II, The High Priestess



2.) XI, Justice



3.) XII, The Hanged Man



The first thing we notice right away is that these are all Major Arcana cards, letting us know that this is an important decision in Stacy's life. No wonder she feels compelled to do something she's never considered before. There are forces in her life urging her toward this experience. There are no other suits present, so we can skip that part, but we can look at the numbers. Interestingly, they are in numeric order, showing a natural flow. There are two even numbers, and some people associate even numbers with stability and balance, so she would move toward greater balance in her life. The idea of balance is further highlighted with the Justice card, which has the implication of balance in its title. Also, it is interesting to note that, not including the Fool, Justice is exactly in the middle of the twenty-one Major Arcana. The visual pattern is pretty interesting, moving from upright with eyes open to eyes blindfolded to upside down with eyes closed. The pattern also moves from analyzing (reading) to doing (holding things) to the inability to move. Also, the colors move from cool and dark to warm and bright, showing an emerging from darkness to manifestation.

Without even beginning to interpret the individual cards we already know that this is something Stacy probably really needs to do for her own personal growth. Even though it seems like she'd be inviting instability into her life, she will actually be fostering more stability and certainty within herself. There is something that she is trying to figure out that will only come to light via this experience.

Let's look at the individual cards. The interpretations from later in the book are copied here in italics. Below the book interpretation will be how that interpretation is extrapolated for this reading.



II, The High Priestess

The High Priestess, along with the Magician, is half of the Fool's incarnate self. This introverted aspect wants to explore and understand her inner self and the magic of the unseen world. She dances in the dark, mysterious corners of the self and the Universe, paying attention to the invisible currents that move and shape both the physical world and her own soul. She understands that there are ways

of knowing that have nothing to do with the rational mind, and she studies and honors these ways. The mysteries of the Universe are hidden but reveal themselves to those who sincerely seek them. She is the inner calm to the Magician's external action.

Divinatory meaning: The situation feels uncertain because what is important lies below the surface and doesn't necessarily seem logical. There are secrets afoot, muddying the waters. Only those well versed in the rhythms of the Universe will see what is really going on.

Advice: One reason to work on understanding your inner life and being able to hear your inner voice are times like these. The external situation isn't making much sense, so you really have to trust yourself. Circumstances will not help you decide what to do. Tap into your inner wisdom for the truest guidance in this case.

The High Priestess is the part of us closely associated with the soul, the part of us that came to this world to do, be, or learn something. Stacy's choice certainly doesn't seem logical to her, but it also seems inevitable. For a while now (the past few months), her inner voice has been driving her to this decision.



XI, Justice

One of the first troubling lessons the young Fool learns is that life isn't always fair, or more precisely, he learns that justice is more complex than he thought. Justice, as meted out by any human agency, is imperfect. Karmic or Universal justice also plays a role in life and is harder to detect. The Fool's experiences teach him that while secular Justice, or more likely those who serve her, may be capricious, a higher level of Justice operates in the world. This version of Justice means that the Fool's own actions carry consequences and help create his future. He realizes that he must mind not only what he does but also why he does it. Intent matters.

Divinatory meaning: People are getting what they deserve. Although the situation may not be based on ideal Justice, there is some sort of internal justice system at play. Those who behaved admirably will probably be pleased with their results. Those who haven't lived up to their own standards, values, and professed beliefs may not be so pleased.

Advice: If you behaved well (according to your own reckoning), stick to your guns and trust that justice will be served. If you haven't, don't try to argue. Accept your lot with as much grace as possible and resolve to make better choices next time.

Up until now, Stacy has done what she has been taught is right. She graduated college and got a good job, even when part of her felt boxed in and controlled. Part of her wanted experiences beyond her family and cultural expectations. Because she played that part so well, never making room in her life for living outside the box in any way, she is now compelled to leave the box entirely. Her past choices have created this intense need.



XII, The Hanged Man

The Hanged Man has, in centuries past, been considered the card of the traitor, and it makes sense. Because here, the Fool takes action based on the work he did in Strength, which usually means turning his back on what his society taught him. He is, at least in one way, a traitor to his people. However, he doesn't flinch or draw back. The Fool is committed to doing what he knows in his heart is right for

him, regardless of the outcome. With great faith, not in society but in his own sense of certainty, he gives himself over to the consequences of his actions. He makes himself a martyr (another traditional meaning of this card) to his truth, come what may.

Divinatory meaning: Once the action has been taken, all you can do is sit tight. You've done your best by your own beliefs and now you wait and see. Like a breath taken in and held, there is little movement and it can be maddening. Every instinct urges movement and yet physical movement is impossible. The mind and the heart are still active, maybe distressingly so.

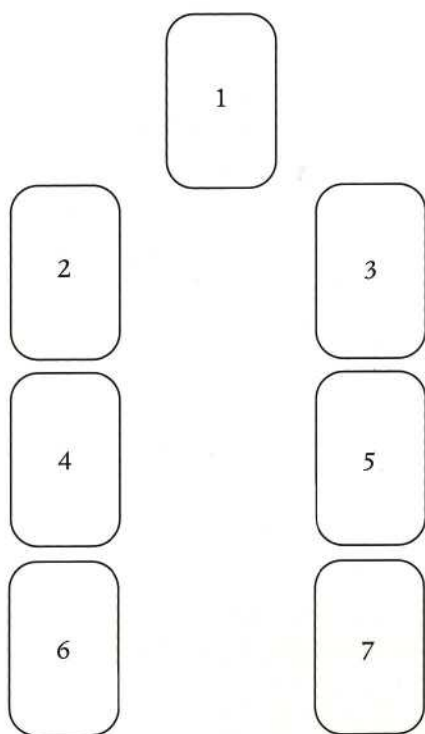
Advice: You've done the thing and you can't take it back. Even though you don't know the outcome, you did the right thing in the moment. Remain still and quiet, employing meditation or prayer to comfort the heart and mind.

Ah, how appropriate is this interpretation? It hardly needs any massaging to make it fit. Stacy wants to know if the experience will be a good one. The cards give her an answer, but not necessarily the one she wants. This final card doesn't say if the outcome will be "good" and perhaps that is because she doesn't really know what that means to her. What she does learn is that by taking this trip, she will know that she's done what is, in her heart, the right thing. Then she simply has to be open to whatever experiences come to her. Only after the trip is over and she's integrated everything will she be able to say if it was "good." Really, this reading tells her the trip goes beyond "good" or "bad." It is, in fact, necessary for the health of her soul. Things that she may find herself sacrificing in the end will not feel like sacrifices because what she gets in return will be an understanding that will help her shape the rest of her life.

Summing up: Stacy should definitely take this trip, knowing that it is going to have repercussions in her sense of self and perhaps change the course of her life. This trip is not a vacation but a true soul's journey.

The Horseshoe Spread

Next, we will use a classic spread with an unromantic name, the Horseshoe Spread. It is good for general readings and includes the same information as the Past-Present-Future spread along with more detail.



- 1.) Querent
- 2.) Past
- 3.) Other information
- 4.) Present
- 5.) Challenge
- 6.) Future
- 7.) Possible outcome

Susan has just gone through a rough breakup and hasn't had much time to heal. A man she recently met at a gallery opening has taken her out a few times and wants to continue to get to know her. She feels the same—that he is nice and she should be open to it—but she wonders if it is too soon. She's not sure she's ready, really ready, to start being intimate with someone new.

1.) Querent: King of Wands



2.) Past: XVIII, The Moon



- 3.) Other information:
XXI, The World



- 4.) Present: Six of Wands



- 5.) Challenge:
Three of Wands



6.) Future: Seven of Cups



7.) Possible outcome:
Eight of Swords



There are two Major Arcana cards in this reading, both in her past and both with numbers toward the end of the sequence of Majors. While there is some strong energy here, it does seem firmly rooted in the past and pretty well wrapped up. On one level, this lets us know that whatever Susan thinks about how long she's been single, she has probably already processed her feelings, likely beginning long before the breakup began. Three cards from the suit of Wands indicate that this reading is more about her will,

her passion, and what she wants. While the idea of passion is important in a new relationship, the nature of these Wands seems more about her and her power than about attraction. With the three Wands, the Eight of Swords makes four out of seven cards active, telling us that this situation will unfold quickly. The six, seven, and eight lead us to think that this particular situation will indeed end before too long. The absence of Coins, which is the suit of manifestation, indicates that this relationship may never really come into being.

Visually, there are a lot of strong postures and masculine energy, strengthening the idea that this is about her will and her wants. An interesting visual connection is the World and the Eight of Swords. Notice how similar they look. The figures have similar poses and both have their eyes covered. However, where the World figure is unbound and free, the figure in the Eight of Swords is bound and captive. Finally, the Three of Wands and the Seven of Cups have some similarities, with both figures looking at possibilities. The Three of Wands is looking at an empty sea wondering what may come, while the Seven of Cups is looking at possibilities, perhaps real, perhaps imaginary.

Before beginning with the individual card interpretations, we know that Susan has indeed wrapped up her processing of the breakup, which is what worried her about starting a new relationship. However, the Wands let us know that it is not about being ready in that sense but more about owning what it is she actually wants. We see the need to look around at possibilities. We see concern over giving up freedom for a new bondage. We know that this situation (the possible relationship) is already nearing its end.

Let's look at the individual cards. The interpretations from later in the book are copied here in italics. Below the book interpretation will be how that interpretation is extrapolated for this reading.



King of Wands

Divinatory meaning: The King of Wands adores taking action and making decisions, often in service of something larger than himself, perhaps a business, political activism, or volunteer coordination. He has the experience, authority, and means to execute exciting new ideas and is always on the lookout for opportunities. Sometimes his position in life requires that he settle down and take care of mundane responsibilities, but this makes him frustrated and cranky. His natural inclinations and skills are at their best when he is doing something.

Advice: Find a beneficial cause to give your energy and abilities to. Participate in something bigger than you are. Make a difference.

The tarot is symbolic, not literal, so even though the King of Wands shows a male figure, it doesn't necessarily represent a man. Instead it represents a person (in this case Susan, the querent) with the attributes of the King of Wands regardless of gender. Susan is interested in making her life bigger, finding something she can give herself over to. When we remember the World and Eight of Swords, we get the feeling that a relationship isn't it. At least not right now. Susan seems to have bought into the narrative that she should want to be in a relationship and that the only reason she shouldn't is because she's not "ready." The truth that she simply isn't interested now, not in this new guy or really anyone, is hard for her to accept because it's not the story she's supposed to be living.

We will look at the rest of the cards in pairs, because, although they are different positions, they work together to tell a full story of what is going on.



XVIII, The Moon

Divinatory meaning: Even if you think you have all the facts, you probably don't. There is more going on here than meets the eye. Making decisions right now is problematic because it is hard to know what is true and what is false. These issues can be either internal or external (and sometimes both at the same time). The dark is temporary and eventually the light of day will bring clarity.

Advice: Try not to make decisions right now and instead dig below the surface to determine what is real and what isn't. If you can't figure it out, just wait and time will take care of it.



XXI, The World

Divinatory meaning: This is an important moment to recognize your achievements because the truth is that you've just completed something important. All your hard work and struggles have paid off.

Advice: Enjoy this period, accept the congratulations of others if offered, and remember to reward yourself. Do something to mark this achievement ... and begin dreaming of your next undertaking.

Susan was in confusion toward the end of her relationship. She probably was already feeling conflicted about not wanting to be in a relationship at all. She really wanted it to be over and to enjoy that sense of freedom she felt when it was.



Six of Wands

Divinatory meaning: Victory! This card indicates success and public acknowledge of the achievement. Whatever you give your best efforts, skill, and dedication to will culminate with pride and accolades. Victories rarely occur in a vacuum. Others are holding up their wands in unity and to show their participation and support of your efforts. The recognition is yours, but you didn't earn it alone.

Advice: Be humble and don't expect attention as a given. Show appreciation for those who supported you and continue to stand with you.



Three of Wands

Divinatory meaning: Choices have been made and actions have been taken. Initial responses show early indications of success, but the story isn't over yet. Now it is time to wait and see what happens. Like the figure in the card, you are waiting for your ship to come. Will it be laden with treasures or will the contents fall short of your expectations?

