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TAROT

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Welcome to the Tarot

The tarot has been fascinating people for hundreds of years with its mystery and its archetypal images. No one knows for sure where or when the cards originated. What is certain is they have been popular, and continue to be so. In this digital age, there is more variety and interpretations of the classic figures than ever before.

The tarot holds a variety of roles. It can give us a glimpse of our own 'hero's journey' in this wonderful adventure called life, as well as a meditation tool into our unconscious. It can be a companion and guide through our daily routines, and it can hint at what is yet to be experienced along our path. The only limit to how we can use the Tarot is our own belief system and desire for knowledge.

Part 1: Introducing the Arcanas

There are two major areas of the Tarot cards, and these are called 'arcanas.' The major arcana consists of 22 trump cards, starting with the Fool at number 0, and going up to the World at number 21. These all represent different aspects of our journey through life, with the first 11 cards being the outward journey as we learn how to function as a person; and the second 11 cards being the inward journey, as we delve into our psyche and learn why we took incarnation.

The other 56 cards belong to a group called the minor arcana. These are divided into four suits, much like standard playing cards are today. In the tarot, the suits are wands, cups, swords, and pentacles. These are sometimes known by slightly different names, such as batons, chalices, blades, and coins, or sometimes each deck will have its own way of naming them. I've seen branches, bowls, spears, and stones used before now; it really depends on what theme the creator of the deck wanted to embrace.

The minor arcana suits each contain fourteen cards; ten 'pip' or numbered cards, and four court, or cards with people on them. These are like contemporary playing cards, with the addition of the page. The jack is called the knight, but the queen and king are still the royalty. These names can vary from deck to deck too, with the lower two cards sometimes renamed, but their position and meaning continues to stay the same.

Many of the early decks did not have pictures on them. For example, the Visconti Sforza tarot, which dates back to the 15th century, had images on the major 22 cards and the court cards, and only pips for the numbered cards in the minor arcana. It wasn't until the 20th century when A. E. Waite commissioned Pamela Coleman Smith to put images on all the cards that the modern version of the tarot came into being. This was the precedent for many of the tarot decks that are popular today.

In the text that follows, I'm going to give you a brief description of all the Major Arcana, along with their numerical value, their element, their astrology correlation, their colors, the crystals to which they relate, and the symbolism on the cards. This will get you going, but to really get into the Tarot, it's a lifelong study.

Part 2: Getting Started

Of course, all this history is well and good, but you're keen to use your cards, right? Well, before you start grabbing this guide and doing readings for all your friends, there are just a few words of caution. Now, don't panic, there's nothing bad going to happen to you or anyone else if you can't wait, but there are a few things I want you to consider.

First, every artist or craftsman has their favorite tool. Perhaps you have a favorite knife to use when cooking, or a favorite pen to use when writing, or a favorite spade to use when gardening. That tool probably didn't become your favorite overnight. You presumably used that tool a few times, tried it out on different projects, and then pronounced it as your favorite. Your tarot cards deserve the same respect and treatment.

Before you use them as an analytical tool or to read the future, get to know them. Handle them. Look closely at the pictures. You may even want to make notes of the images and what they say to you. After all, this is what the magicians and witches of old did; the original 'Book of Shadows' or 'Grimoire' was pretty much just that person's diary!

Another way of helping you to bond with your cards is to carry them with you. Pop them in your purse or your backpack, and keep them handy. You don't have to use them, but just let them absorb your energies. I'd recommend you sleep with them under your pillow, but your dreams might get very interesting indeed!

You may also want to consider how you want to store your tarot cards when they are not in use. You'll get all kinds of advice from well meaning people that the cards have to be stored in a particular kind of bag or a particular wooden box or that they all have to be put back in order and right way up before you store them. While it is respectful of your cards--as a tool--to keep them safe and clean, the main thing is to do what feels right for you. If you are crafty and want to make a bag or a box for them, that's great. The more energy you put into caring for them and using them, the more you will get out of working with them.

There's really no right or wrong way for you to work with your cards. There is a lot of superstition around the tarot, though. Some say that you mustn't buy your own deck, some say that they must be cleansed in the light of a full moon, some say you must never read your own cards; I say 'hogwash!' Do what feels right to you. That is the most important thing. There's no magic or mystery in the cards; they're just pictures on cardstock. It's the history and the mystery behind them that makes them the magical tool that they are today.

Part 3: Divination

Divination is the art of fortune telling. To divine means to see in to the future, using some kind of a tool or set of symbols. This is how many people choose to use their tarot, giving simple one card readings for a quick snapshot as to how things look at the moment; to more complex layouts using many cards, for an in-depth look at something.

The person doing the divining is called either the diviner or the reader. A trusted diviner will understand the meanings of the cards, and the nuances of how they work together. Think about it; would you rather have dinner cooked by a chef who was confident in the dish that he or she was cooking, or one that constantly had to squint at the cookery book?! Getting to know your cards is important. That's why it is best to work with them for awhile, on your own, before you start to read for someone else.

Sometimes what you see in the cards will vary slightly from what other readers may see when they read the cards. That's okay. Go with what you feel. There's a fine line between intuition and imagination. The more you work with your cards, the more you will recognize the difference. No two people are ever going to interpret things exactly the same way.

There are also a lot of small symbols in the images on the cards. Some people who read the tarot may skip over these entirely. Some may spend a long time studying these smaller symbols for their hidden meanings. There are as many different ways of interpretation as there are readers, but the tarot is a well-worn path. The basic meanings are always going to remain the same.

Sometimes when you are reading the cards, they will come out of the deck upside down. That is called an inverted, reversed, challenged, or ill-dignified card. It will have a different meaning than the upright card does. In the text that follows, the keywords for upright and reversed meanings are given. Familiarize yourself with both of them, in order to become a proficient tarot reader.

Part 4: The Symbols

You'll find the following symbols on both the Major and the Minor Arcana. If you can learn what these symbols mean and remember to look for them in the detail of the images on your cards, you'll find yourself starting to be able to give very detailed and accurate readings very soon indeed.

Angel: Messengers from divinity.

Armor: Protection and strength.

Banner: Representation of something worth protecting.

Bird: Messenger of clear speech and thought.

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Blindfold: Impartiality.

Bull: The element of earth, or the sign of Taurus.

Castle: Protection.

Cat: Love, good fortune, feminine energy.

Dog: Loyalty, guardian.

Cloud: Warning, lack of wisdom.

Cross: Union, between man and woman, or between human and divinity.

Crown: Power, victory, eternal life.

Cup: Pleasure, the element of water, female sexuality.

Feather: Justice and freedom.

Fruit: Abundance

Garden: Fertility and nature.

Garland: Joy

Hills: Consistency, reassurance.

Horse: Energy and vitality.

Infinity: Continuance, indestructibility

Lamp: Guiding light.

Lily: Purity and renewal.

Lion: Strength and integrity.

Moon: The divine feminine, the unconscious.

Mountain: Spiritual path, consistency.

Path: The journey of life.

Pillar: A connection between the spirit world and the physical world.

Pentacle: Money and the material world, the element of earth.

Pool: The Moon and feminine Energy

Rose: Love and fertility, desire.

Scale: Justice, equality.

Staff: Magicians, power.

Star: Divinity, mysticism.

Sun: Life force, a father figure.

Sword: Activity, the element of air.

Tree: Fertility

Throne: Power, ceremony.

Tower: A connection between the spirit world and the physical world.

Wand: Masculine sexuality, the element of fire.

Water: Feminine energy.

Wreath: Success, victory.

Part 5: Meet the Majors

0 The Fool: The major arcana of the tarot starts with the Fool card. He is usually portrayed as a cheery chap, knapsack on his back, sun over his shoulder, dog at his feet. The Fool indicates newness, but also the unpredictable and the unexpected. He represents the newly incarnated soul, stepping forth on its latest journey.

