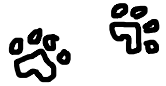


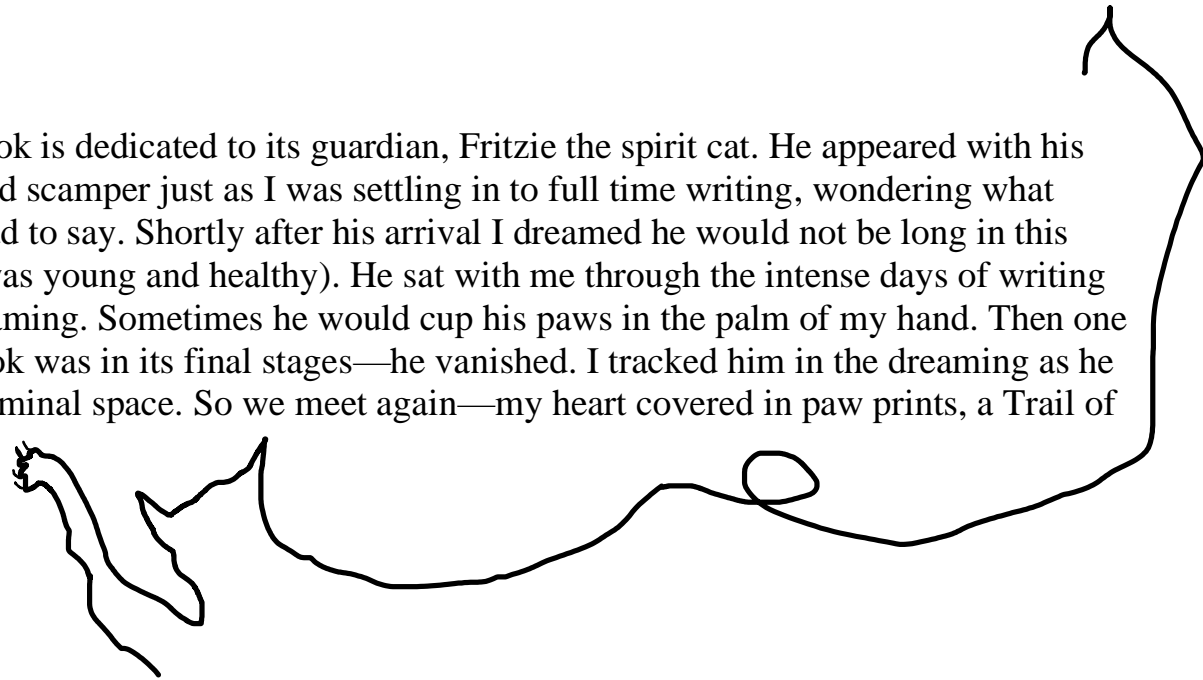


STORIES FROM THE PHOLARCHOS
a companion guide to the Pholarchos Tarot

Carmen Sorrenti



This companion book is dedicated to its guardian, Fritzie the spirit cat. He appeared with his one eye and crooked scamper just as I was settling in to full time writing, wondering what exactly the book had to say. Shortly after his arrival I dreamed he would not be long in this world (though he was young and healthy). He sat with me through the intense days of writing and visited my dreaming. Sometimes he would cup his paws in the palm of my hand. Then one night, when the book was in its final stages—he vanished. I tracked him in the dreaming as he tracked me in the liminal space. So we meet again—my heart covered in paw prints, a Trail of becoming.



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INTRODUCTION

This is a distillation of hundreds of pages. As Maria Prophetissa would have it, distillation is the work of alchemy. The deck first started to tug at my imagination one late afternoon in 2013 when I was standing on Tiber Island by the ruins of the Snake and Asklepios' curly head. This is where a dream temple was founded in 293 BC. I had a vision of medicine women burning sage and helping the patients see beyond the veil. It was ecstatic, a bubble into another place on this regular afternoon with traffic whizzing by. The deck was finally published in 2018 but the structural element that the images rested on was still a mystery. It was an impressive task to track the 20 years of dreaming that informed this book. A bedrock dream is threaded through it so I will mention it briefly as it came on the night I committed to writing the book. In it, I'm reading from the book of a timeless, all-encompassing God with ten eyes and a long list of spectacular qualities. As I read I hear its whirling voice; the feeling is monumental, like it's raining fire, thunder, ice. As I hold it, the book turns into a sack of white pebbles (like those for psephomancy) which in turn become the sea from which I fish out rings with colored stones—ancient as long lost treasure. Each ring has a story. These stories belong to people, to those that are bound to their circular ring, their journey to Self. Each ring has a stone, a *lapis philosophorum* (philosopher's stone). Each ring is a personalized reminder of the alchemical wedding.