Advice: Make use of this time by doing what you can to help things along and plan for your next step.

In part, Susan is feeling a sense of victory. After all, she is already in a position to be in a relationship, which is what she thinks is supposed to be the story she is living. In this sense, she can't help but feel flattered and maybe like she got lucky. She's been on a few dates with him and they were successful, but she feels like

she is waiting for something... probably the euphoria she thinks she is supposed to feel at the thought of a potential new relationship. These two cards together give the feeling of "there must be more."



Seven of Cups

Divinatory meaning: You are blessed with lots of choices, which can sometimes feel like a curse because you can't have them all. Some of the options are realistic, achievable ones; others are imaginary possibilities, fantasies that are less likely to manifest; still others may be fears that can lead down an unhappy, unfulfilling path. All of the alternatives tug at your heart in some way, making the decision even more difficult.

Advice: Step back and get a larger view. Bring in some logic and rational analysis to give some perspective to your emotional responses.



Eight of Swords

Divinatory meaning: Some situations are truly perilous. Your hands are tied, dangers surround you, and you literally (or figuratively) can't see a way out. Because this is the suit of Swords, which represents our thought processes, very likely this situation is created or exasperated by the way you think about it. Doing the same thing and thinking the same thoughts increases the hold the situation has on you.

Advice: Like Houdini escaping from seemingly inescapable bonds, you can free yourself by quelling your rising emotions and thinking about the situation in a completely different way.

These cards pretty clearly show that if Susan continues with this budding relationship that she will end up disappointed. She'll be dreaming of what could have been, of what she might have done with her freedom while feeling trapped in a relationship that should enhance her life, not constrain it.

Summing up: It isn't that Susan isn't emotionally ready, it's that she simply doesn't want to be in a relationship at all right now. She should quit dating this man, work on letting go of the assumption that to be a successful adult you need to be in a relationship, and focus on what it is she really wants to do with her time and energy and newfound freedom.

More Practice

Reading examples and learning as much as you can about tarot is a great start, but I cannot stress enough that practice and experience are the best things for developing your skills. Below are some ideas to get more practice in.

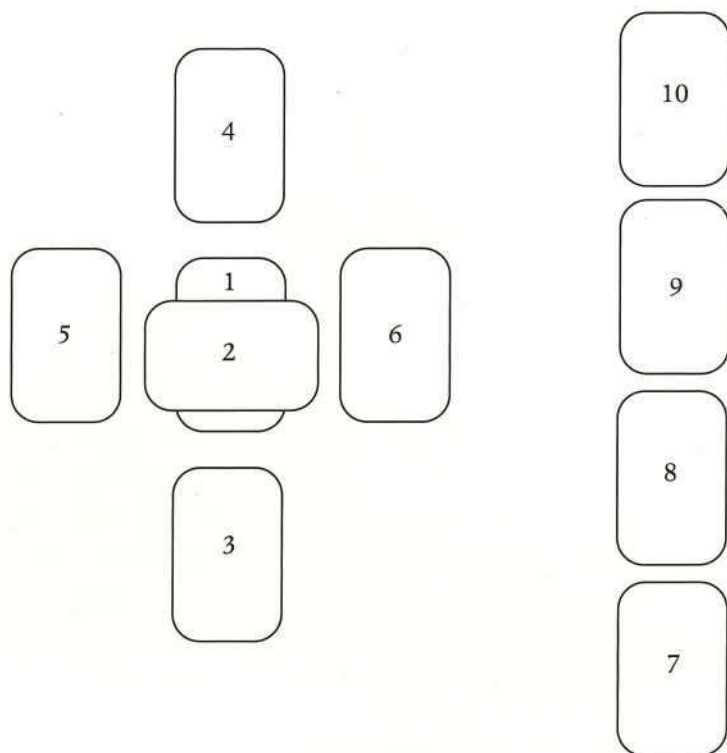
1. Read for yourself. This has limitations, of course. Reading for yourself can be challenging simply because it is harder to be objective. Another hazard of reading for yourself is that you will read in a haphazard manner, not putting as much effort into it as if you were reading for someone else. An excellent way to avoid that pitfall is to make an audio recording of your reading and then listen to it right away. Also, recording and reviewing your readings helps you see your strengths and identify any areas that need work. In the end, it will help you be a better reader.
2. Read for friends and family. Usually once they know you're offering free readings, you'll have plenty of volunteers.

3 Spreads

Spreads, as you know by now, are the way the cards are laid out on the table in order to do a reading. The spreads below, along with the two from the previous chapter, are among the most classic ones as well as my personal favorites. In addition, you can find lots of spreads online. Also, if you are interested in spreads, there is a whole study of the craft of spread design. There will be some books about spreads in the Further Study appendix.

Celtic Cross

The Celtic Cross is one of the most recognized spreads in the world. Designed by Arthur Waite, the designer of the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot, tarot readers either love it or hate it. Like all spreads, it has its strengths and weaknesses. You can try it for yourself and see what you think.



- 1.) Querent
- 2.) Crosses the querent (often seen as a challenge or energy opposing the querent's goals)
- 3.) Foundation of the situation
- 4.) Aspirations of the querent
- 5.) Past
- 6.) Near future
- 7.) Querent's view of herself
- 8.) Environment

9.) Hopes and fears

10.) Outcome

To make this large spread less overwhelming, try reading it as a series of smaller spreads. In the very center we find a crossed pair, which can be read together. Cards 5, 1 and 2, and 6 make a Past-Present-Future spread. Cards 3, 1 and 2, and 4 show where the querent is starting and where she hopes to go.

Susyn Blair-Hunt's Yes/No Spread

This gem can be found in Susyn Blair-Hunt's book *Tarot Prediction & Divination*. It is probably my favorite and most useful spread. It is a great spread to use to start a reading, as it gives clear answers with plenty of information. The spread has no defined positional meanings, which makes it a great one for those who like to read more intuitively.



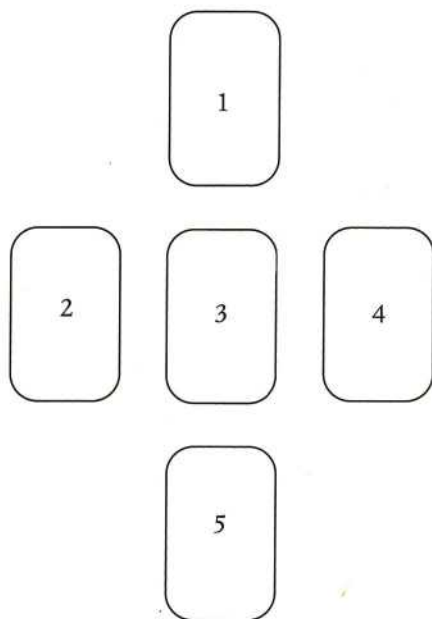
The first step is to determine the number of "yes" cards and the number of "no" cards. Major Arcana cards and the even numbered Minor Arcana cards are "yes." The odd numbered Minor Arcana and the court cards are "no."

All even cards indicate a clear "yes." All odd cards mean a certain "no." A majority of even cards suggest a "yes, if ..." or a "yes, but ..." The opposite is true of a majority of odd cards. The more even or odd cards, the stronger the relative "yes" or "no."

Then continue on to read the five cards as a reading in whatever way you like. For me, sometimes the cards tell a linear story and sometimes they show comparisons. Combining the left-brain counting and analysis with the right-brain intuitive approach makes this reading really satisfying.

Generic Spread

Next to the Yes/No spread, this is my most-used layout.



- 1.) General overview of the situation
- 2–4.) The experience or what will happen
- 5.) Outcome.

Variation: If you want to explore several areas of life at one time, simply determine what they are: for example, love, career, and travel. Then lay out three of the spreads. The first group deals with love; the second, career; the third, travel.

Variation: For the person who is more comfortable with positional meanings, this variation includes specific meanings for positions 2, 3, and 4.

- 1.) Situation
- 2.) Challenge
- 3.) Solution
- 4.) What is hidden
- 5.) Outcome

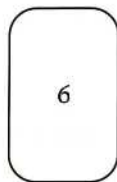
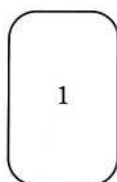
Choices Spread

This is a variation of the Generic Spread and works brilliantly. If you are reading for someone who has to choose between two or more things, have them list the items and label them "1, 2, 3, etc." They keep this info to themselves. You, as the reader, know nothing—not what the choices are nor the order. Simply lay out the necessary number of Generic Spread groups and interpret them. The querent then makes his or her own decision based on the reading. This allows you, the reader, to stay objective.

If you want to do this for yourself, you easily can. Write your choices on separate scraps of paper, fold them up, and mix them. Fold the papers very well (no peeking!), and lay them out on the table and lay the cards near the different scraps. Don't look at them until after you've interpreted all the piles and made your choice.

The "One" Spread

We've all been there. We're dating someone new and we can't help but wonder, "Are they the one?" It is easy to get caught up in the excitement and drama of relationship. But it's good to step back and take a good look at how you feel about the relationship. This spread gives you an overview of how you respond to the other person, providing lots of food for thought.



NOTE: Card 6 is not laid down with the others. Instead you draw this card at the end of the reading.

- 1.) Your gut feeling: Your gut feeling about the other person and the relationship. This could be the real reason you are asking this question. It could be a certain "knowing" feeling that you cannot explain logically.

- 2.) Physical: Your physical response to the person. Is there that special chemistry between you? Is the physical aspect of the relationship satisfying? This could also be about the logistical aspects of being together, such as distance.
- 3.) Emotional: Your emotional response to the person. Does the relationship encourage balanced, healthy emotions? Or is melodrama part of the fun? Perhaps there is a lack in emotional intimacy? How do you feel?
- 4.) Intellectual: Your intellectual response to the person. Are you intellectually stimulated or bored or intimidated? Are conversations a pleasure? This card can also relate to how you deal with arguments or face challenges together.
- 5.) Spiritual: Your spiritual compatibility. Are you inspired? Does being with this person make you want to grow and change in positive ways? Are there issues that could mean big problems down the line?
- 6.) The Question: The question you need to ask yourself. This could be the most important card—it gets to the heart of the matter, pinpointing the main thing you need to think about before moving forward.

As is usual with a cross formation, card 1 relates to cards 2–5. After cards 1–5 have been fully discussed, fan out the remaining cards and have the querent draw a card. This is card 6. You will find that very often card 6 cuts right to the chase with a very clear answer. Why not skip all the other cards then? There is something about going through the process of discussing the various areas that paves the way, allowing card 6 to make more sense.

These few spreads can be used for any number of situations. Don't be afraid to modify them to suit the specific question you

are trying to answer. Also, try creating your own spreads. It's fun and empowering, and it lets you get exactly the information you are looking for.

Now that you know how to do a reading, the next two chapters will acquaint you with the cards in detail.



4 The Major Arcana

The twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana are aptly named. *Arcana* means “secrets,” and these cards are the larger secrets of life, both in divinatory terms and in the human experience. In readings, they often represent important moments, milestones, decisions, or experiences. You can read these cards as markers on the road that let you know what larger patterns or lessons to pay attention to in your life. Many times (but not always) these are energies or forces that you may not have much control over, so your opportunity is to figure out how and to what extent you can work with them to achieve your goals.

The Major Arcana cards are more than part of this magical divinatory tool that we call tarot. This set of images is also a map of a journey of enlightenment. As we follow the Fool through the rest of the cards, we witness an archetypal quest that should feel familiar to us. The journey is often illustrated by placing the cards in three rows of seven cards each, in numerical order, with the Fool at the top, ready to fall to earth and begin his earthly life. The first row shows how we learn to become members of the society or culture we live in. The second row is where we begin to question

what we've learned and yearn to express our authentic selves. Usually ending with an initiation (with Death and Temperance), we embrace the challenge, the commitment to being and becoming our true selves. The third row holds experiences of trials that test our commitment and, if we are successful, lead us to a new level of enlightenment.