Number: 0

Element: Air

Zodiac: Aquarius

Symbols: Dog, Feather, Star, Staff, Sun

Upright Meaning:

When the Fool appears in a reading, you can be sure that something new is about to happen. It's likely to take you by surprise. That's what the Fool does. This card is encouraging you to expect last minute changes to your plans, and not get too caught up in their details. There's got to be some wiggle room, so that what needs to happen can unfold.

Keywords: Opportunity, Newness, Openness, Foolishness, Adventure, New beginnings.

Inverted Meaning:

Even inverted, the Fool is still a fairly positive card, but it is cautioning you against assuming too much, or thinking that you already know all there is to know about something. There's always room to know more, and something can always happen to surprise you. The inverted Fool asks you not to close yourself off to possibilities you have not considered, yet. You may be surprised--in a good way--as to what might unfold.

Keywords: Apprehension, Constraint, Impetuousness, Restlessness, Lack of Discipline.

1 The Magician: If you look at the Magician closely, you will see that on his altar, he has all the tools of his trade; the Cup, the Pentacle, the Sword, and he holds skyward the Wand. Over his head is the lemniscate, the mathematical symbol for eternity. The Magician is a card that shows you that you hold the tools to your understanding in your own psyche, and he's a symbol for discovering purpose.

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Number: 1

Element: Air

Zodiac: Gemini, Virgo

Symbol: Cup, Pentacle, Sword, Wand, Rose, Lily, Infinity.

Upright Meaning:

In a reading, the Magician indicates potential. You've got everything you need to create what you want; do you dare? The Magician reminds you that you have to have both a vision and determination to reach your goals. It's never too late to find your purpose and start gathering what you need to make it a reality. This card is a powerful indicator that you've got what it takes to succeed.

Keywords: Intent, Success, Manifestation

Inverted Meaning:

When the Magician is inverted, it's likely that you feel you're going nowhere fast. Reversed, the card can indicate inhibitions, lack of determination, and obstacles that are standing in your way--whether physical blockages to your progress, or self-made ones due to your own thought process. This may also indicate that you or someone else is using their energy to manipulate or control someone or something.

Keywords: Inaction, Lack of Determination, Manipulation

2 The High Priestess:

The High Priestess looks very imposing in her robes. On her head sits a crown depicting the full Moon. There is a black pillar to her right, and a white pillar to her left. Around her neck is a cross, and on her lap is a scroll. A crescent Moon lies at her feet, and pomegranates--a symbol of fertility--can be seen in the background.

Number: 2

Element: Water

Zodiac: Cancer

Symbol: Cross, Crown, Moon, Pillar

Upright Meaning:

The High Priestess represents intuition and knowledge. When she appears, she's asking you to trust your hunches. You're gut feeling is just telling you to pay attention to facts that you are not yet aware of. You're wiser and have more knowledge about the situation than you think. You may also find yourself being drawn to people who seek your counsel. This card can indicate that others find you more alluring than usual.

Keywords: Secrets, Knowledge, Female Energy

Inverted Meaning:

If the High Priestess indicates intuition and knowledge, then when she appears reversed, she's pointing to a lack of knowledge. Things may be too hectic for you to hear your inner voice, or you may be silencing it yourself by speaking too much. This card can be asking you to hold your tongue. It can also point to a lack of compassion, nurturing, or trust. It can indicate that you need to find your charisma and your self-confidence again before proceeding with the current situation.

Keywords: Self-Doubt, Anxiety, Frigidity

3 The Empress

The Empress sits on a throne outside, in lush surroundings. There are green trees, behind her, and flowing waters at her side. She holds a staff with a crystal orb at the top, and on her head wears a crown. Her gown is covered in pomegranates. She is the epitome of fertility.

Number: 3

Element: Earth

Zodiac, Taurus, Libra

Symbol: Crown, Pomegranate, Star, Throne

Upright Meaning:

The Empress is a sure sign of creativity. Fertile in many ways, she is the card above all other cards that indicates abundance. She reminds you to nurture yourself, and to look around you for inspiration, for it is always there. When the Empress appears, it's time to focus on your creativity. This card can also indicate a possible pregnancy.

Keywords: Fertility, Abundance, Nurturing

Inverted Meaning:

When the Empress is reversed, excess can be indicated. This card can also appear when you're trying to do too much for someone, especially if the fun has left the task. Inverted, the Empress can also indicate quarrels with a mother or motherly figure, or difficulty in understanding or expressing your feminine side.

Keywords: Overindulgence, Fatigue, Barrenness

4 The Emperor

The Emperor looks rather stern sitting on his throne, doesn't he? He holds a staff in his right hand. He is the male counterpart to the Empress, and is opposite her in many ways. Where she is receptive, he is assertive; where she is the mother, he is the father.

Number: 4

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Aries

Symbol: Armor, Cross, Crown, Throne

Upright Meaning:

The Emperor asks that you use some logic when he appears in a reading. You may be tempted just to go with your hunches, but he cautions that you balance the head and the heart. You're going to need stability and structure in this situation. This is the card of leadership, and it's asking you not to let the energie run away with you, but to approach things with discipline and control. In a reading, the Emperor can also represent the father, or a father figure.

Keywords: Structure, Authority, Discipline

Inverted Meaning:

When reversed, the Emperor can be a control freak. The Emperor represents authority, so when it is reversed, there's a good chance that there's some kind of an issue with an authoritative figure concerning the reading. This could be someone who needs to take charge and is not; or it could be someone who is being too controlling.

Keywords: Oppression, Domineering, Control Issues.

5 The Hierophant

The Hierophant is sometimes called the Pope, and the card rather reflects this. The figure is seated, keys at his feet, a cross in his left hand, his right hand raised as if in blessing. He wears a red robe, down the front of which are three crosses. A golden crown is upon his head. Where the Emperor was the male consort to the Empress, the Hierophant is the male consort to the High Priestess.

Number: 5

Element: Earth

Zodiac: Taurus

Symbol: Cross, Crown, Pillar Rose

Upright Meaning:

The appearance of the Hierophant in a reading asks you to examine why you believe what you do about this situation. There is a lesson here, either for you to learn, or for you to teach. This is a time for you to really look at your motives, and also the motives of others. This card can indicate karmic lessons, and spiritual growth.

Keywords: Spirituality, Tradition, Lessons.

Inverted Meaning:

When reversed, the Pope is very dogmatic, or rebellious--it can take either guise. Either the control is being wielded with too much absolute power, or there's a rebellion going on. Whichever way it fits, you can rest assured that there are problems with the status quo. This card might also represent something that is weighing on your conscience. There are questionable methods here, and you need to examine things carefully from all sides. The laws of cause and effect are about to come into play.

Keywords: Rebelliousness, Remorse, Shame

6 The Lovers

The Lover's card shows a choice, and reminds us that even when we choose not to choose, we've still made a choice. Many people think that, because of its name and depiction that it is indicating a love affair, and while this is indeed one meaning for the card, its symbolism actually goes much deeper than that. The card shows two naked people, underneath a bright Sun, and an angelic being.

Number: 6

Element: Air

Zodiac: Gemini

Symbol: Angel, Cloud, Feather, Mountain, Sun

Upright Meaning:

This card asks you to question whether your head and your heart are balanced--or, whether you're listening to your ego, or your truth. You have to follow your heart, but not if it is ego based. The feeling of truth will always have a familiar ring to it. This card also reminds you that with every choice comes responsibility, and possibly sacrifice. Not taking responsibility for your actions is what creates bad karma. Finally the card does indicate that love is in the air, and while this can point to romantic encounters, it is also indicative of more platonic relationships.