The word Pholarchos is mysterious, a kind of myth unto itself. I go into some of the theory around its meaning in the little white booklet. The inscription on a statue of Parmenides tells us he was a Pholarchos. He lived in Elea around 2500 years ago; this is just south of where I came into the world and I sometimes wonder if the land itself acted as a cradle by rocking me with ancient tales. Dotted nearby are other historical wonders such as Cumae, Capua, Lake Avernus, Paestum: all places embedded with ancient mythology and the power of story. It may be the land itself speaking through the deck. In any case, The word Pholarchos keeps growing for me. It sounds like the German word for bird: *vogel* (pronounced with the same initial 'F'). And it reminds me of *Phosphorescence*—the night light of dreaming. It's a word that in its lyrical strangeness lends itself to a rich bed of associations that keeps expanding and holding the dreamers.

Pholarchos is a collaborative endeavor—meaning that every time you use it and enquire further into the unknown, you add to its layers. These guidelines are just some of the possible stories. The following are pointers and possible voices for each card. Look at the images first and discern what narrations emerge for you on any given day—they're alive, working with you like dreams. It may be a single color or detail in a card that pulses in any given reading. If you acquire domesticity with this method, as with dreams, the image will show where the charge is so that you can follow it, watch what it does, where it takes you: this opens a dialogue. Jung calls this active imagination; I have come to understand it as *Streaming* because of a dream figure that refers to it in this way. Find how it works for you.

The “**Possible Themes**” section at the top of each card lists some key words to spark your own investigations. They're mostly nouns but they may show up as qualities in another person—and not always as projected material since subjective and objective elements mix, as in life. Consider that these trigger words may indicate what is present or what is missing—perhaps what is trying to emerge.



THE BACK OF THE CARDS

The shapeshifter is a composite figure born of a dream weave: many dreams coming together over time. It is a union of opposites and the conception of new realities. Below you will see the full image with the open wings. Let's review a couple elements that repeat in the deck.

The face and ears recall a lynx—their tufts make for particularly fine hearing. The etymology of *lynx* is tied to the luminosity of its eyes. This phenomenon created a story: a lynx has supernatural vision. Above those beaming eyes, the cosmos is pouring forth. Here is our first set of opposites uniting: deep, instinctual, feline earth and starry heaven. The full image below shows that this shapeshifter is a tree-like axis bridging above and below; half of the figure is surrounded by roots while the rest is bathed in sky.

Snake and dragon are often seen as the same animal. This is certainly true here. The shapeshifter's wings belong equally to this central snake which is actually a dragon in its most essential shape. On dragons:

If he desires to become small, he assumes a shape resembling that of a silkworm, and if he desires to become big, he lies hidden in the world. If he desires to ascend, he strives towards the clouds, and if he desires to descend, he enters a deep well. He whose transformations are not limited by days, and whose ascending and descending are not limited by time, is called a god. (Quoted in Visser) ⁱ

This deck is based on the art of alchemical transformation. Dragon transformations are unlimited. Its essential serpentine form is so basic—a pure rod of sinuous power, a ripple of electricity waving in and out of life. It is a basic power unit—a lightning rod. It feels like a magic wand of vitality from which any other shape can come to life.

Shapeshifter includes the spirit of the Earth itself. Here she is, with the dragon power of vital life swimming up, animating her incarnation. The snake-dragon is penetrative yang spirit. Heavenly spirit appearing as rain: “The dragon...being “The chief spirit of water and rain” (Visser)ⁱⁱ. In China this creature is a numinous spiritual power that fertilizes life through precious drops of rain.

The shapeshifter is both male and female, a composite being in the process of enacting life's endless cycles. The body of Gaia and the fertilizing serpent—yin and yang—as together they gain and release physical form. Shapeshifter is the point of union and the cross of matter. Unlike the phoenix, the snake sheds its old self repeatedly in partial, more ordinary transformations—it is constantly regenerating. One dream after another, the daily work of consciousness takes place.

