

THE FOOL

BEGINNING
INEXPERIENCE

SPONTANEITY
OPENNESS



The Fool is the pinnacle of possibilities and potential. Like a child who has learned little and has yet to choose a path in life, this card indicates an abundance of choices, though

hints at a lack of information or experience to choose the most optimal route.

The infant is surrounded by shapes in the darkness. While an adult may fear what is hidden from view, the infant has not yet learned to fear the unknown, and is struck with a sense of wonder. An unclear path is scary, but can also bring new discoveries and untold futures.

The child is surrounded by the forms of the 4 suits:

Furiously beating wings of Wands
Fantastical levitating fish of Cups
Flowers and plants of Pentacles
A single butterfly of Swords.

THE FOOL

This card is the beginning of a journey, and is a reminder that the start of any new undertaking is both intimidating and exciting. It can also serve as a reminder to trust our instincts: in the absence of learned knowledge, the Fool can only follow his heart.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

A plot of the Lorenz Attractor is shown.

Named for Edward Lorenz, a pioneer of Chaos theory and origin of the term "butterfly effect", the image traces a path that circles one side and can randomly switch to the other. In Lorenz's words:

"Chaos: When the present determines the future, but the approximate present does not approximately determine the future."

Chaos theory applies to deterministic and measurable futures, but are highly sensitive to conditions in the beginning. Even the slightest of changes can invalidate any future predictions, causing apparent chaos.

MAGICIAN

CREATION

MANIFESTATION

POWER

WILL



The Magician is a being of action, concentration, and power. One hand is pointed to the heavens as another is grounded towards the earth.

It is a request that all powers, above and below, work towards the will of this figure. Beneath his hands form an orb of hot light as many surrounding elements combine into a planetary system, swirling with life. Behind him, a fiery show of cloud and sparks form, reminiscent of nebula and the vast amounts of heat and energy formed during the birthing stages of our cosmos. A lemniscate floats above his head, recalling ideas of an infinite power, infinite time, and cyclical, alternating existence.

Finally, at his feet manifest silhouettes of the 4 suits of the tarot: The Cups of our hearts, the Pentacles of our bodies, the Swords of our thoughts, and the Wands

MAGICIAN

of our passions; the four quarters of our human identities and experiences. The Magician represents the one who understands the workings and, consequently, the powers of all four. With true knowledge of this at his disposal, his works do appear as magic.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Above the Magician lies a snippet of the Southern Hemisphere's skies and constellations.

The study of these stellar bodies is known as Astronomy and is the oldest of the natural sciences. Commonly shared by all humans on the planet, the stars have been used by a multitude of civilizations to navigate the land, plan crop seasons, and even to attempt discovery and communication with higher powers.

The movement of these heavenly bodies are, in most cases, accurately predicted by the same Newtonian physics applicable to Earth-bound objects.

HIGH PRIESTESS

MYSTERY

SUBCONSCIOUS

OCCULT KNOWLEDGE

INTUITION



Sitting atop a crescent moon, the High Priestess is enveloped by an aura of mystery, stillness, and hallowed power. She commonly represents the feminine counterpart to the masculine Magician; quiet and contemplative instead of frenetic and active.

A pomegranate symbolizes the fertility of the feminine power represented, while her other hand holds a dowsing pendulum that seeks to gain knowledge of a less apparent nature. Centered on her neck is a key, a symbol of the potential to be unlocked by this occult knowledge.

The High Priestess suggests a time of stillness and investigation. Now is the time to illuminate the unknown with the light of her crescent moon. Delve deeper into the underlying nature and truths. Thoughts and information gathered should be reviewed and meditated upon.

HIGH PRIESTESS

This card may also represent an individual who embodies these qualities: someone with a deep understanding regarding occult topics, a teacher of such subjects, or a reserved individual with a large repository of knowledge.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Behind the High Priestess is a topographic map of the Mariana Trench.

Known as the deepest point on Earth's surface at an estimated 7 miles, the Trench represents one of the most hidden and difficult to access locations on Earth, due in large part to the crippling water pressures at such depth.

In spite of this, it is brimming with potential knowledge and unexplored species, with the most recent expeditions uncovering glowing life, single-celled organisms 4 inches in length, and supergiant crustaceans more than 20 times the size of normal counterparts.

EMPRESS

MOTHERING
RICHES

PLEASURE
SEXUALITY



The Empress sits on a lavish throne of rich gold, bursting with motifs of flowering plants and overgrown vines.

Sensually, she parts her finery.

The Empress is the embodiment of pleasure in all its forms, from lush materials to sexual joy, loving embrace to heartfelt laughter, the Empress wants for nothing and enjoys an abundance of all good things.

As she sits on her throne, she holds in her arm a ripe melon, a symbol of mothering and birth, not only of a human child but of the Earth and nature itself. As she is nourished by the world, she returns it in kind reciprocity, representing a oneness with the planet on which we are born.

This card signals a person, time, or event that is rich in bounty, whether it be experiential or physical, though this

EMPRESS

richness is meant to be shared. As a mother, The Empress has an abundance that should be given freely and lovingly, never coveted or guarded jealously.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

A diagram of the hormone Oxytocin stands behind the Empress.

Commonly known as the "love hormone", it is one of the key neurotransmitters that regulate sexual reproduction as well as feelings of empathy and generosity, though it may only apply to members of one's "in-group," commonly a social circle or family. Outside of these in-groups, Oxytocin can promote dishonesty in individuals if it serves to advance their particular in-group.

Oxytocin levels are increased during orgasm, breastfeeding, and physical embrace, and small-scale studies have shown that increased exposure to the chemical triggers a preference for one's longtime romantic partner over an equally attractive stranger.

EMPEROR

ORDER
CONTROL

STRUCTURE
SECURITY



The Emperor stands in direct contrast to the Empress: He is stern, direct, rigid. His realm is one of rules and organization, of staying responsible and dependable.

This Emperor sits on a square slab of stone, unadorned except for a tall back, etched with concentric rings that recall the unifying laws of physics that govern planets and particles alike.

In one hand, a prism is formed from a seemingly random amalgam of parts, signifying his ability to create order from chaos. In his other hand, he writes a long list of rules, regulations, and schedules. Above his head hang many golden prisms, elongated objects with triangular cross-sections, known in the architectural world as one of the most structurally sound shapes.

EMPEROR

The Emperor's job may not be exciting, but it is essential to the fluid function of any well-made system. Though it can often be seen as restrictive, a well-planned structure allows for the propagation of creativity and ideas without veering into tangencies, as is the case in filling the pages of a storybook structured with paragraphs, chapters, and volumes.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

The Emperor is flanked by the tracings of a bubble chamber, a device used to track and study the movement of charged particles that move through it. As the particles lose energy, they start to dive into helical patterns, coincidentally forming an aesthetically pleasing display that is often used to represent the field of scientific study, specifically physics.

This overarching field of physics encompasses both the study of minute particles and gargantuan planetary bodies alike, with its ultimate goal being the understanding of the fundamental laws that govern universal behavior.

HIEROPHANT

BELIEF
COOPERATION

COMMUNITY
TRADITION



The Hierophant asks us to join the fold: to believe how he believes, to study what he studies, and to band together to achieve a common goal.

This card symbolizes a call to be part of something greater. The figure sits on a throne of rectilinear bricks, each stacked and shaped to support the greater whole. Likewise, his golden headdress reflects a similar interconnectedness, as a multitude of puzzle pieces assemble to create the entirety of the mask, obfuscating his face, an identity which garners less and less importance as he takes on the meanings and teachings of his group. Men are just flesh and bone, but their ideals can live forever. "Pass these ideals down, and become part of a greater, eternal whole."

His staff reflects these words, topped by a golden nest of bees. Ubiquitous for their

HIEROPHANT

teamwork, these bees work, reproduce, and if necessary, die for the greater good of the hive and queen.

While blind obedience and iron-fisted hierarchies are common negative traits of this card, it is important to note that groups and shared beliefs are neutral in nature; they can be used to band a group together for either good or evil.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Lake Mungo, Australia, is depicted behind the Hierophant. It is the location of the world's oldest ritually cremated human remains.

The presence of ritual cremation implies both a concerted group effort for burial, as well as a shared set of beliefs surrounding the death and potential afterlife of an individual, important enough to warrant a burial ceremony.

This body, "Mungo Woman," was buried approximately 40,000 years ago, and implies that human concerns of the afterlife have existed for at least such time.

LOVERS

CONNECTION
ATTRACTION

CHOICES
BALANCE



The red string of fate ties two souls across any amount of time or space, and while it can be knotted or stretched endlessly, can never be broken.

