

Nocturna

ORACLE

GUIDEBOOK

I



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Introduction

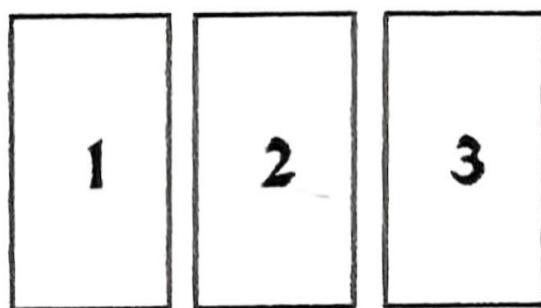
While our bodies rest, creatures of the night emerge from the shadows. This 48-card oracle deck is inspired by plant and animal folklore, and the mysteries of the night. The organisms in these cards dwell in hidden places - away from the sun, in forests, caves, and the bottom of the sea, drawing energy from the moon and stars.

This deck can be used on its own, or accompanying tarot cards. It is a great deck for winding down after a long day.

This guidebook is optional. The keywords offered are only suggestions for interpreting the cards, based off of my own world view and thoughts. You can use it for reference, or you can let your intuition guide you instead.

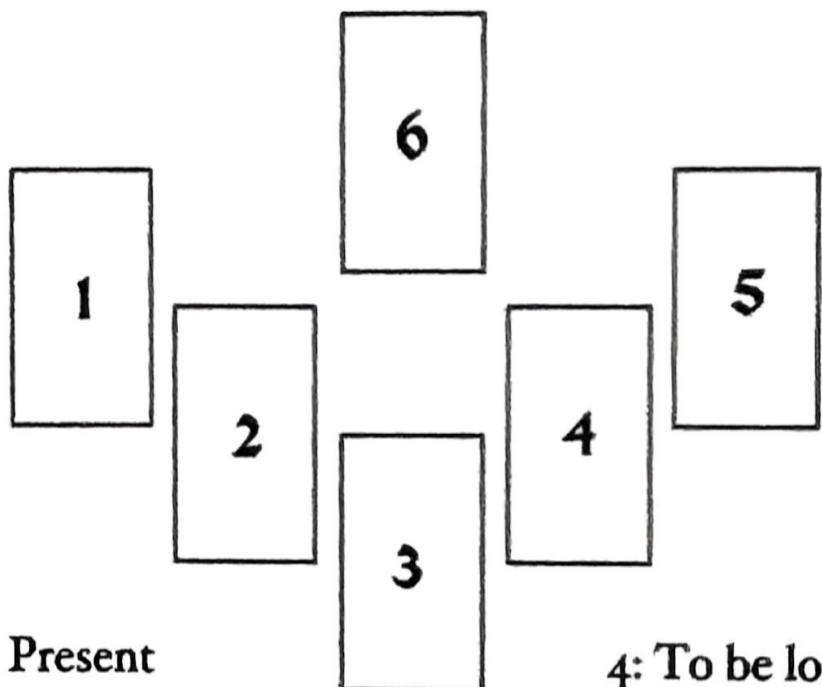
When doing a reading, give the cards a shuffle, while actively thinking about your query. You can choose to draw just one card, or use one of the following spreads. There are also plenty of spreads found in books and online that you can use, or you can create a new one that better suits your needs.

Three card spread



I: 2: 3:
Past Present Future
Mind Body Spirit

New moon spread



1: Present

2: Intention

3: To be gained

4: To be lost

5: Action

6: Outcome

Dusk

duality • cycles • beginning

The Dusk card, along with her sister card Dawn, represents the concept of duality, and the cyclical nature of day and night. Dusk is considered the time right before sunset, when darkness descends from the sky and the sun touches the horizon. During this time, nocturnal creatures start to emerge from their sleep. Where I live, bats can be seen flying around, their dark silhouettes standing out against the blazing sky. For this card, I decided to create a picturesque sunset typically seen on the West Coast or Hawaii, where I live and frequently visit. Watching the sun set against the ocean gives me a sense of departure, as the light leaves these lands for other horizons.