A Spiral Story

“The snake always means the cerebrospinal nervous system”. (Jung) ⁱⁱⁱ This simple line contains a fundamental sense of the vital power of this animal: our electric wiring, the pulse of life. In the shapeshifter, dragon-snake is coiled in the womb like a knowing nucleus of Earth. When it wakes, it uncoils by pushing up through our primary geometries, rotating inner stars to a climax of all lights, a rapturing of the brain. The slim dragon rises through the vortex wheels, molten lava returning the whole to One... a kundalini dragon...

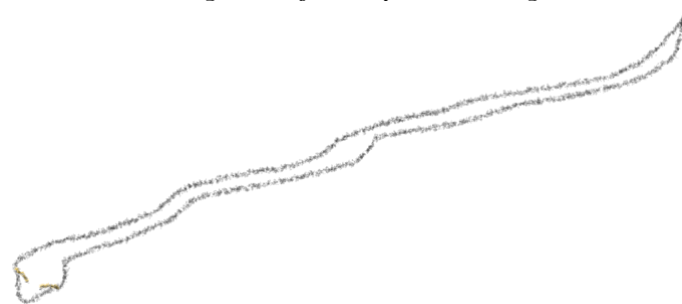
In this story, spirit becomes matter and then spirit again through the spiral: the energy coils in and then back out. Eternity embodied in cycles. This is a less obvious, feminine movement that may not at first bring the clarity we seek—it can seem disorienting when we want to stand on firm ground. It may be slow, subtle, repetitive. A spiral labyrinth right to the centre. We live in a world that is fast paced in its masculine orientation but the unconscious has rhythms that are completely other and that reveal a spectrum of reality that is imperceptible in linear vision. Roses, the Milky Way, shells, the Caduceus are but a few examples of this cyclical, hypnotic motion. Even the intricate spider webs that weave across the planet as if stitching it together are often based on a spiral mapping. This is an important perspective in long term dreamwork as we may tire of seeing complexes rise repeatedly and we may feel like we're treading water. If we observe carefully, the dream presents the same issue on successive rounds of a spiral. We spiral round to new meeting points as the relational web with the issue slowly changes shape. Alchemy takes time, it snakes round in spiral motion. The unconscious is not linear or predictable. Each revisiting of a complex takes place at another level of the spiral that is never quite the same but links to the last—something flowing round and round a center along a meaningful trajectory, spanning time and non-time and linking them together.

There is a prevalence of female figures in the deck that are not women but rather the feminine principle. It's a reminder that to do inner work, a quality of receptivity is the first requirement for both men and women. We have learned to devalue vulnerability and the raw places it lands us in. In fairy tales it is always the dumb, plain, unambitious and poor 4th figure that leads to the treasure. The mud of earth, the nigredo as manure, a receptivity to all we have rejected. This is not the same as being swamped by it, this is listening and negotiating so that a new, more inclusive reality can emerge. This ability to relate to the inner dreamscape is a feminine quality present in every male and every female. It invites engagement with endless Mystery, much of which we simply cannot define or control. It is not about gender but about certain qualities personified. There's a particular focus on emotional and instinctual reception in the images. And it includes receptivity to the impelling needs of Mother Earth. It's a deck that rekindles a way of relating to all beings, on inner and outer levels. The clarifying elements, the logos and extraction of meaning of the cards gets more attention here, in the book.

The logos would represent the structural element of the unconscious—structure and meaning—while in the feminine qualification there is more the idea of its pictorial, emotional manifestation (von Franz).^{iv}



Now let's turn it over and begin our journey as the dragon-snake descends into the Fool





THE FOOL

Possible Themes

Vivification, raw energy, vagabonding, lightheartedness, trust, spontaneity, freedom, adventure, impulse, fuel, blitheness, naivety, surprises, current.

The Image

A blue figure, a meeting of water and ether. At the brow, a golden condensation of spirit holds the red blood of incarnation in the triangles of above and below. A mottled dragon-snake flows down through a cloud. Zero places this card anywhere along the journey.

Stories from the Card

Each incarnating soul begins its journey here. This scintillating soul presence is always with you, moving through your veins, even once matter has all but hidden every trace of it. In the chest are planets: a heart connection to the movements of creation. The soul knows it is never alone, senses the larger network as it moves through. Its eyebrows are tufts of feathers; it never loses its wings, though you may sometimes forget its winged song. This dreamer that dreams you on—first in psyche and then in flesh—is ready for every part of your vast journey. Travel your story on and know that when your blood is visible, there is always the invisible blue of soul that streams along with it. Its eyes are always open.