Originating from Eastern cultures, the "red string of fate" has been described as either binding two persons' pinky fingers or ankles, and here as binding their wrists. In some embodiments, the story follows a young child that throws a rock at another child, only many years later marrying someone with a mysterious scar.

In any form of the story, considerable time elapses between their first and final meetings, with any number of events or years separating them, symbolized by the extensive and knotted red ribbons in the card's background. In this time, the red string never breaks as the two carry on with their independent lives, only to arrive together in a distant future.

LOVERS

The two figures also hold a prism in their hands. One upright and another facing down, they represent the opposing but attractive forces of each person, and can also symbolize a choice between two different paths. Should they choose each other now, or another path that calls to them, hoping and trusting that they will inevitably meet again in the future?

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Above the Lovers hangs 3 heavenly bodies: The Sun, Moon, and Earth.

Plato writes on the origins of Love in his novella, *Symposium*. In it, he describes humans as having originally been two-headed, four-armed, four-legged beings, powerful enough to threaten the gods. The gods, fearing them, split each human in half, dooming them to forever search for their "other half."

What consisted of a person's "other half" depended on what heavenly body they descended from: man-man pairings from the Sun, woman-woman from the Earth, and man-woman from the Moon.

CHARIOT

SUCCESS
CONTROL

AMBITION
WILL



The Chariot is the embodiment of success, the taste of victory after years of struggle and uphill battles. It is the finish line.

A figure is frozen in time as he takes his place upon a throne of wings, half ascending and half reclining after an arduous trek, his arms raised in triumph.

In one hand he holds a sceptre, a symbol of power and rule, and in the other a chain, an instrument of control and authority. He has learned to master himself as well as harness the powers of the entities that surround him, using every power at his disposal to achieve his goals. For this, he is rewarded with a golden wreath. At his feet we see a pool of stars, some connected in an interstellar path.

How far has the victor come? Is this his final triumph, or just another stop among

CHARIOT

farther and more unknown worlds?

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

At the Chariot's feet lies a simplified diagram detailing the descent of the Apollo Lunar Module; the vehicle used by the first humans to visit the moon.

The Lunar Landing was part of a decades-long space race, initiated in part by the Soviet Union's first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1.

Four years later, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, aboard the Vostok 1, would be the first human to initiate spaceflight, spurring a long sequence of "firsts" between the competing Soviet Union and United States. Eight years later, Neil Armstrong would close out 1969 as being the first human on the moon.

In 1975, the space race concluded with a joint US-Soviet project, docking a US Apollo module with a Soviet Soyuz module in Earth's orbit. This project was named the *Apollo-Soyuz* test project. The Soviets refer to it as the *Soyuz-Apollo*.

STRENGTH

STRENGTH
COMPASSION

UNDERSTANDING
COURAGE



Defiance. Protection. Strength. A figure stands near a massive coiled snake, her small frame standing upright for a creature that cannot do so itself.

The snake can be seen as menacing and dangerous, long a symbol of evil and distrust, though the figure knows the truth: it is not dangerous in its nature, merely misunderstood and loathed by those who lack the knowledge, projecting their fears onto its menacing appearance. It is scarred, and small arrows pepper its skin. She puts herself between the onslaught and the victim.

True strength lies not in aggression when faced with fear, but the time and effort necessary to understand the "other."

The figure extends an olive branch, symbolic of peace, that rains gold upon the snake, and in her other hand snaps a handful of arrows, again standing in

STRENGTH

defiance of those who want to harm the apparent beast. This is conviction in the face of opposition.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

To the left and right of the figure stand many spears and halberds, though 3 on each side rise higher than the rest. They recall the Asch Conformity Test.

In this test, a participant is shown a card with 3 bars on it: a short, medium, and long, labeled A, B, and C. They are then given another card with a single bar, and asked which of the first bars match it.

When tested alone, the answer is obvious and the participant nearly always chooses correctly. However, when tested in the presence of peers (whom are all actually actors paid to answer incorrectly), the participant is 37% likely to choose the incorrect answer.

Some who answered incorrectly truly believed the majority opinion was correct, while others knew they were incorrect, though chose not to oppose majority views.

HERMIT

SEARCHING
REFLECTION

SOLITUDE
MENTORING



The Hermit is caught mid-turn as he comes to set his gaze upon his visitor. Why have we come to find him, wandering through the dark and the wild?

He has willingly set himself apart from the world, seeking knowledge and truths that are more apparent when removed from civilization than when obscured by it. Gathering all he knows, he is also one who would teach it, given the proper audience.

His robes are simple and torn, a marked departure from concerns of the physical realm, though close to his heart is a glowing pendant, a symbol of the value of things that are within us rather than without. A starburst frames his figure, and a window of faint twinkling lights opens up behind him.

The Hermit finds an abundance of knowledge that we have overlooked, a world hidden in plain sight.

HERMIT

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Behind the Hermit is an expanse of sky and stars, centered around a cluster of stars, a stand-in for the Nebra Sky Disk.

(The disk's real design has been trademarked by the German state Saxony-Anhalt, and cannot be legally depicted without permission.)

The Nebra Sky Disk is a bronze disk about 12 inches in diameter, found in what is now modern-day Germany and dated to ~1600 BCE. It contains icons of the sun, crescent moon, and a star cluster likely to be the Pleiades.

The disk is thought to be an instrument of both astronomical and religious significance, and is the earliest known concrete depiction of cosmic phenomena, specifically solstices. Independent of these cosmic phenomena, the earliest known depiction of the stars has been traced to 30,000 BCE, also in Germany.

Though the precise purpose and nature of these items are open to speculation, they establish a minimum timeline of human interest in the stars.

DESTINY

REVERSAL
FATE

LUCK
INEVITABILITY



Destiny is an unknowable, uncontrollable force, affecting the world of mortals but unable to be affected itself. In this deck, it is a replacement for the Wheel of Fortune card.

Destiny sits, calmly, patiently, and seemingly embodied in a near-human entity, though it is not a part of this world. Its motivations and thoughts cannot be understood. Its uncannily thick neck leads up to an almost beast-like snout, which encircles a multi-dimensional infinity portal. Within it spin many small orbs, which dance and weave a future that cannot be predicted.

As it weaves the strands of collective fate, it towers over the golden sphere that is our world, protective yet menacing. In his two lower hands he holds an upright and downturned triangle, symbols of opposition: earth and heaven, good and evil, beginning and end.

DESTINY

Destiny represents events that are beyond human control or prediction, whether for better or worse. These can sometimes be life-altering, bringing an uncanny feeling of fate or inevitability.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Within Destiny's infinity portal, multiple interweaving strands represent the three Fates, or *Moirai*, of Greek mythology.

Spinners whose thread dictated the lives, experiences, and deaths of mortal humans, all beings of the world, including the gods, were bound by their judgments.

Clotho spun the thread on her spindle, *Lachesis* measured the length of life, and *Atropos* cut the thread, choosing the means by which the person would die.

Similar agents of fate and destiny can be found in other mythologies, including the Roman *Parcae*, the Norse *Norns*, and the Russian *Rozhanicy*. Vedic religion of ancient India writes of *Rta*, a principle or true order of things that all beings, gods included, must inevitably follow.

JUSTICE

FAIRNESS
IMPARTIALITY

KARMA
CLARITY



The blind arbiter of truth and justice and executioner of subsequent swift punishment, Justice is shown with the classic trinity of symbols: the scales that measure the weight of one's heart, the sword that equalizes wrongdoings, and the crown of impartial truth that stands above man's subjective thoughts and reasonings.

Her veil occludes personal vendettas and heartfelt pleas, and indeed Justice should be less embodied as a true human with emotion and more as the sentinel that answers to no man or power, save for that which is revealed by the searing light behind her as the one and only truth.

Justice calls us to put aside our own predilections, though difficult it may be, and to see our actions, our selves, and the world around us through eyes that are not our own.

JUSTICE

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Behind Justice is the constellation Libra, the Scales of Justice.

Justice, as a personification of the quality, originated in Roman mythology through the goddess Justitia, representing one of the four Cardinal virtues of Prudence, Courage, Temperance, and Justice. Celebrated by the emperor Augustus, a temple in her honor was also built and soon many authoritative figures, wanting to associate themselves with impartial ruling, would use her symbol.

Rome, being a far-spanning culture, was influenced by Egyptian culture, and indeed found the origins of the Scales of Justice in Egyptian mythologies.

In the Egyptian story of the afterlife, the heart, the seat of the soul, is weighed against a feather, representing the ideals of the goddess of truth, Ma'at. Those found unworthy were doomed to spend eternity in Duat, the Egyptian underworld, while their hearts were eaten by the demoness Ammit.