Moth

(*Hyalophora cecropia*)

distraction • being lead astray • burnout

Moths are nocturnal insects that follow the light of the moon, however with the abundance of artificial lighting from human civilization, moths are often lead astray. Conversely, in our consumerist society, we are lead to believe that things like earthly possessions and money will provide emotional fulfillment, however like a moth drawn to a lamp, this is not the case. You may need to adjust your course and not let distractions get in the way. Examine whether the things you are pursuing will actually bring fulfillment and positivity into your life.



Fog

feeling lost • uncertainty • confusion •
oppression

Shapes and shadows lurk in the distance. Fog is a favorite weather pattern of mine, due to the way it diffuses light and blurs shapes. It conceals the truth, and deprives us of our sense of direction. This is especially so since fog tends to occur at night or in the early morning, when it is already dark out. Uncertainty looms before you, so take heed, tread carefully, or simply wait for the fog to lift.

Jellyfish

(Cnidaria)

simplicity • flow • flexibility

The jellyfish has existed for millions of years, and yet is one of earth's most simplest creatures, lacking a heart and even a central nervous system. Like many deep sea creatures, it has a soft body that allows it to withstand the extreme pressure of the ocean. It drifts aimlessly through the sea, going with the currents and catching anything that swims into its tentacles. The jellyfish reminds us that sometimes simplicity is the best approach.



Fennec fox

(Vulpes zerda)

pioneer • adaptation

The fennec fox is the smallest of all foxes, and is found in the deserts of North Africa. In such a harsh environment, these marvelous creatures have evolved large ears which radiate body heat and keep them cool. Their paws are hairy, which act as "snowshoes" and also provides protection against the searing hot sand. Like other desert animals, they are also able to go a long time without water. These interesting adaptations remind us to always be open to change, even under difficult circumstances.



Wisteria

(*Wisteria sinensis*)

luck • new beginnings • hope • love

Drooping foliage is typically symbolic of loss, however, the long lives of wisteria plants give it a new meaning of hope and luck. In Japan and China, they are symbolic of love and new beginnings. The flowers are a popular good luck charm to give at weddings and baby showers, or when someone is starting a new business. However, the wisteria is also a voracious, fast growing vine, serving as a reminder to not let love consume you.

Chambered nautilus

(Nautilus pompilius)

sacred geometry • endurance • expansion

The chambered nautilus is a deep sea mollusk that has endured for millions of years, since the time of the dinosaurs. The creature's shell is a marvel of nature - it features the Fibonacci spiral, which is found in both mathematics and nature. As the nautilus grows, a new chamber is added to the shell to accommodate the creature's larger size.



Orchid

(*Orchidaceae*)

sexuality • desire • luxury

The word orchid comes from the Greek word, “orkhis” which was coined by ancient Greek botanist Theophrastos, who believed the tubers of the plant resembled the male anatomy. Many ancient cultures associated them with virility and strength. In the Victorian era, they were highly sought after, and there was an entire industry built around collecting them. They were considered a luxury plant, as they were only available in the tropics during the time.

Ocelot

(Leopardus pardalis)

balance • vision • distance • solitude

The ocelot is a small, nocturnal cat that can move through the branches and brush of the jungle with ease. It is territorial, solitary, and non-confrontational; and because of its camouflage coat, incredibly hard to spot. The ocelot reminds us that sometimes it is okay to disappear, to break away from a situation and find healing in solitude. As with any other cat, it is also associated with vision, and symbolic of the unseen.

Kelp

(Laminariales)

entanglement • subconscious

Many people feel uneasy being in a body of water, especially when a piece of seaweed brushes against their foot. However, kelp forests are extremely important ocean ecosystems. As with anything associated with the sea, kelp can be an indicator of something growing “below the surface” - in the subconscious. Like a kelp forest rich in nutrients, this could be something that provides a benefit to your life. On the other hand, this could be some sort of difficulty, which is ensnaring and dragging you down.