The dragon-snake carries the rain drops on its back, ready to fertilize the earth. Its life force never forgets from whence it came or the patterns it holds for growth. It sheds and regenerates as needed.

The Egyptians held that the eye is the seat of the soul; for example, Osiris is hidden in the eye of Horus. In alchemy the eye is the coelum (heaven): “It is like an eye and a seeing of the soul, whereby the state of the soul and her intentions are oftentimes made known to us, and through the rays and glance [of heaven] all things take form”. (Jung)^v



THE MAGICIAN

Possible Themes

Timing, intent aligned with potency, skill, activation, harnessing the imaginal, presentation, implementation, manipulation, persuasiveness, materialization, communication within and without, invocation, alignment.

The Image

A two-headed hermaphrodite with alembics containing a wolf-moon and a dragon-sun. A round table with the zodiacal wheel is rimmed with fire. Birds and a hooded figure are gathered for the experiment. Trapeze ladders are suspended from the ceiling for acrobatic feats.



Boy with hoodie, detail

Stories from the Card

The 'sleight of hand' boy holds up Mercury's disc: identity change specialist, passport maker, language spinner, connective tissue, male and female both, Hermes of every border, messenger of every God... closely related to Mercurius, chief in all alchemical operations. Mercurius the

Magician of consciousness is both trickster and great orchestrator of wholeness. The boy in his hoodie is juggling attributes and time—he's at the crossroads seeing where he's going take this, which ship to board, how the winds blow and what he might barter. At times it is only through the trickster that we can move forward in the maze of our inner trappings—he has a winding thread that does lead home. The experiences we least expect can become the most helpful ones.

The gold is likely to start out as beetle dung. "*Our gold is not common gold*" (Rosarium) ^{vi}. The magician begins an experiment, aligned with right timing. He's an expert in the magic of images—a masterful translator: two eyes set on the symbolic world and two eyes ushering it into daily life, thus shifting reality as we know it by a series of negotiations.

He has set up the scene for the first operation. The sun and moon are being cooked separately. Before union there is separation—what is really present in the inner jumble we call home? We dismember before we re-member. This means breaking things down, stripping layer upon layer to discover what really stands behind.



Wolf & Dragon, detail

Pisces is taken out of the zodiacal line up and dropped into the alembics as male dragon and female wolf, or sun and moon, or two fish—yearning for Oneness yet tugging at each other as they swim in opposite directions. Between the fire and its discernment, we stand here. All is

being shifted to a new reality through the process of elimination and of creation. Timing is an acknowledgement that the power of the will is interacting with deeper forces.

The goal would be to find this double-rayed conscious attitude, namely a capacity for standing the opposites. This would not mean wavering between the opposites but rather holding the tension between them... (von Franz)^{vii}



Phoenix feathers, detail

Text on the Card: (from the top feather): Wands—Calcinatio, Swords—Sublimatio, Pentacles—Coagulatio, Cups—Solutio (the carnival phoenix has a tail with 4 feathers, each with a suit glyph and an alchemical process).



HIGH PRIESTESS

Possible Themes

Intuition, receptivity, secret knowledge, occult perception, patterns in dreaming, psychic intimations, waiting, gestation, memory, forthcoming information.

The Image

The oracle's head splits as it receives information. Here reception is partial, unlike the *Tower* where the entire being is under a siege of light. The sage leaf eye opens down left. Top left a messenger raven flies in.

Stories from the Card

Oracle of Delphi, womb and center of Earth. She perches in the adyton, the inaccessible place—available once mind splits open like ripe fruit and receives light forms of language. Dawn approaches and brings back the sun in all its splendor. Something fine and rare is revealed when dark and light meet. This act of God possession was known as *enthusiasmos*... it says a great deal about the power of enthusiasm as we know it today. Enthusiasm for life is a kind of magic, the act of making sacred.

Light is language. Words are not the only language, they are pinpoints of differentiation, fundamental and limited. What comes between words and their rhythms carries a great deal more of the information. Do not fret if the oracle is incomprehensible; sit with it, allow it to unravel.