Keywords: Partners, Union, Choice

Inverted Meaning:

When the card appears reversed in a reading, it can indicate frustration when it comes to romantic interludes, or perhaps a relationship based on sex rather than love. It's a sure sign that something is missing, and if this is referring to a platonic relationship, it is a sign that you may not be communicating your needs correctly, or that you're seeking some kind of devotion from a person that they are either unable or unwilling to give. This can be an indicator that an existing relationship is wobbling, too.

Keywords: Indecision, Unrequited Love, Codependent Relationships, Inappropriate Choices

7 The Chariot

The Chariot is all about movement. The figure on the card is confident, and sure of where he--or she--is going. He is flanked by two sphinxes, one the mirror image of the other. He wears a crown on his head, and is adored in armor. Behind him lies a city; what lies ahead?

Number: 7

Element: Water

Zodiac: Cancer

Symbol: Armor, Castle, Crown, Feather, Moon, Star, Staff

Upright Meaning:

The Chariot is urging you to take control over your life. Like the Magician, this card is assuring you that you can be in the driver's seat, that you don't have to let your life live you. It can signify a journey, too--one that can be physical, as in you traveling somewhere; or one that is metaphoric, such as a journey into your higher self, or deeper into mysticism.

Keywords: Progress, Journey, Momentum

Inverted Meaning:

As the Chariot indicates progress, the reversed card in a reading can indicate lack of progress. You may get there, but there is something hindering you. You'll need to dig deep into your reserves of determination to see the outcome you want to experience, but it is still possible. You may not have thought things through long enough, and now feel caught up in a whirlwind of energy that is making you feel uncomfortable. If this card appears when you're considering actual physical travel, make sure you check your plans and allow yourself extra time.

Keywords: Delays, Lack of Progress, Frustration, Obstacles.

8 Strength:

It shouldn't come as any surprise that this card is all about strength. The figure in the card is prising open a lion's mouth--or is she? Look at the lion, is he being forced, or is he willingly submitting? Is the figure angry, harsh, or does her face reveal compassion and understanding? This card reminds you that strength isn't necessarily about brute force and bravado--in fact, it often isn't about that at all. The strongest force on earth is compassion.

Number: 8

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Leo

Symbol: Infinity, Lion

Upright Meaning:

When strength comes into your reading, gird your loins. This card indicates that you are going to need to muster everything you have, but it also reassures you that you have everything you need to get through the situation. Find a balance between your raw emotions and what you need to do, and then start doing.

Keywords: Integrity, Confidence, Self-Empowerment.

Inverted Meaning:

When the card appears inverted, you may be feeling frustrated, disillusioned, and as if you can't go on any more. Things may seem out of control, but they really aren't. They just need a new reserve of power, and a new way of looking at them. This is not the time to fall back into old patterns of behavior, but rather, it's a time to forge ahead with new reserve. Strength reversed reminds you that there is a difference between determination and stubbornness, and cautions against the latter.

Keywords: Lack of Control, Weakness, Stubbornness

9 The Hermit:

The Hermit looks a lonely figure in his robes, with his head bowed. His feet stand on the snow, only empty sky behind him. His lantern lights the way, and as he leans on his staff, he gazes forward. Is he looking where he is going, or is he gazing into the lamplight?

Number: 9

Element: Earth

Zodiac: Virgo

Symbol: Lamp, Staff, Star

Upright Meaning:

The Hermit shows that time alone is needed to find solutions to the situation. It reminds you that the answers you seek are not found elsewhere, but rather, deep within you. It's also an indicator that you may be in need of some rest and relaxation to recharge your batteries. Sometimes the best solution is simply to withdraw.

Keywords: Reflection, Wisdom, Solitude

Inverted Meaning:

The reversed Hermit can indicate that you're spending too much time alone. No man is an island. If you are feeling down, disheartened, or depressed, you probably don't need to spend so much time alone at the moment. Don't take it to heart if someone else needs space at this time, either. This is a time of reflecting why you withdrew, and determining what you need to do to restore the balance in situations again. Too much isolation can be dysfunctional.

Keywords: Burnout, Isolation, Abandonment

10 The Wheel of Fortune:

The Wheel of Fortune looks like a wheel with all kinds of interesting glyphs written on it. It is supported by and surrounded by all kinds of magical, mythical creatures. It's a very busy card, and that's pretty much what it represents, the busyness of life, and the changes that are happening, or about to happen.

Number: 10 /1

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Sagittarius

Symbol: Angel, Bird, Bull, Cloud, Feather, Sword

Upright Meaning:

The Wheel of Fortune brings inevitable changes into your life. If you think about it, change is always inevitable, because change is the only constant that there is in the universe. Some people fear change, and push against it, but that is what brings the complications and the frustrations. It is by learning to go with the flow that things become easier. Whatever the question, the Wheel of Fortune indicates that things are about to change.

Keywords: Change, Opportunity, Destiny

Inverted Meaning:

When the Wheel of Fortune spins challenged through your reading, be prepared for obstacles. Change is here, and wants to flow to you, but something is inhibiting its progress. Either there are unavoidable delays, or perhaps you are resisting the change that is going to occur, anyway. Slow down, breathe deeply, and try to surrender to the changing tides. This too shall pass.

Keywords: Delays, Stagnation, Hesitancy

11: Justice

The Justice card sits between two pillars, robes equally balanced, the sword in one hand, the scales in another, crown sat firmly on the head. This is an authoritative figure, one who is impartial and equal, as the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike.

Number: 11 / 2

Element: Air

Zodiac: Libra

Symbol: Crown, Pillar, Scale, Sword, Throne

Upright Meaning:

When Justice appears in a reading, it's time for a rethink. Make sure that your actions reflect your words, for actions will always deliver a louder message than any words can convey. It's a sign that you need to find your center again. This can also indicate legal issues.

Keywords: Ethics, Integrity, Accountability

Inverted Meaning:

Confusion and disorder might be surrounding you if the scales of Justice appear upside-down in your reading. Something is most certainly out of balance. If you have been behaving unethically, you may be exposed. If someone else is behaving unethically, it's time to realize this, and put some distance between you and this person if you can. This can also indicate messy legal proceedings. Sometimes it indicates too much logic is being applied to a situation that needs a bit of compassion.

Keywords: Guilt, Vengeance, Unfairness

12 The Hanged Man

At first sight it is hard to tell which way up this card goes! Even though the man is hanging, he doesn't seem in any distress. There is greenery on the bough from which he hangs. He hangs by one ankle, and could reach up and untie himself, if he was truly distressed. He's not been stripped of his fine clothing, and around his head shines a halo of light. Did he volunteer for this experience?

Number: 12 /3

Element: Water

Zodiac: Pisces

Symbol: Cross

Upright Meaning:

This is a card of patience and sacrifice. You have to be willing to place yourself in a position of vulnerability. Yes, you may get hurt--but what if you don't? What if this opens you up to a whole new experience, one that you've dreamed of all your life, but never had the courage to expose yourself to it? This is also a time for counting your blessings, and changing your focus from one of desires to one of gratitude.

Keywords: Surrender, Sacrifice, New Perspective

Inverted Meaning:

If the Hanged Man is inverted, it's time to re-examine your motives. Are you playing the martyr to get attention? That never works for long. In order for your life to be truly empowered, your actions have to come through selflessness, not through ego. Try not to overthink a situation, but allow things to flow sweetly and freely.

Keywords: Hypocrite, Charlatan, Egoist

13 Death:

Death rides a white horse, wearing black armor. He carries a flag, and appears to have no concern where he is going, or on whom he treads. This card does NOT mean death in the physical form. It simply represents transformation. Think about it; if you get a new job, then your life at your old position dies. If you move house, then your life in your old home dies. Death, therefore, speaks of transition, not the end of physical life.