HANGED MAN

SURRENDER
FAITH

SACRIFICE
PERSPECTIVE



A man, legs suspended in the air, lays face-down in a golden field. He is calm, peaceful, and relieved as he slowly disintegrates.

The Hanged Man is a symbol of surrender, but not of principle or will. With liquid gold dripping from his lips and nourishing the earth around him, he embodies the realization that some situations can only be won by losing, sacrificing a battle in order to win the war.

A cloud of butterflies manifests near his vanishing feet. He is finally at peace confronting this realization, and the card is also encased by an aura of understanding and finality, a quiet and dignified end to achieve the greater goal.

In this contradictory nature, the Hanged Man can also symbolize taking a different and unexpected approach. The most obvious answer is not always the best.

HANGED MAN

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Floating above the Hanged Man's feet is a schematic view of the city of Teotihuacan, birthplace of the 5th sun.

In Aztec creation mythology, the current world is the latest of 5 incarnations, each of which required a god's sacrifice in order to create the sun and give life.

After a sacrificial bonfire was started, *Tecuciztecatl*, a rich and proud god, was the first to volunteer. However, upon seeing the fire in which he would die, he hesitated and retreated.

In his stead, the poor and unseemly *Nanahuatzin* willingly took his place. As he threw himself into the fire, he became the sun, lighting the world. Seeing this and wracked with guilt, the first god followed *Nanahuatzin* into the fire as well, becoming the moon, forever following the sun and half as bright.

DEATH

END
EVOLUTION

CHANGE
MORTALITY



A hooded man stands before a large and mysterious gate. His posture is strong but passive. As the gatekeeper between worlds, he holds a great key. As the ferryman for those whose time has elapsed, he clutches a skull. The figure stands above an endless field of blood: the stuff of both life and death.

In tarot, the Death card is commonly taught as a synonym for change, the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, rather than physical death. It can indicate the end of a relationship or project, and while experiences, mindsets, and settings are likely to come and pass more often than permanent death, it is inevitable that the fundamental fear in life must be addressed.

Death is the shroud behind which nothing earthly can reliably see, whether a result of inability or impossibility, and is an enduring topic of mythology and speculation.

DEATH

Glimpses and flashes are purported, as depicted here. The quintessential gate to the unknown is adorned with two figures on either side: a great wolf to the left and an armed man to the right, agents in the Norse story of Ragnarok, a world-ending event that gives rise to a new beginning.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

At the entrance of the gate are the writings of the Tao Te Ching, Chapter 76. Written in 600 BCE, it is the foundational text for Taoism.

In this entry, the writer Lao Tzu explains:

"Trees and plants, in their early growth are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered."

He likens life to flexibility and death to rigidness. If a being is to truly live, they must be willing to grow, change, and experience. To cease these activities is to invite true death.

TEMPERANCE

BALANCE

ACCEPTANCE

CONSIDERATION

COMPROMISE



Temperance is a force of balance, a unifying factor in a world full of extremes and blacks-and-whites. One of few angelic beings in the deck, Temperance stands opposite

the Devil, a being of excessive indulgence, pride, and greed. For Temperance, moderation is key.

Money is not evil; forsaking all other cares in its pursuit is.

Sex is not evil; the callous mistreatment of partners to satisfy cravings is.

Power is not evil; reigning over the weak is.

Temperance understands the needs and wants of humankind, and indeed that these desires are part of what gives humans their intrinsic qualities. She asks only for moderation and control of these desires, taking care that their pursuit does not grow to harm others or oneself.

TEMPERANCE

She stands between a field of swords and a field of flowers, a balance between growth and death. There, she presents to us a pure white orb held in a blood-red hand, while another red orb is held in a white hand.

Red within white, blood within milk, passion within peace.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Behind her head is a taijitu, more commonly known as the "yin-yang" symbol of Taoism.

Taoist duality embodies a nuanced interpretation of "good" and "evil". They are not inherently opposed to each other, and as two sides of the same coin, evil can only exist when contrasted with good. One cannot know the darkness until they have seen the light, and even so, no natural thing is intrinsically good or evil until given an intent.

Violence can be used to create harmony. Kindness can be used to manipulate. Darkness can be used to calm.

DEVIL

TEMPTATION
EXCESS

DECEIT
MATERIALISM



The Devil takes what is good; pride, affection, pleasure, and twists it into a force that binds. It asks for indulgence in excess, to be unrestrained in the pursuit of humanity's more

basic and animalistic wants. Standing opposite Temperance, the Devil is a bastardization of that which is natural and pleasurable.

A beautiful figure with gleaming golden wings is centered on the page, recalling the Christian incarnation of Lucifer as one of God's beautiful angels, fallen into sin. One hand is lifted to its lips in a whispering gesture, recalling the demons of Islam, *Shaytan*, "one who whispers into the hearts" of mankind.

All around fall endless golden coins that disintegrate; impermanent pleasures, while numerous chains descend. The figure reaches out. Temptation is a willing prison, more dangerous for being more beautiful.

DEVIL

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Surrounding the Devil are 40 positions, 26 filled with prisms and the others empty. This references *Milgram's Experiment*.

Following the trials of Nazi war criminals, Stanley Milgram asked how a seemingly average population could commit the atrocities of WWII. Would everyday Americans have done the same? In his experiment, a hired actor posing as an authoritative scientist asks a participant to administer increasing levels of electrical shocks to a second hired actor should he answer various test questions incorrectly.

As the shocks, which were fake, increased in voltage, the second actor would yell and bang repeatedly, indicating distress and fear of death. After much verbal prodding and assurances that these shocks and actions were "essential", 26 of the 40 participants administered, however reluctantly, a fatal 450-volt shock.

Milgram's experiment demonstrates that average people are alarmingly susceptible to acts of evil, given sufficient motivation.

TOWER

CHANGE
CATAclysm

DANGER
EPIPHANY



A figure is shattered into pieces, a sudden and violent event. The Tower card indicates that a great change is coming. It will be unexpected and it will be uncomfortable.

To the figure's left floats a crown, a symbol of power and control, cut in half. To her right is a bouquet of flowers, indicating peace and beauty, also cut in half.

Events feel unpredictable and dispiriting, but the figure holds in her hands a glowing glass orb. It is cracked and vulnerable, but there is insight to be gained. A massive eye opens in the dim background: keep your senses open and learn from this experience.

The Tower symbolizes sudden change, but also the possibility of a great epiphany and moment of realization. Ensure this uncomfortable moment is a learning experience.

TOWER

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Beside the figure are the Fox and the Grapes, a parable that exemplifies *Cognitive Dissonance*.

In this parable, a fox sees a bunch of grapes. It attempts to reach the grapes, but eventually realizes it cannot. Rather than admitting its own shortcomings, it convinces itself that the grapes themselves are sour and that it should not bother.

Cognitive Dissonance is an uncomfortable in-between mental state, a result of an action and a belief being incongruent, e.g., loving animals and eating meat, or believing oneself honest while lying. This incongruence leads to distress as the person attempts to reconcile the opposing belief and action in one of three ways.

Using the latter example, these are:

- 1) change the behavior (*I will stop lying*)
- 2) justify the behavior (*I needed to lie*) and
- 3) deny the information (*white lies are not lies*).

The Tower card asks us to realize the unpleasant truth: that we are wrong and must correct our actions.

STAR

HOPE
GOODWILL

GUIDANCE
OPTIMISM



The Star is the bringer of hope and light in the dark.

Sheathed in a dress as black as night, she pours liquid inspiration and mirth from her bowls, the life-giving water feeding the earth. Each stream slowly drifts off into the night sky, transforming into the endless multitude of stars.

Her movement itself is one of positivity, a lighthearted dance that signals a positive turn of luck and fortunate events. For those on a journey, the light of her stars illuminates the way.

She stands at the intersection of sea, the endless possibility, and earth, the physical manifestation of that possibility. Blessing both with her positivity, and painting the universe with the twinkling light of hope, she reminds us that it is important that this hope, the first light that inspires a greater

STAR

journey, is followed by action and effort.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Behind the Star is a vast array of circling stars, centered around a bright North Star.

Polaris, better known as the North Star, is the brightest star of Ursa Minor. As shown in this artwork, a long-exposure image of the stars indicates that Polaris is not exactly celestial north, being $.75^\circ$ degrees off-center, and due to the movement of our planet, will shift over the course of many hundred years. Nevertheless, it is an effective anchor point for navigation and astronomy.

The North Star has been used throughout history as a dependable landmark, and in medieval times was named the "star of the sea" for its aid in maritime voyages. In 10th century England, it was known as the "ship star", and in Hindi, given the name Dhruva for "immovable star." In Phoenician times, around 25th through 10th centuries BCE, the entire constellation of Ursa Minor was used for navigation.

