

# Real Tarot

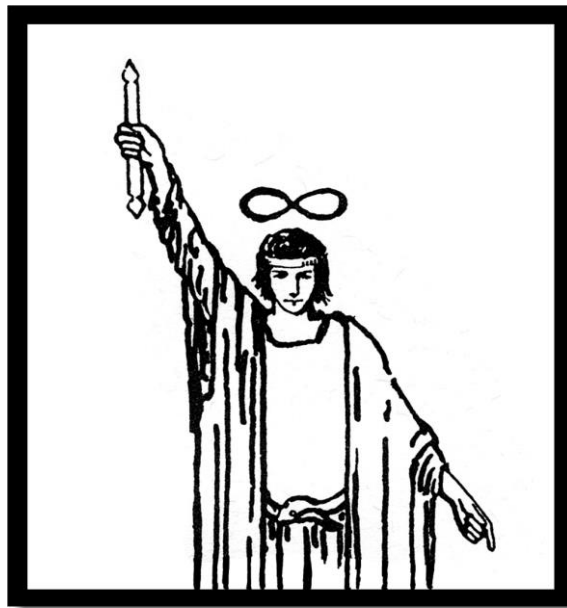


Don McLeod

# Real Tarot

*A modern approach to an ancient art*

by Don McLeod



## Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2010 by Don McLeod

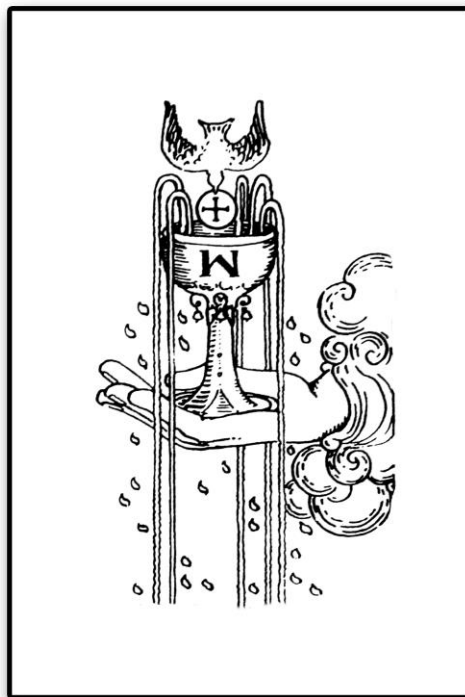
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author. Requests for permission should be addressed to MisterTarot@yahoo.com.au

## Contents

Introduction .....	5
Chapter 1 - Using Tarot is Easier than you Imagine .....	6
Chapter 2 - How They Work.....	10
Chapter 3 - Tarot Lies and Tarot Truth .....	11
Chapter 4 - Tarot and the Future .....	15
Action Cards.....	15
Chapter 5 - A Journey through the Major Arcana.....	17
Chapter 6 - Symbols and Interpretations of the Major Arcana.....	20
The Fool – Card 0.....	20
The Magician – Card 1 .....	21
High Priestess – Card 2 .....	21
The Empress – Card 3 .....	22
The Emperor – Card 4 .....	22
The Hierophant – Card 5 .....	23
The Lovers – Card 6.....	23
The Chariot – Card 7 .....	24
Strength – Card 8.....	24
The Hermit – Card 9.....	25
The Wheel of Fortune – Card 10 .....	25
Justice – Card 11 .....	26
The Hanged Man – Card 12.....	27
Death – Card 13.....	27
Temperance – Card 14.....	28
The Devil – Card 15 .....	29
The Tower – Card 16.....	30
The Star – Card 17.....	31
The Moon – Card 18.....	31
The Sun - Card 19 .....	32
Judgement – Card 20 .....	33
The World – Card 21 .....	33
Summary .....	34
Chapter 7 - The Suits .....	35
Chapter 8 - Symbols and Interpretations of the Minor Arcana .....	38
Cards in the Suit of Cups .....	38
Cards in the Suit of Pentacles .....	45
Cards in the Suit of Swords .....	52
Cards in the Suit of Wands .....	58

Chapter 9 - The Court Cards As People .....	64
The Pages .....	65
The Knights .....	65
The Queens.....	66
The Kings .....	67
Chapter 10 - Preparation for Tarot .....	68
The Shuffle and the Question .....	68
Chapter 11 - Tarot Options .....	72
Chapter 12 - Tarot Spreads .....	78
The One Card Draw.....	78
The Three Card Spread.....	79
Timeline Spread .....	80
The Celtic Cross Spread .....	80
The Relationship Spread.....	84
Chapter 13 - Tarot Readings .....	86
Chapter 14 - Summary .....	87
Quick and Easy Reference Charts .....	88
Bibliography .....	91
Acknowledgements.....	92



## Introduction

Anybody can read Tarot cards. You don't have to study for years to become a Tarot reader, nor do you have to be a 'gifted' psychic. If you've never used Tarot cards before, this book is for you. If you've tried to use Tarot cards before, but haven't received clear answers to your questions, this book can help you too!

I have studied the symbolism, history, and evolution of this system of divination since exploring my first deck of Tarot cards in 1985. The study of Tarot has led me on a fulfilling journey of self-empowerment, personal development, and practical application. In the following chapters, the basic elements of Tarot are laid out in simple terms, so that you, too, can gain insight and predictions from your Tarot cards, fast!

Tarot is all about using your intuition. It is a training method for developing and improving your ability to tap into your subconscious mind, and it is a skill that can be applied in your everyday life. This is possible because Tarot has a wealth of symbolism embedded in the cards' illustrations—and the subconscious mind can 'speak' the secret language of these symbols. These cards are full of imagery. Therefore, they are an ideal tool for accessing information from this level of consciousness. Symbols provoke the wisdom of the subconscious mind, allowing you to easily understand the essence of any situation. Your subconscious knows things about you and your life that you are not actively aware of. The inner mind knows the direction you are leaning regarding particular situations, and it is often attuned to trends happening in the world around you.

Aristotle said, 'The soul thinks in images.' Symbols have an immediate effect upon the mind, bringing concepts into consciousness in a holistic, instantaneous fashion. Speech and writing, on the other hand, can only bring clarification through a single word at a time, slowly building upon each other, eventually creating comprehension in the objective mind.

*Real Tarot* is illustrated with images from the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck, originally published in 1909. This was the first Tarot deck ever printed in England and it was drawn by Pamela Colman-Smith, as directed by A. E. Waite. The cards' images are packed with mystical symbolism, providing simple 'impressions' that indicate the meaning of each card to the reader.

By following the step-by-step advice in each chapter, you will soon be able to read and interpret the cards for a glimpse of the future, or for a psychological profile of anyone's true personality. Tarot can be used on many practical levels as well. For example, it can give you advice about finances, career, and the challenges you face in your daily life. The varieties of results you can derive from Tarot card divination are limited only by the boundaries of your imagination. Once you have experienced how useful and accurate these readings can be, you will then be confident enough to perform readings for others.

## Chapter 1 - Using Tarot is Easier than you Imagine

Modern Tarot decks are composed of two parts, the *Major Arcana* and the *Minor Arcana*. The word *Arcana* means *mysterious*, or *secret*, and by giving these Latin titles to the cards, one of the early writers on Tarot (Paul Christian, circa 1860) intended to provide them with seemingly mystical qualities. These terms are now commonly used to describe the two sections of modern Tarot decks.

The Major Arcana represent the important issues in life. They relate to spiritual principles, psychological influences, and the life lessons you will experience in your journey from birth to death. These cards embody the underlying urges, universal forces, and Karmic situations making an impact on your existence. In a reading, they can show the underlying reasons behind events, and they can reveal the psychology behind certain behaviours.

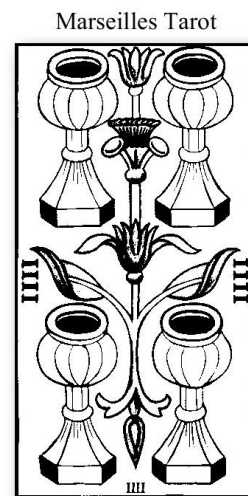
In contrast, the cards of the Minor Arcana deal with the daily reality of life. They indicate situations such as romance, money, friendships, arguments, family matters, and career. They also show the individuals who have an influence upon you. There are 56 cards in this part of the Tarot, and these are the equivalent of modern day playing cards. They are divided into four suits: Cups, Pentacles, Swords, and Wands. Each suit also has four Court cards: Page, Knight, Queen, and King. The remaining cards for each suit are numbered from Ace to Ten.

Tarot began its existence as a card game in Italy, back in the fifteenth century. The original deck's appearance was a bit different from the cards that we are familiar with today; the Major Arcana were the trump cards of that game. In its modern form, the Major Arcana are now numbered from 0 to 21.

Standard decks, such as the Rider-Waite Tarot, have both the Minor Arcana and the Major Arcana fully illustrated with symbolism. As you will soon realise, the imagery is very helpful when you are learning to read the cards.

Some non-standard Tarot decks have only the Major Arcana symbolically illustrated. The Minor Arcana in these decks often have illustrated Court cards, but the numbered cards are depicted only as fixed images of the appropriate number of items, for example: four swords, or four cups, etc.

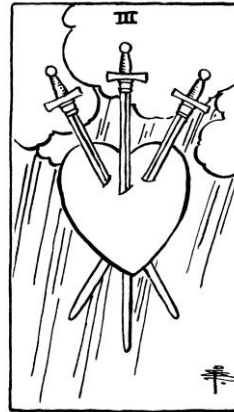
Other non-standard decks use themes that are quite different from the traditional style. They are often totally unrelated, except that divination is also their main purpose. For example, the *Runic Tarot* has 24 Major Arcana cards (not 22) and they are linked to the runes of Celtic mythology. Its four suits show the seasons and pagan festivals. *The Way of Cartouche* deck does not have a Major and Minor Arcana; it simply has 25 cards with an Egyptian theme.



Although you haven't learnt any of the traditional meanings of the cards yet, I'll show you how easy it is to read Tarot cards. Look at the following cards from the Rider-Waite deck and write down your first impressions. Trust your intuition and make notes about the first ideas that come into your mind.



Three of Cups



Three of Swords



Four of Wands



Five of Wands



Knight of Swords



The Sun

The symbols on each card make it easy to understand the intended meaning. Here are some of the traditional interpretations. See if they match your ideas.

Three of Cups: Merriment, satisfaction, fulfilment, vitality, happiness, celebration.

Three of Swords: Heartbreak, sadness, arguments within a relationship, frustration, loss, grief, and maybe physical heart problems.

Four of Wands: Success, partying, prosperity, harmony, celebration, family, friends, and the idyllic country life.

Five of Wands: Conflict, competition, confusion, arguments, recklessness.

Knight of Swords: Activity, excitement, enthusiasm, eagerness, bravery, impulsiveness.

The Sun: Cheerfulness, pleasure, good health, simplicity, optimism, joy.

In some of the following cards, the imagery is a bit more detailed and the meaning is not as obvious. When you take a closer look, however, you will be able to gain an understanding of the card's meaning. Interpreting the meaning will become even easier when you know the area of life that each suit relates to. Full details about the suits will be given in the next chapter. For now, here are a few examples showing how some of the difficult cards become very easy to interpret as soon as you know just a few key words associated with the suits.



### Two of Pentacles

The suit of Pentacles relates to finances. The young man in this image is off balance and he seems to be focusing intently upon the pentacles in his hands. The waves in the background are huge, and the ships on this ocean are in for a wild ride. From this visual information, I'm sure you will agree that this card can be seen as a warning to look carefully at your financial situation, and to be cautious in all matters relating to money.

### Two of Wands

Wands are the suit of energy and action. In this card, a wealthy person stands between two wands, contemplating a globe of the world. His home overlooks the ocean and a village. From this image, keeping in mind that this suit relates to energy or action, we can easily infer the following meanings for this card: boredom, restlessness, travel plans, a desire for further conquests, the longing for a new job. All of these interpretations could be suitable in a reading.







### Nine of Cups

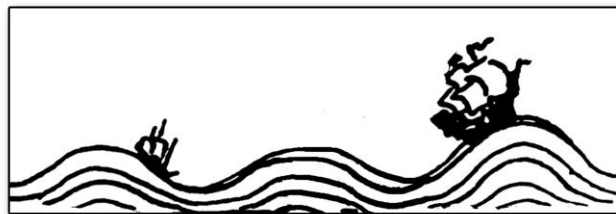
The suit of Cups focuses on relationships and emotions. In the card called Nine of Cups, a shopkeeper or craftsman sits in front of a row of cups. He has a smug expression on his face and he seems pleased with his display of these beautiful objects. Because the suit of Cups is about emotions, we can say that this card relates to feelings of success, abundance, contentment, fulfilment, and a general sense of wellbeing.

### Nine of Swords

When you know the suit of Swords is about thoughts, it's easy to see that the lady in this picture is having trouble sleeping because she is worried. Therefore, appropriate interpretations for this card are: depression, fear, despair, and confusion.



From these brief examples, you can see how easy it is to decipher the meanings of the cards. You don't need to study them intently for years in order to be able to interpret them. When you know more about the nature of each suit, and the meanings of some of the symbols featured on the cards, it becomes even easier to do readings. Through your reactions to these symbols and the basic imagery of the cards, your intuition guides you to their meaning.



## Chapter 2 - How They Work

When using Tarot cards to seek for information about a specific problem, you are asking your subconscious to arrange the cards into a pattern that will give you insight into a solution. You are allowing your subconscious to choose appropriate cards for you.

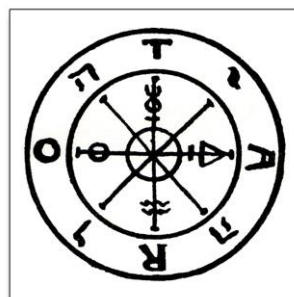
There is no magic or mystery within Tarot cards themselves. Tarot cards are nothing more than colourful pieces of cardboard. The images depicted on them act as triggers to the subconscious, offering pathways of information for your mind to explore. The cards themselves are not a divine entity that can tell you what you should or shouldn't do. Your mind is doing the work, not the cards.

The symbols on the cards are often termed 'archetypal', that is to say, their meanings can be recognised and comprehended on an inner level by any person from any culture. Archetypal images are universal pictures or symbols which affect the subconscious mind.

Your subconscious knows things about your life and circumstances that your objective mind doesn't realise and sometimes consciously ignores. Your inner mind is more aware of the direction of your life than you think, and through Tarot, it can reveal your innermost thoughts and desires.

Tarot is an art, not a science. There are no fixed rules for Tarot, and there are no fixed meanings that you *have* to attribute to any card. When you are doing a Tarot card reading and you gain information about a situation that you could not possibly know by normal means, it can seem like there's some supernatural influence, but *your mind* is the magical part of this process. On many levels, you are linked to all other beings on this planet. Your body, mind and psyche are continuously sending and receiving information, near and far.

The entire universe is interconnected, and the cards are simply helping you to arrive at information that you already know on some inner level. An emotional person can easily affect the moods of others. Likewise, on a mental level, through visualisation, your thoughts create the reality in which you live. When you realise that your thoughts, feelings, hopes, and fears are broadcast into the universe—and other people can (on some level) respond, react, and notice—then you can understand that during a Tarot reading, the cards are guiding you to information you already know, through the inner workings of the psyche.



## Chapter 3 - Tarot Lies and Tarot Truth

When the subject of Tarot comes up in a conversation, people often have strong points of view about how valuable it can be, or how much of a sham it is. The believers will recount stories of Tarot readers who knew personal details far beyond the likelihood of lucky guesses. To the non-believers, Tarot is just a way of parting gullible people from their money. There is still much mystery and false belief surrounding the use of Tarot cards. Here are some commonly held erroneous or superstitious notions that are often attached to Tarot.

**The Lie:** Tarot cards originated in Egypt.

**The Truth:** In 1781, Antoine Court de Gebelin saw a pack of Tarot cards being used as a card game and when he looked at the images, he came to the conclusion they contained symbols and myths of the Egyptians. He must have had a great imagination, because the cards of that era do not bear any resemblance to Egyptian life or scenery. There are many fanciful theories about the origins of Tarot cards. Some books say Tarot originated in India—this theory came about because one of the Hindustani Deities known as Ardhanari is depicted holding all four symbols of the Tarot suits, as they were shown on the earliest known Tarot cards. We cannot say Tarot came from this source, however, because none of the Major Arcana cards have imagery relating to this Eastern theory.



Tarot writers also suggest that the Knights Templar and the Crusaders brought playing cards to Europe. However, the Crusades ended around 1291, and there are no reliable references to any form of cards in Europe until 1367. Atlantis is also mentioned as another possible source of Tarot cards, but in the many denunciations of gambling and divination that appear within Church records of the medieval ages (476 to 1453 C.E.), cards are not mentioned until the very end of this period. It would have been impossible for them to have derived from the mythical land of Atlantis. If that were the case, the cards would have been in widespread use during this whole period, and they would have been included in the bans that the Church placed on such objects during those years.

Another theory states that the Gypsies brought them to Europe, but the Gypsies arrived in Europe *after* normal playing cards had developed, and about 30 years *before* the first Tarot cards were designed. Furthermore, in historical records,

Gypsies are only referred to as palm readers; there is no mention of them using cards for fortunetelling until 1891. Even then, the cards referred to are standard playing cards, not Tarot cards. The earliest surviving Tarot cards are hand-painted decks which were made in Italy around the year 1441. They were made for the court of Filippo Maria Visconti, the Duke of Milan. They started their existence as a card game called Tarocchi, and it wasn't until many years later that they were used for divination.

Today's Tarot suits are quite different from the original ones. They were derived from Islamic playing cards featuring suits of Coins, Cups, Swords and Polo Sticks. The game of polo was very important in Islamic culture, but was not known in Europe when the cards arrived. As a result, the suit of Polo sticks eventually became known as the suit of Staves or Batons. In Italy and Spain, playing cards have retained the suits of Swords, Cups, Coins and Batons. Various occultists changed the original suits to make the Tarot seem more mysterious. The Sticks/Batons/Staves were changed to Wands, and the suit of Coins was changed to Pentacles.

Many of the Major Arcana cards have been renamed too. Notable name changes over the years include...

The Beggar—changed to The Fool

The Popess—changed to The High Priestess

The Pope—changed to The Hierophant

The Hunchback (sometimes also known as Father Time)—changed to The Hermit

The Traitor—changed to The Hanged Man

The Angel—changed to Judgement

**The Lie:** Tarot is a tool of Satan.

**The Truth:** For centuries, Tarot cards have been maligned by the Church as an invention of the Devil—at one time the Puritans even called them 'The Devil's Picturebook'. Seventeenth century moralists considered the Court cards to be representations of pagan gods, and therefore anyone who used any form of playing cards was, in their minds, worshipping false idols. The real danger to the Church, however, was that people playing games of chance or using divination in any form relied upon luck or fate rather than believing in an omnipotent Christian God. It is supremely ironic, then, to realise that the first Tarot card designs included Christian principles in the illustrations.

In the original Tarot, the artist, Bonifacio Bembo, used an allegory of religious teachings for the trump cards. The physical realm was the lowest form of existence, and this was followed by a sequence of spiritual images, culminating in the final card called "The World, that is, God the Father." While playing this card game, the images of the trumps were supposed to impress upon the mind how to become closer to God.

Modern Tarot cards are quite different from historical Tarot—the intention of the modern reader is to gain insight from the imagery and symbols in order to obtain guidance and clarity about particular situations. Tarot is not evil; it is a benign and useful psychological tool for yourself and others.

**The Lie:** You must not purchase your own deck.

**The Truth:** A common superstition states you have to be given your first Tarot cards, or you must steal them! This is not true. You are the one who will be using them, so choose a deck you feel comfortable with. After you have mastered the basic principles of Tarot using a Rider-Waite style of deck, there are hundreds of decks to choose from and all vary in colour and design. Choose one you are going to enjoy using.