The journey plays out in our lives on many levels. There is the idea that the journey follows our lifetime from birth through death. The cards also can be read as mini-cycles within the larger life cycle. For example, becoming a student and then graduating is a cycle. Starting and then leaving a job is another kind of cycle. Beginning and then completing a project is another example of a possible Major Arcana cycle.

Paying attention to both levels of meaning when interpreting the Major Arcana cards in a reading can lead to deeper understanding of yourself and the situation.

The interpretations below provide information about each card's place in the overall journey, a divinatory meaning to apply to the immediate situation or question, and advice. The divinatory meaning describes the situation, relevant to the question asked. After understanding the situation, bringing the advice into the reading creates a more proactive and empowering experience. It's one thing to have clear insight about what is going on; it's another to know the actions to take. Reading on several levels—the archetypal, the divinatory, and the advisory—gives the fullest, most useful readings. The cards have so much wisdom to offer and looking at their meanings in categories helps make that wisdom more accessible and useful.

There are many ways to read reversed cards, such as using the opposite meaning of the upright card or considering the energy

of the card as blocked or internalized. Another way to handle reversed cards is to see them as an opportunity to explore your relationship with that card and possibly discovering what you can do to unblock that energy.





The Fool

The Fool is the adventurer, the hero in this journey. In archetypal terms, he is the new soul ready to incarnate on earth. He doesn't have much to bring with him. In fact, we don't know for sure what he carries in his bag. Possibly the bag contains his innate abilities and the knowledge of his soul's purpose in this life. He steps into the unknown with his faithful canine companion. What does this loyal dog represent? We don't really know that either, but one idea is that it is the Fool's intuition, connected to the web of the physical universe. If the Fool is smart, he'll pay close attention to it.

Divinatory meaning: A new beginning, the need for courage and faith, and taking a step that some would consider foolish.

Advice: Listen to your instincts and do that thing you want to do, even if you're scared. There's no guarantee that things will always be easy, but your quest will take you where you need to go and to have the experiences you need to have.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I following my true intuition or being foolish? Am I letting fear stop me from living my soul's purpose?



The Magician

The Magician, along with the High Priestess, is half of the Fool's incarnate self—his true nature. This outgoing aspect wants to explore the world and to figure out the logic behind it. The Magician also wants to experiment with his natural abilities, trying things to see what happens. As he gains skill and understanding, he learns about his capabilities. His goal is to embrace his personal power, to harness the energy of the universe, and to manifest his will in his life. The four suits of the Minor Arcana surround him—a Sword and air, a Wand and fire, a Cup and water, and Coins and earth—showing his interest in and mastery of those elements.

Divinatory meaning: Power, skill, understanding, and the desire and the ability to create. What is happening may not be obvious to the casual observer. True understanding requires seeing the world of possibilities ... and that means seeing through the eyes of magic.

Advice: You have the skills you need to accomplish your goal. Be bold and confident. Be willing to step outside your comfort zone and do something different. The situation calls for a magical act, which you can create. Do the thing, stand back, and prepare to be amazed.

If reversed, ask yourself: Why am I afraid to push my skills further? Is there something holding me back, forcing me to stay in my comfort zone?



The High Priestess

The High Priestess, along with the Magician, is half of the Fool's incarnate self. This introverted aspect wants to explore and understand her inner self and the magic of the unseen world. She dances in the dark, mysterious corners of the self and the Universe, paying attention to the invisible currents that move and shape both the physical world and her own soul. She understands that there are ways of knowing that have nothing to do with the rational mind, and she studies and honors these ways. The mysteries of the Universe are hidden but reveal themselves to those who sincerely seek them. She is the inner calm to the Magician's external action.

Divinatory meaning: The situation feels uncertain because what is important lies below the surface and doesn't necessarily seem logical. There are secrets afoot, muddying the waters. Only those well versed in the rhythms of the Universe will see what is really going on.

Advice: One reason to work on understanding your inner life and being able to hear your inner voice is for times like these. The external situation isn't making much sense, so you really have to trust yourself. Circumstances will not help you decide what to do. Tap into your inner wisdom for the truest guidance in this case.

If reversed, ask yourself: What truth am I hiding from myself? What secrets am I keeping and why? How can I develop my inner ear and trust the whispers of my heart?



The Empress

In the archetypal journey, the Empress represents the teachings of the Fool's culture in terms of home and family values and expectations. These lessons form the first templates for intimate and trusting relationships. Of course, in our imperfect world, this can also mean passing down family dysfunctions. The range of nurturing behaviors can run from one extreme of neglect to another extreme of smothering or controlling. In a broader sense, the Empress is Mother Earth, with all its abundant life as well as with its necessary death. The cycle of life makes room for all events, both happy and tragic. All experiences have value and add to the richness of life.

Divinatory meaning: Prosperity and the fullness of life abound. There is enough and possibly more than enough, which can be a blessing or burden (as anyone who has tried to “declutter” or lose weight knows). Abundance requires attention, nurturing, and love if it is going to continue to thrive.

Advice: Recognize your values and give them your time, attention, and energy. Put your focus on what you want to increase in your life. Pay attention to boundaries because nothing can grow well if it is overcrowded.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I holding on to a poverty mindset? Am I allowing unhealthy boundaries in my life and relationships? Am I perpetuating unhealthy behaviors or expectations passed down by my family or early life experiences?



The Emperor

Families, businesses, organizations, and governments need structure in order to function. While archetypally the Empress provides the raw materials, the Emperor handles the harvesting, storing, and distribution of resources. He teaches the Fool about responsibilities and obligations, and about serving something greater than himself as well as how to succeed in life based on their culture. Control of resources can focus on service to others and a greater good or on simply bolstering one's own wealth and status. If one is to survive the winter or other lean times, Emperor energy is vital. It wields a lot of power and, as we all know, with great power comes great responsibility.

Divinatory meaning: The situation is, basically, one of authority and organization. Other cards in the reading will advise whether this is a time of abundance or of want. In either case, a good plan is needed to sort out how to distribute the plenty or how to meet the needs expressed in the situation. This is a time of structure based on logic, reason, and common sense.

Advice: Identify the need and develop a plan to manage it. Determine your goal and then, before taking any action, ask yourself if that step moves you closer to your goal. If not, don't waste your time or energy on it. This is not a time to pursue ego-based desires or petty paybacks.

If reversed, ask yourself: To whom and how have I given over my autonomy, my authority? Why do I struggle with productivity? In what ways do I disagree with my culture's value system?



The Hierophant

While the Empress and the Emperor teach about home and social life, the Hierophant's important job is being the bridge between values and actions. While this card has traditionally been associated with religion, given most people's (especially those interested in tarot) cynicism about religion, it is better to see the Hierophant as the one who teaches the Fool how to "walk his talk." That is, what are good ways to behave, ways that express inner values and beliefs? The Hierophant knows that as long as there is a gap between what you believe in your heart and the actions in your daily life, it is impossible to be at peace or to present an authentic face to the world.

Divinatory meaning: Formal (whether personal or institutional) training or education, traditional religious or cultural practices, rites, or beliefs, and commitment to a value system. Teaching, learning, practicing...these are at the core of this situation, although whether they are something you are pursuing or avoiding is something only you know.

Advice: Take a good, hard look at your most treasured beliefs and make sure your actions and behavior reflect them. If you don't know your beliefs, look at your actions and behavior. Based on those, how would someone else describe your beliefs?

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I living my truth? Am I living someone else's truth? Am I rejecting tradition and practice out of rebellion or due to careful consideration of my heart and soul?



The Lovers

After learning all about the rules, expectations, traditions, and Amores of his culture, the Fool faces the challenge of making decisions. The Lovers card might seem to be all about love and romance, and in some ways it is, for it is in the realm of love that we face important choices. Do we pick an “appropriate” partner or do we pick one based on our own desires, even if common sense or tradition suggest otherwise? The Fool, as we all do, has to deal with the internal struggle of what to prioritize when making choices. Does he listen to his head? His heart? His friends and family? The angel at the top of the image suggests that the heart is the truest guiding star.

Divinatory meaning: In a reading, this card can indicate a romantic situation, although it is much more than that. This is the card of the “hard choice.” Hard choices aren’t always “big” decisions. Choices are hard when there is no clear logical “right” choice. No pro or con list shows the winning option.

Advice: Because there is no clear, reasonable, justifiable choice in this situation, you must decide based on something else. This card advises that you pick whichever option you feel best aligns with what your heart and soul desires. It’s as easy, and as hard, as that.

If reversed, ask yourself: How am I denying my own desires? What else, if not my heart, is driving this decision? What is it that I really want but am afraid to acknowledge?



The Chariot

Once the Fool has learned the lessons of his culture and practiced making decisions (and dealing with the resulting consequences), he is considered an adult, a fully functioning member of society. Like a teenager being granted a driver's license, the Fool is ready to go into the world. Like all new drivers, he lacks experience and it takes all his concentration to control the forces at his fingertips. He may feel clumsy, but he is definitely ready to move forward. For now, each step feels new as he blends the expectations, beliefs, and mores he's gathered with his personal experiences. Will he thrive with his current worldview or will it disappoint him?

Divinatory meaning: It is time to take control and move ahead. Nothing is going to happen unless someone takes action. The situation may be new or feel new or different from past experiences, creating a sense of anxiety or uncertainty. Perfectionism, though, isn't required. Simply doing something will suffice.

Advice: You have the reins, so pick them up and just plunge in. Even if you feel awkward, don't worry. Your skills may be untested, but you do have them. Think of this as a test drive. See how it feels and make adjustments as you go.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I waiting for someone else to decide for me? Do I doubt my own abilities, or do I doubt my choice? What skills would I need to gain before I feel ready?



Strength

This is where the Fool's will galvanizes. He is done with being controlled by the whims of fate or beguiled by the promise of destiny. However, it is not easy to turn his back on the expectations of his society. That is not all: he also has to face his own inner demons, which are really unattended mental, emotional, and spiritual wounds that have festered. He gathers as much courage as he can muster and stares into the abyss, which, as they say, stares back at him. This is probably the hardest lesson the Fool has faced to date: admitting that what he clung on so dearly to has not served him well. The gift, though, is worth it: an unshakable and confident inner strength.

Divinatory meaning: There are some difficult battles to face right now.

The attacks could be coming from external sources or from your own dark shadow self. These dragons must be faced before you can move on. Either your fears will engulf you (and no one wants that) or you will find a strength of character, of mind, of heart, of soul that outshines anything you've previously imagined.

Advice: Do your shadow work. Look for the parts of yourself that you have denied or deemed unworthy. Find the wounds that caused you to think that, heal the wound, and reclaim a part of yourself that you (and the world) desperately need.

If reversed, ask yourself: Is there something about someone else that is bothering me? How is that trait manifested in myself? What are the scariest dragons lurking in my shadow?



The Hermit

The Fool has had some interesting and possibly unpleasant or disappointing experiences. He learns that even if he plays by “the rules,” things don’t always go as he was taught to expect. Things are not as black and white as he was led to believe. This causes him to question everything. To do that, he withdraws from society and begins to hold counsel with his own heart, weighing actions, consequences, and experiences. He measures the old worldview, the one he was handed down, against the wisdom that is unfurling in his soul. Without the old map of “how things work,” he is left to his own devices. His limited knowledge lights his way, but dimly, only showing the next step.

Divinatory meaning: Society, friends, family, and anyone trying to sell you anything can claim to know just what is needed in this situation. Unfortunately, none of them has the right answer. It’s hard to step out of the realm of normal or acceptable behavior, but nothing less than authentic action will do ... and no one can tell anyone else what that is.

Advice: Withdraw from all kind (or not so kind) offers of advice and guidance. It is best for you to eliminate all further input; you have all you need. Question everything with only your own heart, mind, and soul as the measure. Keep what rings true; disregard all that doesn’t.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I distracting myself from challenging thoughts through socializing? Do I depend too much on the opinions of others?



The Wheel of Fortune

Despite the Fool's resolve to change, he finds himself drawn back into the same cycles over and over. Similar things happen and he continues to respond in the same way, feeling ever more exasperated with himself and with "the system." It's that classic definition of insanity: doing the same thing and expecting different results. Some part of him still has faith in the lessons of his culture. He's invested a lot of time and energy, after all, and he would like to see some return on his investments. Clearly not ready to cut his losses and try a new strategy, he continues moving through life in a frustrated fog.