Badger

(Meles meles)

persistence • self reliance • warrior spirit

Badgers are solitary, independent creatures that dig very extensive underground burrow systems for their homes. To “badger” someone is to bother them with unyielding tenacity. When cornered, badgers are also known to be very fearless, able to fend off predators much larger than them. They have a determined, fighting spirit that encourages us to be brave and sure of ourselves.

Frog

(Agalychnis callidryas)

cleansing • abundance • release • self care

Frogs “drink” through their skin, which is why they are in the water so often. The frog encourages us to cleanse ourselves of anything that is weighing us down. What’s holding you back? What “baggage” do you need to get rid of? A little rejuvenation won’t hurt - try a new workout, take a spa day, do something to take care of yourself. Because it is a fertile creature, the frog is also associated with abundance and wealth, especially in Eastern cultures.

Manta ray (*Manta birostris*)

grace • calmness

Despite being the world's largest ray - with a wingspan of up to 9 meters (29 feet), the manta ray glides effortlessly through the water with grace and confidence. While manta rays will stay in the shallow waters for feeding and mating, they can dive as deep as 450 meters (1476 feet). As with the depths of the ocean, the manta ray reminds us to explore the depths of our emotions with calmness and composure.

Coral snake

(*Elapidae*)

warning • avoidance

“Red and black, friend of Jack. Red and yellow, kills a fellow.” The bright colors of the coral snake indicate danger - it is one of the most venomous snakes found in North America. The coral snake teaches us that sometimes confrontations are unnecessary, and some should be outright avoided. When it comes to bad outcomes, an ounce of prevention is better than a cure. Do not ignore clear warning signs, they exist for a reason!



Night sky

guidance • clarity • wonder

Gazing up at the night sky often elicits feelings of smallness, and wonder of worlds beyond our own. In order to see a clear sky, one needs to leave the city and light pollution behind, and find a quiet place in the country. A cloudless sky also provides clarity - after all, our ancestors used the constellations for guidance and navigation. Your path is clear, all you need to do is look up and follow the stars.

Scallop

(*Pectinidae*)

goddess • travel • femininity • vessel

The scallop has many associations across multiple religions. It is affiliated with the Roman goddess Venus, and the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, making it a symbol of femininity and as a vessel. In Christianity, it is associated with the apostle St. James, and was a popular icon among pilgrims journeying to his shrine in the Spanish city of Santiago de Compostela. This gives the scallop its association with travel. An interesting thing to note is the ridges along the shell which converge together to one focal point at the base. To Christians, this is symbolic of the many pilgrims journeying to a holy site, while in Celtic society, it resembles the sun's rays during sunset.



Weeping willow

(*Salix babylonica*)

sorrow • grief • flexibility

The willow tree was considered a symbol of grief and mourning in 16th and 17th century Europe. Chinese folklore associates them with ghosts due to their shape, and it is considered unlucky to have one in your yard. It is also a flexible tree, able to bend very far without snapping. This teaches us to bend with the universe and with what life throws at you, rather than fighting.



Mushrooms

growth in dark times • longevity

Asian cultures associate mushrooms with longevity and strength. Certain edible mushrooms, such as a shiitake, were used as herbal remedies for centuries. Mushrooms grow in the darkest, most unexpected places, in damp soil and rotting wood. Some species, such as morels, grow in places where there were previously fires. Even in difficult times, life finds a way.

Asphodel

(Asphodelus macrocarpus)

feeling stuck • unable to move on • regret

In the Greek Underworld lies the Fields of Asphodel. This is a realm where ordinary people, who were not heroic enough for the Elysian Fields, nor wicked enough for the Pits of Tartarus, lie. In Victorian floriography, the flower means, “my regrets follow you to the grave.” Are you unable to move on from something? Is there anyone you need to say “I’m sorry” to?

Blue morpho

(*Morpho peleides*)

happiness • joy • wish • rarity

Butterflies are often viewed as a symbol of rebirth. Blue morpho butterflies, which are found in the rainforests of Central/South America, symbolize joy and hope, and in some cultures are regarded as wish granters. I saw these creatures very frequently during my travels to Honduras and Ecuador, and they always brought a smile to my face. While these butterflies are fairly common, it is interesting to note that the color blue itself is a rare color to see in nature, as it is difficult to produce biologically. That itself makes these butterflies very special.