**The Lie:** You must wrap your Tarot cards in silk, or keep them in a box.

**The Truth:** It is not necessary to wrap your Tarot cards in silk, nor do you need to keep them in a wooden box. Some people will tell you that this form of storage stops the cards from picking up negative vibrations, but you don't need to worry about harmful or distracting vibes. The cards are just tools; they will not be negatively influenced by other people's energy. They will not give you a more positive outcome during a reading just because they have been left in a box overnight. They do not have an entity tucked away inside them that is going to get angry if it's not snuggled up nice and comfy in a silk cloth. As with any tool, you can protect them from wear and tear by looking after them and placing them in some form of covering if you desire. However, it isn't necessary to have a particular type or colour of silk bag in order to protect their 'energy'.

**The Lie:** No one must touch your cards.

**The Truth:** Forbidding other people to handle your cards is also something you might find mentioned in Tarot books. This advice is only prevalent because those authors think another person may influence future readings by touching the cards. This is a misconception. By giving people an opportunity to handle your cards, you are encouraging them to put aside their prejudices and helping Tarot become more widely accepted.

**The Lie:** You must learn how to interpret reversed cards.

**The Truth:** Another unnecessary practice is reading 'reversed' cards. When you first open your pack of cards, you'll find they are all in sequential order. You will have to shuffle them before you start doing readings, of course, but some books will tell you to mix them around so that some are upside-down in the pack. When you lay the cards out for a reading, you will then find some cards come out *upright* and others will have a *reversed* image. All of the cards have basic key words attributed to them, and the reversed cards are supposed to have an opposite meaning. For example, the Strength card can often represent *courage*, but if the card falls reversed in a spread, then it is supposed to have a more negative connotation, such as *weakness*. Don't feel obliged to learn the reversed meanings of the cards. In Tarocchi (the original card game from which modern Tarot is derived), no emphasis was given to cards that were dealt reversed (upside-down). Even when Tarocchi cards were first used for

fortunetelling, the cards had the same meaning whether they were reversed or dealt the right way up. There is enough symbolism within each card, and sufficient information contained within its position in a spread, to determine whether it is of a positive or negative nature. So leave all your cards facing one way, and regardless of how they are drawn from the deck, lay them upright into your Tarot spread.

**The Lie:** You must not take money for readings.

**The Truth:** In many spiritual groups, there is a tendency to avoid taking money for services which are considered to be of a spiritual nature. A psychic ability, or a talent for mediumship, is seen as a ‘gift’ from the spiritual realms, and as such, it is thought to be inappropriate to charge a fee when extending this service to others. Some people think that if you profit from your ‘gift’, it may be taken away from you. This is not true. Artists, writers, musicians—anyone with creative abilities—can be considered to be ‘gifted’, and all of them work hard to maintain and excel in their chosen field. All of them have to charge for their work in order to survive in this physical world. If you provide a service, you deserve to be paid for your time and energy. A law of exchange is the true basis of spirituality—if you ask someone for help, then you help them in return. If you give a Tarot reading, then any decent person will want to give you money or goods to the same value.



## Chapter 4 - Tarot and the Future

When we use Tarot as a divination tool, we are able to look at situations from a different angle—and we are able to see future possibilities. Most people buy Tarot cards because they want to be able to foretell the future. Many are worried that they may not like what they see. Fortunately, we're not stuck with those predictions. We always have free will to change circumstances if we don't like them.

Knowing in advance that something dreadful may happen is one of the things frightening many people away from Tarot. But our destiny is not fixed. What we see through a Tarot reading is not going to happen regardless of our actions. The future is fluid and when we are aware of possible outcomes, we can make plans to embrace the future, or to avoid it.

Our fate is not determined by what we see in a card reading. Let's look at a few examples regarding destiny. Many events can be predicted with reasonable accuracy. Weather forecasters, for example, know that big storms generally travel in the same direction; when they see one coming, they can advise residents of certain towns to expect adverse conditions. Those people then have the choice of preparing their surroundings to minimise damage, or they can choose to do nothing at all.

Tarot predictions are similar to these storm warnings. During a reading that I did for a customer early in 2009, she mentioned her plan to spend money renovating her shop. I could see from the cards that her finances were secure at present, but it looked like the income from her business was going to fall dramatically during the next few months. This person had the choice of ignoring the warning, or holding onto her money in case she needed to use it to keep her business afloat during the lean period. Fortunately, she chose the latter option—instead of spending the money on renovations, she kept as much as possible aside, and when the effects of the Global Financial Crisis struck, she was able to avoid a money shortage when her sales diminished.

A particular event appearing in a spread indicates the *potential* for it to happen. For example, if you see in a reading for a client that a change of career is likely in a few months, this could mean they will be offered a new job, or it could simply mean the energy of changeability is going to be surrounding them at their work during that period. They may just feel restless or discouraged in their present role, and they might feel the desire to change jobs.

### Action Cards

Using Tarot to reveal your future is a rather exciting concept. Even more amazing is when you understand that you can use these cards to change your future!

A general Tarot reading for the coming twelve months can show the most likely outcome based upon the circumstances of the present moment. These circumstances include the choices you have made in the past, your thoughts about what you would like to happen, and your fears regarding what may eventuate. If you

don't like what you see in a reading, you don't have to accept this outcome—you can pick an action card from the remaining cards in the deck to show you the best way around the end result.

Many years ago, I used to do readings at psychic fairs. Before agreeing to participate over a planned weekend, I always did a Tarot reading for myself to determine whether it was going to be a good opportunity to make some money and to have an enjoyable time. On one occasion, when I checked to see if the location was going to be favourable, the cards showed a disastrous financial result. I chose an action card to tell me what I needed to know about being part of this event. The card I chose from the deck turned out to be the Nine of Pentacles.

When looking at this card, I could see there was plenty of potential to gain financially from this endeavour, so I had to look closely to see where the problem lay. An overall glance at the card's imagery showed that money was available—the woman's hand is resting on one of the pentacles (a symbol of finances) and her surroundings show abundance. However, when thinking about the Tarot readings that I wanted to do, my eyes were drawn to the snail at the woman's feet—this suggested that the demand for readings was going to be very slow. It seemed that the people in that particular town were not going to be too interested in Tarot readings. While thinking about this, I noticed that the woman was looking intently at the falcon on her other hand. It showed me there were other alternatives, and I decided to take along a table full of inspirational and motivational books to sell.



During the weekend of the psychic fair, I heard about this town's strong Christian affiliation. Although many people attended out of curiosity, most were afraid of having a Tarot reading, because they didn't want their friends to see them participating in an activity of that nature. As predicted, I didn't do as many Tarot readings as usual, but the table of books was a huge success!

Action cards give guidance and show us what we can do to avoid or change circumstances. They can also be used to ensure certain favourable situations do come about. It's always wonderful when you see great success as an outcome, and by drawing an action card as well, you can discover the best way to proceed towards that goal.



## Chapter 5 - A Journey through the Major Arcana

The Major Arcana are the trump cards of the Tarot. In readings, they provide information about the underlying essence of a situation. They show the psychology behind certain behaviours, and the spiritual importance of particular events.

The characters within the Major Arcana cards have archetypal power associated with them. They represent essential qualities such as intuition, innocence, wisdom, temptation and change. The sequence of these cards can also represent progress from ignorance to enlightenment.

Imagine for a moment that you are standing in a long, narrow corridor, and on one side of the walls there are 22 large framed paintings. Within each frame you can see one of the Major Arcana cards, and they glow like windows to another world. You are about to walk down this passageway and look into each of these portals. As you do this, you will learn about each card's nature and its characteristics.

At the first framed card, you encounter **The Fool**. He is not a fool in the ordinary sense of the word. He is not a village idiot. He is well dressed and he seems relaxed and ready for an adventurous walk along the top of the mountains. He is a bit naïve, simply living in the moment, wandering along and enjoying the beauty of nature. The attribute associated with The Fool is **Innocence**.

At the next frame you meet **The Magician**. He has the demeanour of a teacher who wants you to be more aware of your surroundings. This is represented by the symbols of the four elements he has on his table: the cup, pentacle, sword, and wand. These four elements correspond with the four suits of the Tarot. On the material level, the cup represents water, the pentacle represents earth, the sword represents air, and the wand represents fire. These four elements form the basis of the physical realm. The combination of water, earth, air, and fire has resulted in the landscape you walk in every day of your life. These elements bring an awareness of the physical body you find yourself in, and the surroundings you see, taste, hear, smell, and feel whenever you are awake. In order to interact with these elements, you must have mastery over your body so you can sense and appreciate your environment. Therefore the main word to describe The Magician is **Mastery**.

Next you meet **The High Priestess**. She reveals the world of insight and psychic abilities. She has knowledge of the mysteries of life itself. The High Priestess asks you to acknowledge your **Intuition**.

**The Empress** is sometimes shown in cards as being pregnant. In the Rider-Waite pack, there is the suggestion of fertility from the abundance of her surroundings. From her, you learn feminine qualities of warmth, patience, receptivity, and respect for self and others. The main word for The Empress is **Nurturing**.

**The Emperor** asks you to respect the laws of society. He represents ambition, order and organisation, and his attribute is **Authority**.

The key word for **The Hierophant** is **Guidance**, for he represents counsel, or the giving of information. In some modern packs of cards, The Hierophant is called The High Priest, so he is the partner of the High Priestess. Where the High Priestess has shown that you must listen to inner guidance or intuition, The Hierophant asks you to give information into the world. The Hierophant also represents an inner understanding of the laws that you learnt from The Emperor. He gives an understanding of right and wrong—in other words, he can also represent your conscience.

You now view **The Lovers** and gain an understanding of the emotions and desire—their main emphasis is simply **Love**.

Now you meet the Charioteer. The character known as The Charioteer shows you the importance of expressing your masculine side. **The Chariot** is a card of outer strength, and the control of your surroundings by the use of physical and mental force. Its attribute is **Control**.

The next card, **Strength**, gives a balancing effect to the previous card by indicating **Inner Strength**. This card represents courage, or an inner knowledge of your power, but without the need for its display.

**The Hermit** stands on a peak of the spiritual realms. He has achieved spiritual enlightenment. Your intention may be to discover how to become enlightened, but The Hermit is not able to teach this to you. The lesson taught by The Hermit is that you have to find your own way to enlightenment. You realise that attainment of spiritual enlightenment is possible, because you have encountered someone who has experienced what you desire. The attribute associated with The Hermit is **Attainment**.

The key wording for **The Wheel of Fortune** is **Karmic Change**. In this card you see the wheel of fate and you learn that life holds many extremes. It shows you that change is inevitable and that you must not be complacent when you feel you are at the top of your game. On the other hand, the Wheel of Fortune signifies that when you are in deep despair, a change for the better is just around the corner.

From the card called **Justice**, you learn how to weigh up any situation so that you can make appropriate and correct decisions. The attribute for Justice is therefore **Balance**.

**The Hanged Man** offers you the gift of patience. The key wording for this card is **Acceptance**. From this image you realise that sometimes circumstances are beyond your conscious control, and that luck favours those with a good sense of timing.

The **Death** card does not represent an actual death; it simply shows a significant change involving an ending of one set of circumstances and a beginning of a new way of life. The attribute for this card is **Transformation**, and in readings it specifically relates to significant changes on an outer level.

The angel figure called **Temperance** is neither male nor female. Its attribute is **Harmony**. In this card's context, the word *temperance* shows the need to maintain a balance between the conscious and the subconscious mind.

Now you look into the world of **The Devil**. This card does not suggest that there is an evil being with horns and a tail; it simply represents **Fear**. The image represents the area of the mind that stores all of the uncertainties and negativity that you have suppressed.

The next card is called **The Tower** and it represents the concept of how there is often a need to shatter old belief systems in order to find the truth of any situation. **Breakthrough** is the main word associated with this card.

**The Star** reveals the quality of **Renewal**. This card shows you the positive side of the dramatic changes associated with the previous card.

The next image is called **The Moon**, and it is another card of change. Specifically, this image relates to changes that have been inspired on inner levels and which are then forced into consciousness. The attribute for this card is simply **Change**. This card teaches you the lesson of cycles. The Moon is constantly changing from new moon to full moon, then to dark moon, and back to new moon again. In a similar way, your understanding of the world will change dramatically as you grow older. You will let go of many cherished ideas along the way, changing your mind about the way the world works, thereby gaining a better understanding of your place in the universe.

**The Sun** card suggests that negative experiences in life have meaning and purpose, and they can be overcome. The main word for this card is therefore **Optimism**.

In the card called **Judgement**, you see people awakening from the illusions of life and being called towards spiritual values. The attribute for this card is **Evaluation**.

**The World** is a card of enlightenment. The key word for this card is **Fulfilment**. At this point, your journey along this corridor of Major Arcana images reaches its end.



## Chapter 6 - Symbols and Interpretations of the Major Arcana

In the last chapter, The Fool was given the attribute **Innocence**. When you look at this card, many other words may come to mind, words such as *adventure* and *freedom*, and all of these are correct interpretations too. When you are doing a reading, it's just a matter of finding the most appropriate word for the circumstances of that reading.

After laying out the cards in a spread, the interpretation of any particular card is obtained from the card's position within the spread, the influence of the surrounding cards, and the card's traditional meaning. The main influence for your reading, however, while keeping the above details in mind, should be the impressions that you receive from the symbols on each card. Your task is to work out the meaning of this symbol, and the way that it relates to the query.

The following list gives traditional interpretations of the symbols contained within the Major Arcana cards. Look at each card as you read these interpretations, and make a mental note of the meanings that feel right to you.



### The Fool – Card 0

**Symbols:** The laurel leaves forming The Fool's hat signify his optimism for a successful journey, and the red feather represents his desire for adventure. The white rose in his left hand shows that his intentions are pure. His bag is embroidered with the image of an eagle, which is a symbol of Zeus, the most powerful of the Greek gods. He seems relaxed as he takes an adventure into the unknown with a playful dog at his side.

**Represents in a reading:** Embarking upon a new business or relationship. Being aware of opportunities. Curiosity. Innocence. A quest. Naivety. A fresh start. A journey into unfamiliar territory. All things are possible, but beware of turning this exciting journey into pure escapism and frivolity. Undertaking

a search for experience and wisdom. Spontaneity and risk. A person who is eager to take part in a new adventure, regardless of the consequences. Unlimited potential for spiritual growth and personal development.

## The Magician – Card 1

**Symbols:** Wearing a red cloak to signify action and power, The Magician stands confidently at the centre of this card. Beneath the cloak we see that he is garbed in white, representing his purity of purpose. His belt is the joined snake which signifies eternity, and above his head is the symbol of infinity—the powers at his command are therefore drawn from realms beyond time and space. He points a wand to the heavens and his finger to the earth—an acknowledgement of his position as mediator between the worlds, represented by the ancient creed, ‘as above, so below’. The symbols of the Tarot suits on the table represent the elements, the building blocks of life. The red roses and the white lilies signify passion and the intellect respectively.



**Represents in a reading:** Being conscious of your abilities. He is the personification of the creative force within you. He represents the qualities of focus, willpower, discipline, and mastery. He is a teacher and guide in the physical world. Power and energy are available when this card is present in a reading. Skill, action, capability, confidence, application, and a sense of purpose surround this card. Creative and academic pursuits may be offered at this time. Enthusiasm for a new achievement within these areas is high when this card is shown in a spread.

## High Priestess – Card 2

**Symbols:** The High Priestess sits passive and serene between two black and white pillars. These pillars symbolise duality. Each pillar bears a letter, ‘B’ or ‘J’, representing the Hebrew words *Boaz* and *Jachin*, the names of the two pillars that stood at the front of King Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. They represent opposites: severity and mercy; feminine and masculine; dark and light; night and day.

Behind the High Priestess are pomegranates, the sacred fruit of Persephone, which are a link to the Greek myth connecting the High Priestess to the Queen of the Underworld of deeper consciousness. She represents the passive state, as shown by the moon at her feet and the calm ocean in the



background. She holds the scroll of our destiny, which is already known within the psyche.

**Represents in a reading:** The subconscious. The strengthening of intuition. A study of the occult or esoteric. Secrets, mysteries, and psychic powers. The inner knowledge of life purpose. Reflection, perception and insight. The most spiritual aspects of the feminine.

### The Empress – Card 3

**Symbols:** The Empress wears a tiara of twelve stars, representing the twelve signs of the zodiac. Her necklace has one pearl for each planet. In some Tarot decks, The Empress is pregnant, internalising the fertility of the scene around her, which is bountiful and rich with life. The river on the card is the flow of life itself. She holds a golden sceptre which is topped by the world. By holding this symbol of power, she demonstrates that she is active in her feminine role—unlike the passive, virginal High Priestess. The sign on her shield is a symbol for ‘female’ and it also represents Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty.

**Represents in a reading:** A supporter and nurturer—emotional, sensual, and gentle. The Empress is indicative of the innate wisdom of nature. She is fertility, growth, abundance, fruitfulness, serenity, patience, and creativity; she is Mother Nature herself. She can represent the fullness of life, domestic stability, generosity, contentment, and potential fulfilled. This card sometimes indicates a pregnancy.



### The Emperor – Card 4

**Symbols:** The Emperor is an imposing figure, full of strength and attitude. Unlike the voluptuous, cushioned seat of the Empress, the seat of her consort, The Emperor, is a bare throne decorated only with rams' heads. The ram is the symbol of Aries—a masculine astrological sign that is ruled by the warrior planet, Mars. The Emperor's red cloak conceals a suit of armour, suggesting that he is poised to go to war at any given moment, for any purpose he can justify. The jewels on his crown indicate worldly, material success. The Emperor upholds the laws of the land and the customs of our society. He holds a

sceptre in one hand and a golden globe in the other to symbolise his status as a monarch.

**Represents in a reading:** A person who is traditionally minded, quick tempered, severe, and confident. A natural leader, usually headstrong and firm in his opinions. An earthy, materialistic nature. He symbolises authority, ambition, virility, security, intellect, reliability, practicality, achievement, and a fatherly aspect within any relationship. He represents order, stability, wealth, the rational mind, organisation, and rulership. When this card turns up in a spread, it may indicate an encounter with authority figures, such as the head of the company, or the police.

### The Hierophant – Card 5

**Symbols:** In the early versions of Tarot, this card was called ‘The Pope’. With his right hand, The Hierophant makes an ecclesiastical sign, denoting his links to religion. The crossed keys at his feet are fused together, representing the inability to unlock deeper wisdom from rigid dogma. One of the priests being counselled wears a robe with a rose pattern, and the other has lilies. These flowers were also shown at the feet of The Magician; in this situation, the roses represent the emotions, and the lilies are symbols of deeper thinking.

**Represents in a reading:** Mediation, counsel, ethics, and inspiration. The Hierophant can represent a teacher, or assistance from a wise and compassionate person. He may symbolise a spiritual seeker, but this person would have a preference for orthodoxy and conformity. Tradition, education, guidance, and obedience are all meanings that can be attributed to this card.



### The Lovers – Card 6

**Symbols:** Behind the man is the Tree of Life. Behind the woman is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The angel represents spiritual unity, the manifestation of the union of polarities: male and female; intellect and emotion. The snake behind the woman is a symbol of wisdom. The apples on the tree are gifts from the Goddess.

**Represents in a reading:** A lover, or the feeling of love itself. This is a card of trust, and of partnerships in their many forms. Sometimes it refers to attraction, relationships, and marriage. On

a spiritual level, it represents the integration of the rational and emotional aspects of a person.

### The Chariot – Card 7

**Symbols:** The focus of the card called The Chariot is the dazzling Charioteer, the archetypal warrior who is constantly engaged in, or dreaming of, contests and battles.

He stands within a solid grey vehicle of war, trimmed with celestial decorations. The whole image is a mixture of male/female polarities: black and white sphinxes, and a sun symbol as a crown with moon crescents on his shoulders. Adding more contrast is the grey, cement city in the background, whereas around him is lush grass and trees that line a flowing river. All of these elements symbolise opposite polarities that work in harmony with each other, reinforcing the concept of integration.