Upright Meaning:

Nothing is staying the same. The changes may not be pleasant ones, but they are necessary to your growth, and ultimately, to your happiness. This is a time to rid yourself of what is no longer useful. If you've been feeling like you're making no headway, then this card is encouraging you to go deeper into the fires of purification, make more sacrifices, and be willing to surrender whatever is necessary to get you moving forward again. It can point to the end of a situation, or yes, even the end of a relationship.

Number: 13 / 4

Element: Water

Zodiac: Scorpio

Symbol: Armor, Banner, Crown, Feather, Horse, Sun, Tower

Keywords: Transformation, Closure, Purging

Inverted Meaning:

Death reversed can show resistance to necessary changes. This card can show you that there is still something to learn, whether it is about why you are resisting the changes, or whether it is what these events themselves still have to teach you. There is some kind of a challenge to overcome--self-made or otherwise--before you can be completely free of this situation.

Keywords: Attachment, Escapism, Non-participation

14 Temperance

Temperance is often confused with Judgement, and while they both have to do with balance, the Temperance card is far more introspective, and more in your control. The figure is pouring water from one vessel to another, scarcely looking at the action, because it is so natural so familiar. One foot is on the land, grounding; the other is immersed in the water, feeling. Wings and a halo make the image seem holy.

Number: 14 / 5

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Sagittarius

Symbol: Angel, Crown, Cup, Feather, Lily, Mountain, Path, Pool, Sun

Upright Meaning:

This is a card that is about finding your own balance. You've been through the self-sacrifice of the Hanged Man and the metamorphosis of Death; now you can focus on what is really important for this incarnation. This card asks you to patiently evaluate and re-evaluate things, tweaking them as needed along the way, and making steady and confident progress.

Keywords: Balance, Adjustment, Integration

Inverted Meaning:

Temperance reversed indicates that you're still too attached to something--or someone. You may be focusing too much on your own wants, and not enough on those of others involved. Remember, there is a vast difference between what you want and what you need. It is in the synthesis of connecting yourself to all that is, rather than acting through ego, that the situation can be most easily resolved.

Keywords: Imbalance, Over-analyzing, Lack of Compromise.

15 The Devil

This card is probably as scary as the Death card to a lot of people, but it has nothing to do with demons or other nasties. This card is indicative of our temptations, and what is inhibiting us from breaking free of attachments. The devil sits above two naked figures, bound to him by chains. What do they need to do to be free of the chains that bind them?

Number: 15 / 6

Element: Earth

Zodiac: Capricorn

Symbol: Angel, Star

Upright Meaning:

The Devil card indicates an attachment to material things and physical pleasure. When this card appears, things may feel good or look enticing, but they may not be the best option for you. You know better, but chances are, you're going to do it anyway. Rules WERE made to be broken, but even then, moderation is the key. If this card is representative of a person in a reading, they're likely to be temptation, and perhaps not to be trusted.

Keywords: Indulgence, Materialism, Addiction.

Inverted Meaning:

When the Devil appears inverted, you may be on the verge of releasing what's been inhibiting you from taking control of your life. This could mean quitting a job that was bringing you down, leaving an inappropriate relationship, or stopping a bad habit. This card often appears when there's no other way to go but up. Even though the appearance of this card isn't particularly pleasant, the card itself can be a very good omen.

Keywords: Intervention, Resurrection, Turning Point

16 The Tower

The Tower is another disconcerting card. It shows a building on fire, with people leaping or being thrown from it. Lightning has struck, and knocking the crown off the structure. It's a black sky, with billowing smoke. However, look at the foundation; the Tower is standing on solid rock. Can it be rebuilt?

Number: 16 / 7

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Aries, Scorpio

Symbol: Crown, Mountain, Tower

Upright Meaning:

The Tower is a disconcerting card, and with good reason. It's appearance in your reading indicates that something is about to come crashing down--but only so that you can rebuild it better, stronger, and more appropriate. The energies of the Tower often take people by surprise, and these events are usually complicated. It's a sure sign that a drastic change is needed. If the question is asking if you should do something, there's likely to be consequences if you do.

Keywords: Chaos, Disorganization, Sudden Change

Inverted Meaning:

The inverted Tower comes with even more of a caution than the upright meaning. Stress, anxiety, worry, fear, they are all usually present when this card appears. It's advising you to shake things up, make some waves in order to be the catalyst of change that is needed. Change, or be changed is the theme, here.

Keywords: Caution, Stress, Difficulties

17 The Star:

The Star is a card of hope. It shines bright, surrounded by seven smaller stars. There is a bird in the tree behind the kneeling figure, and water is in abundance. Everything about this card is reassuring, spiritual, at ease.

Number: 16 / 7

Element: Air

Zodiac: Aquarius

Symbol: Cup, Garden, Mountain, Pool, Star

Upright Meaning:

The Star's message is one of faith and renewal. If you have been feeling at the end of your tether, this card brings you a message of hope that things are changing in your favor. This card brings a positive energy to a reading. It can also indicate a budding astrologer, or someone who would work well with the esoteric arts.

Keywords: Optimism, Renewal, Recognition

Inverted Meaning:

When the Star appears reversed, it's still quite an optimistic indicator, it just means that you may have to work a bit harder or wait a bit longer to get where you want to go. Hoping and wishing is one thing, but that won't bring the desired results. You have to get up and act on those wishes if you want to manifest your goals.

Keywords: Ego, Lack of Motivation, Empty Promises

18 The Moon

The image of the Moon looks down from a cloudless sky onto twin towers, two dogs, and a crustacean crawling out of the water. Even though the moon is bright, the card is foreboding somehow. This is the card of the night, with all its mysteries and illusions.

Number: 18 / 9

Element: Water

Zodiac: Pisces

Symbol: Dog, Mountain, Moon, Path, Pool, Tower

Upright Meaning:

The appearance of the Moon in your cards is cautioning you that things may not be all they appear to be on the surface. It can also be reminding you of the natural cycles of things, that some things cannot be hurried. Finally, it could be asking you to tune into your own hunches and psychic awareness. Listen to your dreams.

Keywords: Illusions, Doubts, Psychic Awareness

Inverted Meaning:

The inverted Moon can be a bit unsettling. It usually indicates that either you're listening to your illusions rather than looking to what is really happening; or that someone is trying to deceive you. It's one thing for someone else to try to kid you, but quite another for you to try to kid yourself. Makes sure that you have all the facts, and that you have the confidence and self-respect to demand it from others.

Keywords: Deception, Self-Deceit, Lack of Confidence

19 The Sun

The Sun is one of the brightest and happiest cards in the Tarot. The child riding the white horse is happy, the sunflowers are blooming and the sun fills the sky with light. This is a positive card, echoing the triumph over the trials that have been encountered.

Number: 19 / 20 / 2

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Leo

Symbol: Banner, Feather, Horse, Sun

Upright Meaning:

The Sun indicates that everything is about to be revealed. You will reap the rewards of being transparent and sharing your thoughts and feelings when this card appears in a reading. Remember, though, that actions speak louder than words. You'll get a far better reception by doing, rather than talking. In a yes or no question, this card is a resounding 'yes.' Let your inner child come out and play, now. It's time for celebration!

Keywords: Happiness, Success, Inspiration

Inverted Meaning:

The Sun reversed is still a good card to receive in a reading, it just may take a bit longer before you can bask in the glow of success. It reminds you to keep your feet on the ground and cautions against celebrating too much or too early. There may be a bit of self-centeredness here, and you'd do well to remember that pride comes before a fall.

Keywords: Consequence, Ego, Hesitation

20 Judgement

In the Judgement card, we see an angel blowing a trumpet, and all sorts of people rising up from the dead to the trumpet call. The winged angel hangs in the clouds and has a banner hanging from the horn, and there are mountains in the distance.