Pitcher plant

(Sarracenia leucophylla)

deceit • illusion

The carnivorous pitcher plants give off a scent that is enticing to insects, however this is a trap! Once an insect has fallen inside the plant's chamber, it is eaten alive with the plant's digestive juices. Beware of temptations, for things may not be as great as they appear.



Shark

(*Carcharodon carcharias*)

fearlessness • confidence • drive • authority

As a scuba diver I have seen many sharks in my lifetime, and everytime one appears, it has a very commanding presence. To pull this card may mean that there is an opportunity that you need to take hold of. Always swimming, always moving forward, the shark reminds us to be active in life, not passive. Be fearless in getting what you want in life, and don't second guess yourself. Remember however, to not bite off more than you can chew.



Gecko

(Cyrtodactylus bahuensis)

speed • sensitivity • sacrifice • positivity

To the gecko, size doesn't mean power. In fact, its small size typically means it can stay under the radar, unnoticed. The gecko's extremely sensitive vision and hearing allow it to notice danger before it notices them. But if spotted, it can easily get away from predators due to its sheer speed. Its legs and feet are able to grip any surface and climb vertical walls, away from danger. Worst come to worst, if cornered the gecko is able to detach its tail from its body in order to satiate its pursuer.

Conch

(Lobatus gigas)

awakening • hearing • call to action •
communication

In Buddhism, the conch shell symbolizes truthful speech and strength, and is used often in religious ceremonies. In Hindu ceremonies, blowing into a conch shell produces a sound similar to the *Om* sound, and is believed to awaken the ignorant into enlightenment. Blowing into a conch shell is a call to action, but sometimes this action is to simply listen. If you are having communication problems, let the conch shell aid you.



Aurora

positive omens • ancestral spirits •
gods/goddesses

Across many cultures, the aurora borealis/australis were thought to have mystical origins. The Vikings believed the lights were from the Bifrost, a rainbow bridge that connected the nine realms in Norse mythology, while ancient Greeks thought they were from the chariot of the goddess Aurora. Chinese legends associated them with battling dragons. Other cultures, such as those from North America and Northern Europe, believed the lights to be the spirits of the dead. They are typically very positive omens.

Moonstone

soothing • third eye • tranquility

Moonstone is a type of feldspar, and is one of my favorite gemstones, due to its ethereal beauty! The shifting, cool colors give it a very tranquil feel. Some cultures believe moonstone to be the moon's rays, solidified. It is said to aid with overcoming grief and stress, and helps with strengthening intuition and clairvoyance. It is associated with the third eye and the crown chakra. If you are in need of recharging, let the moonstone provide healing.

Slug

(Ariolimax columbianus)

steadfastness • pacing • masculine/feminine

Here in the Pacific Northwest, slugs, especially the pictured banana slug, are a very common sight during the fall. The slug encourages us to slow down, which can be difficult in this fast-paced world. It is persistent, and focuses on its goal, reaching it at its own pace. It will get there eventually, and it knows it. Slugs are also hermaphroditic, making them the perfect balance of the masculine and feminine.

Rat

(Rattus norvegicus)

cleverness • creativity • survival

Rats are one of the most hunted animals on earth, by both humans and other creatures. Despite this, they have not only survived but thrived, having spread to every continent except Antarctica. They are adaptable, determined, and able to squeeze out of tight spaces. In Asian cultures, they are also revered as symbols of wealth and luck, and is one of the 12 creatures of the Chinese zodiac.



Starfish

(Asteroidea)

healing • regrowth • sensory

A starfish is one of the many creatures that can regrow a lost limb. The many nerves that stretch from the center of the animal to its arms even allows a completely severed limb to regenerate into a whole new starfish. Loss is painful, but is a very inevitable and necessary part of life. However, with each experience there is opportunity for learning and growth.