The contradictory nature of this card is also indicated by this man of action being stationary. The sphinxes are resting, but when they do move, they will be trying to go in different directions! Yet the Charioteer knows that he can bring them together through his personal power.

On the front of the chariot is the winged solar disk, which represents the Egyptian God Horus. The symbol on the shield is a Hindu symbol of sexuality, the unification of duality. The Charioteer symbolises success through effort, rather than good fortune. The moons on his shoulders, and the astrological signs on his belt, point to this card being linked to the zodiac sign of Cancer, which is ruled by the moon.

**Represents in a reading:** Triumph through the implementation of willpower and discipline. The creativity that results from conflict. Determination and control. How to overcome and unify opposing tendencies. The value of positive aggression. When this card turns up in a spread, it can indicate a person with a determined nature.

### Strength – Card 8

**Symbols:** The maiden represents feminine principles, the higher self and intuition. The lion is the uninhibited, primitive instincts that dwell within you. The maiden closes the mouth of the lion gently, for aggression would only lead to conflict. Her effortless control over this beast signifies that there is more to life than desires such as passion, ambition, material gain, and physical satisfaction.



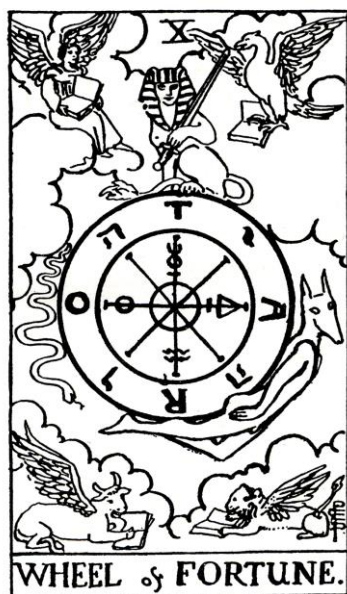
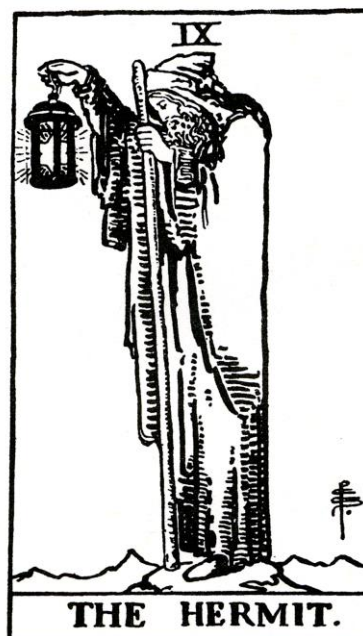


**Represents in a reading:** The interaction of physical and emotional forces. Self-control can be gained by acknowledging our base desires, then using that energy for creative, constructive measures. Inner strength and self-awareness. Courage, endurance, perseverance, goodness, fortitude, and self-awareness. This card can represent a peaceful person, or one who has the quiet determination to see a project through to the end, regardless of the hardships involved.

### The Hermit – Card 9

**Symbols:** Unlike previous cards, the image of The Hermit is not as colourful, nor is it as full of symbolism; rather, the riches of this card are contained within The Hermit himself. He is a spiritual guide, and with his lantern held high, he removes the darkness of ignorance. The star in the lantern is a symbol of guidance and enlightenment. The Hermit holds this lamp aloft to show that his attainments are available to all. He fulfils Carl Jung’s archetype of the Wise Old Man.

**Represents in a reading:** Attainment, acceptance, maturity, solitude, reflection and understanding. Extra time could become available in your schedule—use this time for introspection. This card warns against taking sudden action without contemplation of all the possible results. Take time to meditate or think about your past and your future. The Hermit can also represent a teacher of mundane or esoteric subjects.



### The Wheel of Fortune – Card 10

**Symbols:** The figures at each corner of this card are a mixture of images from biblical sources: the four creatures of Ezekial, and the four beasts from Revelations. They can be said to depict the four fixed astrological signs (clockwise from top left) Aquarius, Scorpio, Leo and Taurus. These signs represent the elements Air, Water, Fire, and Earth respectively.

Waite says that the Egyptian sphinx perched on top of the wheel represents ‘equilibrium’ and ‘stability amidst movement’. The snake is Typhon, a grotesque and destructive monster from Greek mythology, which had fifty serpent heads on each hand, and coiled vipers in place of his legs. The figure rising on the right of the wheel, with its human body and

jackal head, is Hermanubis, a combination of the Greek god Hermes, and the Egyptian god Anubis—both guides of the dead. This was a popular god form during the time of the Roman Empire.

The alchemical signs on the wheel are (clockwise from the top) mercury, sulphur, water and salt. On the wheel there are also four letters, which form the words ROTA, TARO, and TORA, depending on which way you read them. ROTA is a Latin word meaning *wheel*. TARO can be seen as TAROT if you use the first letter twice, which is appropriate since the wheel itself is symbolic of cyclical progression. TORA refers to Jewish religious law and teachings, and this is usually spelled as *Torah*. Interspersed on the wheel are the Hebrew letters of the Divine Name.

**Represents in a reading:** Luck, destiny, momentum, advancement, evolution, and a change of fortune. Like the cycle of the seasons, this card shows us that the universe is always in a state of change. The main message of this card is simply that the ebb and flow of fortune is a constant part of our existence. Know that the wheel will always turn, and that life is not always under our immediate control. An understanding of humility is the lesson associated with this card. Change is inevitable and a sense of destiny and progress emerge when this card turns up in a spread.

### Justice – Card 11

**Symbols:** As with The High Priestess, the two pillars in this card once again show opposing forces. The scales weigh one's conscience against truth. The symbol of the scales also links this card with the astrological sign of Libra. The violet material hanging between these columns represents spirituality, wisdom, and compassion. The sword held high in the right hand shows that the awareness exhibited in this card is based upon objective processes.

The blue jewel on the crown represents the clarity of mind and purpose required for accurate judgement. The red clasp above the heart signifies that compassion is part of real justice. The figure is female, but she has short hair which minimises her feminine, emotional qualities, allowing her to dispense true justice with a balance between rational and emotional forces.

**Represents in a reading:** Justice is a moral virtue and above all else, this card is about seeing the truth about ourselves and passing judgement on our own thoughts and actions. This shows a situation that needs careful consideration in order to find a fair and rational solution. Impartiality is required, and consequences are to be considered. Equilibrium can be maintained if all aspects of the case are looked at with an objective mind and an open heart. This card also suggests that there are good



reasons why we have found ourselves in the situation that we are in. When this card comes up in a reading, it means that a period of introspection is valuable before we take further action.

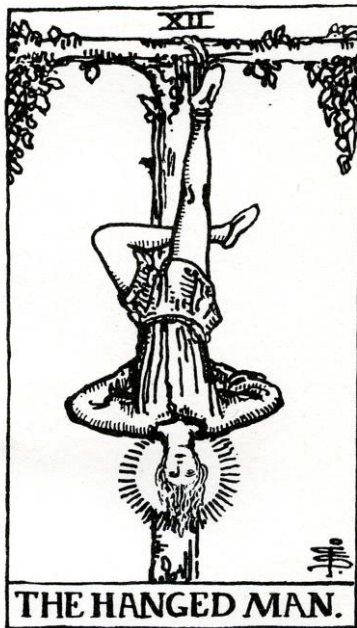
The card Justice is often related to legal matters, and suggests that you maintain fair dealings and honesty with others. It can also serve as a warning to check that others are acting justly towards you.

### The Hanged Man – Card 12

**Symbols:** The young man hangs inverted by one foot. His arms and legs are crossed to form upright and inverted triangles, suggesting the inter-relationship of higher and lower forces. The blue shirt over the red pants signifies that the passive state has overcome the body's desire for activity. The man has accepted his situation, hence the serene expression. The halo indicates that he is at peace with the world and enlightened by the experience.

**Represents in a reading:** Have patience. Be willing to adapt to changing circumstances. Reflection, acceptance, and viewing situations from a different perspective. This card shows a present sacrifice for a future benefit. When The Hanged Man appears in a spread, it can indicate

a period of introspection, which leads to a greater understanding of one's circumstances.



### Death – Card 13

**Symbols:** Many of the historical versions of Tarot cards simply showed Death as a skeleton figure, representing the inevitability of one's physical demise. On closer inspection, this card is crammed with symbolism about significant change and transformation. The skeletal figure in his cold armour rides forward on his pale horse, changing the circumstances of everyone he meets. The white Mystic Rose on the rigid flag represents life, and the sun signifies immortality. In this card, A. E. Waite showed his belief that death is a purging process, which results in rebirth to a new world. The water in the background is the flow of universal energies.



There are four other figures shown in this card: a prone king whose crown has fallen from his head; a bishop; a child, and a young lady. Death will reach out to them all with his bony touch. This selection shows that death visits everyone regardless of position in life, age, or spiritual leanings.

**Represents in a reading:** The end of a particular cycle of life. If you are doing a reading for someone and the Death card turns up, look at the four people facing Death in the card, and work out which one represents the person you are reading for. This indicates how they feel about the impending changes.

If they are like the king, they are paralysed into inactivity, accepting change fearfully.

If they are like the bishop, initially their faith in a higher purpose might help them to face the ordeal, but they could be emotionally crushed when the full weight of the inevitable ending comes upon them, regardless of their idealistic pleadings with the universe. This attitude could lead to depression afterwards if the person is not careful.

If they are like the maiden, then this person does not accept that an ending is possible. Unfortunately, if they hold this false attitude, they will be unprepared for the inevitable death of their present circumstances.

It is much better to face Death as the child does, with an air of acceptance. Change is an unavoidable part of life, and by accepting its possibility, we can make preparation for the new start that results from the end of the current situation.

### Temperance – Card 14



**Symbols:** The androgynous figure, the two iris flowers, and the two cups represent duality, harmony, and balance. The cups symbolise the blending of the conscious and subconscious mind. The essence of life itself is being poured from one cup to the other. A path leads to the mountains, where a crown is visible through the rays of the sun.

The sun disk on the forehead illuminates the head of Temperance, providing a halo or sunray effect around the hair. This sign is also the alchemical symbol for gold, which represents the perfection of matter. On the robe is a triangle within a square, which signifies the transcendence of spirit from this material world, leading to wisdom and spiritual bliss.

**Represents in a reading:** Coordination, cooperation, and moderation. The need to balance one's rational and emotional selves. Harmony between one's material and psychic nature.

## The Devil – Card 15

**Symbols:** This image looks like it's from a horror movie, or a Satanic book of spells, but it's based on Eliphas Lévi's image of Baphomet, a pagan idol. To some, the card called The Devil is a symbol of evil. However, Lévi intended his image to be symbolic of 'the absolute' form containing the male and female aspects of creation. A.E. Waite included a man and woman in the picture. They are chained to The Devil, which indicates bondage to a materialistic way of life. This card does not represent Satan; rather, it shows the base, physical, sexual nature of humans—and the guilt that usually accompanies uncontrolled desires and the way they are expressed.

The horns on the heads of the male and female figures show that their minds are chained to The Devil through their ignorance, thoughts, and fears. Meanwhile, their bodies are only loosely held through physical means (the chains are quite loose around their necks), symbolising that they are bound to existing conditions only by a limited understanding of their true nature. The tails on the couple represent their animalistic nature.

Compare the picture on this card with the imagery from The Lovers. We now see opposing forces at work. Instead of daylight, we have the danger and intrigue of night. The angel has been transposed into the winged Devil. It is the same couple, but their lower nature is represented in this image. Instead of being free, the couple are fettered to a stone block. Grapes at the end of the tail behind the woman are fruits symbolising the earthly realm rather than the Tree of Knowledge, which was in The Lovers card. The tail of the man is alight from the flaming torch. There is a resemblance to the flame-like leaves of the Tree of Life, shown in the other card, but this time the image represents lust and desire at the base chakra.

The goat-like features indicate the astrological sign of Capricorn, which rules this card. The symbol on The Devil's right hand is the glyph of the planet Saturn, which has rulership over the Capricorn zodiac sign.

**Represents in a reading:** Longing for material possessions, or wealth that is being used for power. On an inner level, The Devil represents the deep-seated, instinctual aspects of our physical and sexual desires. This image suggests the need to acknowledge base impulses and to accept them as being natural. The Devil can symbolise repressed fears or needs which must be overcome. He can also indicate a situation that limits or binds you. The emphasis of this card is physical force, psychological force, guilt, obsession, violence, repression, and addiction. It can reveal



a feeling of being ‘chained’ to circumstances over which you feel you have no conscious control. This card also suggests people who try to dominate or control you.

### The Tower – Card 16



**Symbols:** As the lightning bolt pierces the gloom and strikes the stone tower, the man and woman fall from their pillar of ignorance. They have finally been released from the restraining conditions they have built up around themselves. Their framework of rigid beliefs has been shattered, and they are now able to gain a better understanding of their place in the physical and spiritual realms. The 22 yellow flames drifting to the ground are each in the shape of the Hebrew letter *yod*, which is the first letter in the name of the Hebrew God. These blessings from divinity float to the earth to assist humanity. *Yods* show that regardless of how disruptive and disheartening a situation may seem, support from divine sources is available if

you choose to focus on the opportunities brought by upheaval.

For many centuries, a crumbling tower was a common religious symbol for divine punishment. The couple fall headfirst, showing that it is their thinking that needs to end, so that their inner nature can take over and redirect them to their true path.

**Represents in a reading:** A need for separation from material attachments. Sudden conflict and disruption. A change of employment or residence, or perhaps just a significant change within your usual routine at work or home. Major changes in thinking, intellectual breakthroughs (and sometimes mental breakdowns). Upheaval (and even violence) in a relationship can be indicated by this card.

The Tower is symbolic of unexpected action with widespread repercussions; depending on the nature of surrounding cards, this action can lead to better or worse circumstances. This card can represent a reversal of fortunes that removes any false values and belief systems that you have allowed yourself to become trapped behind.

When this image turns up in a spread, you can be sure that there's chaos, disruption, confusion, and drama happening in your client's life. The good news is that the end result will be a release from false concepts. Your client will see situations as they really are, finally breaking through the delusions that they have been steadfastly trying to ignore. Ultimately, this realisation leads to freedom of thought and an awakening of their spirit, so that they can make more appropriate decisions in the future.

### The Star – Card 17

**Symbols:** There are many similarities between this card and Temperance, including the positioning of a foot in water and a foot on land, signifying the need to maintain balance between the inner and outer self. The lady is naked in order to represent freedom and natural expression. Waite calls The Star ‘The Great Mother’ and perhaps she embodies Ishtar, Queen of the Heavens, whose symbol is an eight-pointed star.

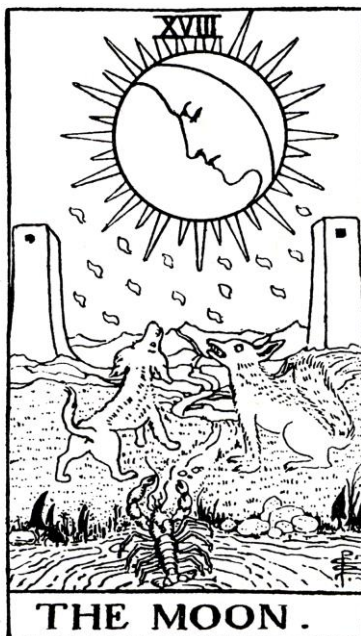
The water poured onto the land is a gift to the world. The astrological sign associated with this card is Aquarius, hence the design on the card is similar to the sign of the water-pouring cup bearer.

**Represents in a reading:** Spiritual renewal and physical revitalisation. Taking ideas and manifesting them in the real world. Centeredness and balance. Truth, success, creative thinking, guidance from the universe, and an increase in good fortune. It suggests wholeness, optimism, peacefulness, calmness, and innovative concepts.



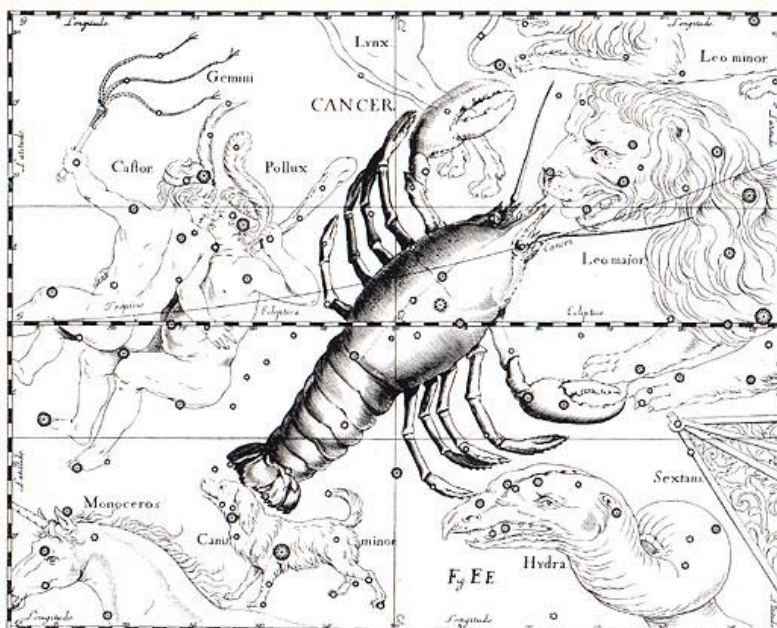
### The Moon – Card 18

**Symbols:** The changing faces of the moon goddess (Maiden, Mother, and Crone) can be seen in this card. The towers from the Death card are also featured in this image, and they represent the passage through the gates of consciousness into the realms of the psyche. The domestic dog, the wolf, and the crayfish stare at the moon goddess, and blessings in the form of *yods* (the first letter in the name of the Hebrew god) flow to the earth.



The dog and wolf are reluctant to move down that path, as they are the primitive, instinctual aspects of the conscious mind, barking and howling at the unknown. The crayfish, representing our darkest thoughts and feelings, climbs from the depths of the subconscious mind. This crustacean represents the zodiac sign of Cancer. In modern times, this is symbolised by a crab, but in Renaissance times the crayfish was the usual emblem for that sign. In astrological charts that were available at the time of

Tarot's origins, Cancer was adjacent to Canis Minor and Canis Major (the dog and the wolf), and the twins of Gemini (the towers) were nearby as well.



(Image from *Uranographia totum coelum stellatum*, Hevelius 1690)

**Represents in a reading:** Imagination, instinct, change, fluctuation, and vivid dreams. Because of the feminine nature of this card, the changes that are implied in a reading should be regarded as being of a subtle nature, relating to the inner level of experience. The message from this card is to calm the mind and find the peace within you.

### The Sun - Card 19

**Symbols:** The Sun is the most optimistic, positive card in the whole of Tarot. A red banner heralds new energy and triumph. Bright sunflowers grow strong and fresh. A personified, dazzling sun radiates life and goodness to the smiling child upon the gentle horse. As another expression of freedom, as per The Star, the child is naked—only his head is decorated, with a garland of flowers and a red feather, which links him to The Fool's vitality and innocence.

Achievement is now simply a result of a constructive attitude. The horse is placid, which shows that the animal's instinctual nature has been subdued, and the True Self is fully connected with higher sources. This is a masculine card which balances The Moon's feminine qualities.





**Represents in a reading:** Activity, cheerfulness, pleasure, and good health. The Sun also represents simplicity, new possibilities, optimism, joy, acknowledgement, and achievement.

### Judgement – Card 20



**Symbols:** In a bizarre combination of biblical imagery, figures in this card rise from floating coffins and praise the Archangel who has called them from the dead. This is essentially a scene of the last judgement, and it is symbolic of an awakening to our spiritual nature. The people are naked because they have shaken off the illusions of the outer world which previously clothed them. The equal-armed cross on the flag, sometimes known as the Grail Cross, is the symbol of complete truth and perfect balance.