Divinatory meaning: Time moves in cycles as we see in our seasons and in our calendars. There are some things we can count on to remain unchanging. In our lives, we experience cycles. Sometimes we are on top, and sometimes we are not. While it is not possible, in this case, to control what the Wheel presents to you, you can control how you respond.

Advice: Don't let the vagaries of life, the whims of fortune, or even the steadfast cycles of life control your behavior. Your power and your freedom are in your will. You get to decide how to respond to what is happening. Make it a choice you will be proud of, no matter the outcome.

If reversed, ask yourself: Where am I stuck? What patterns do I keep repeating?



Justice

One of the first troubling lessons the young Fool learns is that life isn't always fair, or more precisely, he learns that justice is more complex than he thought. Justice, as meted out by any human agency, is imperfect. Karmic or Universal justice also plays a role in life and is harder to detect. The Fool's experiences teach him that while secular Justice, or more likely those who serve her, may be capricious, a higher level of Justice operates in the world. This version of Justice means that the Fool's own actions carry consequences and help create his future. He realizes that he must mind not only what he does but also why he does it. Intent matters.

Divinatory meaning: People are getting what they deserve. Although the situation may not be based on ideal Justice, there is some sort of internal justice system at play. Those who behaved admirably will probably be pleased with their results. Those who haven't lived up to their own standards, values, and professed beliefs may not be so pleased.

Advice: If you behaved well (according to your own reckoning), stick to your guns and trust that justice will be served. If you haven't, don't try to argue. Accept your lot with as much grace as possible and resolve to make better choices next time.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I playing the blame game and wasting energy wailing about something not being fair when fairness isn't the issue? Am I playing a role in denying justice to someone?



The Hanged Man

The Hanged Man has, in centuries past, been considered the card of the traitor, and it makes sense. Because here, the Fool takes action based on the work he did in Strength, which usually means turning his back on what his society taught him. He is, at least in one way, a traitor to his people. However, he doesn't flinch or draw back. The Fool is committed to doing what he knows in his heart is right for him, regardless of the outcome. With great faith, not in society but in his own sense of certainty, he gives himself over to the consequences of his actions. He makes himself a martyr (another traditional meaning of this card) to his truth, come what may.

Divinatory meaning: Once the action has been taken, all you can do is sit tight. You've done your best by your own beliefs and now you wait and see. Like a breath taken in and held, there is little movement and it can be maddening. Every instinct urges movement and yet physical movement is impossible. The mind and the heart are still active, maybe distressingly so.

Advice: You've done the thing and you can't take it back. Even though you don't know the outcome, you did the right thing in the moment. Remain still and quiet, employing meditation or prayer to comfort the heart and mind.

If reversed, ask yourself: Have I turned my back on something I shouldn't have? Am I making an unnecessary martyr of myself? Have I given up control I shouldn't have?



Death

If the Fool knew that Death followed the Hanged Man, he might not have had the courage to live his beliefs so fully. But the truth is, this kind of death is not as scary as he thought. It feels natural, a fitting outcome to leaving behind all that he wasn't to embrace all that he is. That caterpillar/butterfly metaphor makes a lot of sense to him now. He truly was dissolved into nothingness in order to be reformed into something more authentic and more alive than before. The layers of identity placed on him by society, family, and his own fears have been peeled off and he feels, for the first time in a long time, actually free.

Divinatory meaning: Events have worked together to create the need for change—a type of change that is organic, a natural outcome, an ending to a stagnant and unhealthy situation. Change is usually scary. Humans prefer the known to the unknown. And loss, even if it clears the way for theoretically better things, is still loss, and it hurts.

Advice: Change is coming and it is necessary. Don't try to stop it. That means acknowledging grief and taking the time to mourn. To not do so only delays the process and the eventual rebirth.

If reversed, ask yourself: Where am I stagnant and clinging to things I need to release?



Temperance

After his intense Death experience, the Fool feels like the world is a new place and he is a new creature. The seemingly unsolvable dichotomies between himself and the world suddenly seem easy to navigate and effortless. Synthesizing what society wants and what he believes is no longer a chore but a magical act that he loves performing. He can hold two opposing views in his mind without going crazy. This is amazing! His inner voice is so clear and strong that he moves with confidence, never questioning his choices. It's like he can do anything and whatever he does is touched with magic, grace, and perfection. Life after death sure does seem like "heaven" to him.

Divinatory meaning: Easy grace in the face of intense pressure or difficult circumstances makes this situation seem extraordinary. Choices, actions, thoughts, words all seemed touched with alchemy with everything containing the perfect amounts of truth, compassion, and strength. It is not a case of simply mixing equal parts, but finding just the right ratio.

Advice: Combine the best parts of your reason with your intuition and you'll discover a magical elixir of perfect grace and ease no matter how crazy or messed up the situation. Trust your inner voice completely.

If reversed, ask yourself: What am I doing to sabotage myself? Why am I fighting against ease and grace? Do I actually prefer angst and struggle, crisis and chaos? Is drama more exciting than beauty?



The Devil

Just when things were going so well, the Fool finds himself face to face with the Devil. How and why did this happen? Systems have built into their very being the desire to maintain themselves. Whenever anyone tries to change a habit or behavior, the system from which it arose will fight against the change trying to pull everything back into the old order. When the Fool changed, all the old wounds and impulses rose up to test him. It is like he said to the Universe, "I'm different! Bring it on!" and the Universe replies with "Great, so here's the same old patterns ... Are you really going to behave differently?" These tests are not fun but they are also gifts, helping the Fool to reinforce his decisions and strengthen his new habits.

Divinatory meaning: Something is holding the situation and the people involved captive. The Devil is all about being bound to unhealthy or inauthentic things, behaviors, or people that keep you in bondage. Whatever is going on is not in your best interest and is, in fact, contrary to the desires of your heart and your soul's purpose.

Advice: You may feel hopeless and helpless, but you are not. Yes, you are caught in a powerful, destructive cycle but you also have the ability to break free. Do whatever it takes and involve outside help if necessary.

If reversed, ask yourself: What habits or behaviors am I allowing to control me? What benefit do I think I'm getting from these habits or behaviors?



The Tower

After dealing with the internal struggles against the Devil, the Fool stands strong in his resolve to continue being the new, healthy person he wants to be, the person he knows he truly is. Systems rarely involve just one person, so when a small crack occurs in the system, like the Fool taking a stand and refusing the old mindset, other people who are still invested in that system will begin to react, usually badly. This causes a lot of drama and chaos and leads to the breakdown of the existing structure. In short, some area of the Fool's life is blowing up. The resulting crisis and subsequent loss is hard to deal with, but it is necessary to make space for new systems to evolve.

Divinatory meaning: If things feel chaotic, you're not crazy ... some part of your life is falling apart. There will be feelings of loss and a desire to hold tight to what was. Not everything will be destroyed, only that which is no longer serving your highest good. It may not feel that way, but this experience will lead to a better iteration of your life.

Advice: Avoid further pain by letting things crumble and staying out of the way. After things have settled, go back and salvage what remains to bring with you as you recreate your life.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I hitting the "destruct" button on some area of my life? Do I seek out or create needless drama as a form of distraction?



The Star

The Fool's commitments have been tested both internally and externally and, to tell the truth, he feels pretty battered and worn out. Luckily he gets to visit the Star. This gentle card, filled with cooling waters, the soft light of stars, and the sweet fragrance of lotus blossoms, is a welcome respite. Allowing the waters to pour over him, the Fool is cleansed, healed, and refreshed. Among all the stars, he finds the one that is his true guide—his very own North Star that he can count on when he feels confused or lost. The lotus flowers soothe and inspire his spirit, just when he needs it the most. Being completely renewed and strengthened, he is ready for the road ahead.

Divinatory meaning: This card marks a period of rest and healing. The things your spirit needs to rejuvenate are close at hand and for this time, however short or long, you can exhale and relax. During this time of calm, it is easier to find your true north. The next inhale brings inspiration and an eagerness to continue on, knowing things will be okay in the end.

Advice: Take it easy. Relax and enjoy this respite. Don't wait for the other shoe to drop. Do what you can to restore your mind, body, emotions, and spirit. Identify your North Star and learn to see it under any circumstances.

If reversed, ask yourself: Am I hiding my light under a barrel? Where can I find the healing and refreshment I need?



The Moon

Just like any good story ... or any real life ... things don't stay easy for long. It's a good thing the Fool found his star because in the Moon card he faces a lot of uncertainty. In the strange glow of the moon, things are both bright and dark. Nothing is what it seems. Monsters appear as friends and friends can appear as monsters. The Fool feels like he cannot trust his physical senses and has to rely on his spirit and his intuition to guide him. That's not so easy because being in a state of external fear makes it really easy for internal fears to crawl out of the subconscious (like that lobster emerging from the water) and grip him with its claws of terror. Unless he keeps his eyes and his faith on his North Star, the Fool will begin to panic.

Divinatory meaning: Even if you think you have all the facts, you probably don't. There is more going on here than meets the eye. Making decisions right now is problematic because it is hard to know what is true and what is false. These issues can be either internal or external (and sometimes both at the same time). The dark is temporary and eventually the light of day will bring clarity.

Advice: Try not to make decisions right now and instead dig below the surface to determine what is real and what isn't. If you can't figure it out, just wait and time will take care of it.

If reversed, ask yourself: Do I like wandering in the dark and feeling confused because it relieves me of the responsibility for my actions or gives me an excuse? Do I put myself in dangerous or uncertain situations on purpose?



The Sun

The Fool was successful in navigating his way through the strange lunar-lit landscape by seeking truth and following his true north. And as surely as day follows night, the Sun has appeared. He is in a lovely place, warm and bright, where he can see clearly the results of all his efforts. Through confronting the layers thrust upon him by society and his old wounds, fighting his inner demons, and trusting in his inner voice, he has created this shiny new reality. This time won't last forever ... happy, peaceful times never do ... but he can always hold it in his mind to give him strength to continue on. Knowing that this is what he is working and fighting for, as he continues to face challenges and to grow, makes it easier.

Divinatory meaning: The Sun is a straightforward card. It is, quite simply, a time of pure joy, happiness, and clarity. Goodness abounds and life is meant to be enjoyed.

Advice: Let go of worries. Make the best of this time and squeeze every ounce of joy from it that you can. Count your blessings. Practice gratitude.

If reversed, ask yourself: Do I force or fake "having a good time"? Do I gloss over troubles and pretend things are fine? Do I look for problems where there are none?



Judgment

It is almost like the Fool hasn't quite been fully alive. But now, in Judgment, he finds himself, like Pinocchio, becoming a "real boy." Following his North Star, he is now at a place where the heavens open up and he hears the music of the spheres singing directly to his soul. His transformation is complete and yet it isn't. The music tells tales of even greater freedom and even a more authentic way of being. Now that he is more fully himself, the Fool yearns to do something more, to serve something greater than himself. He wants to share the gifts that he has been given with others.

Divinatory meaning: Judgment isn't about being judged per se, or at least not being judged by others. It is about being connected not just to your own inner voice but also to whatever kind of power or being or idea that is more than yourself. Judgment is frequently defined as "the call," meaning you receive clarity about some larger task or joy or action your soul wants you to take.

Advice: That urge you are feeling, that big, wonderful thing you are thinking of doing ... do it. Don't question it because you know, you *know*, it comes from the purest and best part of yourself.

If reversed, ask yourself: Why am I ignoring what I know I should be doing? Am I attributing "the call" to something that really isn't a "call" in order to justify what I want to do?



The World

The Fool's quest has ended. He has found everything he sought when he began: an understanding of the world he lives in, his own inner wisdom, the tools to stand up for his beliefs, the strength to behave according to his heart, a connection to the Divine, and a cause that benefits more than himself. Life is full of cycles, and the wheel of life never stands still. For now, he has a moment to bask in this perfect moment. But in completing this quest, he has already started the ball rolling for his next quest. As he becomes the Fool once again, he prepares to take that first step that will determine his next adventure.