Owl

(Strix varia)

ancient wisdom • intuition • observation •
guidance

The owl sits high in the trees, its sharp vision allowing it to spot the smallest creatures hiding in the grass and brush. The ancient Greeks and Romans associated it with divine wisdom, and it is affiliated with the goddess Athena. The owl is able to see what's hidden, including deceit. The bare branches in the card represent clarity - nothing can hide from the owl. If you are going through confusing times and tough decisions, pull back and simply observe what's around you.

Geode

inner beauty • inner self • harmony •
divine feminine

Like a geode, with its unassuming, rocky exterior and its sparkling crystal center, beauty comes from within, and having one in the home promotes harmony and chi flow. Let the geode help you connect with your inner self. Geodes also represent the divine feminine, due to its comparisons to the womb.

Caiman

(Paleosuchus palpebrosus)

primordial • strength • meditation • stealth

During my trip to the Amazon in 2018, we took a night canoe ride to look for caimans. With their excellent camouflage and ability to remain perfectly still, they would be almost impossible to spot, except for the telltale red color that reflected from their eyes against our lights. In Inca mythology, caimans were supposedly considered the world's first creature. They have, after all, existed since the dinosaurs. The caiman is capable of lying perfectly still, waiting for its prey. When the time comes, it is ready to strike with efficiency and skill.



Snow

silence • gentleness • pause

There is something calming about seeing a fresh untouched blanket of white powder on the ground. Perhaps it is due to my childlike excitement that's never gone away, but I always have to pause and have a moment of admiration whenever it snows. Unlike rain, a gentle snowfall is silent, and lightly brushes your face as the flakes meander down from the sky. Around you, all signs of life are gone, animals are hibernating, trees are barren, and people are huddled in their homes and off the streets and roads. It's one of those few moments in life where the world around you is quiet and still.

Scorpion

(Centruroides sculpturatus)

change • death • rebirth

With its poisonous sting, the scorpion is a classic symbol of death. Ancient Egyptians believed them to be spirits which guided souls from one realm to the next. However, with this card is not a literal death, but a figurative one. Scorpions periodically shed their skins and grow a new one - up to six times in its lifetime. Perhaps it's time to shed your own skin, like an old relationship that's run its course, or a dead-end job you've been at for too long.

Grasshopper

(Pomphagidae)

moving forward • faith • adventure

Drawing this card tells you to take a leap of faith. Grasshoppers only jump forward, never backwards or sideways, and without uncertainty. It may be time to move forward in your life, so go forth and trust your intuition no matter the outcome. Now is the time for a new adventure - move to a new city, take a road trip, dye your hair a weird color!

Mountain lion

(Puma concolor)

patience • nobility • boundaries

The mountain lion is an ultimate symbol for scrutiny. A reserved and solitary creature, the mountain lion preserves its energy and only attacks when the time is right. These noble big cats are sure of themselves - being apex predators, they have few things to worry about (that's why they sleep so much!). Mountain lions are also very territorial - a reminder that setting boundaries in your life is very important.

Cactus

(Stenocereus thurberi)

armor • being closed-off • endurance

The prickly spines of the cactus make it seem uninviting and inaccessible. Despite this, there is beauty in its ability to endure. While the spikes are unappealing, it provides protection for the plant, which can survive in the harshest environments with little water and nutrients. When the time is right, they bloom the most magnificent flowers.



Kiwi

(Apteryx mantelli)

devotion • affection • relationships

The shy and elusive kiwi is a bird indigenous to New Zealand, that gave up the gift of flight to be closer to the earth. They form pairs and mate for life. But what I found the most interesting about the kiwi is the size of its egg, which is about a third the size of its body. To create and lay such an enormous thing is an ultimate symbol of devotion.

Night blooming water lily (Nymphaea)

love • purity • optimism • eloquence

Water lilies are aquatic plants that grow in a variety of conditions, given that they have a body of still water to reside in. In many cultures, they symbolize purity and love, and are popular in wedding bouquets. They anchor their roots in the mud, and produce a flower that blooms above the water. These flowers always return every year, even after the waters have dried up in the previous season. Perhaps you too have bloomed from the “muddiness” of life.

Hyena

(*Crocuta crocuta*)

family • matriarch • home

While hyenas have a bad reputation in pop culture and literature, this card focuses on the social groups of these interesting beasts.