**Represents in a reading:**

Transformation—a stirring of the mind to a higher purpose. A renewed sense of urgency to accomplish important tasks of a meaningful nature. This card can represent settlement, an announcement, or a decision which is made that leads to a change for the better. It shows an awakening, and evaluation of circumstances with a promise of reward. An awakening from illusions. Clear thinking and good judgement.

### The World – Card 21

**Symbols:** The dancing female figure shown in this card is similar to the Hindu God Shiva, whose dance of bliss is also a dance of death, representing both the creation and destruction of the universe. The dance manifests the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth. The faces in the corners of the card are the same figures from The Wheel of Fortune image. They show the same order of zodiac signs and elements as that card does: Aquarius, Scorpio, Leo, and Taurus. These signs represent the elements Air, Water, Fire, and Earth respectively. The green wreath, bound with crimson ribbon, shows the regenerative forces at work. The oval shape of the wreath signifies completion, and the white wands in the woman's hands show the active



power of manifestation that she wields. The purple sash is indicative of the attainment of spiritual wisdom.

**Represents in a reading:** The joy of accomplishing a long-term objective. This is a card of achievement, synthesis, completion, perfection, and integration. It signifies success and fulfilment, the end of a personal cycle, project or series of events, with appropriate rewards for your efforts. The archetypes of wholeness and perfection are evident in this card.

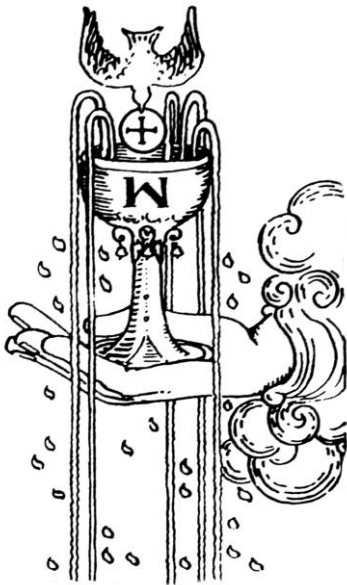
### Summary

As you have been reading through the descriptions of these cards, have you recognised a small part of yourself in each of them? Each of the Tarot cards shows traits and emotions that we can identify with at various points in our lives. Take a few moments to look through all of the Major Arcana and think about when you have taken on the role of these cards. When did you act in a way that was like The Fool, The Hermit, or The Star? What were the circumstances that made you feel that you had to be someone else? And what is your true nature? Which card do you think represents the real you at this point in time? When we identify with the qualities of each character, we can be more accurate in the interpretations of our readings for ourselves and others.



## Chapter 7 - The Suits

As briefly mentioned in the first chapter, each suit of the Tarot represents specific aspects of life. The suits are also linked with the elements and zodiac signs. Most people feel a sense of familiarity when they read the following descriptions. You may recognise yourself, your friends or family members.



**Cups:** The suit of Cups represents the element of water. This suit relates to emotions, such as grief, loss, joy, and love. Other characteristics of this element include the psyche, fertility, imagination, intuition, dreams, sensitivity, serenity, friendships and partnerships.

When looking through these cards, you will notice the use of the colour blue to denote the watery aspect of this suit. 'Love' is the attribute for the Cups, and romance is the key factor when lots of these cards show up in a spread. The astrological signs connected to this suit are Cancer, Pisces, and Scorpio.

Sometimes the Court cards of the Tarot represent people, and when this happens, the suits can give you a better indication of the type of person shown. For example, the people indicated by the suit of Cups are often idealistic, friendly, even-tempered individuals. Other representations can include people who are sensitive, reserved, and private.

**Pentacles:** The suit of Pentacles represents the element of earth and focuses on physical or material qualities. Business matters, finances, the natural world, assets, security, and the home are all concerns of this suit. When Tarot was first created, this suit was called 'Coins', signifying the attributes of 'Money' and 'Material Wealth'. Health matters can also be revealed when these cards appear in a reading. The corresponding astrological signs are Capricorn, Taurus, and Virgo.

This suit represents practical people who are focused on money or the physical realms. In each of the Court cards, the sky is a brilliant yellow, emphasising the golden pentacles.





**Swords:** The suit of Swords is linked to the element of air. In these cards, the sky often features clouds and a windblown landscape. Air is associated with the mind, so the main focus of Swords cards is the intellect, worries, mental conflict, ideas, and study. This suit is all about how you respond to mental challenges, and your ability to communicate. The attribute for this suit is 'Thought'. The astrological signs for this suit are Aquarius, Gemini, and Libra.

People represented by Sword cards like to discuss things. They talk a lot and ask many questions, which helps them to make logical decisions. Their priority is effective communication and skilful negotiation, especially when done in a rational and impersonal way.

**Wands:** The suit of Wands represents the fire element and energetic qualities such as creativity, enthusiasm and inspiration. The attribute of Wands is 'Energy', and throughout this suit we see confidence, optimism, and enthusiasm. Even when the characters of the Wands cards are not active, they are ready to defend, explore, work or have a party!

Wands used to be called staves, and a staff (singular) is like a walking stick that travellers use over rough terrain. This is an appropriate symbol, as the people shown in the Wands cards are adventurous characters who are always on the move. The symbols of this suit often look more like a staff than a magic wand, so in my descriptions of these cards, I sometimes refer to these objects as staves.

The type of person characterised by the suit of Wands loves a challenge. They are direct and forthright, and they expect you to be the same. A Wand person is often cheerful, with a happy-go-lucky attitude to life.

The suit of Wands represents people who are unpredictable. They enjoy a battle, and they need to be constantly challenged on a creative or physical level. Characters in the suit of Wands are contemplating their future, struggling against others, taking on too many responsibilities, or travelling to exotic destinations.

The astrological signs for Wands are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius.



Issues within the workplace are also covered by this suit. Wands cards represent the interaction we have with co-workers and management, in contrast with the financial aspects of a business, which are represented by the suit of Pentacles.

Some people are a mixture of the qualities of two or more suits. In general, though, a person's basic nature can be summed up as a particular suit.



## Chapter 8 - Symbols and Interpretations of the Minor Arcana

Tarot readings can be done with just the Major Arcana. However, as these archetypal images represent characteristics of human existence and spiritual evolution, rather than the basic activities of daily life, they are not always appropriate for everyday readings. When you are doing Tarot readings for yourself and others, you probably want to look at areas such as health, work, finances, family dynamics, friendships, and romance. This is why Tarot decks also contain the Minor Arcana.

In the Minor Arcana, we find 4 suits of cards: Cups, Pentacles, Swords, and Wands. Each suit depicts a range of activities relevant to the meaning of those suits. For example, in the suit of Cups, the characters are engaged in pursuits of love and friendship. The emotions are the main focus of these cards, and the images include families, lovers, friends, as well as sadness and emotional confusion.

In the suit of Pentacles, the activities revolve around business and finance. The images involve financial rewards, and the effects of having limited money.

Worry and misery take their toll in the Sword cards; the more positive side of this suit appears in the Court cards, where people are acting with clarity and conviction.

The suit of Wands has energy radiating from the cards. The characters are planning new adventures, fighting, looking for challenges, defending themselves, and having celebrations. Changes can happen quickly when there's an abundance of Wands cards in a spread.

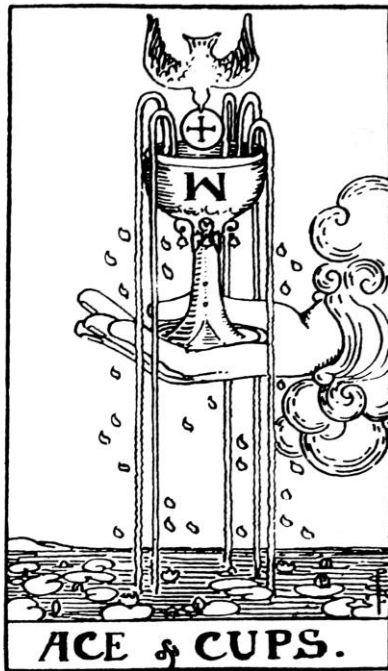
The following are some standard interpretations associated with each card of the Minor Arcana. Keep in mind that each suit has general attributes associated with it in addition to the traditional meanings. Also feel free to discover your own meanings for these cards simply by looking at the images and gaining impressions as to what the images represent.

### Cards in the Suit of Cups

#### Ace of Cups

**Description:** The Ace of Cups appears as the Holy Grail from the Arthurian legends. There are small bells hanging from the chalice, and these herald the influx of new energies that are about to pour into a person's life when this card turns up in a reading. The dove (which holds a wafer) represents peace and harmony.

Blue *yods* fall from the cup, looking like droplets of water. These symbolise divine inspiration which will splash across the conscious mind, offering insight when required. At the bottom of the image, the pink lotus flowers signify a blossoming of love and friendship.



The letter W, which is stamped upon the front of the Cup, could be an obvious reference to Water, this being the element of the suit of Cups, or it may be an artistic honouring of Waite, the designer of the pack.

**Represents in a reading:** All of the Aces represent new beginnings. Aces are powerful cards that promise the achievement of results. They are filled with a primal force that evolves into an expression of each suit's energy. In the suit of Cups, the Ace represents a fulfilling new start on the level of romance and the emotions.

Unlike most of the other plain gold Cups in this suit, the depiction of the elaborate chalice in this card shows that the energies of the Ace are special. It indicates a new start on the emotional level, but it is also much more

than that! This card tells us that there are forces at work offering significant advantage if you flow with these energies.

Other divinatory meanings associated with this card are: joy, contentment, happiness, and the stirrings of romance. If this card is shown in conjunction with the Two of Cups, it can indicate a new relationship.

## Two of Cups

**Description:** This card is dominated by the image of a winged lion. Lions often symbolise primal passions such as lust, but in this instance these energies are tempered by wings of spirituality, toning down the meaning to that of a mutual desire which is likely to result in a loving relationship. Shown directly beneath the lion's head is the caduceus of Hermes, a symbol of healing and alchemy. The man and woman exchange cups, indicating their fondness for each other.

**Represents in a reading:** A well-balanced relationship or partnership. Friendship, romance, love, affinity, sharing, caring, and cooperation. It can also show an opportunity to resolve differences.





### Three of Cups

**Description:** Three women raise their cups to celebrate the joyfulness of their lives. Their plans have been fulfilled and their friendship is true. Their enjoyment of the abundance around them shows that they are emotionally satisfied.

**Represents in a reading:** Happiness, appreciation, and celebration. Merriment, victory, satisfaction, fulfilment, renewed health, and vitality. This card indicates the fortuitous conclusion of a project of great value.

### Four of Cups

**Description:** A young man sits with his arms crossed in a petulant manner. Because all of his immediate needs have been fulfilled, he doesn't recognise the value of the gift he is being offered. He is bored with his surroundings and will only recognise how fortunate he really is when some of the things that he takes for granted have been removed from him.

**Represents in a reading:** This card shows the need to seek new goals or a different way of life. Boredom, dissatisfaction, sulkiness, apathy, discontentment, weariness, grumpiness. This person is too confused to see the opportunities that are being presented. When this card appears in a spread, it can be a warning that a person is thinking too much and needs to open themselves to new possibilities.





## Five of Cups



**Description:** A cloaked figure is upset after knocking over some of his cups. If this man looked closely, he would realise that one of the cups did not contain red wine, but poison. This unfortunate accident has saved his life. He has buried his face in his cloak though, and mourns what he thinks he has lost. In doing this, he also fails to appreciate that two of his cups still remain upright; unless he notices this soon, he may knock them over too! He is far from his home across the bridge, so he feels alone and miserable, but it is time for him to appreciate what he has, rather than focus on what he has lost.

**Represents in a reading:** Worry, regret, loss, disappointment and its accompanying grief.

Expectations have not been realised. An emotional letdown, perhaps the ending of a relationship or a dismissal from the workplace. New alternatives after a loss should be explored. Remember to look for what can be salvaged from an unpleasant situation. It's time to stop sulking, unravel yourself, and recognise your potential so you can move forward.

## Six of Cups

**Description:** A young boy and his little sister enjoy the fragrance of a flower. This magical garden is full of beauty. It is a safe haven, protected by high walls and a guard who marches around the perimeter. It's a sheltered environment in many ways, as symbolised by the gloves that the young girl is wearing, but the peaceful energies of the card confirm that this protection offers security, rather than restriction.

**Represents in a reading:** Pleasure, nostalgia, happiness, innocence, wishes fulfilled. Past work leads to present success. Harmony and friendship.



## Seven of Cups

**Description:** A man contemplates a series of visions. Some of these cups could be good choices, but it would be wise to avoid the ones containing the snake or demon. The one holding the victory wreath looks worthwhile at first glance, but the faint etching of the skull on the front of this cup suggests it would not be a wise choice. This man is faced with many options, and he has a difficult decision to make. The emotional world is full of highs and lows, and situations that look ideal on the surface can turn out to be unrewarding if you are not careful.

**Represents in a reading:** Imagination, fanciful visions, unrealistic expectations, confusion over choices or the unknown. A decision must be made. Carefully examine all opportunities before making a



final choice.

## Eight of Cups

**Description:** A man slowly walks away from the cups. The red cloak shows there is a desire for change. The calm waters suggest this is a time to gradually remove problems and obstacles, rather than acting with speed and force. The upright cups stand in an orderly manner, so the man is leaving an established situation, but one that he senses is not exactly right for him.

**Represents in a reading:** This card may represent disappointment, or someone walking away from responsibilities. A turning point. New directions. The rejection of an established way of thinking and feeling. A situation in decline—perhaps a midlife crisis!



## Nine of Cups

**Description:** A range of cups is displayed behind a smug man. The blue cloth indicates the watery realms of the emotions, and the symmetry suggests that all of this man's emotional needs have been met. The red hat with its flowing red plumes and the red leggings indicate that his good fortune has not happened by itself; he has made plans and taken action to achieve his position in life.

**Represents in a reading:** Success, abundance, satisfaction, happiness, and a contented state. Physical and material wellbeing. The fulfilment of an important desire. A loving and satisfying relationship.



## Ten of Cups

**Description:** The couple acknowledge the universe for their good fortune, while their children play next to them. Their home is in the distance and the river of life flows easily before them. Contentment, trust, and an abundance of love radiate from this card.

**Represents in a reading:** Companionship, family matters, true friendship. Lasting happiness and security. A happy family life.



## Page of Cups

**Description:** The Page of Cups is effeminate and wistful. As he looks into the cup, an omen in the form of a fish appears—this represents his desire for making an emotional connection in the near future. The blue tunic and the water in the background link this suit to the emotions. Unsettled waters in the background show the gentle turbulence that can manifest from youthful desires and uncertainties.

**Represents in a reading:** A quiet, kind, and gentle youth—someone who is in touch with their feelings. The start of a creative project.



## Knight of Cups

**Description:** While holding the Grail of Love in front of him, the Knight of Cups moves forward upon his horse. Pure love is guiding this knight to his heart's desire. The stream he is about to cross is narrow and shallow, which shows that when one has a noble purpose in sight, any challenge will be easily overcome.

**Represents in a reading:** A dreamer, or a courteous, gentle and romantic young man. Depending on the surrounding cards, the Knight of Cups can indicate a proposal, an offer, or an opportunity of an emotional nature.



## Queen of Cups

**Description:** Unlike the plain cups depicted in the other Court cards of this suit, the Queen of Cup's magnificent golden chalice is decorated with jewels and winged angels. The Queen's decorative stone throne is perched upon a narrow piece of sand, with water lapping at its edge. The Queen of Cups is carefully poised upon her seat, because any disturbance from the water (her emotions) will topple her from her position.

The smooth pebbles and the placid water at her feet show that the Queen of Cups is now calm and centred. She has control over her emotions, but the fixed concentration that she is giving to the cup in her hands tells us that she has to work hard at maintaining and managing her feelings. This Queen has

carefully balanced her emotional life, but if she allows underlying issues to rise to the surface too quickly, she may feel overwhelmed by her circumstances.

**Represents in a reading:** An imaginative, affectionate woman. The Queen of Cups can also be a serene, devoted and intelligent woman, or a person who shows calmness and honesty. This card can also indicate the need to develop one's intuition or a more sensitive nature.



## King of Cups

**Description:** The fish in the background represents the unconscious urges of the King of Cups. It leaps out of the water in order to be recognised by his objective mind. As symbolised by the fish pendant around his neck, the King is now ready to acknowledge these energies, and he uses them to become fulfilled on the emotional level.

The red boat in the background represents his innermost desires coming into his life. Although the waves lap at his feet, the King's throne is upon a solid, stable base. This shows that others see him as being in control of his feelings. However, underlying emotional issues tend to rule his life. The cup and a sceptre are symbols of the inner world and the outer world. The cup is larger than the sceptre, so his emotional requirements have priority.

The King's throne is of solid stone or cement and the ocean surrounds him. Like the boat behind him, he can sail through the roughest of emotional times without becoming shipwrecked. He believes he is the master of his emotions, but he must gain an understanding of his deepest fears before he can safely step away from his perceived position of security.

**Represents in a reading:** A conscientious man who is loyal, but needs to balance his emotional self. He is sensitive and kind, but can be moody at times. He is assertive within areas of friendships and relationships. This card can also indicate fairness, a responsible person, and creativity.



## Cards in the Suit of Pentacles

### Ace of Pentacles

**Description:** A disembodied hand offers a gold pentagram. At the base of the card is a peaceful garden setting with flowers and a path through a hedge. The green landscape is an image of growth in the physical world, and the path to the mountain in the distance shows a promise of material achievement. This is the only Ace that does not show *yods*. The plentiful and lush garden setting seems to be a blessing in itself, showing that extra divine inspiration in the form of *yods* is unnecessary.

**Represents in a reading:** Since an Ace means new beginnings, in the suit of Pentacles this refers to a new start in business or material affairs. As indicated by the lush garden in the foreground of this card, it can represent a change for the better in a physical or financial way. A new project that involves security and practicality.

### Two of Pentacles

**Description:** The ups and downs of finances are shown in this card. The young man tries to find a balance in his financial affairs, but the loop of infinity around the pentacles reveals that this is an ongoing problem in his life. His huge hat tells us that he often thinks about money—he may even be obsessed with it.

The rolling waves in the background reflect that change and upheaval are coming. The waves are in the form of swell, rather than dangerous breakers, so there is no peril here, but it will be unsettling.

He is dressed in greens and brown, which are the colours of the earthly, material realm, so this card represents concern with business and finance, assets and budgets.

**Represents in a reading:** This is a time for looking carefully at your financial situation. There is a need to budget carefully, and to be prudent in all business dealings. A change in fortunes could make new projects difficult to launch. Be tentative in matters relating to money. There is a need to maintain a balanced lifestyle and not be too focused on material issues, but you should not neglect them either!



### Three of Pentacles

**Description:** A sculptor stands upon a pew, with a mallet and chisel in his hands. A priest and an architect with blueprints in his hands stand near this craftsman, discussing the changes they need to make to the church.

**Represents in a reading:** An opportunity to expand a business. There is a sense of success after some initial hard work has been completed, but the project is still not completely finished. This card can also represent skill in a trade.

## Four of Pentacles

**Description:** A young man tightly holds a pentagram, which represents his assets and money. He holds down two of the pentagrams with his feet, while the other one is balanced upon his gold crown. These four pentagrams represent his thoughts and actions. The one on his head shows that he is thinking about finances all the time. The one gripped tightly in his hands indicates that he is in the process of gathering more whenever he possibly can. The desire to stash away reserves of cash is represented by the pentagrams under his boots.

This man's fine clothes indicate the high position and status in life that he has achieved. Meanwhile, the burning building in the background tells us that material wealth can be fleeting and unstable, and that he must not rely on money alone for his happiness.

**Represents in a reading:** Material stability. A miserly attitude, or someone who is proud of their assets and achievements. This is the right time to direct your energy towards future financial security.



## Five of Pentacles

**Description:** Stumbling through the snow, two beggars dressed in rags pass by a stained-glass window that shows five glowing pentagrams.

**Represents in a reading:** Loss of money or position, or the fear of losing them. Financially difficult times may be ahead. This card shows that a person is feeling overwhelmed or physically drained.