Divinatory meaning: This is an important moment to recognize your achievements because the truth is that you've just completed something important. All your hard work and struggles have paid off.

Advice: Enjoy this period, accept the congratulations of others if offered, and remember to reward yourself. Do something to mark this achievement ... and begin dreaming of your next undertaking.

If reversed, ask yourself: Why isn't this good enough? Am I imposing unrealistic perfectionism on myself? Why can't I enjoy or find pride in this achievement?



5

The Minor Arcana

While the Major Arcana represents larger cycles, events, and lessons in our lives, the Minor Arcana represent the experiences and people that fill our daily lives. The numbered cards show the events while the court cards can indicate our friends and families, our coworkers, ourselves, and, if we are unlucky enough to have them, folks who may not be so friendly toward us. Each suit governs a particular area of life and a specific sort of experience, as listed in each section.

The Minor Arcana cards do not tell an overarching story as the Major Arcana cards do, so in the interpretations below, there will be no story to preface the meanings. Also, because the scope of the Minors is different from the Majors, the reversed cards will have short meanings rather than questions. As with the Majors, there will be a divinatory meaning as well as advice.

Wands

The cards in the suit of Wands are associated with fire and show how our inner drives, wills, and passions find expression in the world. They also illustrate the state of our careers and projects.



Ace of Wands



Divinatory meaning: The Universe is handing you a gift, an opportunity. There is something you want to express or do or create and the Ace of Wands is like a big thumbs-up signal to go ahead and take the plunge. Whether it is starting a new career or taking on a community service project or creating a piece of art, the energy of this card will provide the burst of power needed to get it off the ground.

Advice: Just do it.

Reversed: A missed opportunity, delay, dissatisfaction



Two of Wands

Divinatory meaning: The world is your oyster. This seems like a good thing but sometimes the burden of choice is heavy. There are several things you want, goals you seek to achieve, or opportunities you want to take advantage of. But there is only so much time in a day and energy in a person, so, sadly, something has to give. The good news: all the options look good and you probably can't make a bad decision here.

Advice: Pick the one that stirs your passion or excites you the most.

Reversed: Indecision, a deal falls through, lack of vision

Three of Wands



Divinatory meaning: Choices have been made and actions have been taken. Initial responses show early indications of success, but the story isn't over yet. Now it is time to wait and see what happens. Like the figure in the card, you are waiting for your ship to come. Will it be laden with treasures or will the contents fall short of your expectations?

Advice: Make use of this time by doing what you can to help things along and plan for your next step.

Reversed: Delay, discouragement, bad decisions, distraction



Four of Wands

Divinatory meaning: This card indicates a formal or organized celebration or party! Something wonderful has happened and you and your friends (or family or colleagues) have the chance to really acknowledge all the hard work you put in to achieving your goal. This can be anything, such as a wedding, a birthday party, a retirement party, or graduation celebration. It could even be something like celebrating a political victory or gallery opening.

Advice: Take part in making this event the best it can be and, most of all, enjoy!

Reversed: Celebrating too soon, plans fall apart

Five of Wands



Divinatory meaning: It is time for a little friendly competition to help each other hone your skills. The man is holding the wands and we can just see the hands of the other people taking up their wand from the collection. Everyone is getting ready to bring their best efforts to the game. This could be an actual game or sport, but it can also be any kind of meeting or gathering where people are sharing ideas and brainstorming solutions.

Advice: Put your best foot forward, give as good as you can, but do remember to be a team player and good sport.

Reversed: Aggression, fighting, hurtful criticism



Six of Wands

Divinatory meaning: Victory! This card indicates success and public acknowledge of the achievement. Whatever you give your best efforts, skill, and dedication to will culminate with pride and accolades. Victories rarely occur in a vacuum. Others are holding up their wands in unity and to show their participation and support of your efforts. The recognition is yours, but you didn't earn it alone.

Advice: Be humble and don't expect attention as a given. Show appreciation for those who supported you and continue to stand with you.

Reversed: Failure, shame, being overlooked, taking credit for someone else's work

Seven of Wands



Divinatory meaning: Defense! Some things are worth protecting. In this situation something is worth standing up for ... yourself, an idea, someone else. Whatever is being attacked deserves someone to watch its back. First of all, because the thing has worth. Second, because it is not a fair fight. The attack is either coming from several fronts or is a combined effort. Standing alone for what is right isn't easy, but it is better than the alternative.

Advice: Know what is right in this case and have the courage to take a stand.

Reversed: Overreacting, being easily offended, picking a fight, defending the wrong thing



Eight of Wands

Divinatory meaning: All the ducks are in a row and ready to fly. Events have been set in motion and moving quickly to an outcome. The end result should not be a surprise because it is the logical conclusion. Whatever steps have been taken, they will continue on perhaps faster than anticipated and achieve the intended effect. Trying to stop things at this point could work but would cause utter chaos.

Advice: You've done all the work, so just step back and let things play out.

Reversed: Chaos, confusion, delays

Nine of Wands



Divinatory meaning: Be prepared, be vigilant. Experience has shown that there is, in this situation, trouble brewing. Very likely this is some sort of ongoing battle or repeating issue or cycle, perhaps on the job, within a social group, or in a relationship. There is weariness in this card, as if you are just tired of fighting the same fight over and over again. Unfortunately, unless something changes, it is a case of “same stuff, different day.”

Advice: Be ready to do battle...yet again. Or find a way to put a stop to the cycle that allows these struggles to continue.

Reversed: Martyrdom, disloyalty, stubbornness



Ten of Wands

Divinatory meaning: The suit of Wands carries within it a love of activity and a desire to say “yes!” to every opportunity. While this can make for an exciting life or a skyrocketing career, it can also lead to being stretched too thinly, with the result that nothing is done quite up to par. Taking on so many tasks and carrying such a heavy load puts everything at risk of being dropped or damaged, maybe beyond repair.

Advice: Re-examine your load. Either decide what can be laid aside or figure out a better way to manage everything on your plate.

Reversed: Physical and spiritual exhaustion, oppression, procrastination, distractions

Page of Wands



Divinatory meaning: The Page of Wands may be a young person or may be inexperienced at the task they are considering undertaking. He has discovered (or rediscovered) something that flames the fire of his passion and is eager to rush in to learn and experience all he can. His enthusiasm is strong and contagious, so others are willing and eager to support him. His confidence may be more developed than his skills, although he doesn't always understand that.

Advice: Listen to that inner excitement and courageously take on that new task, start that new journey. What are you waiting for? Adventure beckons!

Reversed: Too much dependence on external validation, anger or frustration when facing failure



Knight of Wands

Divinatory meaning: The Knight of Wands is driven by a passionate quest. He is very excited about and focused on achieving this one thing. Everything else fades into insignificance, sometimes out of necessity. Sometimes sacrifices have to be made. On the other hand, it is very likely that the goal will be achieved, but there is the danger that other things, perhaps equally important, may be neglected. This charming knight will have plenty of supporters, but his tunnel vision may cause him to not give them the proper acknowledgment.

Advice: Go for the brass ring. Recognize what can safely be put on the back burner as you reach for the prize you've sought for so long.

Reversed: Needless haste, stepping on others, chasing the wrong dream



King of Wands

Divinatory meaning: The King of Wands adores taking action and making decisions, often in service of something larger than himself, perhaps a business, political activism, or volunteer coordination. He has the experience, authority, and means to execute exciting new ideas and is always on the lookout for opportunities. Sometimes his position in life requires that he settle down and take care of mundane responsibilities, but this makes him frustrated and cranky. His natural inclinations and skills are at their best when he is doing something.

Advice: Find a beneficial cause to give your energy and abilities to. Participate in something bigger than you are. Make a difference.

Reversed: Lack of attention to emotional matters, logical reasoning, or physical concerns

Queen of Wands



Divinatory meaning: The Queen of Wands understands and wields her personal power. She draws strength and confidence from her will and does so with charm and grace, which attracts a lot of admiration. While very self-determined, she is not self-centered and wants to inspire others to experience their own inner power and will, whether they are ready to do so or not. In this sense, she can sometimes push or control others ... with the best of intentions but with complete disregard for their anxiety.

Advice: Know who you are and the full extent of your personal power and use it wisely. By acting from a place of power, you encourage others to do the same.

Reversed: Being pushy, bossy, or controlling, misusing personal power, denying your own potential

Cups

The cards in the suit of Cups are associated with water and represent our emotions, our relationships, and creative impulses. In the Cups, we see how we experience and process the experiences of life through our feelings.





Ace of Cups

Divinatory meaning: You are being offered a chalice of healing elixir that promises to soothe the soul, calm the spirit, and heal wounds. Healing often begins with forgiveness... for yourself and for others. Even if the situation is challenging or chaotic, there is an opportunity to bridge the gap and restore the relationships that have been under stress. Moving forward from a place of love may feel awkward, but as you finish drinking the cup of grace, you will find a lesson and understanding.

Advice: You are being offered the gift of love. Don't be stubborn. Receive it and offer your own hand in friendship. Begin again.

Reversed: Resentment, bitterness, a lack of Spirit, separation

Two of Cups



Divinatory meaning: This is that moment when eyes meet across a crowded room and both people just *know*. Whether it is romantic, platonic, business, or some other type of relationship, this is that exciting moment, full of the promise of something deeper. While this card promises an intense connection of some sort, there are no guarantees that it will turn into something more. For now, though, the possibility of more is more than enough.

Advice: Be open to and optimistic about this new connection, enjoying the pure magic of it. But don't ruin it by dragging expectations into the picture.

Reversed: Rejection, rose-colored glasses, unrequited love, infatuation



Three of Cups

Divinatory meaning: There is just something about hanging out with friends that has a sparkle all its own. Being appreciated for who you are and appreciating others simply for being them generates a warmth and acceptance that radiates outward. When you are with your people, you feel like your best self because you are being reflected back to yourself through your friends' eyes. Genuine affection has a way of making people beautiful.

Advice: Enjoy the comfort and joy of being with friends. If you have no immediate plans, arrange something and get a booster shot of feel-good vibes.

Reversed: Mean cliques, feeling left out, too much partying

Four of Cups



Divinatory meaning: Oh, the ennui is so thick around here! It seems like you've been bored forever with no end of the tedium in sight. You aren't happy with what you have. You aren't interested in the offerings from charming, ethereal ladies. Apparently nothing will satisfy you. This isn't always bad. Sometimes after a string of bad romantic relationships, family squabbles, or friend drama, taking a time out can be just the thing.

Advice: Take some time, if you need it, but probably you've been out of commission long enough. Open your eyes, look around, and grab some of life's goodness.

Reversed: Deep depression, melodramatic discontent, lack of gratitude



Five of Cups

Divinatory meaning: This card looks like loss, but it is more about the emotional reaction to loss. There is the mourning of what is gone and isolation, the natural desire for privacy with one's grief. Two upright cups show that something still remains, something that can comfort and sustain when the time is right. Finally, there is the path back to community, connection, and what we may think of as "normal" everyday life.

Advice: Take the time to process your feelings because that is the only way to return to "normal" life, but know that even normal life will be different now.

Reversed: Obsessing about the past, self-pity, repressing grief

Six of Cups



Divinatory meaning: Small but heartfelt acts of kindness can change the vibration of a situation, creating a ripple effect of sweetness. This card can represent either a current act or a memory of a past experience when you gave or received such a gift. Whichever it is, the person giving the blessing is without guile or agenda, except for making someone happy. There is no danger or anything to worry about.

Advice: Accept the gift without suspicion, or if you are taking an action, make it one of kindness. There is no need for any harsher emotions.

Reversed: Romanticizing the past, emotional manipulation, gifts with strings attached



Seven of Cups

Divinatory meaning: You are blessed with lots of choices, which can sometimes feel like a curse because you can't have them all. Some of the options are realistic, achievable ones; others are imaginary possibilities, fantasies that are less likely to manifest; still others may be fears that can lead down an unhappy, unfulfilling path. All of the alternatives tug at your heart in some way, making the decision even more difficult.

Advice: Step back and get a larger view. Bring in some logic and rational analysis to give some perspective to your emotional responses.