Number: 20 / 2

Element: Fire

Zodiac: Scorpio

Symbol: Angel, Banner, Cloud Feather, Mountain

Upright Meaning:

Judgement in a reading is making you aware that you have to let go of past hurts and disappointments if you want to taste the sweetness of happiness. It's a sure sign that things have to change, because where you are now is going to come to an end. This may be the end of a career, the end of a relationship, or the end of a mindset or outlook. It's time to let go, and move onto bigger and better things.

Keywords: Rebirth, Assessment, Awakening

Inverted Meaning:

When Judgement appears reversed in your layout, you may be having trouble choosing what is the best path to take. You know that you need to change, you may even know what you need to release, but there's something inhibiting you, so that you stay spinning your wheels. This card is also a caution not to be too judgemental of others. Everyone is going through their own pilgrimage to enlightenment, and no one's journey is greater or lesser than anyone else's.

Keywords: Confusion, Inhibition, Distraction

21: The World

This card shows an androgynous figure surrounded by a wreath. There are wands in either hands, and the wreath is flanked by four images: the eagle, the lion, the bull, and a human. It's the last card in the Major Arcana, and symbolizes the completion of a cycle.

Number: 21 / 3

Element: Earth

Zodiac: Capricorn

Symbols: Angel, Bird, Bull, Cloud, Lion, Wand

Upright Meaning:

The world represents both endings and beginnings. It is the end of one journey, and the start of another one. It's a sure sign that it is time to move onto something different. It signifies completion, and victory. It assures you that you are all that you need to be, and that you have all that you need to have. The world is at your fingertips now. Go explore it.

Keywords: Completion, Fulfillment, Success

Inverted Meaning:

When the reversed World lands in your reading, you may be being greedy. There's a disappointment here. Perhaps you thought you were going to have the world at your feet, and now you find that you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders. You can still turn this around, though. You just have to revisit where your attachment is, so that you can surrender it, and move towards the end result.

Keywords: Disappointment, Incompletion, Attachment

Part 7: The Fool's Journey

In the Tarot, more time is spent on with the Major Arcana, because these are the cards that tell the journey of life. The odyssey starts with **the Fool**, innocent and not yet aware of our separateness. The Fool has no number in the Major Arcana because the Fool represents the possibility of all things.

The Magician is the second character in the journey. The Magician is number I. One is the root, the potential, from which all things arise. The Magician has all the tools of his trade before him, and the symbol of infinity over him. He is associated with the planet Mercury. Because Mercury is traditionally associated with the day Wednesday, this can also be ascribed to the Magician, too.

The next five characters in the journey bring powerful energies that help develop individuality. First comes the **High Priestess**, associated with the Moon and the Moon's day, or Monday. Her card is number II. Two as a number represents the potential of one forming into an idea.

After the High Priestess comes **The Empress**. Her number is III and she is associated with Venus and the day Friday. Like the planet Venus, the number three represents harmony.

The Emperor is the consort of the Empress. He is associated with the astrological sign of Aries (21 March – 20 April) and thus indirectly with the planet Mars and the element of Fire. The Emperor's number is IV, representing foundation. Like Aries and Mars, the energies here are of willpower and action.

After the Emperor comes **the Pope**, sometimes called **the Hierophant**. His number is V and he is associated with the astrological sign of Taurus (21 April – 20 May) and the element of Earth. Through his ruling of Taurus, he also is associated with the planet Venus and traditionally the second house of the horoscope chart.

After the Pope, comes **the Lovers**. It is here that individuality starts to be found. The number of this card is VI. The Lovers card corresponds to the astrological sign of Gemini (21 May – 20 June). Through Gemini additional correlations are to the element of Air, the planet Mercury and the traditionally the third house of the horoscope chart.

Number VII, **the Chariot**, is the next Major Arcana card. The Chariot is the momentum of choice. It's element is Water, and its sign is Cancer (21 June – 21 July). This card is also ruled by the Moon (through Cancer), and its traditional placing is in the fourth house of the horoscope chart.

Strength is number VIII in the sequence, and it is associated with the astrological sign of Leo (22 July – 22 August) and the element of Fire. Strength indicates the power of conviction through choice. Through Leo, the Strength card is associated with the Sun, and the fifth house of the horoscope chart.

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Card number IX is **the Hermit**. The Hermit is associated with the sign of Virgo (23 August – 22 September) and the element of Earth. The planetary correlation is Mercury, the sign is Virgo, and the sixth house of the horoscope chart. It is with the Hermit card that the quest for a spiritual relationship to the physical world starts.

Next comes number X, **The Wheel of Fortune**. This card correlates to the planet Jupiter, and Thursday as the weekday. It is not out of sequence; it simply does not correlate with any particular sign or house of the Zodiac, although loosely it can be associated with Sagittarius through its Jupiter connection. The Wheel is constantly turning, destination yet to be decided.

Justice is number XI, associated with the planet Venus, the astrological sign of Libra (23 September – 22 October), and the element of Air. In our journey, Justice asks us to examine the journey, and bring everything to balance. Just as Strength had an image of the lion on the card, Justice has a set of scales, the symbol used for Libra. Through Libra, Justice relates to the planet Venus, and the sixth house of the horoscope chart.

Next comes **The Hanged Man**, card number XII. This card correlates with the element of Water, the sign of Scorpio (23 October 23 – 22 November), the planets Mars and Pluto, and the eighth house on the horoscope chart. With the Hanged Man comes the lesson self-sacrifice.

Death rises up at number XIII. Many people are frightened of this card, but its true meaning is transformation, and not physical death. This card is associated with the sign of Scorpio. Like the Wheel of Fortune, Death has no natural placement on the horoscope chart, but through Scorpio it can be associated with Water, the 8th house, and the planets Mars and Pluto.

Number XIV on the journey is **Temperance**. This card teaches imbalance, so that balance might be found. Temperance correlates with the sign of Sagittarius (23 November – 21 December), and through the astrological sign also the element of Fire, the planet Jupiter and the ninth house of the horoscope chart.

The Devil comes into our journey at number XV. Corresponding to Capricorn, (22 December – 19 January), through Capricorn the Devil is also associated with the Element of Earth, the planet Saturn, and the tenth house on the horoscope chart.

As there are 22 Major Arcana and only 12 houses of the horoscope, it is obvious that not all of the Major Arcana are going to have a natural seat. Through their planetary correspondence they will all relate to a sign and a house in some way. Most of the rest of the cards fall into this category.

Card number XVI, **the Tower**, goes right into the heart of the storm. The lesson the Tower is one of unlearning was previously thought important, and opening up to self-empowerment. The Tower indicates where attachment lies. The Tower is – not surprisingly – ruled by Mars, and is associated with Tuesday. The Tower has no natural place on the horoscope chart, but through Mars it is associated with Aries and the first house.

The chaos of the Tower is followed by the subtle light of **the Star**, card number XVII.. The Star is associated with the sign of Aquarius (20 January – 18 February), and through Aquarius with the element of Air, the planet Uranus, and the eleventh house of the horoscope chart.

The guiding light of the Star goes toward one final test, portrayed in card number XVIII, **the Moon**. The Moon's light is deceptive, and teaches that shadows in the night may be misleading; they must be put to the test to be validated and understood. The Moon correlates to the sign of Pisces, the element of Water, the Moon (as in the astrological 'light'), and the twelfth house of the horoscope chart.

Just as the light of the Sun follows the light of the Moon, so card number XIX, **the Sun** follows the card of the Moon. In the light of day, successes can be seen. Unsurprisingly, this card relates to the Sun (as in the astrological 'light'), and the day Sunday. Like Death and the Tower, the Sun has no direct correlation to a house in the horoscope chart, but through the Sun it can be associated with Leo and the fifth house.

With **Judgment**, card number XX, the lesson is to let go of what is still inhibits progress. It's here that ego is surrendered, and the realization comes that all things are in all things. This card is ruled by the element of Fire. Through the elemental correspondence, this card could be associated with Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius; and the first, fifth, and ninth houses of the horoscope chart.