## Six of Pentacles

**Description:** A businessman distributes money to the poor. The beggars in their cloaks kneel at his feet to receive the gold coins. This money has been weighed on scales, so that all may benefit evenly from his wealth.

**Represents in a reading:** Charity. Assistance may be forthcoming. Alternatively, you may be in a position to be generous with your time or money.



## Seven of Pentacles

**Description:** A gardener leans on a digging tool and looks at his crop of pentacles. The earth at his feet is fertile and filled with promise, but he looks solemnly at these strange fruits. He recognises their worth, but starts to ponder whether there is more to life than focusing constantly on day-to-day needs.

**Represents in a reading:** A period of growth and achievement, but there's still a hint of dissatisfaction regarding the outcome. There may be hesitancy or worrying signs about a project that initially seemed promising. A time of evaluation and reflection. Perhaps a time to change direction in life.



## Eight of Pentacles

**Description:** An artist engraves discs of pentacles, which he then proudly displays. He is focused on his work and concentrates on this task in a meticulous manner. A town similar to the one shown in the Four of Pentacles is seen in the background. This town symbolises the end result of his labour—status in the community and material security. The artist has pride of his product and his abilities. He knows that by giving attention to detail, he can create a quality product, and this will bring success in his line of business.

**Represents in a reading:** Skill in material affairs. A practical outlook and a disciplined frame of mind. Craftsmanship and employment. Commitment and hard work, with the end result being satisfaction and monetary reward.







## Nine of Pentacles

**Description:** A wealthy woman in an opulent, flowing dress stands in her garden with a falcon resting upon her gloved hand. The garden overflows with a bountiful supply of grapes and pentacles, and we see her magnificent manor home in the background. The symbols on her dress remind us of the symbol of Venus, and of femininity. A snail crawls past her feet, indicating that acquiring such luxury takes time and patience.

**Represents in a reading:** Contemplation of your achievements. Dedication, discipline, and an end result of material wellbeing. Fulfilment and contentment on all levels of existence. Productivity, success, and abundance. An enjoyment of natural surroundings. This card shows someone who is enjoying the rewards of

their effort. The image reminds us to be aware of the good fortune that we have in our lives.

## Ten of Pentacles

**Description:** Pentacles float across this scene of a wealthy family. The decorative colouring of their clothing, and the size of their home in the background, shows that these people have accumulated a variety of riches during their lives.

The ten pentacles are displayed in the shape of the mystical Tree of Life. To emphasise the magical connections of this card, the old man's cloak is covered in magical sigils, showing that this is a potent card of personal power.

**Represents in a reading:** Prosperity and material security. Can represent the home or a family business. A position of comfort and stability.



## Page of Pentacles

**Description:** The green and brown clothing reveals that this Page is linked to the earthly realm and to materialism. The green grass and recently ploughed fields tell us there is a great deal of potential for him to create wealth and abundance in his life. His steady gaze at the pentacle shows that his goal is to maintain a comfortable existence, and he is willing to work hard to achieve it. His brown sleeves, leggings, belt and boots, combined with his green tunic, show that this suit relates to the earth and its qualities of practicality and materialism.

**Represents in a reading:** A thrifty, conscientious, sensible, and diligent young person. An opportunity to make money. Growth, abundance, and financial benefits.



## Knight of Pentacles

**Description:** This Knight patiently sits upon his horse, holding the pentacle in a relaxed fashion while contemplating the plans for his next project. The pentacle is like a seed that he will focus upon and plant into the earth. Compared to the Page of Pentacles, we now see the Knight right next to ploughed fields, looking at them with anticipation. He has an opportunity to establish crops that will yield substantial rewards, so he considers his situation carefully. With patience and persistence, he will nourish his material desires until they become the abundance he expects from his efforts.

The vegetation depicted on the horse's bridle and on the Knight's helmet is a symbol of being prepared for a period of growth and regeneration. The stars across the reins show that a successful outcome will eventuate.

**Represents in a reading:** A practical, reliable young man who is clever in matters of business and material affairs. Can represent perseverance and slow progress, with eventual rewards. Responsibility and endurance. Patience and contemplation. A career-minded individual.



## Queen of Pentacles

**Description:** Surrounded by flowers, the Queen of Pentacles holds the symbol of the pentacle upon her lap. The fruit that is engraved on her throne, the lush vegetation, and the flowers that surround her indicate she has abundance and prosperity in her life. The rabbit in the foreground and the symbol of the goat's head on the armrest show that this is a card of fertility, fruitfulness, and sensuality. The pentacle in her lap represents the prosperity and abundance in her world.

**Represents in a reading:** A serious, sensible, materialistic woman. Someone skilled in nurturing who has a practical outlook that brings stability to all family and social situations. This card also represents intelligence, opulence, generosity, abundance, and security.



## King of Pentacles

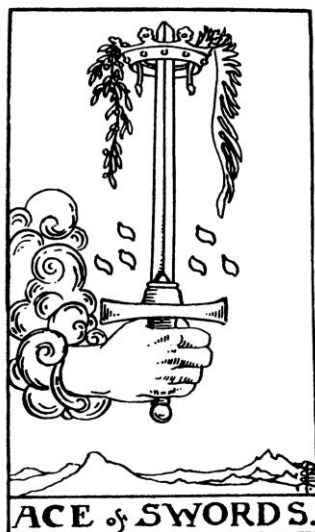
**Description:** Flowers, vines, and bunches of grapes surround the King of Pentacles, and in the background is his castle. He rests his foot upon a boar, which is a symbol of masculinity. The throne is surrounded by symbols of abundance, growth, strength, tenacity, and success. The decorative bulls' heads on this throne show his determination and reveal the brute force that he has used to establish control. This materially successful monarch has an earthy, practical nature.

**Represents in a reading:** A reliable and generous man with financial acumen. This card shows a serious-minded, intelligent person who focuses upon and achieves his goals through persistence and ingenuity. A professional and thorough approach to life.



## Cards in the Suit of Swords

### Ace of Swords



**Description:** At the top of the Ace of Swords is a gold crown adorned with jewels, an olive branch, and a palm leaf. The sword is held up high in the sky, showing that air is the ruling element of this suit. *Yods* hover on each side of the sword, symbolising the divine energy that instigates new thought patterns at this time.

**Represents in a reading:** Aces represent new beginnings, and in the suit of Swords we have the first stages of planning for a project. The crown, olive branch, and palm leaf herald the start of a successful period of time. This card indicates decisiveness, perception, communication, and a strong intellect.

### Two of Swords

**Description:** A lonely, blindfolded figure sits with her back to the ocean, holding a sword in each hand. The moon hangs passively in the skies above this woman. The sea is calm, and the pale blue of the sky, water, and her robes suggest she is calmly thinking about her options.

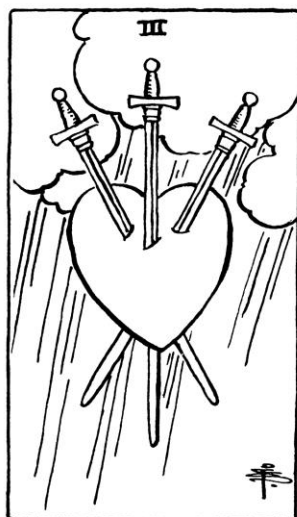
**Represents in a reading:** A choice needs to be made, but the person represented is not able to see their situation clearly or rationally at present. This person needs to look carefully at all aspects of the situation, and to recognise and acknowledge their fears regarding the options. This card also shows the perils of conformity.



### Three of Swords

**Description:** Three swords pierce a heart. Grey storm clouds gather above this scene, adding rain to this bleak image.

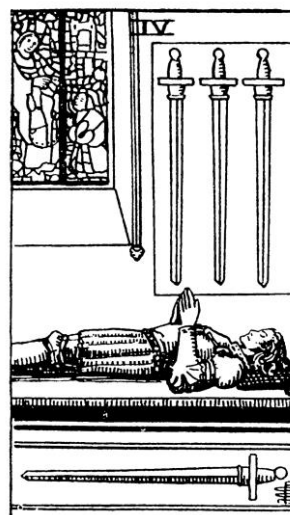
**Represents in a reading:** Conflict or heartbreak. Arguments within a relationship. Disruption to one's usual state of mind. Delays and frustration. On a mental level, this card can indicate loss and the need to grieve. On a physical level it may indicate heart problems.



## Four of Swords

**Description:** A sculptured representation of a young knight reclines upon his tomb in a chapel. He lies beneath an image of three swords and a colourful stained glass window. A fourth sword remains at his side.

**Represents in a reading:** Rest, withdrawal, reflection, and consolidation. Relief after a time of anxiety, sorrow, or stress. This card can sometimes refer to a time of sickness or of recuperation after an illness. Can also mean solitude or loneliness.



## Five of Swords

**Description:** A challenge has resulted in the defeat of two men, who walk away and leave their swords to the victor. The fragmented, patchy clouds in the sky suggest this is an uneasy situation which has not been fully resolved.

Most of the cards from the suit of Swords represent the negative aspects of situations, so the meaning of this card is about those who have lost this challenge, rather than being about the winner.

**Represents in a reading:** A disagreement or argument has not ended favourably. When this card turns up in a reading, the client probably feels humiliated by an unpleasant experience. They may be dwelling on thoughts of failure or defeat. This card can also be a warning to avoid being unrealistic or over-confident in matters that require an objective outlook. The image indicates the need to use good judgement and to be fully focused when evaluating circumstances and other people, especially when in a situation of conflict.

## Six of Swords

**Description:** A ferryman takes a mother and child across a river. As signified by the upright swords, which are positioned in an orderly manner at the front of the boat, the occupants have collected their thoughts and worries and have accepted a difficult situation for what it is. The calm waters and clear skies in front of the boat show they are moving to a place of safety that can offer them inner peace.

**Represents in a reading:** Progress and the transition from troubled times to a period of less

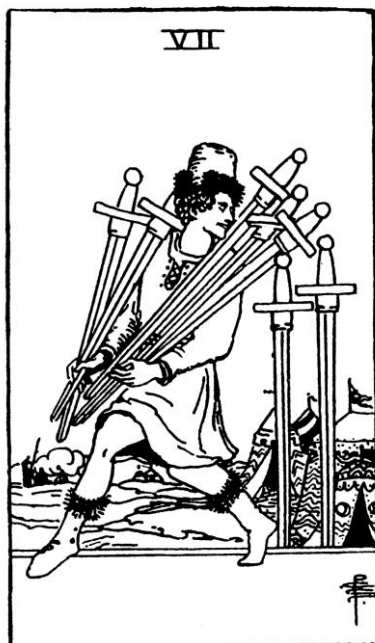


strain. Can represent a decrease in pressure on a personal level, or even an actual move to a less stressful environment. This card also suggests that once a decision is made and a commitment has been given, you will find that the path to its realisation becomes smoother than originally expected. It shows a quiet retreat, or perhaps an escape to a better way of life.

### Seven of Swords

**Description:** A smiling man in exotic garb sneaks away from a colourful group of tents, carrying five swords. Two swords remain in the ground next to him. People in the distance enjoy a discussion and don't seem to have noticed him.

**Represents in a reading:** The need to be wary of a deceitful person. Prudence. It may indicate a theft. If the person that you are reading for is in an awkward situation, they may need to use subterfuge in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome.



### Eight of Swords

**Description:** A bound and blindfolded woman stands motionless on the rocky foreshore with puddles of water at her feet. Eight swords have been placed near her; perhaps she feels as though she is totally surrounded by those deadly weapons, because she seems afraid to move. This is unfortunate, because the safety of a castle is shown on the cliff tops behind her—and her bindings are loose and could easily be shrugged off.

**Represents in a reading:** A sense of being restricted or held back. Isolation and humiliation. Unable to see the present situation clearly. Confusion and being bound by circumstances.





### Nine of Swords

**Description:** Nine swords of worry and dread hang above a woman who has been trying unsuccessfully to sleep. Astrological signs, representing forces of fate, and roses, symbols of love, decorate her quilt. The scene that is carved on the side of her bed suggests that her lover has recently died in a duel.

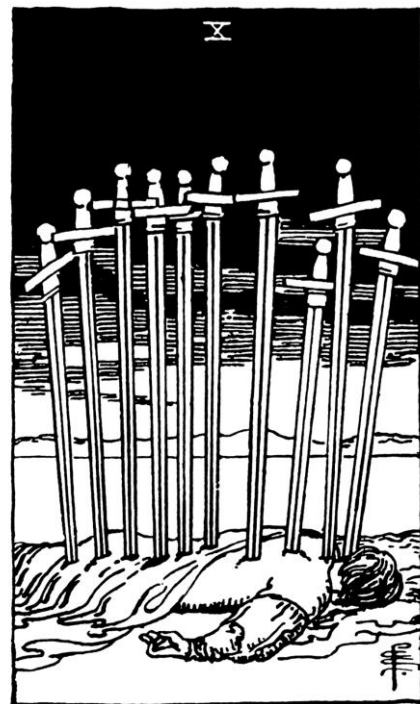
**Represents in a reading:**

Depression, despair, mental suffering, or the inability to make a decision.

### Ten of Swords

**Description:** A man is pinned to the ground by ten swords. It is the end of a long night and the sky is still black. Red cloth covers most of his body, symbolising that his life force (passion, enthusiasm, and energy) are flowing away from him. The man makes a curious gesture with the fingers of his right hand, which is the same clerical symbol made by the Hierophant. It indicates that when all is lost, a belief in yourself, or a faith in some form of deity, is sometimes the only thing that you can retain when faced with such a situation. In the background, the sun begins to lighten the sky above the calm water and there are pale mountains in the distance.

**Represents in a reading:** Disruption and sudden misfortune. An ending of an old way of life. This card appears when all hope has gone and the end has come. It is time to face the reality of a difficult situation. Despite this card's overall gloom, the rising sun shows that the worst is over. When that has been acknowledged, your client can begin to look for new goals. By accepting an ending for what it is, they can leave those struggles behind and move forward in a completely new direction without lingering doubts about what might have been.



## Page of Swords

**Description:** An alert young man walks swiftly across rugged countryside. The Page holds his sword up high, hesitating at the crest of a hill. He checks his surroundings as he plots the safest and most interesting route. The birds circling above his head are symbols of the many thoughts going around in his mind. His journey will help to awaken new thoughts and ideas. The clouds, birds, and windswept trees in the background are symbols of the element of air.

**Represents in a reading:** An extremely rational, cautious, perhaps even insensitive young person. Can symbolise intellectual matters, communication, or a new concept. Indicates vigilance, decisiveness, and activity.



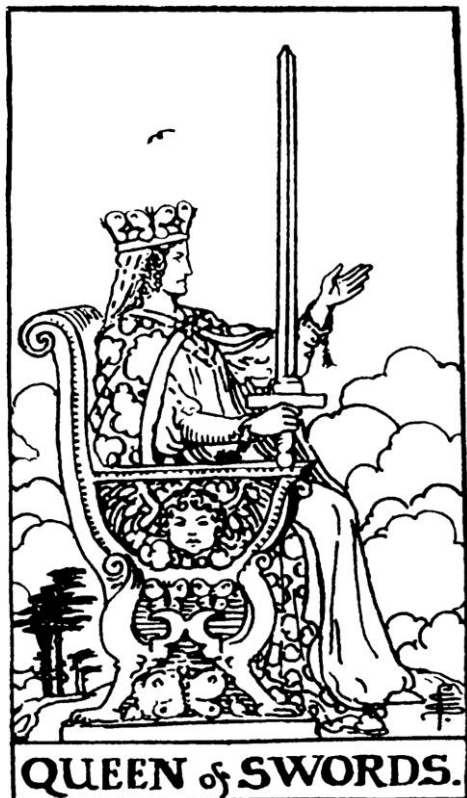
## Knight of Swords

**Description:** Charging hard against a gale, the Knight holds his sword high as his horse carries him forward into battle. Images of birds and butterflies are all over this card, representing the element air and the quick thinking that is needed in such action-packed situations. The red plume on his helmet and his red cloak are trailing behind him as he dashes forward. Birds are depicted on the reins, on the decorative trim on the horse's neck, and high in the sky above him. They reinforce the concept of immediate action, since most birds dart quickly from place to place at a moment's notice.

**Represents in a reading:** An active, decisive young man. A situation that begins with enthusiasm and activity. A desire to fully embrace and experience the excitement of the world. Eagerness, bravery, and a sense of purpose. Swiftness of activity and the impulsiveness of youth are represented by this card. Beware of appearing selfish as you rush to fulfil your dreams.







## Queen of Swords

**Description:** Sitting upright on her carved stone throne, the Queen holds a sword in one hand and gestures to unseen people with the other hand. She wears a glorious cloak that is decorated with a scene of blue skies and soft, white clouds. A lone bird flies high above her, suggesting that her thoughts are focused on one issue alone. Gold butterflies are fashioned into a crown, showing that her mind is free of prejudice. A colourful cloak decorated with clouds and a throne engraved with winged cherubs and butterflies link the Queen of Swords to the element of air.

**Represents in a reading:** A serious, seemingly emotionless woman who is intelligent and perceptive. A person who is witty, quick-minded, and can make conversation easily.

## King of Swords

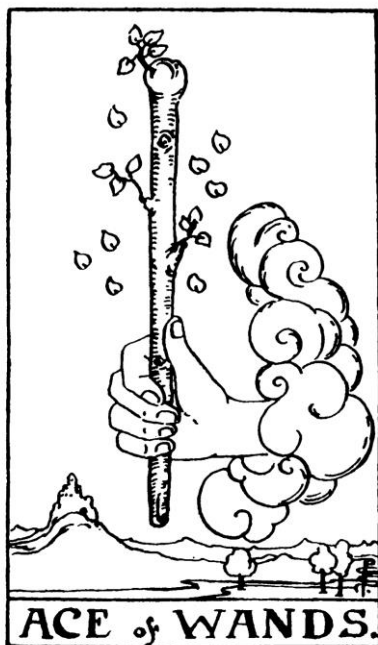
**Description:** The King sits in a landscape similar to that from the Page of Swords card. The main difference is that the wind has ceased to blow, and the King is much more settled in many ways. He has matured and he knows what he needs to do in order to be useful to the lands that he governs. This transformation is represented by the butterflies etched into the top of the throne. As shown by the purple cloak, this King is respected for his wisdom.

**Represents in a reading:** A strong, rationally minded man. He could be old-fashioned in his views. This card suggests authority, fairness, intelligence, and decisiveness.



## Cards in the Suit of Wands

### Ace of Wands



**Description:** Leaves that are similar in shape to *yods* fall from a wand. As with the other Aces, a hand is predominant. It reaches from clouds and radiates an aura of energy as it grasps the wand. A river of life flows easily in the foreground, and the green of the landscape suggests opportunity and fertility. A castle in the background indicates the success that is promised by the Ace.

**Represents in a reading:** This card brings a positive, powerful new beginning to any endeavour, often indicating a new job or a change of profession. Initiative, inspiration, and creative energy are involved. When this card turns up in a reading, it shows an abundance of enthusiasm, inventiveness,

strength, and virility surrounding the situation. The suit of Wands is one of action, so an Ace shows the burst of activity that immediately follows a good idea.

### Two of Wands

**Description:** A wealthy person stands between two wands, contemplating a representation of the world. His home overlooks a scenic bay, fertile hills, and other houses. One wand is fixed to his castle dwelling, and the other is gripped in his left hand. This arrangement suggests that he is uncertain whether to stay in his safe and prosperous environment, or to use the unfettered wand as a walking staff and travel to the excitement that other lands offer. Calm seas and paths to the mountains are clearly shown in this card, and these give him some options for exploration.

**Represents in a reading:** Success and a desire for further conquests. Status in the community has been gained. This card can indicate restlessness or boredom. It can involve making travel plans, looking for a new place to live, or finding a new job.