Reversed: Daydreams interfering with life, escapism, delusions

Eight of Cups



Divinatory meaning: Sometimes things are pretty good. Everything seems just fine except for this deep but persistent urge to move on. There is nothing you can put your finger on as the reason why you want to go; you just do. This makes it hard to rationalize or talk to others about. It may look like you are throwing away a perfectly good life or job or relationship or opportunity. But your heart knows it is no longer for you.

Advice: Be brave and listen to your heart even though it is hard, even though you might not be completely sure what you are chasing after, and others might not understand. Staying will lead to bitterness.

Reversed: Settling for second best, resentment, running away because of fear



Nine of Cups

Divinatory meaning: In the old days, this was called the Wish card. If it turned up in your reading it meant that your wish would come true. Today, we don't go in so much for wishes being granted, preferring instead to earn our blessings through hard work. The truth probably lies in the middle ground: you've made some good choices and the results are very pleasing to you. For this moment, at least, you feel like life is pretty darn good.

Advice: Count your blessings, practice gratitude, and share your good fortune with others.

Reversed: Overindulgence, selfishness, dissatisfaction, regret

Ten of Cups



Divinatory meaning: The suit of Cups, like a fairy tale, ends with a “happily ever after” card. In this moment, the hard work of fostering healthy, loving relationships culminates in a sense that all is right with the world. In addition, looking from this vantage point at the future is glorious. You are all sharing the same beautiful dream and ready to take the next step together. The future may bring challenges, but you know together you can face anything.

Advice: Really enjoy this feeling, imprint it in your heart, and make sure your loved ones know without a doubt how you feel. You can draw on this feeling for strength during hard times.

Reversed: Showing a false front, family arguments, broken promises or vows



Page of Cups

Divinatory meaning: The Page of Cups is experiencing or exploring an emotion as if for the first time. He is completely submerged in the feeling, like a teenager falling in love for the first time. Everything seems so huge, so real, so all-important that it can really blind him to reality. His devotion is admirable but can lead to some very real heartbreak. On the other hand, it can also lead to the most important relationship or experience of his life.

Advice: Dive in to the experience, but do so with open eyes. Find the balance between celebrating your open heart and keeping it safe from becoming bitter or cynical in the future.

Reversed: Assuming you understand everything, refusing guidance, ignoring warning signs

Knight of Cups



Divinatory meaning: The Knight of Cups is the quintessential quester. He has a clear idea of his holy grail and is completely devoted to finding it no matter the cost. However, while the Knight of Wands is all about the chase and taking action, this knight's commitment to dreamy ideals includes honoring the poetry and romance woven through daily life. He moves slower, yes, but his focus is just as intense, sometimes to the point of missing out on real life.

Advice: You know what your ideal is so don't settle for less. Enjoy the journey but don't get distracted.

Reversed: Head in the clouds, indulging in romanticism, obliviousness



Queen of Cups

Divinatory meaning: The Queen of Cups gets deep satisfaction from connecting with others. She is open and curious, creating an environment that fosters intimacy. Her natural abilities help with this, as she is extremely sensitive and intuitive and perhaps even psychic. It's hard to hide things from her. Encouraging close relationships and talking about feelings is good, but sometimes she pushes too hard or becomes obsessed with her own emotions.

Advice: Be aware of your emotions and honor them but don't let them take over. Remember that emotions are only one part of who you are. When in doubt, let them settle before acting on them.

Reversed: Neediness, codependence, smothering others, being controlled by emotions

King of Cups



Divinatory meaning: The King of Cups is moved by matters of the heart. Experience and authority have not made him cynical or shifted his focus to bottom lines and outcomes. He works hard to create deep and meaningful connections between people, especially in group settings, such as families, work teams, or organizations. Being motivated by emotions means that he is sensitive and caring, but if things don't go his way, he can revert to childish behavior, pouting, and manipulation.

Advice: Let your heart and a desire to foster love and connections drive your actions. Build bridges and strengthen relationships.

Reversed: Disconnected emotionally, childish pouting, melancholy

Swords

The cards in the suit of Swords are associated with air and reveal our ideas about truth and communication. When we look at the Swords we learn about how we think about the world and how we approach the challenges in life.



Ace of Swords



Divinatory meaning: Just as a sword is a double-sided weapon, it contains both gifts and warnings. This card means truth, clarity, communication, and justice. It is a bright idea that seems to come out of nowhere. It is the solution to a tricky problem. It is knowledge that makes everything become clear. The warning is to use this truth, this idea well and wield it with love because using it clumsily leads to cruelty.

Advice: Take up this idea, this solution, this truth and wield it with love. You've been given a gift to restore peace not to destroy.

Reversed: Faulty logic, miscommunication, injustice, indecision



Two of Swords

Divinatory meaning: You are facing a decision and you know which is the right choice ... and there is a “right” choice in this situation. However, you are unwilling to let go of the other option, perhaps out of fear or maybe because you simply would prefer the other. Also, your emotions are interfering. Sometimes leading with the heart is best, but this time, there is a logical reason. You know you have to choose it, no matter how much you want the other.

Advice: Procrastination will only make things worse. You can’t put this off any longer. Do what you know is the true and right thing.

Reversed: Ignoring a problem, refusing to accept facts, lying to yourself

Three of Swords



Divinatory meaning: We all say we want truth, but the truth, like words, can cut deeply and can wound cruelly. Truth and communication are the realm of Swords and the mind, but in this situation they are only the tools. It is the heart that experiences their effects. Whether or not you asked for this information, you have it and you can't unknow it. Unfortunately, this changes everything, and it will, I'm sorry to say, hurt for a while before it heals.

Advice: Acknowledge and accept this truth; don't try to deny your pain but also resolve to heal and forgive or the swords will stay and poison your heart.

Reversed: Confusion, maliciousness, hurtful lies, cruelty



Four of Swords

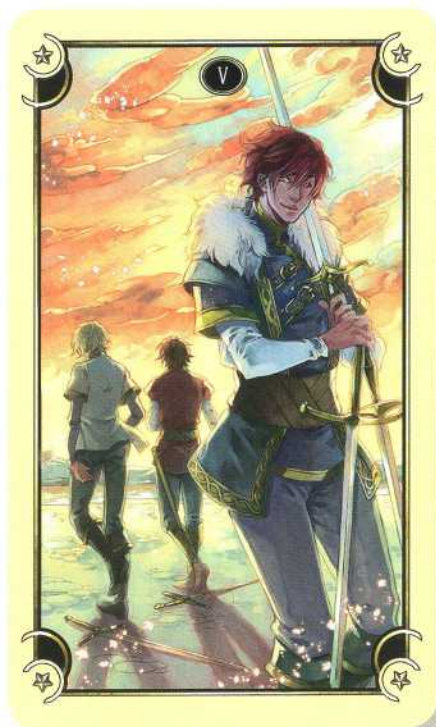
Divinatory meaning: There is a problem that seems unsolvable.

With sticky issues, it is easy to think and think and think until your head is so full of thoughts that everything feels confused. This card describes another approach: retreat, rest, restore, and regroup. Yes, there are lots of moving parts and complicated angles but the solution is simple and elegant. It is, apparently also shy, hiding until the mind is clear and ready to receive it.

Advice: Let go of this problem for a while; it's not going anywhere ... and you are not moving closer to a solution by fretting. Meditate. Pray. Sleep. Probably sleep; people just don't understand how important it is to rest.

Reversed: Denial, obsession, procrastination, confusion

Five of Swords



Divinatory meaning: A battle is over, complete with a winner and losers. Someone is walking away with all the prizes as well as confirmed enemies. Others are walking away with regrets, bad feelings, strong judgments, and probably with a taste for revenge. Although he may not know it yet, the victor has also lost something valuable, perhaps his honor, integrity, values, or friends. This situation is confused and that makes it hard to know what to do.

Advice: If it is too late and the battle happened already, make whatever restorations and moves toward peace that you can. If it hasn't happened yet, try to figure out a better way to solve the conflict.

Reversed: A costly victory, dishonor, shameful behavior



Six of Swords

Divinatory meaning: The only solution to the situation seems to be to run away. That is not always the right answer, but sometimes getting to a safer place is the only option. Some situations are not salvageable and some relationships cannot be mended. Difficult travel through choppy waters may not be easy, but the end result promises parting clouds, encouraging sunshine, and a peaceful place appropriate for regrouping and making new plans.

Advice: Get out of the situation so you can see more clearly what you are dealing with. Only with the benefit of distance will you be able to figure things out.

Reversed: Delay, being stuck, choosing to stay in a bad situation

Seven of Swords



Divinatory meaning: Sometimes a clever or sneaky plan seems fool-proof. What could possibly go wrong? In this situation, whether the plan has honorable or dishonorable or merely questionable motives, someone is watching. You may feel like you did or will get away with something, but the truth is, it simply isn't going to turn out as you thought. Whether or not you get the resulting benefits you expected remains to be seen. Even if you do, there will be a cost.

Advice: If you can, rethink your plan. If you can't, come clean and don't try to make things worse by hiding your actions.

Reversed: A plan fails, exposure, getting caught in the act



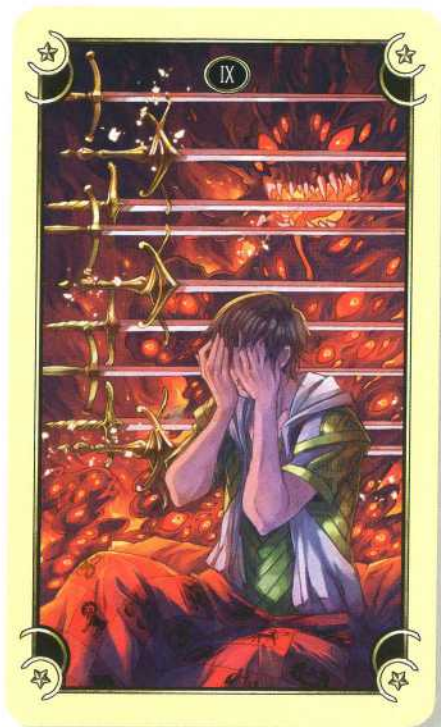
Eight of Swords

Divinatory meaning: Some situations are truly perilous. Your hands are tied, dangers surround you, and you literally (or figuratively) can't see a way out. Because this is the suit of Swords, which represents our thought processes, very likely this situation is created or exasperated by the way you think about it. Doing the same thing and thinking the same thoughts increases the hold the situation has on you.

Advice: Like Houdini escaping from seemingly inescapable bonds, you can free yourself by quelling your rising emotions and thinking about the situation in a completely different way.

Reversed: Making excuses, victim mentality, inventing problems

Nine of Swords



Divinatory meaning: Ah, the dreaded thought monsters that eat away at the night, stealing sweet and badly needed sleep. Whether these thoughts keep you from falling asleep or wake you up at 3 a.m., all they do is consume with no beneficial return. The more they eat, the stronger they get...and the weaker you feel. They conflate every regret, every mistake, and every slight until the smallest act or thoughtless word threatens to consume you.

Advice: These nights happen to us all and it's never easy to end them. Develop a set of ideas to try until you find one that works. Meditation, making lists, or simply getting up and doing something productive are possible options.

Reversed: Isolation, long-term insomnia, over reliance on sleeping aids



Ten of Swords

Divinatory meaning: Some situations can't be won or don't end the way we want, no matter how bravely we behaved or how dedicated we were. The fact is, this situation is over. The damage is done and there is no going back to the way things were. The sunset represents the end. But it also can be seen as a sunrise, the new beginning hidden in all endings. There are lessons to be learned here and the wise person will take those lessons into the welcoming new day.

Advice: Trying to change the outcome is a waste of time and energy. Take what you've learned and move into a future that will be different can also be better.

Reversed: Melodrama, denial, refusing to let go

Page of Swords



Divinatory meaning: The Page of Swords is smart and quick to learn ... and easily bored. Once he understands something, he gets really good at using that knowledge to get what he wants, even if it is simply to amuse himself, sometimes at the expense of others. He is, like all the Pages, immature and sees things in black and white, which can be frustrating to those around him. He is clever, insightful, and discerning but can also be gossipy and judgmental.