MOON

INTUITION
PSYCHIC

FEAR
ILLUSION



A large menacing hand looms over the scene while a massive crescent moon pours water from no discernible source. This world isn't your own, and the rules no longer apply.

Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that the hand the woman is pointing with is actually the hand in the background. What was once a foreboding presence is now a manifestation of her power.

The dark is a constant source of fear, hiding any number of dangers and terrors, though particularly if they are not understood. The Moon asks us to view our surroundings in a different light, one that can give us power if we understand how to interpret and bend it to our will; particularly an important point for those exploring their psychic abilities.

The abundance of pouring water embodies a large amount of potential energy, a

MOON

conduit of power waiting to be realized. Underneath the moon, our world is basked in a strange light, but new possibilities are revealed.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Many small discs trace the water that flows from the moon. To the left are small circles, and to the right are the hollow rings that remain when those circles are removed. This is an allusion to the *Framing Effect*, a cognitive bias that affects a person's perception of a situation based on its presentation: Are these discs half empty or half full?

A simplified example encompasses two choices: A) Half of 100 people will die, or B) Half of 100 people will be saved.

Though both decisions are effectively the same, the proposition of "saving" is usually more well-received, and approaches based on similar logic are employed to sway voters, buyers, or juries.

Understanding these multiple perspectives allows for more informed decisions.

SUN

WARMTH
JOY

INSIGHT
CELEBRATION



The Sun is the brightest of our celestial entities, a star that lights the day and gives life to all living creatures of the world.

Nurturing, she shines with an exceptionally bright light, garnering the love and admiration of all who lay their eyes upon her. After a dark and cold winter, the sun warms our very bones and dissolves away uncertainty and woes.

Sunflowers bloom from her very step, blanketing her with the glow of their many petals. Dancing in this scene, the Sun is a card of self-assurance, joy, and confidence.

Her brightness also pierces through the black and shadow, a brilliant light that reveals and enlightens intellectually, while also visually placing her at the very center of our attention.

SUN

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Centered around the figure's face is an elaborate starburst motif with several small dots radiating in a line above her. These represent the 9 planets of our Solar System based on the *heliocentric model*.

Prior to the Copernican Revolution, most world cultures accepted that the known universe, usually relegated to the planets of the Solar System, revolved around Earth. It was not until the 16th century that an alternate model, centering the planetary bodies around the Sun, would be accepted.

In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus published *De revolutionibus*, containing the heliocentric theory that would soon take hold of Renaissance Europe and dominate the remainder of history. In earlier versions, he cites influence from Greek astronomer Aristarchus, who had proposed the heliocentric model hundreds of years prior in the 3rd century BCE but was rejected by his peers.

JUDGMENT

DECISION
RECKONING

REWARD
PUNISHMENT



Judgment is the culmination of all actions and intentions, the time at which everyone will reap their just desserts. Featured heavily in a myriad of religious texts, the good will be rewarded and the bad will be punished.

A menacing being strides through the clouds. One hand points to the accused while another readies a long spear. For sinners, the time of reckoning has come.

Judgment, though, must be enacted across all beings alike, including the judge herself. A third hand clutches a ring of thorns, a symbol of penance for past wrongs, while a fourth hand gestures towards a healing wound, the closure and forgiveness of misdeeds repaid.

Though referencing an apocalyptic end-time, the Judgment card more often calls for a moment of clarity: what people, projects, or things are deserving of your

JUDGMENT

time and energy? Have you returned this relationship in kind? Extraneous entities that are of no benefit or have only caused harm should be stripped away and barred.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Surrounding the towering figure are seven trumpets, or *shofar*.

During the age of Abrahamic religions, these trumpets were a traditional sacred craft of the ancient Hebrews, and was made from ram's horns, lending to their spiraling shape.

The Christian Book of Revelation signals the end-times by the blowing of these seven trumpets, each bringing forth an apocalyptic event, ranging from a third of all trees and fish dying to the opening of a bottomless pit from which poured scorpion-tailed warhorses.

The Islamic Quran also signals the end-time with two blows of a trumpet, first causing all on earth to fall dead, and finally to arise and await judgment.

WORLD

WHOLENESS
COMPLETION

TRAVEL
UNDERSTANDING



A woman holds a perfect golden sphere in her arms, content and at peace with a newfound wholeness. She is surrounded by the four elements of tarot: butterflies for air, feathers for fire, plants of the earth, and fish of water.

Representing the facets of human knowledge, passion, physicality and emotion respectively, they combine to represent a complete understanding of the human condition, its motivations and its pitfalls.

The last card of the Major Arcana, this marks the conclusion of the Fool's journey and the abundance of insight gained. All feels right, and even the mistakes and struggles of life are accepted in a new light. She is now crowned by a victorious wreath and equipped to re-enter the circle with experience for the better.

WORLD

The World card may also signify a long and eye-opening opportunity for travel. At the conclusion of every journey is the start of another.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

Centered on the golden sphere is a map detailing the interstellar coordinates of Earth and its Solar System, a position measured in relation to 14 pulsars.

This drawing is etched into two Golden Records being carried by Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft, each hurtling through space at 11 miles per second and 13.3 billion miles away.

Along with Earth's galactic coordinates, the records contain 115 images, sounds of wind, water, birds and whales, spoken greetings in 55 languages, explanations of DNA and human evolution, and much more.

Though the chances of alien life intelligent enough to encounter and decipher the Golden Records is slim, the effort enacted by humankind speaks of two distinct hopes: that there is life in the cosmos, and that it is good.

ANANT

ENDLESS
INFINITE

EXEMPT
CYCLICAL



Anant refers to the neverending, eternal, and exempt. While all other temporal beings enter existence, grow, and then die, Anant exists outside of these constraints and rules. It has been and always will be, a core concept shared by other world religions.

Laying in the center of this card is a fetus, the intermediary between the ending and beginning of the Major Arcana, representing the cyclical nature of eternity.

Around it coils the snake known in Sanskrit texts as Anant-Shesha, usually depicted with five, seven, or a thousand heads. "Shesha," a term used to identify the "remainder" in mathematics is that which exists when all else ceases. In Hinduism, Shesha was given the task of supporting the world atop himself, which he does until this day.

ANANT

When the end of the universe draws near, Anant will manifest eleven *rudras*, or storm-gods, to bring about the end of the universe so that a new one may take its place.

ADDITIONAL ARTWORK:

The background is speckled with an endless field of stars, with the exception of the space occupied by the fetus and Shesha. This empty field is Barnard 68, a "dark nebula" or molecular cloud near the constellation Ophiuchus.

Though Barnard 68 appears to the naked eye as a black void, it is dark only due to the high concentration of cosmic dust, the material that will eventually coalesce into stars. This dust is so thick that it obscures visible light attempting to penetrate the cloud, though infrared photography reveals about 1000 stars being blocked by the nebula.

Barnard 68 is thought to be nearing gravitational collapse, a process which will culminate in a new star within 200,000 years.

MINOR ARCANA

The Minor Arcana are divided into 4 suits, much like those of a playing card deck, and were the origin of standard playing card suits. They contain 10 numbered cards: Ace through Ten, as well as 4 court/face cards: Page, Knight, Queen, and King.

Each suit references a particular sphere of the human experience as well as an element, and is very briefly outlined below:

Wands : Fire

The passionate: creativity, purpose, action

Cups : Water

The emotional: love, intuition, connection

Swords : Air

The mental: ideas, thoughts, intelligence

Pentacles : Earth

The earthly: physicality, wealth, health

ACE OF WANDS

CREATIVITY
GOOD NEWS

COURAGE
INITIATION



The Ace of Wands represents a bold step in a new direction. It is a card of courage, risk-taking, and opportunities. These opportunities can often be fun and spontaneous.

Featuring a golden and ornate quill of a peacock feather, it also symbolizes enthusiasm and confidence, and asks for these qualities when approaching an upcoming situation.

The Ace of Wands frequently represents areas of the arts and creativity, embodied here in both the quill and the piece of parchment behind it. In magic, the term "wand" is used to describe a device that helps concentrate and focus a practitioner's intent and energy. For the artist and writer, this wand is the pen. The parchment bears a message of birth, sometimes of new ideas or opportunities, but can herald the birth of a child as well.

TWO OF WANDS

DARING
DECISIONS

INFLUENCE
PIONEERING

A globe is encircled by a nest of bees, all using its resources and, inevitably, draining it in time. Above, a lone bee lands upon a new planet.



The Two of Wands is a card of pioneering. The lone bee has found that there is more to explore, more glory to be found, and greener pastures elsewhere. It is empowered, emboldened, and daring. This card symbolizes an ambition in its exploration of the unknown and carving of a new path, but this yearning for more can also stem from dissatisfaction with the current climate.