### Three of Wands

**Description:** A merchant stands on a cliff top watching his ships sailing off to do business in distant lands.

**Represents in a reading:** Established position of strength. A task has been completed and there is an opportunity to progress even further. This card indicates a successful business venture. It can also represent travel plans—perhaps to overseas locations.

### Four of Wands

**Description:** Four staves (wands) stand in the foreground supporting a floral garland covered with harvest fruits and tied with red ribbons. Two women are dancing while holding bouquets of flowers above their heads. Other members of the party celebrate behind them. A magnificent castle is in the background.

**Represents in a reading:** This card shows a period of celebration. The partying may be due to some good fortune coming your way, or it may be from the completion of a project. Prosperity and harmony are indicated.



### Five of Wands

**Description:** Five young men engage in a play-fight with their staves (wands). The peaceful surroundings show that this is just a harmless game.

**Represents in a reading:** Strife and competition. No serious conflict is indicated, just pettiness, confusion, and annoying arguments that must sometimes be faced in our daily lives. This card can also symbolise a reckless approach to life.



## Six of Wands

**Description:** A victorious army returns from battle. A laurel wreath crowns the hero's head and another is on top of his staff (wand). A cheering crowd carries other staves aloft.

**Represents in a reading:** Confidence and achievement. A triumphant victory after strife or effort. Good news is coming.



## Seven of Wands

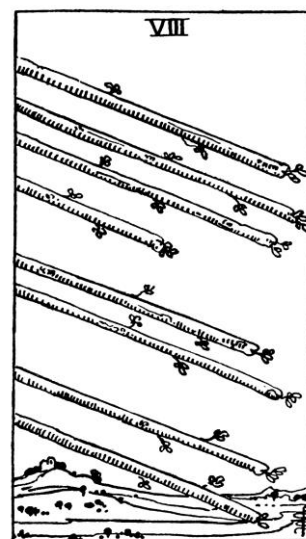
**Description:** A young man stands on the crest of a hill. He is fighting off advancing attackers who have raised their staves at him. He is in a strong position—he is standing on higher ground, so he can easily protect his vantage point. The landscape at his feet, with its hills and water-filled valleys, gives the impression that he is a giant. The other strange detail in this image is that he is wearing a boot on his left foot, but only a shoe on his right. This suggests that he has been taken by surprise, yet he has still managed to maintain control of the situation.

**Represents in a reading:** Obstacles or opposition which must be faced. Be wary of those who would undermine your status or power. Courage in the face of adversity, negotiation, and tough competition.

## Eight of Wands

**Description:** Eight wands fly through the air. Below them is a peaceful scene of the countryside.

**Represents in a reading:** Your life will soon be filled with activity and excitement. There is significant news about an improvement of circumstances. Take advantage of this momentum and initiate activity. This card indicates a swift and (usually) fortuitous resolution to situations which have been dragging along for ages. This is another Wand card that can signify travel, especially a journey that is spontaneously embarked upon.





### Nine of Wands

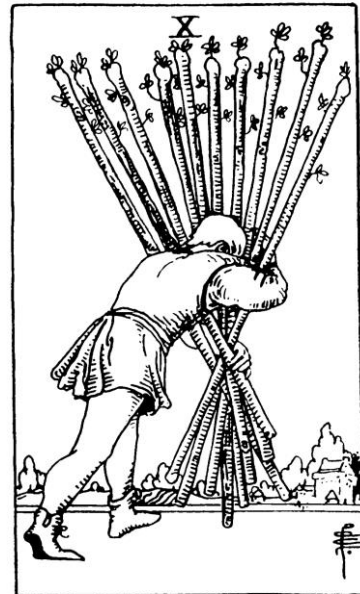
**Description:** A defensive and wary man stands on the walls of a fortress. The wands behind him act as a barrier. He is bandaged across his forehead, and he leans against his wand wearily.

**Represents in a reading:** After a hard struggle, you have reached a secure position in life. Even though you are still cautious, you can be sure that your troubles have been overcome. Time for recuperation.

### Ten of Wands

**Description:** Weighed down by his heavy load of wands, a man struggles home. The ploughed field in the background shows that even when the bundle of wands has been delivered, there is still much work to be done.

**Represents in a reading:** Demands upon time and energy. A burden or duty which has been taken on, one that is perhaps self-imposed.



### Page of Wands

**Description:** To satisfy his thirst for adventure, this Page has travelled to foreign lands. The red feather on his hat symbolises his desire for new adventures. He stands in a red and orange landscape that matches the colour of his clothing. His tunic is decorated with images of fire salamanders—the elemental spirits of fire.

**Represents in a reading:** An ambitious, extroverted young person with a desire for adventure and knowledge. Restlessness and curiosity.



## Knight of Wands

**Description:** The Knight of Wands lunges towards new adventures. He's not content to sit placidly upon his horse like the Knight of Pentacles. Nor does he allow his horse to walk along slowly, like we see in the Knight of Cups card. And he isn't galloping ahead like the Knight of Swords—this Knight has his horse rearing up so that people notice him as he follows his dream. In an ostentatious manner, he holds the wand high as he begins his quest for excitement.

He has taken the time to be filled with inspiration. Now, with excitement flowing through him, he dresses in his finest clothing and sets off for the experience of a lifetime. The feather that appeared in the Page of Wands card is now a fiery plume—it gives the visual effect of a blazing meteor streaking across the countryside. The same pyramid-shaped hills from the preceding card are in the background. The Knight of Wands realises the direction in which he wants to travel, and nothing can stop him as he undertakes his latest quest.

**Represents in a reading:** An impetuous young man. He has an adventurous and unpredictable nature. This card may represent impatience, or a hasty decision. It can also indicate travel, or a change of residence.



## Queen of Wands

**Description:** The image on this card is filled with decorative lions, sunflowers, and other solar symbols. The Queen of Wands radiates energy and enthusiasm. The Queen holds a wand in one hand, and a sunflower in the other. Sunflowers also decorate her throne. These images reinforce this suit's connection with the fire element and the astrological sign of Leo.

**Represents in a reading:** A woman with a sense of passion, courage, and versatility. Determination and a restless, fiery temperament. Sometimes a woman with the sun sign of Leo.

## King of Wands

**Description:** The King of Wands sits on the edge of his seat, ready to take on a challenging task with boundless vigour. Around his neck he wears a pendant that is shaped like a lion's head. It represents the sun's energy that radiates through him with a burning obsession for new adventures. The solar theme is reflected in the symbols on the throne—the lions with their flaming tail, and the salamanders, which are the elementals of fire. His gold crown of power and status shines like the sun—as does the King himself. He loves the status and respect he has earned, but he yearns for adventure.

**Represents in a reading:** A determined and restless man. Passion and enthusiasm. A positive attitude and vibrant energy.



## Chapter 9 - The Court Cards As People

When you are doing a Tarot reading for a client, the Court cards (the Page, Knight, Queen, and King of each suit) may indicate actual people. The King of Pentacles, for example, might represent a rich, dependable man. Alternatively, this card could mean that the client needs to develop a more disciplined nature, especially regarding finances. A Court card needs to be looked at in the context of each individual spread, and with the surrounding cards.

If you feel a card represents a person, you need to rely on your intuition for the details of a physical description. You might choose to describe the characteristics as you see them in the image on the card. For example, the Queen of Pentacles may be a mature woman with dark hair—or you could simply say that the person is likely to be a Capricorn, Taurus or Virgo astrological sign. Giving details about the elemental characteristics may also help, in which case the Queen of Pentacles would be an earthy, practical person who likes to earn money, but loves even more to spend it on quality items to enhance her lifestyle! Court cards can represent friends, family members, workmates, or someone you (or your client) will soon meet.

A Court Card can also indicate the level of certain characteristics within the client. For example, the suit of Wands has vibrant energy, vigour, and liveliness flowing from the cards, and the ‘younger’ Court cards such as the Page and Knight are the early stages of this enthusiasm and vitality. The Queen and King of Wands still have this energy, but in a more mature, tempered fashion.

In general terms, Court cards represent the maturity of individuals...

- **Page:** a young boy or girl, or an immature, childlike person.
- **Knight:** an adolescent—usually a teenage male, or a person (male or female) with youthful mannerisms.
- **Queen:** a mature woman.
- **King:** a mature man.

The colour of the hair and eyes can be indicated by the various suits too. My suggestions for physical descriptions are:

- **Cups:** blonde or fair hair, with blue or grey eyes.
- **Swords:** brown hair and brown or hazel eyes.
- **Pentacles:** black hair and dark eyes.
- **Wands:** fair or red hair, with green or hazel eyes.

These descriptions are based on the hair colouring of the main characters within each suit of the Tarot. Please note that this is a rough guide only. A Court card may simply represent qualities of the card, or its meaning may be gained from a symbol within the various images shown. The body language of the main characters



in the Court cards shows their temperaments. The following descriptions will give you a clearer understanding of these cards. Please note: the gender of each individual described below is based on the illustration of the Court card, but the person represented could be male or female.

### **The Pages**

**Page of Cups:** All Pages represent the inherent potential of their suit. The Page of Cups is an imaginative dreamer who is devoted to his friends and family. He is sensitive, emotional, and often spiritually minded. The Page of Cups can seem shy at first, especially when in large crowds or at noisy parties. He can be moody, idealistic and impractical, but he is creative and intuitive. He embodies the romantic potential that he will bring to relationships.

**Page of Pentacles:** The Page of Pentacles is a skilled and responsible young person. Someone interested in fitness and health. He is a resourceful student with the potential to accrue an abundance of money and material goods. This Page is a diligent worker who makes the most of opportunities.

**Page of Swords:** The Page of Swords is an analytical, talkative young man. He communicates well and enjoys research. He has fresh ideas about the world and is not afraid to express his point of view. The suit of Swords is about one's thoughts and worries, so this card shows the potential of a person to be decisive and confident in their assessment of situations.

**Page of Wands:** The Page of Wands has a fiery temperament, making him fearless and sometimes foolhardy. He dives into risky situations that others would leave alone. If he gets into difficulty, he can usually overcome those obstacles through his brilliant creativity and inspired ideas.

This Page craves action and excitement. He is mischievous, with an imaginative, impatient mind that is easily bored. He is constantly seeking change and new experiences. He is a restless individual who leaps into any situation that promises to stimulate his overactive mind. The suit of Wands is about imagination, inspiration, and the need for new adventures, so this card shows the potential of a person to act impulsively, seeking new challenges.

### **The Knights**

**Knight of Cups:** The Knights of the Tarot represent opportunity. This Knight is devoted to the concept of true romance. He is a gentle, soft-hearted man. He desires intimacy, the bonds of family and the ties of friendship. After experiencing the longing for love and emotional fulfillment as the Page, the Knight of Cups now seeks the opportunity for romantic bliss.

**Knight of Pentacles:** A placid young man who dedicates his life to his career. He doesn't mind hard work because it helps to build his business portfolio. The Knight of Pentacles plods steadily through life accruing assets and the trust of others. He is patient, mature, diligent, reliable and steadfast. He has many opportunities to establish himself in the business world through his own efforts.

**Knight of Swords:** The Knight of Swords has overcome the wariness of his younger self, and he now hurls himself wholeheartedly into battle. He makes plans and acts with conviction. This Knight seizes any opportunity to change the thinking of people who would otherwise dither about, lost in the confusion of too many choices. He is direct, forceful, and full of bright ideas on how to change the world. He is an intelligent young man who talks fast and states what's on his mind without any fear of reprisals. He is precise and professional.

**Knight of Wands:** This Knight is enthusiastic and filled with energy. He is daring, impatient, courageous and passionate. He loves spontaneity and challenges of a physical nature. He relishes any opportunity to travel or to show his creative nature. For the Knight of Wands, the pursuit of sexual liaisons is as important as the conquest itself.

### The Queens

**Queen of Cups:** The Queens of all suits represent satisfaction. The Queen of Cups is satisfied with her family and those to whom she is emotionally attached. She is the embodiment of the emotions and inner fulfilment. Her actions always come from her heart, not her thoughts. She likes nothing more than to show the nurturing, motherly side of her nature. Most often she has an introspective, dreamy and poetic nature, but if she feels that a loved one has been slighted, beware her wrath. She is good-hearted, sympathetic, and by her general nature is a natural, warm and generous person. The negative aspect of this card is a person who tries too hard at maintaining a friendly, unruffled persona, while on the inside she may feel threatened or insecure.

**Queen of Pentacles:** The Queen of Pentacles is trusting and practical, with a natural talent for acquiring wealth. This Queen enjoys the finer things in life, and she is not shy about letting the world know of her good fortune. Quality is important to someone represented by the Queen of Pentacles. Like the Empress, she is another expression of Mother Nature. She cares for the earth and its creatures. When she is not at a charity fundraiser or checking her investments, she can be found in the vegetable patch of the garden. She knows the satisfaction of having a good home and a secure financial future.

**The Queen of Swords:** As symbolised by the single bird flying above her, this Queen sometimes thinks that people don't understand her. She can feel lonely when others don't appreciate her need to contemplate and analyse all aspects of a situation. She is ruled by rational, analytical thinking, not by her heart. All decisions come from logic, not from passion.

Her satisfaction comes from working out logical answers to any question. She needs to think clearly about situations, but at the same time she can have trouble making decisions about non-rational circumstances.

To win an argument with a Queen of Swords, you must give rational explanations; you have to be fair, and you must respect her opinion. She will have spent a lot of time evaluating situations, so don't talk to her about your intuition about a particular matter—a Queen of Swords thinks that feelings only cloud a person's

judgement and detract from the facts. When she is focused on a goal, the Queen of Swords is decisive and quick-witted. Her mind will not be swayed by emotional issues, as she feels that these have no place in the decision-making process. However, sometimes she thinks too much about situations and can become depressed and confused when she cannot resolve all of the situations in a way she would like.

**Queen of Wands:** This Queen has a busy life with a full social calendar. With her overtly sexual and flirtatious manner, she has an immediate impact upon everyone she meets. The Queen of Wands will tackle projects with vigour, until she becomes bored or distracted—which doesn't usually take too long to happen. She is an optimist who is filled with vitality and confidence. Her satisfaction derives from the passion and enthusiasm she feels within herself, and which she inspires in others.

### The Kings

**King of Cups:** The Kings of all suits represent stability. The King of Cups is a sympathetic, tolerant, and non-judgemental man. He is emotionally mature and is often artistically inclined. He is caring, calm and supportive. This King is quiet, sensitive, and has a strong romantic nature. His stability is only available after consciously controlling his inner needs.

**King of Pentacles:** The King of Pentacles is powerful and influential. He is methodical in his approach to business matters, and his success is flaunted through a display of assets and the wielding of power in society. With his earthy, practical nature, this King is reliable and trustworthy, with a dependable nature. He is deeply devoted and generous to his spouse and family. He is an honest worker with many practical skills, and he has the sense of stability that material success bestows. He is professional and thorough. He controls his domain quietly, but with such power that nobody questions his decisions. Routine work does not bother him, as he can plod along carefully and assuredly to reach his predicted outcome of greater prosperity.

**King of Swords:** The King of Swords likes to be in control of any situation. Because of his determined, disciplined, and decisive nature, he can seem cold and distant. This King uses his sword to cut through any deceit, so do not try to tell him lies—he'll see through them in an instant. Always treat him fairly, and know your facts when discussing things with him, because he'll tear down any ill-founded arguments with delight. This King is a great conversationalist, because he keeps up with current affairs. He can add clarity and insight to any situation. He doesn't dominate the conversation, as he likes to hear other people's points of view.

**King Wands:** Even with his advancing years, the King of Wands has not lost the desire for travel, new sexual experiences, or a change of career that will challenge his skills and reserves of energy. This King needs a career with lots of freedom attached. You will find him involved in outdoor activities, especially ones involving a degree of danger. He is a natural leader and can be a very successful businessman when he learns to focus his energy and avoid distractions. Of all the Kings, this one has the least amount of stability, because he's too active to settle down for long.

## Chapter 10 - Preparation for Tarot

In the first chapter you saw how Tarot cards can be interpreted through intuition alone. You were able to look at an image and make a decision about its meaning. It is even easier to do readings when you have learnt a few basics, such as what each suit represents, and a key word for each card.

Now, this chapter will help you to readily access your subconscious for accurate Tarot interpretations. Preparing yourself properly for a Tarot reading, on a physical, mental, and psychic level, can help you to bring about even better results. If you are new to Tarot, these next steps will help you to achieve insightful interpretations in a shorter period of time. Spending a few moments in a ‘Tarot state of mind’ will help you to gain significant advantage over other Tarot readers.

**Physical Preparation:** When you are first reading Tarot cards for yourself or others, you will not want to break your concentration, so prepare a peaceful working environment before you do anything else. While sitting comfortably and quietly with your eyes closed, allow your body to relax. Take a few deep breaths, and calm your thoughts. When you are physically relaxed, you can become mentally focused, and therefore receptive to intuitive information from your subconscious.

**Mental Preparation:** While relaxing, if anything comes to mind that you feel you should remember, open your eyes and make a note for yourself; otherwise you will be holding on to that thought instead of giving your full concentration to the task ahead. Allow your mind to be at peace.

**Psychic preparation:** For an even more accurate Tarot reading, you can also prepare yourself on the psychic level. You can awaken your psychic abilities through a simple exercise by focusing energy to your third eye, which is behind the middle of your forehead. Focus upon the third eye to increase your psychic perception.

In a reading, these exercises will help you to gain more information from the cards, because they take you to a slightly altered state of awareness—this helps your objective mind to have easier access to your subconscious.

### The Shuffle and the Question

Some books will ask you to choose a *significator* card from the pack before you shuffle. This card is supposed to represent the person that the reading is for—a Court Card that matches the *querent's*<sup>1</sup> physical description or zodiac sign is often chosen. This card is then placed on the table, and once the rest of the deck has been shuffled, other cards are placed into position around and on top of it. I don't use a significator card in my readings. I feel that it's better if all of the cards are available for the spread itself.

---

<sup>1</sup> The word *querent* is an Old English term indicating a person who is asking a question. This wording is sometimes still used in Tarot or Astrological readings.

You may think that shuffling the cards is the easiest part of a Tarot reading. However, during the shuffle of the cards, your subconscious is using your hands to place the cards in a sequence that shows symbolic images as an answer to your query, so give yourself plenty of time to shuffle them beyond any random order.

After you have prepared your surroundings and yourself, and before you shuffle the cards, you need to decide on the purpose of your reading. In order for your subconscious to be able to offer a definitive answer to any query, it needs to be channelled through a simple, clearly defined, unambiguous question. You need to be able to hold a clear question in your mind if you want your subconscious to be able to give some straightforward direction. Therefore, you must work out in your mind the basic essence of the question for which you would like an answer.

It is best if you avoid questions that normally result in a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Those sorts of questions don't leave any avenue of expression for other options that may need to present themselves. Another fault with this type of question is that you are asking your subconscious to give an answer to your query within the limited reference of the present time. By incorporating a time frame into your question, you can get a better idea of what will happen during the coming weeks or months.

Your subconscious can offer much more relevant information within a reading if you approach your questions in the following manner. First, work out in your mind which type of Tarot spread would be most appropriate for your query. Information on basic Tarot spreads is given in Chapter 12.

Next, reduce your question to its simplest form. If there are various elements involved that you need to ask about, do a different reading for each part. I have found that the most effective structure of a query can be formulated with the following sentence: 'What should I be aware of regarding \_\_\_\_\_ during the next \_\_\_\_\_ months?'

An example of this wording is, 'What should I be aware of regarding my relationship over the next three months?' You can choose a time frame ranging from days to years. You need to work out for yourself a suitable period of time, and this will depend on your circumstances, the type of question you are dealing with, and the type of spread that you are going to use.

By giving as much information as possible in your question, you minimise guess work. A while ago, my father asked me if my Tarot cards could help him decide if he should get a fishing boat. His first question was, 'Should I buy a fishing boat?' Unfortunately, this type of question doesn't give you good results in a reading. There are too many variables. What fishing boat was he referring to—a dinghy or a prawn trawler? Did he want to buy the boat from a private owner or a boat dealer? Would he be paying cash or using finance? All of these varying propositions were going to have a major impact upon whether buying a fishing boat was a good idea or not. He needed to be more specific and use wording such as, 'What should I be aware of regarding the cash purchase of the red, five-metre, half-cabin fishing boat from The Boat Yard over the next 3 years?'