The sage opens its eye into the heart. On the island priestesses burn its leaves as they welcome seekers, so as to fill the atmosphere with its wisdom. Through the sage smoke vision alters as life and death unite in a single thread of continuing existence. The light changes and what is beyond shimmers in all its life, just across the curtain of smoke. The union is ecstatic. All healing comes from this liminal frontier of transformation. The raven enters top left, its caws announcing the mysterious power pulsing through the matrix.

Text on the Card: Cypress turns to lucid dawn.



THE EMPRESS

Possible Themes

Venusian abundance, Earth Mother, community, nourishment, motherhood, love, sensuality, embodiment, delight, beauty, procreation, creativity, growth, generosity, belonging, fertility.

The Image

The earth personified, roses blooming at her chest, lush vegetation, the molten core gleaming with metal and crystal ore. Ladybirds flit like red splashes of passion spreading along the waxing moon. The flowering is alive with hummingbirds, dragonflies, crickets, geckos.

Stories from the Card

Belly of earth filled with molten lava, womb of creation hatching whole ecosystems, the cornucopia of multiplicity. Hundreds of berries and seeds float slowly in the wind ... juniper, tulsi, cedar. We have life here because of this delicate, intricate network—her intelligent body. The vivifying and regenerative life force of the feminine matrix that runs in chlorophyll's liquid light to dark roots of belonging... Do not let too much sun, too much intellect, shrivel the leaves of your garden; sit in shade and night sometimes, watch the cycles.

... rich minerals and jewels, ore of every kind transpires through her skin; her shoulders are lapis, amethyst, quartz, topaz. We will never discover all her secrets. And from the composting dark earth, roses bloom in spiral motion—fill the air with their perfected song. What song is in your throat now, what rose can you disclose?

Great archetypal mother, rooted inside every one of us. How is she wired into your complex nature? What are your rhythms and which are acquired ones? What riches have been harvested so far by great Demeter, protectress of abundance? What has been blighted by her wrath?

You cannot be aware of the whole web so which strands will you tend to? Which offer themselves to you? Everything is in full growth, the moon waxes and those ladybirds spread like droplets of bright bliss. What ecological responsibility are you ready to take on as your own?



THE EMPEROR

Possible Themes

Order, leadership, foundational structure, authority, stability, perseverance, responsibility, rigidity, status quo, fatherhood, customs, ambition.

The Image

The emperor's body is tuned to earthen colors while his head is sky blue, same as the eye that governs his chest. The mirror behind him reflects cosmic forces while the handheld mirror reflects the earth communities.

Stories from the Card

3200 BC in Sumer, the cultural flowering radiates out in all directions, permeating all lands with a continued refinement, order, differentiation, structure.^{viii} The cuneiform script sets the great art of writing in motion. People begin to specialize in their labors, the psyche and society change shape. Non stop evolution of consciousness.

The Emperor's two mirrors detect the archetypal traffic both above and below, within and without. This is no human politician but the spirit of governance. His feathered headpiece reaches into the mysteries. He is made of weather: he is the rain, wind, electric storms. He listens as Saturn and Jupiter move into the Aquarian phase together—two fathers, generations coming together in a humanitarian mission where the bearer has water for all: a grail where all opposites can wed in a common goal. His third eye is both stamen and antenna, initiating a new age. If he were to make this power personal, he'd be a toppling despot creating havoc. He's placed at number 4 and he has 4 books of structural wholeness to answer to; he learns to understand the evolving books which radiate south and north, east and west—each direction has qualities he takes into account for his rule. The geometry of the creative 3—the ever spinning triangle—comes to a stop in the stable 4 so that humankind may gather round tables laden with fruits from the Empress and here build solid foundations.

Text on the Card: Non-stop (bottom rim of handheld mirror).



THE HIEROPHANT



Phoenix reborn, detail

Possible Themes

Teaching, insight, philosophy, doctrine, wisdom, query, religion, morality, prayer, perspective, spiritual authority.

The Image

A teacher that is part horse, part human, part plant. Red and white snakes mate on its back. Six eggs dangle from the spiral above. The hierophant holds the burning phoenix in its palm while the regenerated phoenix spirals out of its womb.

Stories from the Card

And so the stories goes...when it's time, the scarlet phoenix leaves its land and soars along the Nile until it comes to Heliopolis, sacred seat of sun god worship. There the magical bird reaches the fiery altar and immolates itself on the ignited, aromatic pyre. Within 3 days from the burning, the reborn phoenix rises from its ashes and flies back home.