Card number XXI, **the World**, brings wholeness, and oneness with all that is. The Wheel of Fortune turned previously and going from external thinking to internal thinking. Now the Wheel turns again, back to the innocence of the Fool, and the journey continues in an ever upward spiral. The lesson of this card is that one man's ceiling truly is another man's floor. The World is an Earth element card, and, like Judgment, can be associated with traditional Earth signs and houses; Taurus in the second house, Virgo in the sixth house, and Capricorn in the tenth house.

Part 8: The Minor Arcana

There are four suits in the Minor Arcana: Wands, Pentacles, Swords, and Cups.

Wands represent action, and the element of fire.

Pentacles represent material things, and the element of earth.

Swords represent thoughts and ideas, and the element of air.

Cups represent feelings and emotions, and the element of water.

While the Minor Arcana is important when it comes to reading the Tarot, they are not as detailed or involved as the trump cards. It is for this reason that only the keywords are given for each card in the suit. It is by handling the cards, looking at the pictures on them, and studying the symbols that you will truly get to know how they interact with the Major Arcana to provide detailed and insightful readings.

Ace of Wands

“Actions speak louder than words.”

Upright Keywords: Inspiration, New Beginnings, Action

Inverted Keywords: Inaction, Lack of Focus, Idleness

Number: 1

Element: Fire

Symbol: Castle, Cloud, Wand, Water

Two of Wands

“To see where to go, look where you’ve been.”

Upright Keywords: Decisions, Contemplation, Reflection

Inverted Keywords: Unpreparedness, Lack of Realism, Bewilderment

Number: 2

Element: Fire

Symbol: Castle, Lily, Mountains, Rose, Wand

Three of Wands

“You know what to do, now do it.”

Upright Keywords: Travel, Commerce, Initiative

Inverted Keywords: Doubt, Delays, Lack of Commitment

Number: 3

Element: Fire

Symbol: Wand, Water

Four of Wands

“The time to celebrate is now, the place to celebrate is here.”

Upright Keywords: Celebration, Ceremony, Achievement

Inverted Keywords: Delayed Happiness, Ungratefulness, Lack of Support

Number: 4

Element: Fire

Symbol: Castle, Wand

Five of Wands

“Pick your battles wisely.”

Upright Keywords: Competition, Struggle, Contest

Inverted Keywords: Inner Conflict, Bullying, Chagrin

Number: 5

Element: Fire

Symbol: Wand,

Six of Wands

“Let your return be victorious.”

Upright Keywords: Leadership, Recognition, Victory

Inverted Keywords: Betrayal, Corruption, Ego

Number: 6

Element: Fire

Symbol: Horse, Wand, Wreath

Seven of Wands

“Defend only what is worth defending.”

Upright Keywords: Tenacity, Defense, Determination

Inverted Keywords: Stubbornness, Self-Doubt, Resistance.

Number: 7

Element: Fire

Symbol: Hill, Wand

Eight of Wands

“Things will move at their own pace, in their own time.”

Upright Keywords: Movement, Advancement, Energy

Inverted Keywords: Impatience, Breakthrough, Risks

Number: 8

Element: Fire

Symbol: hill, Water, Wand

Nine of Wands

“Worry is a misuse of the imagination.”

Upright Keywords: Apprehension, Caution, Suspicion

Inverted Keywords: Assumptions, Weariness, Inexperience

Number: 9

Element: Fire

Symbol: Hill, Wand

Ten of Wands

“You do not have to carry the burden alone.”

Upright Keywords: Burden, Pride, Responsibility

Inverted Keywords: Procrastination, Wasted Effort, Inundated

Number: 10

Element: Fire

Symbol: Trees, Wand

Ace of Pentacles

“New beginnings need a practical approach.”

Upright Keywords: Practical Approach, New Beginning, Sufficient Resources

Inverted Keywords: Avarice, Financial Setbacks, Delayed Projects

Number: 1

Element: Earth

Symbol: Garden, Lily, Mountain, Path, Pentacle Rose

Two of Pentacles

“Ensure you are not juggling too much.”

Upright Keywords: Multitasking, Busyness, Diversion

Inverted Keywords: Juggling Too Much, Inability to Cope, Overlooked Opportunities

Number: 2

Element: Earth

Symbol: Infinity, Pentacle

Three of Pentacles

“Be willing to receive.”

Upright Keywords: Employment, Assistance, Opportunity

Inverted Keywords: Contrariness, Criticism, Lack of Appreciation

Number: 3

Element: Earth

Symbol: Pentacle

Four of Pentacles

“Do not hold on so tightly that you suffocate opportunities.”

Upright Keywords: Frugality, Security, Greed

Inverted Keywords: Wasted Resources, Fear of Loss, Stinginess

Number: 4

Element: Earth

Symbol: Crown, Pentacle

Five of Pentacles

“Feeling sorry for yourself prevents you from seeing the solution.”

Upright Keywords: Poverty, Scarcity, Self-Pity

Inverted Keywords: Insecurity, Longing, Despair

Number: 5

Element: Earth

Symbol: Pentacle

Six of Pentacles

“The road to abundance is paved with gratitude.”

Upright Keywords: Generosity, Charity, Gratitude

Inverted Keywords: Debt, Hoarding, Sense of Entitlement

Number: 6

Element: Earth

Symbol: Castle, Pentacle, Scale

Seven of Pentacles

“What you put into something is what you will receive from it.”

Upright Keywords: Respite, Patience, Evaluation

Inverted Keywords: Repeated Mistakes, Failure to Learn, Disappointment

Number: 7

Element: Earth

Symbol: Pentacle, Staff

Eight of Pentacles

“Hard work, but high rewards. “

Upright Keywords: Perseverance, Hard Work Rewarded, Accomplishment

Inverted Keywords: Shabby Workmanship, Exhaustion, Exploitation

Number: 8

Element: Earth

Symbol: Castle, Pentacle

Nine of Pentacles

“There is nothing wrong with enjoying what you have worked to attain.”

Upright Keywords: Independence, Pleasure, Self-fulfillment

Inverted Keywords: Co-dependency, Conceit, Vanity

Number: 9

Element: Earth

Symbol: Bird, Garden, Pentacle

Ten of Pentacles

“Success and material gain come after hard work.”

Upright Keywords: Success, Completion, Security

Inverted Keywords: Selfishness, Incompletion, Insecurity

Number: 10

Element: Earth

Symbol: Dog, Castle, Pentacle

Ace of Cups

“Let your heart be full of happiness.”

Upright Keywords: Emotional Fulfillment, New Love, Happiness

Inverted Keywords: Delayed Happiness, Introvertedness, Distrust

Number: 1

Element: Water

Symbol: Bird, Cloud, Cross, Cup

Two of Cups

“Two can gain warmth from each other, for one cannot be warm alone.”

Upright Keywords: Union, Partnership, Compromise

Inverted Keywords: Disharmony, Unrequited Love, Lack of Connection

Number: 2

Element: Water

Symbol: Angel, Cup, Lion

Three of Cups

“Celebrate a joyful reunion.”

Upright Keywords: Celebration, Reunion, Friendship

Inverted Keywords: Loneliness, Isolation, Withdrawn

Number: 3

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Fruit, Garland

Four of Cups

“Do not miss the opportunity in front of you.”

Upright Keywords: Contemplation, Daydreaming, Boredom

Inverted Keywords: Estrangement, Disappointment, Unappreciation

Number: 4

Element: Water

Symbol: Cloud, Cup, Tree

Five of Cups

“All is not lost.”

Upright Keywords: Remorse, Grief, Bitter Disappointment

Inverted Keywords: Wallowing in Self-Pity, Clinging to the Past, Self-Absorption

Number: 5

Element: Water

Symbol: Castle, Cup, Water

Six of Cups

“Take off the rosy colored glasses.”