This question had a focus (a red, five-metre, half-cabin fishing boat); he knew where he intend to buy it (The Boat Yard) and he told himself he wanted to look at this situation over the next 3 years. A Tarot spread over this period of time would reveal whether he was initially going to be happy with the purchase, and if the fishing boat would serve him well over the next few years.

Perhaps you might think, 'If the subconscious is so smart, then it should know what is meant by my question, regardless of how I phrase it. Why does it need to be spelled out in such detail?' Sure, your subconscious knows everything, but at the time of the reading you are directing it to give you a specific answer. If you are not focused upon a specific question, then it cannot do that effectively. It's a bit like using an Internet search engine. The more details that you give for your search, the closer you get to the information that you desire.

Once you have established your question, shuffle the cards with nothing but your query in mind. If your thoughts stray while shuffling, think back to your question and shuffle some more. Do not allow your thoughts to wander to other topics while shuffling.

A recent study found that it takes 7 complete shuffles of a deck of playing cards before they are randomly dispersed in a pack.<sup>2</sup> A Tarot deck has 26 more cards than a normal deck of cards, so it takes at least 9 shuffles before your subconscious has enough opportunity to sort the cards into the appropriate order for an accurate Tarot reading.

When you think you have the cards properly shuffled (this is not an easy judgement to make, but you will develop a feeling for it eventually), ask yourself if you have shuffled enough. With practice, a yes or no answer will come to your mind. This is a particularly useful technique to develop, as you can then question yourself in a similar manner during readings to check if your interpretation of a card is correct.

Lots of Tarot authors tell you to cut the deck after shuffling, but this is not necessary. Shuffling the cards is sufficient for their arrangement within the deck. Now, from the top of the deck, it's time to flip the top card over, and to place it into position within the spread.

If it's not facing you the right way up, for example, if the King of Wands is standing on his head, then turn the card around so you can easily see the image 'upright'. As mentioned in a previous chapter, you don't need to worry about learning interpretations for 'reversed' images, as there's enough symbolism within each card to give you the required information for a true reading. If you are dealing out a full spread, continue taking the cards off the top of the deck, flipping them over and placing them into their appropriate positions.

As an alternative to dealing the cards from the deck, you can fan the cards (with the images facing away from you) and use your intuitive abilities to pick the right ones for the positions within a spread.

Because there is much to remember about effective shuffling, when you are doing a reading for another person, you may prefer to shuffle the cards for them. Or

---

<sup>2</sup> Study done by mathematician Persi Diaconis ([www.ScienceNews.org](http://www.ScienceNews.org)) September 30, 2009

you could fan out the cards (in your hand, or face down on a table) and then choose them from there. The main reason for this is if you need to grab a card to clarify the meaning of any particular image, you can choose it from the remaining cards that are still fanned out before you.

When shuffling the Tarot deck for another person, change the wording of the query to incorporate that person's name. For example, say to yourself, 'What should Vicki be aware of regarding her work during the next 6 months?'

If you are doing a reading for another person, and if they look like they want to be more involved in the reading process, you can ask them to choose the first card (which reflects the main issue of the reading) and then build up the spread around that position when you choose the remaining cards for them.

Some readers don't want to know anything about a situation before they lay out their Tarot cards. They prefer to do a general reading to get an idea of the main influences around a person before being more specific about any given situation. When you are first learning this craft, you'll get better results if you have a basic idea of the person's problem area. In that way, the essence or nature of their query can be used in the question. As I mentioned before, being specific in your question allows you to be more specific in your interpretation and answers. However, as much as possible, you must avoid discovering options that have already been thought of by the other person, and don't let them tell you details of what they would like to see eventuate. Otherwise, this information may influence the way you describe the interpretations, or at best, you will be retelling them what they already know.

It is often considered *taboo* to do more than one reading on the same question. I do not agree with this concept. I am not suggesting that if you don't like an answer then you should do another reading to see if you can get a result that you like better. After all, unless you change some of the variables of the question, you will probably get very similar cards (if not the same ones) turning up again. Rather, I have found that by doing more than one reading on the same subject, you can gain different perspectives on the answer from within the same framework.



## **Chapter 11 - Tarot Options**

Future romance, a new job, an improvement in health and finances—these are the usual reasons why people turn to Tarot readers for guidance. But you are limiting yourself and your abilities if you turn to your cards only for information about these situations.

Tarot is more than just fortunetelling for fun. In this chapter you will discover the practical and esoteric insights that can be gained through Tarot readings—from the viability of a major purchase to the level of your spiritual advancement. Some of the secret practices only discussed amongst professional Tarot readers will also be explained.

### **Doing readings for yourself**

Many Tarot books will tell you that you cannot do readings for yourself. Their argument is that your interpretation of the cards will be coloured by your desires. They say that despite your intuition, you might choose to see a particular outcome, even if the cards show an obvious alternative. This is a valid suggestion, but only if you allow your faculties to be seduced by your wish for a particular result. Most people can be more realistic than this—they can discern truth from fantasy.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, if the wording of your question is clear, then your results should be too. But if you want to make sure that your prejudices are not influencing your interpretation, you can specify in your question that the cards in the spread will be read with traditional meanings in mind. That way, you don't have to be concerned with your intuitive response to the symbols; you can simply use the standard keywords (as given in Chapters 6 and 8) as your guide to their interpretation.

### **Doing absent readings**

It is relatively easy to do readings for other people, because they want information and they will usually guide you towards the area they want clarification about. They will either agree or disagree with your interpretations (verbally or through their body language) until you come to a mutual agreement about the outcome. Therefore, you might imagine it is difficult to do a reading for someone when they are not facing you across a table covered in Tarot cards, but actually, it is almost as easy to do readings for people who are not in your presence at the time of the reading.

When it becomes known that you are learning how to read Tarot cards, friends and family will often ask for a reading, so that you can practice your newly discovered skill. Sometimes they may phone you asking for advice. In those cases, ask them to formulate a simple query. While repeating their question to yourself, shuffle the cards and lay them into a spread, or fan the deck face down onto the table



and choose some cards for the layout. In this way you can give guidance to people who are not in your presence. This is a useful technique to develop, because it could lead to a career as a reader on telephone psychic lines. You could end up with a full-time job working from your own home, or you could use this skill after hours to make a bit of extra money.

### **Doing readings about others**

Sometimes your client will want to know information about a friend or partner. They may want to know if their husband is cheating on them, if their business partner is ripping off the company, or if their son is happy in his marriage. It is often considered unethical to do readings about a third person, but this type of information could be very useful to the person who has hired you for guidance. The best way to handle such a query is to rephrase the question so that you give your client the information they really want to know while maintaining your integrity. For example, if the client asks you if her husband is having an affair, you can ask the Tarot cards if the client and her partner have a good marriage. Alternatively, you could look at the strengths and weaknesses of the marriage and work out ways in which it can be improved.

### **Is your Tarot reader telling you the truth?**

Another useful reason for learning how to read Tarot cards is to determine if your Tarot reader is telling you the truth about a situation. If you don't reveal to another Tarot reader your knowledge of card interpretation, you can see if they are telling you the truth of a situation, or if they are glossing over the problem areas to spare your feelings. Some Tarot readers avoid discussing difficult issues—they only want to uplift your spirits temporarily. A good Tarot reader will explore all elements of a challenging area, so they can help you to work out ways to overcome the obstacles. By knowing the significance of the cards, you are also more prepared to ask meaningful questions, and thereby get more value for your money.

### **The timing of events**

Be wary of Tarot readers who make generalisations about the future without giving specific information about when these events are likely to occur. 'I see a new romance—and it will happen in three weeks, three months, or maybe in three years.' That's not a reading; that's a loose generalisation. There are many ways to determine the timing of events shown within a reading. If a particular suit dominates a spread, it can indicate the season in which opportunities will arise. For example, Cups represent autumn, Pentacles indicate winter, Swords relate to spring, and Wands correspond to summer. But the best way to determine the timing of events is to include a time frame within your question. If you ask a question within the context of the coming month,

then an outcome of some nature will occur in that specific time frame. More information on working out the timing of events will be given in the next chapter on spreads.

### **Your level of spiritual advancement**

The Major Arcana are strong, significant, archetypal forces of spirituality. They represent a sequential journey towards enlightenment. Just like The Fool, who must experience the energies of each card in order to enter The World (of spiritual bliss), you will learn from many teachers during your life. At various times you will be enlightened by these encounters, and at other times you will lose your way and be dragged into realms of self-doubt and negativity. If you want to know the current stage of your spiritual development, separate the Major Arcana from your deck, tell yourself you are going to choose three cards which will reflect your present spiritual condition, and allow your subconscious to direct your hands to pick three appropriate cards. The first card represents the actions that brought you to this point. The second card tells you what you are going through at this time (on a spiritual level) and the final card reveals what you are learning from the experience. The wording for this spiritual lesson is:

Because of \_\_\_\_\_  
I am experiencing \_\_\_\_\_  
In order to learn \_\_\_\_\_

Here's an example to illustrate this process. The cards chosen by my client were The Magician, The Lovers, and Death. An interpretation of these cards shows the following spiritual insight.

Because of my independent, logical and analytical nature  
I am experiencing an opportunity to connect emotionally with a new lover  
In order to learn transformation of consciousness

Your circumstances change on a daily basis, so you can use this technique as many times as you like to track your spiritual development. It's a great way to understand the inner process which links your thoughts, emotions, and spiritual expression.

### **Numerology**

Most Tarot books describe a link between Tarot cards and numerology. They suggest you can get a better understanding of the cards if you study the qualities of the numbers corresponding to them. However, only a few cards support this theory.

If you take all of the Twos from the pack, only the Two of Cups card follows the idea of *partnership*, which is the essence of its number. If you line up the Threes from each suit and lay them side by side, only the Pentacles card seems to relate to the quality of the number three, which is creativity; the Three of Swords is completely out of character. With a stretch of the imagination, you can recognise *stability* in most of the cards from the Fours of each suit, but you have to look hard.

The main problem lies with the Tens of each suit. According to numerology, the number ten is reduced to the energy of the one, which means independence, originality, ambition and new beginnings. It is considered to have a positive vibration. These are definitely not the characteristics of the Tens in the Tarot! To get around this problem, most Tarot authors take it upon themselves to give the Tens their own numerological quality, regardless of standard numerological practices. *Fulfilment* and *completion* are the words associated with the Tens. The Ten of Swords shows completion, but definitely not fulfilment. The worker in the Ten of Wands is still struggling through his daily toil, and the open fields in the background suggest there is still much work to do before he can rest.

In the original form of the Tarot, the trump cards (Major Arcana) were not numbered. As Tarot evolved, occultists gave these cards their present order. Some of the Major Arcana imagery, therefore, does correspond to numerology, because its modern designers included relevant symbols within the drawing. For example, The Lovers was positioned as Card 6, which represents numerological energies such as romance, partnerships and domestic situations. The Devil is Card 15, which is broken down to  $1 + 5$ , which equals 6. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the same man and woman in Card 15 (The Devil) and Card 6 (The Lovers). Card 15 reveals a negative aspect of this previously happy domestic situation.

When challenged, the Tarot authors I have spoken to agreed that they suggested a connection between Tarot and numerology because their readers expected it, not necessarily because they believed in the truth of any such link.

### **Death and the Tarot**

In Chapter 5, I mentioned that the card called Death did not represent a physical death. This is the opinion of most writers on Tarot, and it is usually stated in order to avoid frightening the reader. However, this card *can* represent death, if it turns up in a spread in conjunction with either The Tower or the Ten of Swords card. The Death card is especially likely to be depicting mortality if it appears next to both of these cards.

Deciding whether to give a prediction about death is a difficult decision. If a client mentioned that their friend, partner, or family member was seriously unwell, then giving a time frame for that person's death may instigate acceptance of the inevitable. However, if the client was unaware of any problems, then predicting the death of a loved one oversteps the boundaries of a normal reading.

It would also be extremely unethical and unnecessary to mention the possibility of your client's death during a reading. After hearing a prediction of their death, a client may worry so much about it that they unintentionally make it manifest. In a situation where you perceive the possibility of injury or death, your wording to your client is paramount. Perhaps suggest that while one particular week is filled with happy-go-lucky energies, in the following week it will be prudent to take a cautious attitude to all situations.

### **Mundane matters**

You can use Tarot cards to check on the situation surrounding any substantial purchase. Laying out a Tarot spread regarding the purchase of a new car may seem a bit odd, but knowing if your choice of car is going to be a lemon or not is a very worthwhile move. Whether the purchase is a new refrigerator, a television set, or a set of golf clubs, you can use your cards to check if the item is going to suit you or whether there's a better opportunity coming up soon.

If you need to make a decision about the overseas holiday you have always dreamed about, check the Tarot cards first. By using appropriate questions, you can avoid booking a holiday that gets spoilt by inclement weather, civil wars, or air transport strikes.

### **Hidden Symbols**

Apart from the obvious symbolism displayed in each card, the designer and artist of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck have also included some secret imagery, hidden within the details of the illustrations.

- The artist, Pamela Colman-Smith, has signed each card on the lower right-hand side. The only card that seems to be missing her signature is The Fool. It is present—it is below the dog—but it is sideways amongst the layers of rock on the side of the cliff.
- On the front of the bag being carried by The Fool is the image of an eagle. It is the symbol of the Greek God Zeus. In *The Book of Destiny*, A. E. Waite stated, 'To dream of an eagle in a high place...is good for those who are starting on some great undertaking...'
- The light inside the Hermit's lantern is really the six-pointed Star of Solomon, a magical, protective symbol, also known as the Seal of Solomon. In the seventeenth century, this image later became known as the Star of David and was associated with the Jewish people.
- On the lower right-hand side of the Queen of Pentacles card is a brown rabbit. It is almost hidden amongst the earth around it. The rabbit indicates the energies of fertility and abundance, which are the hallmarks of this card.

- In the Ten of Pentacles card, the old man's clothing is covered in magical sigils. The large one below the pentacle on the left is the magical marking of A. E. Waite, the designer of this deck.
- The card Strength is linked to the astrological sign Leo, and the symbol for this sign is subtly shown in the lion's mane, and in the strange curling of its tail.
- The Latin word for peace (pax) is in the top left corner of the stained glass window in the Four of Swords card.
- Astrological signs are woven into the quilt on the Nine of Swords card. These show the workings of fate in tragic circumstances.
- In the Seven of Cups, one of the cups has a skull etched into it.
- The man in the Seven of Pentacles card wears boots of different colours. This could show that he is in two states of mind about his crop. He seems depressed, even though he has a good harvest.
- Strange footwear is shown in the Seven of Wands card too. Perhaps the man's attackers have taken him by surprise and he has hurriedly prepared to defend himself.
- The bird in the background of The Star is an ibis, a symbol of the Egyptian God Thoth. This god represents energies of wisdom, magic and rebirth.



## Chapter 12 - Tarot Spreads

A Tarot spread is the pattern in which cards are laid out during a reading. Each position in this pattern has a meaning attached to it. Spreads can range in complexity from simple spreads that use only a few cards to ones utilising the whole deck.

There are hundreds of Tarot spreads which can be used for divination. It seems there are Tarot spreads for any type of question you can think of. Some of them are quite broad in their nature, covering lots of information within the one layout, while others are more specific and relate to only one style of query. After you have become familiar with some of the basic spreads, try a few new ones and use those that suit your Tarot reading style. You may decide that an existing spread could work even better for you if you changed the wording, or the positioning of the cards—feel free to experiment until it feels right.

### The One Card Draw

As the title of this spread suggests, the One Card Draw involves simply picking one card from the deck to obtain an answer to your question. Some Tarot card readers turn half of their deck upside-down and like to think that if a card is drawn upright, then the answer to their question is ‘yes’, and if it is drawn ‘reversed’, then the answer is ‘no’. However, you can gain a more detailed and useful answer by improving the wording of your question and looking more closely at the appropriateness of the card that is drawn from the deck. In this way, the cards are more likely to indicate the circumstances you need to know about the issue. For example, a poor way of checking on the timing of a holiday would be to ask, ‘Should I take my annual leave in February?’ A ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer may be useful, but wouldn’t you be curious as to why you should or should not take that vacation in that month?

A better question is, ‘What should I be aware of regarding taking my annual leave in February?’ If the Seven of Pentacles card is chosen at random from the pack, it might suggest that February is not a good time for a holiday because you will be in the middle of a project and may be so focused on the work situation that you will have trouble forgetting your job during your vacation. Alternatively, if the Page of Wands turns up in this one-card reading, it suggests that February is a very good time for a holiday because you will be feeling restless and wanting to travel—you will be very frustrated if you are sitting at an office desk during that month.

Drawing one card from a deck can give you instant clarification about any situation. This type of reading can provide answers to questions such as:

*Is this a good and fair deal?*

*Am I ready for this situation?*

*Will I benefit from this situation?*

*What can I learn from this problem?*

*How can I make this day more rewarding?*  
*What attitude will be most useful to adopt today?*  
*What's the best way of dealing with this situation?*

The One Card Draw is an easy and quick way to gain insight into a set of circumstances. For even more information, consider using the Three Card Spread. In this type of reading, you can incorporate time frames, and you can get an idea of the underlying conditions affecting the situation you are asking about.

### **The Three Card Spread**

This is another easy spread and it uses just three cards, which normally represent the past, present, and future. With this layout, use wording such as 'What do I need to know about \_\_\_\_\_?'

When possible, and when appropriate, include a time frame too. Examples of questions considered suitable for this spread are:

*What do I need to know about my life over the next month?*  
*What do I need to know about my work during the next week?*  
*What do I need to know about my health this weekend?*

Answers in a three-card layout are distilled to the most important events or influences during the time frame. It's a quick way to get some insight about a difficult situation. This type of spread is good for simple questions. For more involved issues, such as relationships or legal matters, it is better to use a spread with more cards so you have more information at your fingertips.

After shuffling your deck, deal out three cards (or pick three from a fanned deck) and place them face up on the table in front of you. The one on the left represents the past, the one in the middle tells you what's happening at the present time, and the one on the right indicates the future.

A recent example of the Three Card Spread was, 'What should Mark be aware of about booking his band for a gig at the local hotel on March 1st?' In this situation, the time frame for the 'Past' position related to happenings of the last month. It showed the most significant event, thought, or feeling of this period. In this reading, the card for the Past was the Ten of Wands. This showed how hard Mark and his friends had been working to make their act look and sound professional.

The position relating to the Present time showed how Mark was feeling around the time of this reading. It indicated the most interesting or the most dramatic event happening during the current week. The card for this position was the Three of Wands. The band had come to a decision to branch out from being a garage band and they were going to perform in front of an audience. They were looking at ways of making their presence felt in the world at large.

The Ace of Pentacles was the card facing us in the position indicating the Future (the time of the gig). In this spread, the card in the Future position related to

the major influence occurring for Mark during the next month. The energy of this card suggested a new beginning. It gave the warning to make sure their creative side did not override the practical elements of a gig. For example, they had to make sure they had reliable transport, and they had to communicate with the venue about the equipment supplied. This card also gave hope about earning some extra money from their hobby.

A Three Card Spread can be used to support a bigger reading. It can synthesise in a more concise way what you may have seen in a reading that had many more cards.

### Timeline Spread

A Timeline Spread is a sequence of five cards, showing progression of time or events. You can ask a question such as, ‘What should I be aware of over the next five days?’ Or you can ask, ‘What can I expect during the next five meetings at the car club?’

Shuffle and deal out five cards, or choose five at random from the deck. Lay the cards down in front of you from left to right. In the former example, the card in the first position represents the situation on the current day, and the last card indicates the circumstances on the fifth day. In the latter example, each card represents the meetings in chronological order.