Likewise, the Two of Wands can be a card representing a difficult decision: to stay or to go, the known or the unknown.

THREE OF WANDS

EXPLORING
LEADING

TRAVEL
ADVENTURE



Where the Two of Wands represented a conflict between two choices: leaving or staying, the familiar or the new, the Three of Wands is already dead-set on embarking on a new adventure. In this card, the

adventurer is not only going somewhere new, but they are also taking their followers along.

The Three of Wands is a card of leadership, finding new horizons, and forging the way for others. A marine bird is shown diving headfirst into the waves as others follow suit. From a great height, it was able to gain perspective and establish a strategic, forward-thinking view of the situation.

Now, it is able to execute on a well-informed and planned strategy. With this card comes the optimism and excitement of success.

FOUR OF WANDS

CELEBRATING
EVENTS

FREEDOM
POSSIBILITY



A bird, naturally wild and free, finally breaks free of the chains that have held it down. Around it, leaves and flowers from trees gently cascade down, as confetti during a celebration.

The Four of Wands is a card of celebration, whether it is a large wedding or a small get-together with friends. It brings with it a sense of happiness and exuberance, and can also signify the celebration that comes after achieving a sense of freedom.

The chains of bondage are not always physical, but are more often mental or spiritual, and can take the forms of stress, financial baggage, or an emotionally taxing situation.

The Four of Wands is a signal to escape these hindrances and find possibility in new endeavors.

FIVE OF WANDS

CONFLICT
COMPETITION

RIVALING
ANNOYANCES



Five staves clash with each other, each struggling to gain the upper hand. Two shatter from the encounter, while a central staff seems to stand above the rest.

The Five of Wands represents a fierce competition, sometimes to gain favor or win a prize. The objective can be a workplace or political motivation, a romantic interest, or a sport. Of particular note is the presence of a new or younger player, or an individual taking a novel approach and disrupting the status quo. This can result in both benefits, as the involved parties attempt to best each other and learn in the process, or a crisis, as the parties are interlocked in combat and lose sight of the original purpose.

This card can also signify daily annoyances that seem to contribute to an overall feeling of defeat or loss of control.

SIX OF WANDS

PRIDE
GLORY

SUCCESS
RESPECT

A lion strides proudly. He has succeeded, conquering an adversary or obstacle that once stood in his way, and he will be remembered for it. At his feet is the helmet of a hunter, now separated from its presumably defeated body.



Nearby is a downturned knife, a signal of the end of hostilities through victory on the battlefield. Six golden banners fly in the background as if celebrating the win.

While too much pride can lead to arrogance, there is always a time to celebrate your accomplishments and enjoy the win. This card signifies an important victory, the subsequent celebration of that success, and the pride felt when finally reaching the finish line. It can also signify the tangential benefits of victory, such as a lasting reputation, followers and admirers, and a change in attitude.

SEVEN OF WANDS

TERRITORIAL
DEFENSIVE

CONVICTION
RESISTANCE



A staff, helmed by an iron hand, is firmly planted in the ground. It's construction is solid, its colors reveal no playfulness, and it is surrounded by many fierce spikes. As other staves approach the area, they are assaulted and truck down by the central staff.

The Seven of Wands pictures an individual who is highly skilled, but also cut-throat and defensive, attempting to protect something close to them, symbolized by a golden sphere. This could be a firmly held belief, conviction, or stance they are unwilling to give up, or simply their sanity being attacked by numerous opponents.

These opponents may be authority figures, challengers to the individual's views, or immaterial situations. In either case, the situation calls for an abundance of resilience and determination to pull through.

EIGHT OF WANDS

MESSAGE
ACTION

SPEED
EXCITEMENT



Eight golden rods plunge towards the earth, their very pressure drawing sparks from the air. The Eight of Wands signifies a time of action, excitement, and news. Papers swirl around the ground as these rods approach, bringing with them sudden and unexpected messages.

Their nature, more often positive than not, may vary, but they are important and pressing.

The speed embodied by the card may also call for quick thinking and adaptive reactions to this news. The Eight of Wands calls for immediate action, movement, or declarations.

NINE OF WANDS

WARY
GUARDED

MISTREATED
PERSEVERING



A wolf assumes a defensive, threatening pose. Standing in the middle of a wooded area, it is surrounded on all sides by shadow and trees, hiding figures that mean it harm.

At its feet are spent arrows, a history of abuse and mistreatment that has conditioned it to react with aggression and distrust. On its underbelly, white fur is stained with the color of blood.

The Nine of Wands is a sign to approach with caution. A history of problems can be a great lesson to inform a better future, but it can also lead to unproductive distrust or the inability to cooperate.

Inherent in this card is the perseverance of the wolf: it may have taken its fair share of blows, but it is still standing and very capable of putting up a fight. There is still hope for recovery.

TEN OF WANDS

OVERWHELMED
BURDENED

STRUGGLING
NEAR GOAL

A single beetle carries the weight of 10 sticks upon itself. Small by comparison, it struggles to lift the weight. The Ten of Wands signals a situation where one has "bit off more than they can chew."



What was once a task undertaken willingly has grown into a burden that is seemingly insurmountable. The difficulties and problems consistently pile on, and it seems as the finish line is out of sight.

Atop the sticks is another beetle. Intent on riding along instead of offering any aid, it represents a time when the overwhelming responsibilities currently shouldered have been doled out unevenly.

Fortunately, the depicted beetle is a Hercules beetle, so named for its ability to carry up to 100x its own weight. The finish line is close, and an extra dose of stamina and willpower can finish the job.

PAGE OF WANDS

ADVENTUROUS
UNEXPECTED

EXCITING
INNOVATIVE



A girl throws open a portal to an unknown place and jumps in without reservation. Whatever lies on the other end, she is filled with courage and confidence.

The Page of Wands presents the opportunity to try something new and exciting. This venture could require creativity, daring, or more dedication than one is used to, but can lead to great lessons about how far boundaries can be pushed, and new frontiers explored.

Trailblazing and innovative, this Page can also find themselves traversing into risky areas. Risk-taking is essential when trying new things and conquering fears, but it can also be dangerous. Be sure to augment a sense of adventure with preparedness.

KNIGHT OF WANDS

BRASH
COURAGEOUS

PASSIONATE
BLUNT

The Knight of Wands, a being of passion, drive, and a dash of recklessness. While we traditionally associate knights with weapons, this one is seen charging in with a blunt shield, headstrong and in force.



Her fierce drive heats the wand in her other hand, imbued with the elemental fire of her suit, while feathers trail off her hair and armor, indicative of this one's penchant for glamour and showmanship.

Of all the knights, this one's armor is the lightest. This makes her ready to move in an instant, but is also the least protective. It offers a word of caution that excessive amounts of bravery mixed with minimal planning can be dangerous. He who always succeeds does not know the pain of failure, and this cockiness can result in trouble.

QUEEN OF WANDS

BEAUTIFUL
EMPATHIC

CONFIDENT
OPTIMISTIC



Physically beautiful and fully aware, this Queen is crowned by peacock feathers, a warm and radiant gold dress, and an abundance of quiet confidence.

Her energy is bright, and while incredibly confident in her own abilities and appearances, her assurance is soft-spoken, and not garishly flaunted.

An active person, this Queen's days are brimming with hobbies and interests that keep her moving and active. She holds a golden rose, a classically beautiful and popular flower, while her staff emanates a smoldering and warm light.

KING OF WANDS

COMMANDING
INSPIRING

UNITING
CREATIVE



Powerful, commanding, and forward, this King not only takes risks but rallies others to his cause through sheer force of will and charisma.

His word rouses spirits; his presence inspires. His hand is raised high as a commanding gesture to move forward and follow his lead. He wears his confidence proudly through a crown of peacock feathers and steps forward with conviction.

This King's creativity and intrepid attitude will carve new paths while drawing admirers from all corners, and calls for us to take these same strides. Lead a project, create something new, or unify a group.

ACE OF CUPS

LOVE
EMPATHY

BONDING
ABUNDANCE



The Ace of Cups is one of the most positive cards to receive, indicating a firmly rooted and growing sense of love, compassion, and connectedness.

A cup overflows with water, spilling its contents on the ground below, where golden poppies grow and bloom. The poppies, symbolic of dreams, whisper that dreams can come true, though you must water them with your effort and attention.

A white dove spreads its wings over the scene, blessing it. The crown that floats above the dove's head cements his place as a messenger of great importance, the design imitating the flow of water, or even the silhouette of two swans in embrace.

On the dove's chest is a scar, a memory of pain, though the dove still flies. Love gives, despite the difficulties in doing so.