Upright Keywords: Nostalgia, Innocence, Childhood

Inverted Keywords: Living in the Past, Immaturity, Delusions

Number: 6

Element: Water

Symbol: Castle, Cup, Lily, Staff

Seven of Cups

“Do not spread yourself too thinly or you will accomplish nothing.”

Upright Keywords: Distraction, Many Options, Fantasies

Inverted Keywords: Escapism, Self-Medication, Self-Deception

Number: 7

Element: Water

Symbol: Castle, Cloud, Cup

Eight of Cups

“Walk away from what is not working.”

Upright Keywords: Walk Away, Better Choices, Follow Your Heart

Inverted Keywords: Attachment, Empty Connections, Habit

Number: 8

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Moon, Mountain, Path, Staff

Nine of Cups

“The wish card.”

Upright Keywords: Wish Granted, Indulgence, Satisfaction

Inverted Keywords: Smugness, Selfishness, Ingratitude

Number: 9

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Feather

Ten of Cups

“...and they all lived happily ever after.”

Upright Keywords: Completion, Happy Endings, Emotional Fulfillment

Inverted Keywords: Delayed Fulfillment, Unrealized Dreams, Impatience

Number: 10

Element: Water

Symbol: Tree, Cup

Ace of Swords

‘Cut away what is not working.’

Upright Keywords: Cut a New Path, Seek Truth, New Perspective

Inverted Keywords: False Start, Lack of Direction, Misunderstanding.

Number: 1

Element: Air

Symbol: Cloud, Crown, Mountain, Sword

Two of Swords

“Even when you choose not to choose you have still made a choice.”

Upright Keywords: Choice, Unseeing, Impartial

Inverted Keywords: Faulty Logic, Blinded to the Truth, Imbalance

Number: 2

Element: Air

Symbol: Blindfold, Moon, Sword

Three of Swords

“This, too, shall pass.”

Upright Keywords: Loss, Betrayal, Separation

Inverted Keywords: Sacrifice, Resolution, Abandonment

Number: 3

Element: Air

Symbol: Cloud, Sword

Four of Swords

“Look after yourself, so you can give the best of yourself to others.”

Upright Keywords: Respite, Reflection, Rest and Relaxation

Inverted Keywords: Overload, Delayed Rest, Exhaustion

Number: 4

Element Air

Symbol: Sword

Five of Swords

“If you want to be a hero, you have to stick around til the end of the war.”

Upright Keywords: Disagreement, Self-Centeredness, Smugness

Inverted Keywords: Mediation, Animosity, Alienation

Number: 5

Element: Air

Symbol: Cloud, Sword

Six of Swords

“Prepare for a journey, be it physical, or metaphoric.”

Upright Keywords: Travel, Transition, Moving towards Wholeness

Inverted Keywords: Delays, Fear of Change, Unwillingness to Move Forward

Number: 6

Element: Air

Symbol: Staff, Sword, Water

Seven of Swords

“Like a thief in the night...”

Upright Keywords: Deception, Theft, Dishonesty

Inverted Keywords: Exposure, Regret, Consequences

Number: 7

Element: Air

Symbol: Hill, Sword

Eight of Swords

“Do not be a prisoner of your own device.”

Upright Keywords: Inhibition, Playing the Victim, Self-Restrictions

Inverted Keywords: Confidence, Breaking Free, Making Changes

Number: 8

Element: Air

Symbol: Blindfold, Castle, Sword

Nine of Swords

“The nightmare card.”

Upright Keywords: Nightmares, Worries, Depression

Inverted Keywords: Irrational Fears, Self-Doubt, Dismay

Number: 9

Element: Air

Symbol: Sword

Ten of Swords

“Do not hesitate to leave behind that which has truly expired.”

Upright Keywords: Ruin, Expiration, Defeat

Inverted Keywords: Relief, Restoration, Acceptance

Number: 10

Element: Air

Symbol: Cloud, Mountain, Sword

Part 9: The Court Cards

The court cards are an interesting mix, because although they all depict people, they don't necessarily point to a particular person in a reading. I've put a description of the person in with the keywords, but remember, it's more often than not the energies that this type of person brings to the reading, rather than a specific person. The group descriptions below will get you started, and then we'll move onto the individual cards. Remember the elemental energies of the suits matter, too, when looking for the personality traits in the court cards.

Kings

The Kings represent someone who is mature and masculine, someone who is involved in life and demonstrates authority, tradition, and control. His style is direct, and assertive. He wants results, and will do what it takes to get them.

Queens

The Queens represent the mature feminine energy. While the King was assertive, the Queen is passive. Her energies are more inward-looking, her style more relaxed. She's less concerned with seeing results, she's more inclined to enjoy the journey rather than the destination. She can be associated with self-expression and relationships.

Knights

Knights are immature. Older than a child, but younger than the King or the Queen. They can be seen to be teenagers, tottering on the fence between childhood and adulthood and not really knowing which way he's going to fall. He's liable to go from one extreme to the other as he tries to place himself in the world and find where he belongs. Overindulgence is a trait, but so are sincerity and eagerness.

Page

Pages represent the innocent child. He's likely to be thoughtless, pursuing pleasure rather than responsibility. He represents adventure, and potential. His energy is loose, impetuous, and just a little single-minded.

Page of Wands

“A child or someone younger than you, with a fair complexion, who is easily distracted.”

Upright Keywords

Ambitious, Enthusiastic, Curious

Inverted Keywords

Uninspired, Frustrating Pessimistic

Number: 11 / 2

Element: Fire

Symbol: Feather, Wand

Knight of Wands

“A youth with a fair complexion and light colored hair with a message for you.”

Upright Keywords

Adventurous, Motivated, Travelling

Inverted Keywords

Listlessness, Fears Defeat, Lack of News

Number: 12 / 3

Element: Fire

Symbol: Armor, Feather, Horse, Wand

Queen of Wands

“A fair woman with hair on the lighter side, who is determined and accomplished.”

Upright Keywords

Creative, Independent, Romantic

Inverted Keywords

Manipulative, Irritable, Irresponsible

Number: 13 / 4

Element: Fire

Symbol: Cat, Crown, Lion, Throne, Wand

King of Wands

“A fair complected man with red to strawberry blond hair, who is supportive of your endeavors.”

Upright Keywords

Generous, Confident, Enthusiastic

Inverted Keywords

Egotistical, Self-Absorbed, Shallow

Number: 14 / 5

Element: Fire

Symbol: Crown, Lion, Throne, Wand

Page of Pentacles

“A child who may speak out of turn, causing upheaval, discord, or distractions.”

Upright Keywords

Careful, Studious, Hard Worker

Inverted Keywords

Unfocused, Impractical, Insecure

Number: 11 / 2

Element: Earth

Symbol: Tree, Pentacle

Knight of Pentacles

“A dark complected man who may be bringing a message concerning financial matters.”

Upright Keywords

Dependable, Cautious, Capable

Inverted Keywords

Apathetic, Nit-Picky, Unhealthy Behavior or Environment

Number: 12/ 3

Element: Earth

Symbol: Armor, Horse, Pentacle

Queen of Pentacles

“A dark complected woman with dark hair and eyes, whose focus is on devoting herself to her home.”

Upright Keywords

Nurturing, Supportive, Protective

Inverted Keywords

Inappropriate Attachment, Needy, Self-Absorbed

Number: 13 / 4

Element: Earth

Symbol: Crown, Garden, Mountain Pentacle, Rose, Throne

King of Pentacles

“A masculine man with dark hair and dark eyes, who stands for determination and tradition.”

Upright Keywords

Traditional, Conservative, Provider

Inverted Keywords

Materialistic, Greedy, Possessive

Number: 14 / 5

Element: Earth

Symbol: Armor, Bull, Castle, Crown, Garden, Throne, Pentacle

Page of Swords

“A child with dark hair who could be the bringer of disappointment.”