### The Celtic Cross Spread

This spread is a variation of a traditional Tarot layout dating back several centuries. The name of the spread derives from the central part of the layout, which looks like a Celtic cross. It is sometimes known as the Ten Card Spread, and it is used by Tarot readers for insight into most situations.

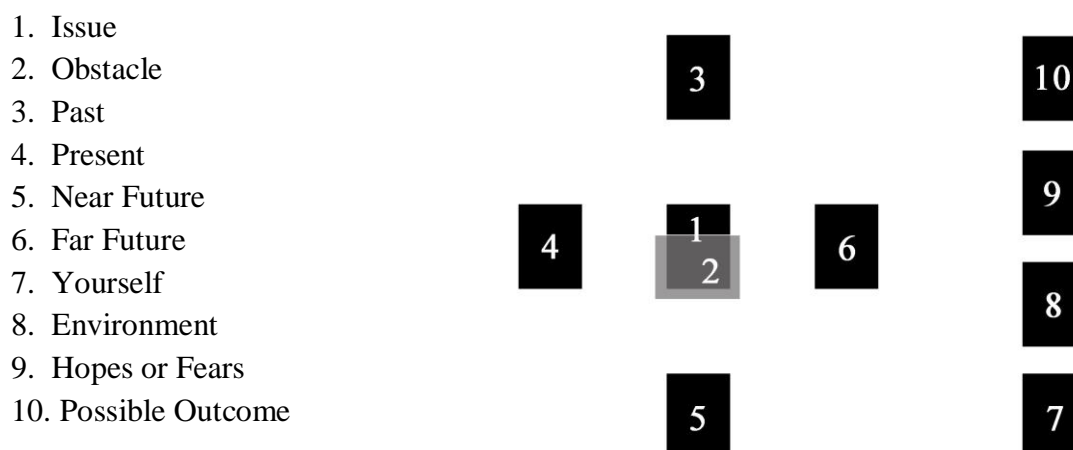
The Celtic Cross Spread covers all areas of a question, offering clarity about the past, present, and future of a specific issue. It also gives greater awareness of underlying aspects of a situation you wouldn't normally be aware of through a spread of fewer cards.





The original design of the spread has been adapted to make it easier for beginners to use. The archaic wording for the positions has been renamed for the same reason. The sequence of information from the cards flows most easily using the layout shown below.

Each number corresponds to the order in which the cards are positioned.



In the Celtic Cross Spread, all of the cards are displayed upright, facing the reader, except for the second card, which lies horizontally across the first card. As mentioned in Chapter 10, it is not necessary to use a significator, which is a card some books suggest placing first into a spread to represent the person who has sought a reading.

Once all of the cards have been placed into position, take a moment to look at the story unfolding through the images. See how the cards relate to each other, then commence the interpretation, explaining the meanings of the cards in the positions they've fallen into, and how they relate to the reading as a whole.

The first card in the centre of the spread shows the main issue of the reading. This position often reflects the question back to you by showing a card representing the type of query. For example, if you are asking about a relationship, then a card from the suit of Cups is likely to be shown in the first position. If it's a reading about finances, then a card from the suit of Pentacles could be expected. Apart from reflecting the type of question you are asking, this card will often give you an indication of the circumstances surrounding the issue. In a reading about money matters, if the first card is the Five of Pentacles, the issue is likely to be a lack of money, rather than a situation about buying a business.

In a general reading with no fixed question in mind, the card in the first position will usually indicate the area of the person's life which is going to be of most significance during the chosen time frame. If no dramatic changes are likely to eventuate, then the first card will show the general trend for the chosen period. The card in the first position of the spread has an overriding effect upon the cards in other

positions. The other cards have their own unique authority and meaning within the spread, but they are still subject to the influence of the energies of the first card.

The second card lies over the first card horizontally. It is placed at the base of the first card, so you can still see all of the symbols of the card representing the Issue. The second card shows the main obstacles or challenges blocking or hindering progress within the designated time frame of the Tarot spread. If the Outcome card is positive, then the Obstacle card shows why it might be a struggle to achieve the desired result. If the Outcome card is negative, then the Obstacle card shows where and why trouble is brewing.

The third card relates to a significant event, or a general tendency in the immediate past. The meaning will be obvious from the type of card shown in this position. The situation from the past is usually directly connected with the Issue of the reading.

In the context of the time frame of a reading, the Past is proportional to the timing of the rest of the spread. If the reading is for the next three months, then the section called the Past refers to the previous month. If the reading is for the next three weeks, then the Past refers to the previous week. There has to be a bit of flexibility with regard to this timing, as some highly influential events may have happened beyond the limitations of the time frames just given.

The fourth card tells you what is happening in the Present. It often shows the circumstances of life at the time of the reading. It may be a reflection of the heart or mind, or it could simply be an indication of the situation in general. This card indicates the most significant event happening at this point in time, or in the immediate future.

Once again, the timing for this position is relative to the time frame defined in the question. If the reading is for a period of three weeks, then the position relating to the Present is for approximately one week. If the time frame for the reading is for one year, then the significant event or energies relating to the card in this position will happen (approximately) within a four-month period.

The fifth card reveals the Near Future. This section of the layout shows what's happening during the middle of the time period chosen for the question. A card in this position indicates a significant occurrence, or the main feelings and thoughts at the time.

The sixth card represents the Far Future, and indicates the final stages of the time frame chosen for the question. A card in this position represents the main influences surrounding the latter part of the reading's time frame.

The seventh card tells you about the person for whom the reading is directed. If you are doing a reading for yourself, then this card can show your strengths or weaknesses regarding your situation during the given time frame. In relation to the main issue, this position reveals your overall mindset. Sometimes the card can relate to your attitude about one or more of the events indicated in the Present, Near Future, or Far Future positions of the spread. In essence, this card shows how you are likely to handle the circumstances during the given time frame. If you are doing a reading for

someone else, the card in this position tells you about the client. This card reveals the client's attitude during that time frame. This card's position at the base of the column also has an underlying influence upon the cards above it.

The eighth card gives the reader insight to the general environment. It shows the support, or the lack of support, given by family, friends or workmates about the main issue. The nature of the question will indicate which environment is represented. In a question about family issues, the card for the Environment will show the energies surrounding an individual at home. In a career-related query, this card tells you about the people within the workplace, and how helpful, caring and supportive they are.

In a general reading with no fixed focus, the card in the Environment position shows the influence of those people who take part in the main set of circumstances in the spread. The Environment may also relate to involvement in social committees, study groups, or sporting teams—in all of these situations, people could have an influence over the issue at hand. There are many types of readings, so use your own discretion to decide how the Environment features in each situation.

The ninth card shows Hopes or Fears. If it is a positive card, then it reveals the hopes and expectations surrounding the core issue of the reading. If a negative card turns up in this position, then it suggests an area which is mentally or psychologically holding a person back from achieving their goals. A negative card showing Fears can indicate an influence from the past that is still of great concern. If the next card (the one that indicates the Outcome) is also negative, then fear may be contributing to this poor result.

The tenth card in this spread represents the Outcome. Based on the circumstances of the time, it shows the most likely eventuality. In a reading for yourself, a positive, uplifting card means you have opened yourself to the possibilities of the future. You feel ready to embrace change and you are confident in your ability to improve your life. A negative Outcome often means you are fearful of change; you have not looked at your attitudes and beliefs in relation to the wider world.

If you are doing a reading for another person and there is a negative Outcome, you might find this type of person sees the universe as something to fight against. This type of person may feel as if the future is preordained and that they are a powerless victim of circumstances. Negative Outcomes give you a chance to help people understand the way they limit themselves. By changing their thinking, you can help them change their future.

If a negative card turns up as the Outcome in a reading, the reason behind it is usually shown in the Obstacles position, or in the card representing Yourself. Sometimes the cause can be known through the Fear card. Choose an action card to see how you can overcome the challenges in the reading. The action card shows how to rise above the circumstances or psychological blockages hindering you from achieving a better result. If you follow the advice indicated by an action card, then a new outcome is possible. At this point, if you choose another card from the deck and place it over the previous Outcome card, the new card will give a more optimistic indication of what you can expect in the future.

Clarification Cards: After looking at the details in the overall spread, if you feel there is a need for more information, you can choose an extra card to gain clarification about the Outcome. This card gives more awareness about the end result.

If you would like to see what happens after the initial outcome, you can choose an extra card. Ask yourself a question such as, ‘What will happen after another month?’ Then draw a card from the deck and lay it beside the Outcome position. Reading these two cards in conjunction with each other can give a more realistic idea of how a situation eventuates or is resolved. This additional card gives a better understanding of the Outcome, much more than a single card can provide.

Clarification cards can also be used to elucidate the meaning or circumstances of other cards within the spread. Ask yourself a question such as, ‘What does this card mean in this position of the layout?’ Draw a card from the deck and place it over the card you are asking about. Its meaning should now become clearer through an interpretation of this helper card.

### The Relationship Spread

The Relationship Spread is most often used to explore the underlying agendas, needs and desires of people involved in a romantic partnership, or when investigating the possibility of a loving relationship with a prospective partner. However, this layout can also be used to determine what you or your client needs to know about their relationship with a supervisor, parent, sibling, friend, or business associate. In the spread below, each number represents a card, and each card focuses upon an aspect of a potential or existing relationship.

1. You now			
2. Your weakness	4		8
3. Your strength		11	
4. Your view of the relationship	3		7
5. Them now		10	
6. Their weakness	2		6
7. Their strength		9	
8. Their view of the relationship	1		5
9. Present			
10. Near future			
11. Outcome			

When using the relationship spread, incorporate a time frame into your question. Your wording could be, ‘What should Sue and Darren be aware of regarding their relationship over the next 3 months?’ If you lay your Tarot cards into this spread to check your own relationship, the cards in the left column represent you, and the cards in the right column show your partner. When reading for a client, the cards on the left relate to their side of the relationship, whereas the cards on the right depict the attitude of their partner.

Positions 1 and 5 reveal each person's state of being at the present stage of the relationship. They show the emotional state, level of desire for commitment, and readiness for a relationship.

The cards of weakness show any distracting influences or personality issues hindering a harmonious relationship. Criticism, lies, addictions, abusive behaviour, and neglect are some of the problems which could be reflected in this section of the spread. If the card in this position is filled with optimistic and supportive energy, then there are no major issues that need to be addressed at this point in time.

Positions 3 and 7 indicate the strengths of the relationship. They are the positive, nurturing qualities each person brings to a healthy relationship. The images that turn up in this position are likely to show supportive traits, such as willingness to communicate honestly with each other, readiness for commitment, mutual respect, and their spiritual connection. If a negative card appears in this position, the person represented has little to offer the relationship.

The couple's thoughts and feelings about the partnership are shown in Positions 4 and 8. Their views of the relationship may be in harmony with each other, or they might be in opposition. This spread brings clarification about the bond they are developing.

Position 9 relates to the relationship itself. At this present stage, does the relationship look promising? Or is it already on rocky ground? Are things moving too slowly, or too fast? Is there peace and harmony, or could that silence be indifference?

The card in Position 10 represents the near future. It shows the next step in the relationship. If your reading covers a period of 3 months, this card shows the middle part of that period. It reveals the level of development at that point: the emotional connection, the hopes and fears, or the overall compatibility.

The outcome of this partnership is shown in the final card, Position 11. This position represents how far the relationship has developed by the end of the reading's time frame. If the reading is about a romantic relationship, this card won't indicate whether the couple will live happily ever after, or not—it simply shows the energy of the partnership at that stage. You will see satisfaction, or maybe bitterness, but hopefully you will see true love!

There's no need for both partners to be in front of you as you do this reading. It can even be more beneficial if you use this spread with only one of the individuals present. This provides opportunity for open discussion of any problem areas.



## Chapter 13 - Tarot Readings

Spending time in contemplation or meditation upon each Tarot card can help you to gain a more personal understanding of their meanings. In the long term, though, you will probably need to do one hundred or more readings before you find your own style of reading the cards. After becoming familiar with the cards and when you are proficient in their placement within a spread, you will be ready to charge for readings.

Using the appropriate spread for your Tarot reading is important. The right layout makes interpretation easier for the reader, and provides relevant information for the client. Reading Tarot cards from a positive point of view is vital for the wellbeing of all. Cards that have frightening images can be disturbing for your client. Tarot predictions have a powerful affect upon people's minds, so make sure you specify that these negative cards are warnings or challenges, rather than ordeals or Karmic consequences. You are dealing with the most likely circumstances for the future, based upon the questioner's thoughts, emotional state, and activities at the time of the reading. Therefore, remember to stipulate that action can be taken to avoid any negative circumstances shown. The Tarot cards are not revealing an immutable destiny.

Professional Tarot card readers give guidance to those who are confused, providing opportunities for empowerment and illumination. A good Tarot counsellor has great listening skills, and offers compassion and motivation.

In readings, be informative, but concise in your interpretations. After explaining the meaning of a card in its position on the spread, pause and consider how that information relates to the next card in the layout; this gives clients an opportunity to evaluate and absorb your comments in the context of their question. Some clients will jump in and give feedback as you do your reading, whereas others will listen to your interpretation of the whole spread before asking any questions. There's no right or wrong way to do a reading. Your style will develop and evolve as you interact with your clients, but remember to maintain a professional and reassuring manner at all times.



An effective Tarot reader will hear the needs of the client, and will steer them in the direction of their goals. They will give warnings of obstacles that have to be overcome in order to achieve their dreams, but they will never tell a client what they *should* do. In the role of a Tarot counsellor, your task is to help the client understand why they have landed in their present situation, and to guide them to a personal realisation of their choices at that point in time.

## Chapter 14 - Summary

Instant awareness. That's what Tarot gives. It creates an immediate connection to a person's dreams and fears. People go to readers for answers, and through the symbols on the cards, Tarot delivers a message that strikes at the heart of the problem, while nurturing the soul of the individual.

Learning about Tarot is like finding a treasure map to life itself. The Major Arcana delves into the psychological needs and the spiritual lessons you are required to learn during your journey through this world. The Minor Arcana reveals the daily reality of your relationship with others as you work towards your goals. It also highlights the financial burdens or rewards you might encounter along the way. As you deal out the Tarot cards into a spread, they point to your position on the map, and show where the (metaphorical) treasure is buried.

Doing Tarot readings for others builds confidence in your intuitive abilities, and puts power back in the hands of the client. Most people come for a reading when their love life, career, or money problems are running out of control. Through Tarot, a client sees how their thoughts or patterns of behaviour led them to this point. Guidance from a reading offers insight, helping a questioner reclaim their power from fate.

Reason and logic only take you so far in this world. You also need illumination, which brings wisdom about yourself and your place in the universe. Tarot opens your eyes to the wonders of your inner self, encouraging and motivating you along the path of existence.

Tarot can be used for predictions, giving warnings about future events. It can also provide an action strategy—guiding you from the initial burst of inspiration all the way to the end result. Like a business plan for the soul, the images on these cards expand your consciousness and open doors to a world of empowerment. On a spiritual level, Tarot cards are an uplifting source of enlightenment, providing an exciting journey to self-fulfilment.

The aim of this book was to provide a clear understanding of Tarot cards, and their uses. I endeavoured to take this complex, esoteric system of divination into the modern world, with a simple, step-by-step approach. I focused on the practical and psychological aspects of Tarot, but there are many spiritual and magical layers that can also be uncovered and explored when you are ready. The Fool's journey through the Major Arcana is a rich, symbolic adventure. If you take the time to walk with him and explore each of the cards in this sequence, he will show you everything you need to know about yourself and the world around you.

## Quick and Easy Reference Charts

### The Major Arcana Keywords

<b>Card</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
The Fool	Innocence
The Magician	Manifestation
The High Priestess	Intuition
The Empress	Nurturing
The Emperor	Authority
The Hierophant	Guidance
The Lovers	Love
The Chariot	Control
Strength	Inner Strength
The Hermit	Attainment
Wheel of Fortune	Karmic Change
Justice	Balance
The Hanged Man	Acceptance
Death	Transformation
Temperance	Harmony
The Devil	Fear
The Tower	Breakthrough
The Star	Renewal
The Moon	Change
The Sun	Optimism
Judgement	Evaluation
The World	Fulfilment



## The Minor Arcana Keywords

### Suit of Cups

Ace	New Beginning
Two	Partnership
Three	Celebration
Four	Dissatisfaction
Five	Regret
Six	Nostalgia
Seven	Choices
Eight	New Directions
Nine	Contentment
Ten	Happiness

### Suit of Pentacles

Ace	New Beginning
Two	Fluctuations
Three	Initial success
Four	Material Stability
Five	Financial Difficulty
Six	Financial Assistance
Seven	Disappointment
Eight	Skill
Nine	Contentment
Ten	Prosperity

### Suit of Swords

Ace	New Beginning
Two	Choice
Three	Heartbreak
Four	Rest
Five	Defeat
Six	Progress
Seven	Prudence
Eight	Restriction
Nine	Depression
Ten	Misfortune

### Suit of Wands

Ace	New Beginning
Two	Restlessness
Three	Established Strength
Four	Harmony
Five	Strife
Six	Victory
Seven	Obstacles
Eight	Activity
Nine	Recuperation
Ten	Burden

## The Court Card Keywords

### The Pages

Card	Attribute
Page of Cups	Potential for new relationships and emotional fulfilment
Page of Pentacles	Potential for future material success
Page of Swords	Potential for clarity and decisiveness
Page of Wands	Potential for new manifestations of energy and enthusiasm

### The Knights

Card	Attribute
Knight of Cups	Opportunity for romance and a new relationship
Knight of Pentacles	Opportunity to establish a new business
Knight of Swords	Opportunity for decisive action
Knight of Wands	Opportunity for inspiration, travel, and creativity

### The Queens

Card	Attribute
Queen of Cups	Satisfaction with home and emotional issues
Queen of Pentacles	Satisfaction with finances and material wellbeing
Queen of Swords	Satisfaction with a logical and rational approach to life
Queen of Wands	Satisfaction on a passionate and enthusiastic level

### The Kings

Card	Attribute
King of Cups	Stability that comes from knowing your emotional self
King of Pentacles	Stability that comes from material success and status
King of Swords	Stability that comes from the ability to judge things clearly
King of Wands	Stability that comes from a tempering of desires

## Bibliography

The following books were an invaluable source of information about the origins, evolution, or standard interpretations of Tarot cards.

Decker, R., and M. Dummett. *A History of the Occult Tarot 1870 - 1970*. London: Duckworth, 2002.

Decker, R., T. Depaulis, and M. Dummett. *A Wicked Pack of Cards*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1996.

Fenton-Smith, Paul. *Tarot Masterclass*. Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2007.

Fenton-Smith, Paul. *The Tarot Revealed*. Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2008.

Giles, Cynthia. *The Tarot - History, Mystery, and Lore*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Huson, Paul. *Mystical Origins of the Tarot*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 2004.

Huson, Paul. *The Devil's Picture Book*. London: Abacus, 1972.

Jensen, K. Frank. *The Story of the Waite-Smith Tarot*. Australia: Association for Tarot Studies, 2006.

Kaplan, Stuart R. *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*. Vol 1, New York: U.S. Games Systems, 1978.

MacGregor Mathers, S. L. *The Tarot - Its Occult Significance, Use in Fortune-Telling, and Method of Play, Etc.*, 1888.

O'Neill, Robert V. *Tarot Symbolism*. Ohio: Fairway Press, 1986.

Place, Robert M. *The Tarot - History, Symbolism, and Divination*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

Pollack, Rachel. *Rachel Pollack's Tarot Wisdom*. Woodbury, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2008.

Pollack, Rachel. *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom, 1980*. London: Thorsons, 1997.

Waite, A. E. *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, 1910. Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1984.

## Acknowledgements

**Huge thanks to:**

*Vicki Bennets*

*Diane Beer*

*Gillian Curtin (KopperKat Editing)*

*Suzanne Hocking (Trellis Editorial)*

*Raheel (Emage Graphic Studio)*



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