Advice: Recognize your own intelligence but also admit that you don't know what you don't know. Reserve judgment and foster curiosity.

Reversed: Being a know-it-all, playing clever but cruel jokes, hurting others to show off



Knight of Swords

Divinatory meaning: The Knight of Swords is committed to the truth as he understands it. He is, like all the Knights, focused and driven. He uses words and logic to support his own agenda, which may be awesome or may be deeply flawed. Marvelously skilled with words, he can convince people that he is right. That is a great power and brings with it responsibility. Fighting for the truth is great, but he doesn't always verify that his ideas are the truth.

Advice: Don't assume your truth is everyone's truth. Make sure you've examined the big picture, including opposing ideas, before you fight for your ideas.

Reversed: Lacking a plan or strategy, being too rigid and not seeing new developments, intolerance

Queen of Swords



Divinatory meaning: The Queen of Swords has tasted both the joys and the sorrows of life. Rather than becoming bitter, she has crafted a useful philosophy. This makes her a wonderful resource when seeking solutions to sticky or complex problems. Her experiences have made her very discerning and able to see lies easily. She can make plans and devise strategies. Because she values logic, she can seem unemotional or detached.

Advice: Take all the experiences of your life and turn them into useful and productive life lessons. Let challenging times make you stronger but never cynical or cold.

Reversed: Bitterness, cynicism, cold-heartedness, inaccessible, sharp or cruel words



King of Swords

Divinatory meaning: The King of Swords believes that it is his duty to serve the greater good by wielding logic, reason, and intelligence. He tries to make the best decisions he can based on the facts and past experience. He sometimes forgets to factor in emotions and sensitivity to others. He understands the power of words, and, therefore, he can be infuriatingly silent because he won't speak until he is sure of what he wants to say.

Advice: Gather all the information you can and process it logically. Make sure you are clear on what you think before you take action.

Reversed: Snobbishness, paranoia, judgmental, controlling, cruelty, meanness

Coins

The cards in the suit of Coins are associated with earth and express our beliefs about the physical world and our resources. Through these images, we see the rise and fall of fortunes, hard work, and generosity.





Ace of Coins

Divinatory meaning: All of the aces are gifts, but this one is the luckiest of all. It is a seed containing all possibilities. Like in the image, it is a cornucopia of abundance waiting to manifest. The prosperity promised isn't just about money, though. It is all physical bounty, including good physical health and fulfilling relationships. Like all seeds, it requires nurturing and the proper conditions in order to blossom.

Advice: Dream big and work hard. The Universe is handing you a metaphoric blank check. Invest it well.

Reversed: Missed opportunity, lack of resources, chasing money for its own sake

Two of Coins



Divinatory meaning: Sometimes we feel tossed on the whimsical sea of life, hardly able to maintain our balance. This situation is unavoidably complex and requires careful juggling to make sure nothing drops through the cracks. There is a lot going on but you're doing a good job of keeping your footing. Living in this heightened state can't go on indefinitely, though. Best case: the external circumstances change so you can relax.

Advice: Maintaining this state is exhausting and certainly not sustainable. Reprioritize as soon as you can or the decisions about what to drop will be made for you.

Reversed: Chaos, stress, poor financial management, mistakes in spending



Three of Coins

Divinatory meaning: Working as a team can be so satisfying if everyone brings their best, unique skills to the table and checks their egos at the door. People have different abilities, so by letting dreamers dream, planners plan, and makers make, great things can be achieved. This could also represent a situation where you are using various skills of your own to do something wonderful. Whether solo or in a team, multiple talents are required to pull this off.

Advice: Remember that everyone is on the same team, working toward the same goal. Bring your best self to the project and help facilitate smooth teamwork.

Reversed: Shoddy work, team not pulling together, not being recognized for contributions, working on an unworthy project

Four of Coins



Divinatory meaning: Energy and resources are, in general, meant to flow. However, there are times when saving or conserving is the wisest course of action. This situation suggests careful budgeting and wise investing because a time is coming when a nest egg or safety net will be needed. Maybe a trip is being planned or a large purchase is in your future. If so, having something set aside will make that more likely to happen.

Advice: Be careful with your budget and curtail your spending. Conserve your energy and resources however you can. Store up your power; it'll come in handy.

Reversed: Greed, hoarding, taking what isn't yours, wasting resources



Five of Coins

Divinatory meaning: Experiencing financial trouble or physical trials is so hard. No one likes to be hungry or sick, especially in a culture that ties self-worth to income and good health to proper behavior. It's easy to feel like you brought things on yourself, which makes it even harder to ask for help. It's also a time when people lose faith in what normally sustains them. This is such a hard time for you and it doesn't mean you are a bad person or a failure.

Advice: Don't be hard on yourself. Ask for help and accept it with grace. It is okay to need a helping hand.

Reversed: Neglecting yourself, refusing help out of pride, taking advantage of others

Six of Coins



Divinatory meaning: It's said that politics is about who gets what, when, and how. This card isn't necessarily about politics, but it is about the haves, the have-nots, and the distribution of resources. Someone has what is needed and others have needs. The person holding all the coins is making decisions and judgments about who gets the help they requested. Some may leave satisfied and others may not.

Advice: You have the ability to help someone and you should. Furthermore, it would be nice if you did it as kindly and generously as possible, helping the person retain their dignity.

Reversed: Stinginess, denial of help, unfair financial impositions, unwilling to accept help, unable to provide help



Seven of Coins

Divinatory meaning: Things seem to be moving along quite nicely and there isn't much that actually needs to be done right now. Your project is so close to manifesting that you can taste it, smell it, and see it. It would be so tempting to just reach out and pick it. That would be really foolish because it isn't time. Things still need to ripen, to grow into their full sweetness.

Advice: While waiting to harvest your rewards, take the time to review how things went so you can improve next time around.

Reversed: Expectations not met, harvesting too soon, not learning from mistakes

Eight of Coins



Divinatory meaning: You have the opportunity to improve. It's one thing to have a skill. It's another thing entirely to master a skill. Taking an ability to the next level requires a commitment to practice that few choose to make. However, while practicing can feel boring, to people dedicated to improving it isn't because they have a passion for the craft itself. Each tiny bit of improvement is an accomplishment.

Advice: Take pride in your work and foster the patience to do the hard work of actually getting better at what you do.

Reversed: Poor workmanship, being satisfied with "good enough," tedious and unfulfilling work.



Nine of Coins

Divinatory meaning: This situation is filled with rewards for a job well done. Actually, it's more than a single job well done... it is about a well-crafted life. This person knew what she wanted and committed herself to doing whatever needed to be done to achieve it. She was self-reliant, inventive, and thought creatively to overcome challenges. She has built her life and now she gets to live in it, to paraphrase an old saying.

Advice: You've worked hard and should be really proud. Now make sure that you enjoy your success... and maybe find someone to share it with.

Reversed: Dissatisfaction, laziness, nothing's ever good enough, needing external validation

Ten of Coins



Divinatory meaning: That lucky Ace of Coins has manifested in the best possible way. Stability reigns, crafted from deep familial affection and material abundance. This situation isn't just one of having good stuff and well-behaved kids. There is the sincere spiritual and loving understanding and appreciation that makes life worth living. Otherwise it is all just empty staging and appearances.

Advice: There is a saying that goes something like "if you like a flower, you'll pick it; if you love a flower, you will water it." Love what you have and take good care of it.

Reversed: Debt, family problems, pretensions, keeping up appearances



Page of Coins

Divinatory meaning: The Page of Coins is interested in and curious about the physical world and loves to understand how things work on a practical level. For him, efficiency is elegant, although he can take that to an extreme leading to laziness or lack of innovation. He gets comfortable with the way things are, which makes him adaptable but he prefers the known to the unknown and might resist change.

Advice: Explore the world around you and feed your curiosity. Learn best practices but try to keep an open mind about innovation.

Reversed: Laziness, hoarding, stagnating in skills

Knight of Coins



Divinatory meaning: The Knight of Coins is devoted, loyal, and steadfast. He understands the importance of timing, waiting patiently until the right moment to act. When resources are lacking, he's great at figuring out how to make something from nothing. In our world of instant gratification, he knows that some things take time and consequently can be trusted to stay committed for the long term.

Advice: Take your time, make the most of what you have, and cultivate patience.

Reversed: Overly cautious, fearing risk or loss, hesitating, tediousness, boredom



Queen of Coins

Divinatory meaning: The Queen of Coins knows that comfortable and beautiful environments help people be their best selves. She is the master of “do it yourself” and turning trash into treasures. If there is joy to be found in making a gourmet meal out of a few eggs and a potato, she will find that joy and serve a wonderful dinner, complete with lovely place settings. With her, no matter the project, details will always be taken care of.

Advice: Create as much comfort and beauty in your world as you can and pay attention to the smallest of details.

Reversed: Fixating on end results, over spending, extreme frugality

King of Coins



Divinatory meaning: The King of Coins is extremely practical and values end results, bottom lines, and quality. Although he has an appreciation for the finer things in life, he doesn't expect them to be handed to him. He can be generous, but he always considers which donations or gifts would have the most impact. His experience and skill are generally turned toward serving the greater good or a larger organization.

Advice: Carefully assess your resources and invest them wisely. Value good work, but don't purchase above your means.

Reversed: Love of luxury, heavy debts, material wealth but emotional or spiritual poverty, being uncharitable



Conclusion

Your own magical quest has just begun. I hope these cards take you on some wonderful journeys of self-discovery. May they grant you guidance and advice and become like wise friends always available whenever you need them. Continue to practice and explore the worlds of wisdom the images open.





Appendix A: Further Study

Amberstone, Ruth Ann, and Wald Amberstone, *The Secret Language of Tarot*.

A study of common symbols used in tarot cards. Theoretically can be used with any deck, however is based on Rider-Waite-Smith.

Antenucci, Nancy, and Melanie Howard, *Psychic Tarot*.

This book teaches tarot readers how to use their intuition to read the cards and how to strengthen their psychic abilities.

Ellershaw, Josephine, *Easy Tarot Reading*.

A fantastic explanation of how a reader weaves tarot card meanings into a seamless, useful interpretation.

Greer, Mary K., *21 Ways to Read a Tarot Card*.

An excellent book for deepening your understanding of tarot cards; can be used with any deck.

Greer, Mary K., *The Complete Book of Tarot Reversals*.

A guide to understanding and using reversals in tarot readings using decks in the Rider-Waite-Smith tradition.

Hazel, Elizabeth, *Tarot Decoded*.

If you are interested in learning more about dignities and correspondences, this is an excellent resource. Can be used with any deck.

Katz, Marcus, and Tali Goodwin, *Around the Tarot in 78 Days*.

A comprehensive course covering one card per day. In-depth and solid material presented in a very accessible manner.

Llewellyn. *Llewellyn's Tarot Reader*.

An annual published from 2005 through 2008 filled with excellent articles, spreads, and deck reviews. Although all issues are out of print, used copies are on the market.

Louis, Anthony. *Llewellyn's Complete Book of Tarot*.

A complete overview of the various schools of tarot, different approaches, and ways of understanding the cards.

Louis, Anthony. *Tarot Beyond the Basics*.

A great resource for once you feel confident in basic tarot reading and want to delve deeper into astrological associations, intuition,



reversals, and number and elemental symbolism, along with great real-life examples.

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Appendix B: The Fool's Journey

O, The Fool

Once upon a time, a young man put on his favorite clothes (all of them at once!) and started on a journey. He took a small bag of essential items, or at least what he thought of as essential. His faithful dog followed along, even though she wasn't convinced this was a great idea. Guided by an inner drive that he couldn't really explain, he started off, and although he didn't know exactly where he was going, he walked with confidence because he trusted that inner voice. The white cuffs reminded him that his actions should reflect his pure intentions. The red feather in his cap was a sign of his passion and commitment to the quest.

I, The Magician

The young man, our Fool, met a great and powerful man who could do amazing things. So the Fool made himself comfortable and watched and learned about magic. The key is to understand the energies that swirl around all the time. The energies have different names depending on who is talking about them. Fire, water, air, and earth. Will, emotions, thoughts, and matter. Once you understand how these work, alone and in combination, you can learn

to control and to manifest dreams and create reality. More importantly, though, it is necessary to control these energies within yourself. To change yourself, that is the true magic.