TWO OF CUPS

CONNECTION
PARTNERSHIP

UNION
ROMANCE

Two of a kind. Two peas in a pod. Two to tango. The Two of Cups represents an attraction, usually to a romantic and sexual partner, but can also indicate a deep friendship based on trust and understanding.



These two cups connect in the darkness, their contents swirling beneath a warm, glowing light. Two angelfish surface and move to meet each other.

Above, an arrow snaps in half. In some readings, the Two of Cups can signify an end to hostilities, seeing eye to eye, and an emerging partnership.

THREE OF CUPS

CELEBRATION
FRIENDSHIP

SUPPORT
CONNECTION



In the Three of Cups, vessels of effervescent water joyfully collide with each other in a toast. The wreath underneath symbolizes a neverending circle that is friendship, and the many golden berries

grow forth as the countless good deeds we do for our loved ones.

Below, golden chains form the underlying bonds of trust and shared burden in times of stress. These will be the bonds that continue to support each other in darker days, but those days have yet to come. These are times of joy and celebration, so sit back, relax, and have yourself a drink.

FOUR OF CUPS

WITHDRAWN
PASSIVE

INTROSPECTIVE
HIDDEN

Four cups hide beneath the leaves and branches of an overhanging willow tree. The air is still and the liquid within the cups is lifeless.



The Four of Cups represents a time of withdrawal, apathy, and indifference. The reader may feel dissatisfied with life, stuck in an emotional rut, or experience a creative block. In these cases, it is important to realize the situation and start imagining a way out.

Withdrawal may also be purposeful, with the solitary time being used for introspection, dreaming, and centering. The central cup enjoys a glowing white flower hanging overhead, and as a more productive form of withdrawal, this state is a promising prelude to positive action.

FIVE OF CUPS

LOSS
DEFEAT

SORROW
DIFFICULTY



Five cups stand shattered, cracked, and seem beyond repair. This is a time of loss, whether it be a falling out with a dear friend, the end of a relationship, or failure in a project.

The despair may seem so vast and discouraging that it is hard to see through the difficulties, but note that there is a lone cup among the group that still holds its contents. Hold on to hope that this event will pass.

SIX OF CUPS

INNOCENCE
CAREFREE

CHARITY
SWEETNESS

Filled with golden candies, the Six of Cups reflects fondly on childhood memories, innocent times, and the release of responsibility.



Candy symbolizes the simple pleasures of childhood times; sunlit days, chases through parks, carefree laughter. As joyful as they are, though, candy is merely a treat and not true nourishment. A caution against the excesses of enjoying too much and accomplishing too little, a few candies fall on the floor, wasted from the abundant overfilling of the cups.

Above the cups is a paper flower, folded from the pieces of paper that flow around the scene, an aspect of gift-giving and goodwill that exemplifies this card. The paper flower is folded in the style of origami, a hobby and craft often learned by children and gifted to friends or romantic attractions.

SEVEN OF CUPS

FANTASIES

DAYDREAMS

ILLUSIONS

PROCRASTINATION



Seven cups, each filled with a golden manifestation of desire, float in an expanse of smoke and fog. A gleaming gold castle fills the background, a symbol of the heights that dreams can reach. The Seven of Cups calls for a time of imagination and creativity. Eventually, these dreams will become goals.

These myriad goals and aspirations, however, can serve as distractions from real-world issues and responsibilities. If unrestrained, they detract from productivity required in the present.

The Seven of Cups also warns against indecision and procrastination. When so many dreams fill the imagination, it can be difficult to choose just one. Without decision and action, however, these dreams will remain nothing but smoke.

EIGHT OF CUPS

DISCOVERY
JOURNEY

LONELINESS
MOVING ON

A newborn baby octopus is about to leave its nest, embarking on its first adventure. It is alone in the cold darkness of the waters, and senses a simultaneous fear and excitement. It has outgrown its egg and clutch. This is the time to move on to new things, and while the unknown can be intimidating, it is also filled with new discoveries to be made.



The Eight of Cups indicates a time of continued journeying and leaving the old behind. A past event or location has fulfilled its purpose, and new opportunities await.

This card can also refer to an intangible mental state, inviting new modes of thinking or straying from one's comfort zone.

NINE OF CUPS

INDULGENCE
COMFORT

ABUNDANCE
SATISFACTION



A pure white arctic fox, its fur soft and glowing, nuzzles itself while curled comfortably at rest. All around it is an abundance of wealth, including the material, emotional, and social. The Nine of Cups represents a wish come true.

The fox, whose fur is prized for its luxurious and pleasing feel, is surrounded by all the pleasures in life. Gold overflows. Fruit and food is within arms reach. Glasses of red wine, the universal social lubricant, happily slosh overhead, and in fact, an instrument used for more carnal pleasures is hidden among the cups as well.

This card represents a time for indulgence and self-satisfaction, the reaping of rewards, and prosperity in social endeavors.

TEN OF CUPS

HAPPINESS
MATURITY

UNITY
FORGIVENESS

Ten cups float above a scene of tranquil reunion and celebration. As the last card of the Cups suit, the Ten of Cups signifies a maturity and emotional growth, qualities that aid in the successful cultivation of relationships, both with family and friends.



A bright white bouquet of baby's breath flowers fills the central cup, representing innocence and everlasting love. Beneath the cup is a golden wreath composed of hundreds of swords. Previously weapons of war, they have been formed into a unifying circle and now stand for unity and peace.

A few cracked cups attend the scene, and one peeks out from behind a curtain. With the maturity and growth signified, past transgressions are forgiven and all are welcome.

PAGE OF CUPS

CHILDLIKE
CARING

SOFT
HOPEFUL



Kind, considerate, and soft-tempered, the Page of Cups is a whimsical and sweet individual, child-like and prone to daydreams and romance.

She brings with her messages of love, and opens up opportunities to grow in the realms of emotion, creativity, and spirituality. With her head encircled by two glowing fish, she represents the heart-oriented focus of the water element.

On her shoulder she carries a soft white rabbit, a symbol of purity and innocence, which she nurtures with a cup of honeyed water. At her feet is an oyster with its pearl revealed, a symbol of the potential friendship and emotional value to be gained when approaching someone with openness, care, and a dash of uplifting spirit.

KNIGHT OF CUPS

EMOTIONAL
BROODING

ARTISTIC
DREAMING

A sensitive, imaginative, and romantic individual, his is the most beautifully decorated of all armors, but also the least effective.



It is lovingly constructed from gold, but also heavy, prone to damage, and geared towards beauty in place of actual protection. The Knight of Cups is fond of dreaming and creating, his head in the clouds and full of wondrous ideals. His isolating helmet simultaneously blocks out the world around him and emphasizes his own moods, whether positive or negative.

His world is one of many possibilities, endless stories of colorful fancy and hopes, elegant words strung together. Critics can deride him for failing to deliver on dreams, but creatives applaud his openness and limitless thinking. After all, one cannot build the future if it has never been imagined.

QUEEN OF CUPS

INTUITIVE
UNDERSTANDING

NURTURING
TENDER



The Queen of Cups is a particularly sweet, flirty, and gentle woman. She brings warmth and light, nurturing and creating, and others find themselves inexplicably drawn and attracted to her.

She follows her heart and intuition, having particularly acute understandings of others' emotional states.

She stands as creator, manifesting angelfish from her cup, and symbolizes a giving and selfless love. Her creations are imbued with this love, and follow her as they circle around her head, creating her crown. Further above them floats an oracle ball, symbolic of this Queen's connection with the psychic and spiritual world.

At her feet swim two Koi fish, one black and one white, symbolizing the yin and yang of masculine and feminine qualities in a perfect harmony.

KING OF CUPS

CALM
COLLECTED

DIPLOMATIC
DISCIPLINED

The King of Cups is a mature, clear-thinking, and sympathetic figure. Perhaps more reserved than the rest of the Cups court, this King is still soft-hearted and caring, carrying the same passionate heart as his family underneath a cooler exterior.



He represents calm and control in the midst of stormy seas, a reassuring and composed presence in spite of whatever pressures are surrounding the situation.

As a level-headed man, this King is also representative of cooperation and diplomacy. As an octopus, long seen as the predator of nearly all fish, swims alongside other marine life in the warm light of his throne, the King of Cups brings all beings together under one roof.

ACE OF SWORDS

TRUTH
REASONING

OBJECTIVITY
BREAKTHROUGH



This Ace of Swords is immediate. Topped by a flaming crown, the symbol of majesty and power, it is a statement, a command, the clearest of bells in a foggy world.