Hyenas live in large groups consisting of up to 80 individuals, and families are fairly tight-knit, with cubs even able to identify relatives as far as their great-aunt. Their societies are matriarchal, with females being of higher rank than males. Convene with your “home,” be it your family, or group of close friends, for they are the ones who will always have your back.

Datura

(Datura stramonium)

intoxication • sleep • hex breaking • flight

Part of the nightshade family, the night-blooming datura is a poisonous plant with many interesting magical properties.

Ingesting any part of the plant can induce visions, and many shamanistic cultures and witches use it for astral travel, hex breaking or communing with spirits. However, it is a highly poisonous plant, so ingesting too much can lead to (literal) death!

Tide pool

weathering the ebb and flow

During low tide, little pockets of seawater remain on the beach, in nooks, holes and in between rocks. In these pockets, many small organisms such as sea anemones, urchins, and crabs thrive. This card features common creatures found in the tide pools here in the Pacific Northwest. These unassuming little oases in a hostile environment serve as a reminder to endure the ebbs and flows of life. When things seem difficult, remember that the tide will always come back.



Opossum

(Didelphis virginiana)

reaction • stress • de-escalation

The opossum is North America's only marsupial. When confronted with danger, they play dead, laying stiff on the ground and even emitting an unpleasant odor, causing the predator to get confused and leave. This is an automatic, instinctual reaction that the opossum is unable to control. This is a perfect reminder to not let situations get too out of hand. On the other hand, perhaps you need to examine how you react to certain things. In difficult circumstances, it is easy to just let your emotions take control, and to react in a way that is not helpful. It is important to remember to use your head and act calmly.

Lavender

(Lavandula angustifolia)

peace of mind • serenity • relaxation

The lavender is the ultimate symbol of serenity, due to the relaxing feelings one gets when smelling the flower's beautiful aroma. Historically, lavender was used to cure all sorts of ailments, ranging from gastrointestinal issues to anxiety, and is still used extensively to this day in aromatherapy. It is a flower that encourages meditation, calmness and peace of mind.

Bat

(Pipistrellus pipistrellus)

senses • clairvoyance • nurturing • fear

Many people fear bats due to their nocturnal tendencies and association with vampire lore, however the reality is they're fairly harmless and fascinating creatures. Sometimes your biggest fears are not as bad as they actually are. Despite their negative reputation, bats are nurturing creatures, living in large colonies and bonding close to their young and family members. They'll even go as far as caring for the sick or orphaned. They "see" in the night using echolocation, and drawing this card is a sign to keep your senses open and be aware of your surroundings. Be receptive to the messages that the universe is sending you.



Clownfish & anemone

symbiosis • friendship • working together

The clownfish and anemone form a symbiotic relationship. The clownfish protects the anemone from predators, as well as cleans and provide the anemone with nutrients from waste. In return, the anemone provides a home for the clownfish, and also strengthens the clownfish's skin with its mucus. Working with a partner, and utilizing each others' strengths, can benefit both of you.



Fireflies

(Photinus pyralis)

inspiration • nostalgia • illumination •
brevity

While fireflies aren't a thing where I grew up, I always associated them with nostalgia, childhood memories and carefree summer evenings. The firefly's symbolism, understandably so, revolves around illumination and inspiration, and explores the concept of light coming from within. This card may resonate with you if you are the creative type, such as a painter, writer, photographer, etc. However, fireflies typically live short lives - merely a few weeks, which reminds us to never take each day for granted.



Dawn

duality • cycles • end

Dawn is defined as the end of night, when the first light appears in the sky just before sunrise. The mountainous scene in this card was inspired by my 2015 trip to Bali. As part of the trip we did a sunrise hike up Mount Batur, one of the active volcanoes on the island. We started hiking around 2 in the morning, when it was still dark, and made it up to the top right before the sun started rising. As I stood at the summit, enjoying my hot breakfast and watching the colors appear in the sky, I felt a sense of peace and completion having overcome a grueling journey. For the creatures of the night, another challenging night has passed, and it is time for rest until the next sundown.