II, The High Priestess

The Fool was all amped up after his visit with the Magician and wandered around in a bit of a stupor. The calm, cool terrace of the High Priestess was very inviting, so he rested there a while. She didn't really say anything, so he got bored but was too tired to move on. So he continued to sit. At first the strange symbols around her baffled him, but he kept staring at them, wondering what they could mean. He asked, but the High Priestess wouldn't answer. He quit trying to figure it out and finally found himself lost in her gaze. She may have been surrounded in symbols, but her eyes were gateways to the undefined, indescribable mysteries of life. In the shade, he might have dozed, might have dreamed, he wasn't sure. When he decided to move on, he felt different. Like he knew things that he didn't know before, but he wasn't exactly sure what.

III, The Empress

The hours (days, years, he wasn't really sure) that the Fool spent with the High Priestess left him feeling like he was more out of his body than in his body. Plus, he was hungry and a little homesick. He followed a trail of flowers to a strange alcove by the edge of

made her a crown of flowers and even though it wasn't as nice as her starry crown, she graciously wore it. Then she packed him a huge lunch and sent him on his way.

IV, The Emperor

The Fool was mindlessly munching on one of the Empress's sandwiches when he wandered upon the Emperor. The Fool wished he had been paying more attention because he would have skipped this imposing character. The Emperor demanded to be shown everything in the Fool's now overfull sack. He wanted to know what kind of journey the Fool was on, how long it would last, and how he would make his provisions stretch for the entire adventure. The Fool, of course, had no answers and so the Emperor lectured him about the importance of responsibility, stewardship, and the general advisability of always having a plan. With the Emperor's help, they sorted his provisions so that he had enough for several days. Plus, the Fool did some odd jobs for the Emperor to earn some pocket money.

V, The Hierophant

If the Emperor was scary, the Hierophant was just crazy. What is up with that hat and those crazy gesticulations? Curious, he joined the small group that listened to the Hierophant. After a while, a basket was passed around and people put money in it. The Fool didn't but instead waited until everyone left and asked what the money was for. The Hierophant explained that it was to feed the poor and take care of the priests and priestesses who served the people. It was his job to help the people to live according to their beliefs, to make the right choices, and to grow spiritually. The Fool

had a lot more questions and the Hierophant patiently answered them.

VI, The Lovers

In a clearing at a fork in the Fool's path, a naked couple listened to an angel. The angel said, "You both recognize each other as your heart's desire. You are choosing wisely." The couple embraced and turned to leave. As they did, a new path opened up as if by magic. Hand in hand, they walked the path, which disappeared behind them. The angel saw the Fool's astounded expression and said, "When you choose the path of your heart, it will be yours and yours alone." The Fool sat under the tree with apples, ate one, and stared at the burning tree. Part of him wanted to go back home. He looked back the way he'd come and saw plants emerging, reclaiming the route, making it impossible to follow. He decided to seek more adventures. A path revealed itself and the Fool continued on his way.

VII, The Chariot

The Fool felt pretty good about his choice, although part of him was still anxious. All doubt vanished when he came upon the Chariot. He never knew he wanted one until he saw it. He walked all around it, admiring all the features. It was like a culmination of his recent adventures. The canopy reminded him of the Empress's celestial crown. The square sturdiness would have delighted the Emperor. He climbed in and noticed a wand...here, he thought, is the Magician. He held up the wand and thought about moving on. Slowly, creakily, the horses stood up and started walking and the chariot lurched into motion.

VIII, Strength

The Fool was so focused on steering his new chariot that he almost ran into a woman and a lion. Without thinking, only reacting to a perceived danger, the Fool jumped out and ran to help. The woman was making shushing noises, trying to calm the lion, and, amazingly, the lion was responding. The woman knelt down and plucked a thorn from the lion's paw. Relieved of pain, the lion fell heavily to the ground, and the woman continued to soothe him. Looking at the Fool, she said, "Most wild, noble beings only lash out or attack when they are in pain or afraid. Like animals, other people, and your own glorious spirit."

IX, The Hermit

It was getting dark and the Fool thought he should stop traveling for the night. As he was starting to set up a makeshift camp, he saw a man with a lantern. The man wasn't paying any attention to the Fool, instead being very focused on the path in front of him, stepping carefully in the small pool of light created by the lantern. The Fool followed him up a mountain. The Hermit finally stopped and said, "Why do you follow me? This is my light and my path. I go to the mountain to be alone and think about things." The Fool knew enough to take a hint and headed back down to his chariot, thinking, if I had a light of my own, I could travel more easily in the dark. He fell asleep wondering how he could make a lantern.

X, The Wheel of Fortune

During the night, the Fool dreamed. He saw a large wheel covered in strange symbols and ridden by a bizarre, golden snake. The snake became more excited as its head rose higher and higher. When it was at the top, the creature started screaming and flailing,

unable to stop its own fall. Then a delicate girl, clearly stronger than she looked, spun the wheel. The snake wailed and clutched, trying not to be flung off. A voice whispered very close to the Fool's ear, "It's easier to hold on if you stay in the center."

XI, Justice

In the morning, the Fool got into his chariot, the weirdness of last night's dream still clinging to him. Soon he saw a formal-looking building with lots of pillars and steps. At the top of the steps was a woman holding a sword and a set of scales. People were on the steps, listening and watching as other people went up and pled their cases. The Fool couldn't hear what was being said, but he noticed some people left in tears while others seemed happy and still others, determined. He asked a fellow observer what was going on and was told, "Oh, it's just people finding out that they have to sleep in the beds that they've made." The Fool must have looked blank because the person continued, "Some people never learn that they get what they deserve."

XII, The Hanged Man

The Fool saw a man hanging upside down in a tree. He wondered, remembering the lesson from Justice, what the man had done to deserve this when the hanging man spoke. "I know what you're thinking, and you're wrong." The hanging man explained that he chose to hang in the tree, giving his liberty as a sacrifice, as an offering. He sought enlightenment, a new way of seeing the same old world. He had been trying hard for years, studying and working, but making no progress, so he decided to not give up but to give over, committing to wait as long as it took. "Sometimes," he continued, "there is nothing that you can do but wait. Just be

still and quiet so you can listen.” The Fool respected that and quit talking. But he stayed and watched for a while. Slowly, a halo of light started glowing behind the man’s head, growing in size and brightness and the man stayed silent, eyes closed, but his face lit up with a radiant smile.

XIII, Death

The Fool must have stayed with the Hanged Man for longer than he thought because when he set off again the sun was setting. In the distance he heard moaning and wailing, so he approached cautiously and he was glad he did. Hiding his chariot, he scrambled closer to a frightful scene. Nearly hidden behind a skeleton’s cloak, lay a dead king. Other people were crying out. The skeleton turned its head and looked right at the Fool with his empty eye sockets. A cold shiver shuddered through the Fool’s soul and he knew without a doubt that he needed to walk with Death. Leaving behind his beloved chariot, his knapsack, and his few meager belongings, he walked with Death toward the sun fading on the horizon.

XIV, Temperance

The Fool still felt dazed after his night with Death, as if he wasn’t filling up his body properly. He almost bumped into an angel with glorious wings who was doing magical things with white vases and liquid. The angel set down her vases and assessed the Fool. The angel saw into the Fool, all the piles of treasures scattered around and all of the empty spaces, too. The angel picked the chalices up again and held them up high. She turned to face each of the directions, speaking beautiful words to the sky. The angel poured the liquid back and forth before finally handing one to the

Fool, who, without question or doubt, drank it. The empty places in his soul filled up and the Fool was more fully in his body. He was more fully in himself in every way. Death stripped him bare, leaving fertile soil and a few seeds. The angel watered the seeds and already they were growing.

XV, The Devil

Feeling jaunty and revived, the Fool continued on his way with a spring in his step. The day was so bright and the air felt so good. He heard strange sounds, like a confusion of tortured moans and diabolical laughter. He did not want to follow the sound but knew he had to investigate. Finding the entrance to a cave, he went in and saw a man and woman chained together. A large demon taunted them until it saw the Fool. Suddenly, the Fool found himself chained to a pillar. His fear bubbled up from his stomach through his veins and panic coursed through every synapse in his brain. The chains became tighter and his terror worse. The demon's voice filled the Fool's mind: You are nothing, you have learned nothing, you will never be worthy.

XVI, The Tower

The Fool was still bound in the demon's cave. He'd given up struggling and was huddled on the ground, holding himself and rocking back and forth. When he rocked forward, he could see outside the mouth of the cave. He could see a tall tower on top of a hill, clouds gathering behind it. The storm churning overhead echoed the chaotic whispers engulfing the Fool's mind. As the energy built in the sky and in his brain, it condensed, illuminating everything. The Fool's truth, a hard-won truth wrestled from the cold hands of Death, flashed in his mind and surged through his being.

The chains fell away and on pure instinct the Fool ran out of the cave in time to see the sky split and the mighty tower turn into a pile of rubble on the hill.

XVII, The Star

The Fool was battered, bruised, and burned after his experiences in the Devil's cave and running past the exploding Tower. He had left everything behind with Death and felt lost, and, he hated to admit it, a little betrayed. Looking up at the brilliant stars in the dark sky made him feel better. One seemed so much brighter than the rest and he followed it into a clearing where a woman was pouring water into the pond. She approached him quietly, took his hand, and motioned for him to rest on the shore. She sang star songs and poured water over him. His wounds healed and he felt like his heart healed, too. He didn't know how to thank her, so he sang a song from his heart. She gave him a kiss on the forehead and he started on his path again, feeling more certain of his way.

XVIII, The Moon

Everything was going great for the Fool until clouds covered the tiny stars. His way was lit only by the ghostly light of the Moon. Shadows formed, making everything confusing. Water poured onto the path, but he couldn't figure out where it came from. A lobster crawled out of the water and onto the path, looking like a horrible monster. He heard wolves howling in the distance and thought they were coming closer. He panicked and ran around bumping into stones and trees. When he stopped to catch his breath, underneath the pounding of his heart, he felt guidance rising up. Stop. Look. Listen. Listen from within. Calmer now, he realized his eyes were

adjusting, and he could see. The path led between two pillars and he knew that was the way to go.

XIX, The Sun

By the time the Sun was high in the sky, the fearful memories of the night before were fading and the Fool felt positively cheerful. He came to a lovely field filled with flowers, including plenty of sunflowers drinking in the warm sunlight. Then the Fool saw the strangest thing: two young children. The child even had a red ribbon, something that had been the Fool's trademark until he lost it during his adventures with Death. The child put the ribbon on the Fool's head and motioned for the Fool. The Fool did and the children vanished.

XX, Judgment

After riding around, long and hard, laughing into the sunshine, the Fool felt like he was done and also, curiosity started tugging at him. What was just beyond that wall, the one with all the sunflowers along it? He climbed over and saw a huge cemetery that reached as far as the horizon. Angels appeared in the sky and started blowing trumpets, although the Fool couldn't hear any sound. Some graves opened up and people, alive and shining with heavenly light, rose up and disappeared. While the Fool was puzzling out what happened, he felt his soul rise up and a song burst from his throat. He didn't know how, but he could hear the trumpet and hear his own voice combining to make the most glorious, majestic song ever made. All the layers of the Fool's experiences began to merge. He lifted his face to the sky and sang his prayer of love and gratitude. He glimpsed the Divine within him and in every bit of the world.

XXI, The World

The cemetery vanished and the Fool stood in an empty field. Eventually, all that vibrating with wonder made his legs weak and he lay down and watched the clouds against the blue sky. As humans have done from the dawn of time, he saw pictures there that told him a beautiful story about success and completion. He fell asleep, dreaming about his adventures and wondering what would come next. When he woke, he was on a cloud and there was a portal marked by a laurel wreath. He couldn't see what was beyond it. The opening was reflective and he saw only himself. He adjusted his red feather, smiled with anticipation, and jumped through.

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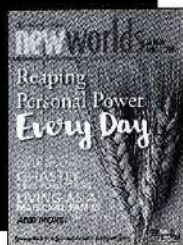
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