It emerges from a bed of golden flowers, a sign of the wealth and beauty that can be achieved when you use its power to dispel confusion and illusion. Note, however, that a few petals have been sliced apart by the sword's movement, a caution that the force of pure intellect is a double-edged sword, and also a shadow of things to come from the remainder of this suit.

An indiscriminate fire tops this sword, illuminating a path and searing through the lies and deceit that could cloud your situation. Now is not the time to be clouded by emotions, but to cut straight to the facts.

TWO OF SWORDS

BLOCKED OFF
REFUSAL

AVOIDANCE
STUCK

Opposing forces, stalemate, refusal of the truth.

The Two of Swords is a card that implores you to realize that your current situation requires action, even if the result isn't pretty.



Two swords are interlocked in a struggle, wearing each other down but neither winning nor losing. Between them is a message or letter, torn apart by a reader unwilling to accept its contents.

This card asks that the situation needs to be confronted and resolved once and for all, lest it deteriorate further. Refusing to make a choice is still a choice, and sometimes it is the worst choice of all.

The swords depicted are modeled after Chinese swords of ~700 BCE.

THREE OF SWORDS

HEARTBREAK
RELEASE

LESSONS
ISOLATION



Heartbreak, betrayal, unwanted isolation. Three swords pierce a lonely, dull heart, with no refuge or aid in sight.

The Three of Swords represents a time of pain, usually emotional, and can be from a personal, intimate, or professional area. It is an unexpected loss.

Within this card lies an important question: Are we the heart, or the sword? The Three of Swords asks if we have wronged others as often as we have been wronged. Make amends, heal, and realize what suffering can be brought upon others so that you are not the perpetrator.

This card is also a calling to heal, coming to terms with the heartbreak, and learning a lesson from it.

The knives represent straight-bladed versions of Moroccan Koummya daggers, early 1900s.

FOUR OF SWORDS

RESTING
REJUVENATING

PREPARING
HEALING

The Four of Swords marks a time of rest, recuperation, and preparation.

It is a significant departure from the oft-noted ill omens of the Swords suit, and calls on us to take solace in the present, either to recharge from a previous effort or to prepare for an upcoming one.



A warm glow and water lilies surround these 4 blades as they hang lightly in the air.

This card asks us to be at peace and detach ourselves from current stresses. Take time to reflect upon your present situation so that you may better confront the future.

The blades depicted are modeled after stone knapped neolithic knives, ~10,000 BCE.

FIVE OF SWORDS

SELFISH
CRIMINAL

IMMORAL
CONFLICT



Four broken, defeated swords are chained to one central golden sword. Surrounding them are white flowers that grow older and more withered as they stray farther from the center.

The Five of Swords represents selfishness, taking advantage of others for one's own gain. The central sword seems to siphon off the life force of those surrounding it, chained to it until they devolve into nothingness. Such behavior also creates conflict, pitting groups against each other.

This card can represent both law-breaking criminality and morally dubious behavior alike. Many evils have been and still are legal.

The swords depicted are Egyptian kopeshes, from ~2500 BCE.

SIX OF SWORDS

WEARINESS
DESPONDENCE

LETHARGIC
TRANSITION

Dull, despondent, but changing with time, this is a card that represents a lethargic pause in action while simultaneously moving towards a different future.



Six swords, badly damaged and being worn away by the elements, loom over this scene. What was once sharp and effective has since decayed, being cast into the earth as time carries on.

As the scene lowers, we see that a small caravan of boats is weaving their way through what now appears to be gigantic, long-forgotten artifacts of war. The present is gray and foggy, but this crew is voyaging somewhere. Their destination is unknown, but it is certainly away from here.

The swords depicted are medieval arming swords from ~1200-1400

SEVEN OF SWORDS

BETRAYAL
THIEVERY

PLOTTING
DISHONOR



A rat, popularly known as a creature carrying disease, infesting areas out of sight, and commonly a name for traitors, is seen crawling in the dark as multiple blades peer out from behind a curtain.

Referencing the "cloak and dagger" phrase, this card represents a clandestine and subversive situation. As a cloak billows in the shadow, blades from an unknown source pierce it repeatedly. Loyalty and honor is nowhere in sight, and parties involved may be underhanded and deceitful.

Above the rat is a central knife, hovering ominously. Betrayal and lies have a way of returning full-circle.

The knives depicted are Indonesian kris knives, from ~1400, and should be noted are culturally believed to carry spirits, both good and evil.

EIGHT OF SWORDS

TEST
CRUCIBLE

STRESS
PERSECUTION

The Crucible.

A test, a fiendishly hot environment, a stressful time. A searing blade stands in the center while 7 more linger in the background.



Some stand guard, observing and waiting, while a certain few fall shattered to the floor from the stress of unforgiving heat.

Now is your opportunity to enter the crucible and come out stronger than you ever have, or be destroyed trying. This is the time to use all your faculties to learn as much as you can from the situation and emerge victorious.

There is no courage without fear, no gain without sacrifice.

The swords depicted are medieval arming swords from ~1200-1400

NINE OF SWORDS

NIGHTMARE
DESPERATION

TERROR
WORRY



The darkest hour, desperation, loss of hope.

A white rabbit, traditionally a symbol of luck, has been brutally impaled. The future looks grim. The sword itself,

with pointed pommel and guard, sits center of the image, proud of the result.

Its conspirators, 8 additional swords in the background, form a cage or ring around the scene. Their handle and guard designs vary, implying that the next betrayal can be by the hand of anyone.

Noticeably, the red that flows from the pure white rabbit is not blood; it is rose petals, and the scene takes on characteristics of dreams instead of reality, alluding to the possibility that this dread is perhaps not real. The Nine of Swords can refer to physical as well as mental imprisonment and difficulties.

TEN OF SWORDS

CRISIS
BREAKDOWN

PERSEVERANCE
CLOSURE

Scraping the bottom of the barrel, the Ten of Swords represents the darkness before the dawn, an ending to the Swords suit that begins with a new light.



The scene symbolizes the deep suffering and tragedies associated with the most trying of times, the aftermath of many dead and flightless birds littering the many swords.

But all things, both good and bad, must come to an end, and so too must the longest night. A single bird seems to have escaped the wrath, and stands amidst her brethren's bodies as a small sun rises in the background.

Persevere, and do not let your story end in the dark.

PAGE OF SWORDS

TRUTH
RESOLVE

CLARITY
CANDOR



The Page of Swords indicates that it is time to face your problems, challenging issues head-on, straightforwardly, and with our heads lifted high.

He stands upright, slicing through a thick layer of bittersweet bramble, a heavy climbing vine that has attempted to ensnare him in its shadowy, confusing presence.

As his sword passes through, however, we see that the bramble's brown and yellow flowers hold bright red fruits. These represent the fruits of a battle hard-won, and the knowledge that can be gained after clearing the air of confusion.

This card represents a time to act justly, seeking truth and clarity in the face of setbacks and difficulties.

KNIGHT OF SWORDS

DIRECT
LOGICAL

CUTTING
AGILE



The Knight of Swords is the most active, swift, and fierce of the 4 Knights.

While others opt for a weapon in one hand and a shield in another, this one believes there is no force like excessive force and wields two swords simultaneously. He is straightforward, blunt, and sometimes brash, but his uncompromising force is not stupidity.

With such strength, a great deal of intelligence and skill is also required, as he is also many times the bringer of ideas and expertise, as embodied by the flurry of writings that trail behind him.

The Knight of Swords is someone who uses their intellect and abilities to their greatest extent by setting aside feelings and penetrating through the confusion of a situation.

QUEEN OF SWORDS

JUST
HONEST

STRAIGHTFORWARD
SHARP



Two swords, one pointed up and another spearing her own hand, represent this Queen's honesty and willingness to play by the rules: sometimes the house rules in your favor, and other times against you.

The Queen of Swords is the Justice of the minor arcana. Her knowledge and wit are embodied by the glowing inscriptions that peek through her drapery. This is an intelligent Queen, understanding vast libraries of knowledge from the factual and empirical to the worldly and behavioral.

Both the Queen and King of the swords suit feature the butterfly motif, her penchant for the world of immaterial knowledge. Crowned by double-sided blades, she reminds us that knowledge can be beneficial, but use caution in its presentation. Sometimes the truth can hurt.

KING OF SWORDS

COMMANDING
INSPIRING

UNITING
CREATIVE



A black cloak shrouds this King. It is solid, impartial, and monolithic. As a man of deep thought and planning, he is deeply grounded. The sword he holds is plain and unadorned, driven and melding into the ground. In spite of a strong wind, he is firmly planted.

The King of Swords is impartial and calculated. Though he prefers to avoid involving emotions, he is not heartless. A window to his chest shows a small, perfectly polished gold marble.