Upright Keywords

Alert, Curious, Thoughtful

Inverted Keywords

Temporary Disappointment, Uncommunicative, Betrayal

Number: 11 / 2

Element: Air

Symbol: Cloud, Sword

Knight of Swords

“A young person with lots of energy who may be bringing good news.”

Upright Keywords

Stormy--Physical or Metaphorical, Inflated Ego, High Energy

Inverted Keywords

Remorseful, Irritable, Spiteful

Number: 12 / 3

Element: Air

Symbol: Armor, Cloud, Feather, Horse, Sword

Queen of Swords

“A woman with dark hair who may try to manipulate and control your actions.”

Upright Keywords

Judgemental, Reserved, Perfectionist

Inverted Keywords

Contradictive, Mean, Gossipy

Number: 13 / 4

Element: Air

Symbol: Bird, Cloud, Crown, Sword, Throne

King of Swords

“A stubborn man, with dark hair, who may be opinionated and dominating in your life.”

Upright Keywords

Critical, Brusque, Logical

Inverted Keywords

Stubborn, Manipulative, Misuse of Power

Number: 14 / 5

Element: Air

Symbol: Bird, Cloud, Crown, Throne, Sword

Page of Cups

“A fair young child brings good news.”

Upright Keywords

Romantic, Naive, Emotional

Inverted Keywords

Immature, Needy, Co-dependent

Number: 11 / 2

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Water

Knight of Cups

“A young person has positive news when it comes to matters of the heart.”

Upright Keywords

Idealistic, Artistic, Charming

Inverted Keywords

Over-sensitive, Insincere, Delusional

Number: 12 / 3

Element: Water

Symbol: Armor, Cup, Feather, Horse

Queen of Cups

“A kind and benevolent woman whose complexion is fair and whose manner is gentle and supportive.”

Upright Keywords

Sensitive, Receptive, Kind

Inverted Keywords

Easily taken advantage of, Empathetic, Over-emotional

Number: 13 / 4

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Crown, Throne, Water

King of Cups

“An understanding and loving man who knows how to nurture and share of himself.”

Upright Keywords

Emotional Strength, Compassionate, Understanding

Inverted Keywords

Inner Turmoil, Hopeless Romantic, Needy

Number: 14 / 5

Element: Water

Symbol: Cup, Crown, Throne, Water

Part 10: The Layouts

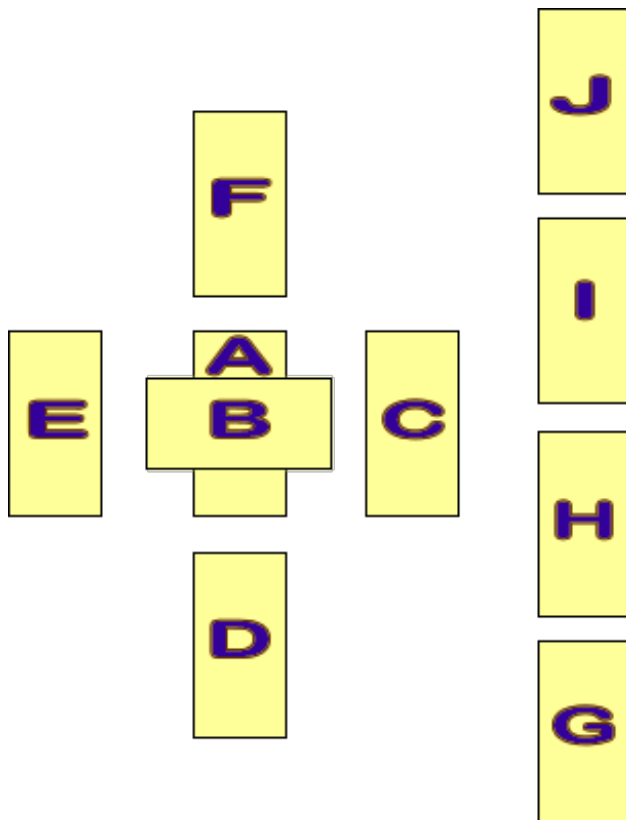
So, you know what the cards are and what they mean, but what do you do with them? Treat them as every card is a chapter in a book, with its story to tell. There are countless patterns in which you can lay out the cards to read them. Entire books have been written on the subject. For now, we're going to concentrate on three very basic ways of reading.

The first method is the one card reading, and that is fairly self explanatory. Shuffle your cards, concentrate on your question, and then draw a card to interpret for the answer. This is a very concise way of getting a 'second opinion' on the matter at hand.

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Another way of laying out the cards is a three-card reading. This is one of my favorites, because it can be interpreted as past, present, or future; it can represent three different areas of focus; it can project into the future as in now, near future, or distant future. It's really as versatile as the ways in which you want to use it. Just choose what each position is going to represent before you lay out the cards, and then shuffle and place three cards in a horizontal row. Turn them over one at a time, and interpret what they have to say, based on the attributes you gave each position in the layout. This spread can also be used to tell a story. Read each card as a frame in a comic book, to tell a story that brings to you the answer to your question.

Possibly the most renowned tarot card spread is one called the Celtic cross. This is a layout that uses 10 cards, all with a specific meaning to their placement, popularized by AE Waite, who commissioned the Rider Waite Tarot back in 1911. Here's what it looks like:



Card A is the 1st card placed on the table. This is the card that covers you. It represents the heart of the issue at hand. This is the primary factor.

Card B is the 2nd card placed. It goes crossways on top of card A. This is the card that crosses you. It represents the obstacles that are standing in your way. It is what reinforces the primary issue.

Card C is the 3rd card placed. It goes to the right of cards A and B. This is the card lies before you. It that represents what will influence and guide you. This is the unknown factor.

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Card D is the 4th card placed. It goes underneath cards A and B. This is the card that lies beneath you. It is what represents your motivation, or your current concerns. It is what will enable you to let go.

Card E is the 5th card placed. It goes to the left of cards A and B. This is the card that lies behind you. It reflects recent events as well as long term challenges. It can show you a new way of looking at things.

Card F is the 6th card placed. It goes above cards A and B. This is the card that crowns you. It indicates where your strengths lie what is likely to happen in the near future. This shows you what you should be open to accepting.

Card G is the 7th card placed. It goes to the right of the other cards, level with card D. This is the card that reveals what factors are coming into play in the near future. It also indicates how you see yourself.

Card H is the 8th card placed. It goes directly above card G. This card represents the potential future environment. It can also represent how others see you.

Card I is the 9th card placed. It goes directly above card H. This card reveals your hopes and fears about the future outcome. it can also hint at what you are overlooking.

Card J is the 10th and last card placed. It goes directly above card I. This is the outcome card. It sums up the other 9 cards and reveals to you the answer that you have been seeking.

Part 10: Conclusion

You now have everything you need to embark on your journey to be a Tarot master. You've got your cards, the information on what they mean, and how to use them. What more could you need? Well, there is one more thing that all great Tarot readers have, and that is a code of ethics. As you start to read for other people, they're going to ask you all kinds of questions. Remember that you're not a doctor, you're not a lawyer, you're not an accountant--and a really good reader won't try to be that, but will refer the client back to those professionals.

Remember too, to always be compassionate. You've got a deck of cards and a bit of info about them and now people are trusting you to counsel and guide them through the turmoil of their lives. Sometimes you don't have to reveal every detail about what you are seeing. Cushion it in such a way that the person for whom you are reading leaves you feeling positive and empowered, even if the situation wasn't particularly a positive one.

At the end of the day what you see in the cards is not carved in stone. Everyone has free will. Some people will respect what you do and will take your advice. Others may make fun of you or tell you--or worse. The cards will reveal the influences around people and their situation, but neither the tarot nor anything else can take away another person's free will.