Symbols of the fruition of ideas, from infancy (larva) to completion (butterfly), butterflies manifest around him while his head is encircled by double-sided blades. Pointing both outwards and in, the potential for harming oneself is cautioned. Just because a decision is logical does not prevent it having ill effects.

ACE OF PENTACLES

WEALTH
STABILITY

PRACTICALITY
WORKING



The Ace of Pentacles is a head start, an investment paid off, a wealth of opportunities for material and financial growth.

A gleaming gold coin floats above the mountains. Solid as a rock, this Ace calls for a stable base of operations built on trust and hard work.

Behind the mountains float a hammer and axe, symbols of physical, manual labor that will build a supportive foundation for the future. Above are a multitude of hanging coins, growing plentiful on vines that have been tended and cared for.

The Ace of Pentacles asks for the tangible, using one's own body and power, and investing it into sensible and practical means that will bear fruit in the coming years.

TWO OF PENTACLES

FUN
INDECISIVENESS

JUGGLING
FINANCES

A curious and playful ferret maneuvers atop a precarious arrangement of coins and gold nuggets. It is able to deftly sense minute changes in momentum, skillfully and gracefully keeping itself atop.



The Two of Pentacles represents the ability to balance and shift attentions quickly and effectively, particularly with finances, or a situation in which such actions are necessary.

While it may be fun, it cannot be kept up forever. The Two of Pentacles can also be a card of financial insecurity, forcing oneself into a situation where we must juggle expenditures and income, constantly unstable and in a state of flux. The only way out is to focus on a single task, a decision that should be made before everything comes crashing down.

THREE OF PENTACLES

TEAMWORK
SYNERGY

DEDICATION
GROWTH



The Three of Pentacles is an invitation to work together, using each other's strengths to create a team more effective than any one person alone.

Three coins, each with their own contributions, combine to plant and nurture a sapling. One plants the seeds, another pours the dirt, and a third waters the new growth.

This card also calls for planning and dedication, investing in a solid foundation for future growth. This is not a time for gut reactions or guesswork, but for careful consideration and preparation.

FOUR OF PENTACLES

HOARDING
GREED

MATERIALISM
STAGNATION

Four massive coins are embedded in the ground, looming and heavy. Bright blue butterflies are ensnared overhead in an intricate web.



The Four of Pentacles warns of stagnation and hoarding, whether of material wealth, ideas, or even emotions. The four large coins are heavy, dense, and dark. Vines have crept over them as they lay dormant. These riches were meant to be used, brought into the world where they may flourish and benefit all.

The butterflies, symbols of freedom and new ideas, are trapped overhead, symbolizing an inability to move on, grow, or learn. Some conservatism can be beneficial in protecting one's belongings and creations, but too much will inevitably impede growth.

FIVE OF PENTACLES

POVERTY
SICKNESS

HARDSHIP
REJECTION



A small burlap sack is torn open and a few coins, dull, dirty, and damaged, fall to the floor.

The Five of Pentacles is a card symbolizing hard times, notably in the realms of wealth or physical health, but can also refer to emotional health.

Rejection, difficult personal relationships, or social mishaps can all wear down an individual's mental health while disease, an accident, or the loss of a job erode physical security.

In these times of hardship, it is important to remember that both ups and downs are temporary, and to seek help when necessary. Excessive pride can lead to unnecessary pain.

SIX OF PENTACLES

INEQUALITY
DOMINATION

APPRAISAL
CONTRAST

Three golden coins shine in the light, resting upon a platform of interwoven vines. Above them is a sceptre, a symbol of power and authority, and a tome, a symbol of knowledge.



Hidden beneath these three, in the shadow and dust, are three other coins, rusted and dirty. They lack light and attention.

The Six of Pentacles is a sign of inequality. One party may have greater access to wealth, knowledge, or affection, while another is left to fend for themselves. This same abundance can be used to dominate the opposition, or conversely, be given to those one deems most deserving.

SEVEN OF PENTACLES

REWARD
EVALUATION

REST
PRIDE



The Seven of Pentacles represents a break. Take time to relax, recharge, and evaluate the current position.

It can also indicate successfully reaching the end of a task, and the pride taken in achieving a goal. During this time of rest, reap the rewards that have been cultivated and enjoy the fruits of that labor.

Six coins lay on one side of a scale while a list of tasks stands on the other, outweighing them by a small amount. A last coin, larger than the rest, rests half-buried in the earth. Celebrate victory in completing milestones, but remember that there is still much to do.

EIGHT OF PENTACLES

CRAFTING
WORK

QUALITY
DILIGENCE

A worn and heavily used hammer, still hot from striking metal, floats above the scene. The Eight of Pentacles refers to the continued effort, diligence, and hard work required to succeed.



The eight coins all bear symbols of the stars, inscribed with starmaps and constellations. This card is also a sign of advancing knowledge, learning new skills, and pushing the boundaries.

NINE OF PENTACLES

RESTRAINT
LUXURY

ABUNDANCE
SOPHISTICATION



A content and satisfied serval cat looks over the scene, sitting atop luxurious fabrics and surrounded with both riches and sustenance. It exudes an air of confidence, class, and style.

The Nine of Pentacles embodies some of the finer things in life, be it a refined palate, silky linens, or upscale venues. For some, this necessitates leaving behind "baser desires" and striving towards refined interactions and events, shown as the cat overlooks the birds and mice, its natural prey and playthings.

The Nine of Pentacles also symbolizes restraint. These upscale luxuries are enjoyed for oneself and not for public bragging rights. True style and class is never flaunted.

TEN OF PENTACLES

PROSPERITY
STABILITY

FAMILY
LONGEVITY

Long regarded in Hinduism and Thai cultures as a sacred symbol of power, glory, and prosperity, the white elephant is also an expression of the massive amount of wealth required to attain and keep such an animal.



The elephant stands in a triumphant pose above a stack of golden bricks, symbolizing stability. Beside it are old and strong trees. This card represents the epitome of a long-lasting and truly wealthy level of prosperity.

The daily financial concerns of the past are no longer relevant. It is time to focus on growing more than just money: family, relationships, and wisdom. Luxuries are commonplace and there is enough security that the family can relax for generations to come.

PAGE OF PENTACLES

PHYSICAL
EARTHLY

INITIATIVE
PRACTICAL



A girl lifts herself towards an overgrown canopy with the power of her own body. She is free, powerful, and looking to grow her own experiences and wealth.

The Page of Pentacles is connected to the earth and the natural plane, and indicates a fun and lively love for physical activity and exploration of nature. She can also signal the need to pursue these in an effort to live a healthier life.

This Page also shows great initiative, literally lifting herself up in order to access the gold coin of wealth or, in less literal terms, knowledge and satisfaction. She brings with her the pursuit of a new undertaking that could lead to a great accomplishment. The gold coin in her hand was once out of reach, but initiative and passion bring success far closer.

KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

PREPARED
STEADFAST

DEDICATED
CAREFUL

The Knight of Pentacles is exceptionally well-prepared, obsessively crafting her armor and inspecting it for any abnormalities.



She holds a heavy tome, poring over the logistics and theory behind her work while clad in the heaviest protection of all the knights. She can be considered a stubborn one.

The design of her armor is straightforward and realistic, crafted in flat, easily formed plates. Hers is a tad uninspired, but effective. The fruits of her labor hang above her helmet, dangling from antlers, a symbol of the tenacity and stamina this knight employs. There is very much to be gained from a steadfast and dedicated obsession with one's work, but be sure that you are not left behind as others dash off to their calling.

QUEEN OF PENTACLES

GIVING
NURTURING

WELCOMING
AUTHENTIC



Sweet, caring, and nurturing, the Queen of Pentacles embodies a confidant, mother, or hostess.

She sits underneath the cover of the plants and nature she most naturally associates herself with, making practical use of the world around her. There, she lends a hand to both bird and snake alike, two animals known for their mutual aggression and distrust. This Queen represents a safe place, and all are welcome under her roof.

She is dependable and sturdy in times of emotional need, and is both trusting and trustworthy. In turn, her presence asks us to find those same qualities within ourselves: trust, dependability, generosity.

KING OF PENTACLES

ENTREPRENEUR
FORGING

SUPPORTIVE
SUCCESSFUL



Reliable, sturdy, and successful, this King knows what it takes to reach the finish line. He is a rock to lean on in hard times, an advocate of playing the long game, and both attracts and makes his own wealth.

Skilled with his hands, he holds a forging hammer to symbolize his creation of opportunities, as well as the meticulous and steadfast effort required to quite literally create your own wealth. In his other hand, a large gold coin floats. With his wisdom and planning, he has complete control over the material world.

He leans upon a large, sturdy stone, representative of both his relaxed nature as well as his ability to be a source of trust and security.