The teacher holds the consciousness of the phoenix, feels the transfiguration and rebirth as it passes up through its body to expand in the minds of new generations. The hierophant remembers the vision of all creatures, keeps track of our evolution... it knows about the first essential emanation, about priest and shaman, about the conference of birds, the electric currents at the top of the mountain and soul encoding through vibration, knows about how soma is both body and divine ambrosia, about the first Tibetan prayer wheel, the prophets, Hawaii's Laniakea, the power of story, the magi, the far reaches of the multiverse, knows about how heart unites matter and spirit through its pulse, about every language between man and God and the struggle in making these, about the pain of separation, the necessity, knows about the phoenix in Heliopolis, the immortal body and the lapis—it knows and holds space, bears witness.

The idea of death and rebirth is basic to the sacred embalming process of the ancient Egyptians. And this idea of creating an immortal body by first subjecting it to death through fire and then reconstituting it is the basic idea of alchemy... The transformation of the phoenix symbolizes the psychological transformation process of individuation which, like alchemy, creates a glorified, indestructible body. (Edinger)^{ix}



THE LOVERS

Possible Themes

Love, desire, choice, union, attraction, indecision, relationship, cooperation, relatedness, exchange, separation, wedding, intimacy.

The Image

Two lovers heat their souls to every color.

Stories from the Card

Empedocles speaks of love and strife as the two forces that move the universe. Plato longs for the long lost twin. Shakespeare writes of the beloved as lovelier than a summer's day, of murderous lust—and of everything in between. Eliot calls love a supernatural ecstasy while Auden wonders if it makes the world go round. Goethe spills verse for holy longing.

Your skin trembling, turned inside out so that you are launched out of your body—chasing yourself into another... all the things you never thought you were, doing the things you never thought you would while others marvel at your drastic changes—at the shedding of all those clothes and all those skins. You, always the diamond in the center of my mountain.

Enter at the wrist, from the pulse of the heart, the place where riveting desire is—so vivid it blasts you open. Control has no jurisdiction here, it turns into falling leaves that heap round the threshold of this other place. Love, waiting for you to turn and look into its face, into the eyes that cross every sea. The total transformation. Do you still love me? Always.

Earth and earthly existence are a product of desire, of coagulation... an unborn abstract person has to discover where his or her... desire is—and then go with it... Too often it can happen that abstract, spiritualized, unborn people read the apostle Paul or the Buddha's Fire Sermon and use such wisdom to avoid the process of coagulation. Real wisdom is expressed in those statements, but it's mature wisdom, wisdom that applies only after you've been through the full fires of desirousness. It should not be used as a device to by-pass the life process. (Edinger) ^x



THE CHARIOT

Possible Themes

Steely will, drive, focus, motivation, travel, speed, impetuosity, goal, accomplishment, voraciousness, self-assertion, triumph.

The Image

A charioteer parts the sky with his angel trumpet vehicle. Dragon heads hold up his mobile universe with their teeth while swinging to the rhythm of his steering. The laughing and weeping masks on his shoulders remind him to harness opposing forces for his goal.

Stories from the Card

The charioteer's heart is out on his chest: a window that travels you further than his wheels. He carries a copper gun—that's to pierce your heart with experience as he leads the way. No experience goes unrecorded by the depths of you. He is a confluence of impulse and bravery. His necklace is made of shark teeth—for every one that tried to take a bite out of one of his passengers. It keeps him focused. Danger depends on which way you swing and if you're listening to the wind or not. But he does pride himself on getting most passengers back to safety—transmogrified, full of verve, celebrating victory. He can show you the whole theater of life and you can treat him like a taxi, you can try—and if his hanging constellations are favorable, he may just grant you your wish; otherwise, he'll take you somewhere way more interesting.

You can easily feel on top of the world with the chariot's racing wheels, you very well may be... or you might be firing up the courage to quicken towards your cherished goals. Once you're on a journey, do your best to focus on it rather than regret where you might have gone instead—feed your regrets to the sharks, it may keep them busy long enough for you to find a new path for yourself.

When the journey's done, the charioteer may gift you one of his shark teeth, a keepsake for perspective; where now is mountain, billions of years ago was ocean, and the mountain he drove you across today carries fossil traces of that era—alive and needing your titanic courage to defend this marvelous trajectory, this beloved earth.



JUSTICE



Trapeze artist, detail

Possible Themes

Law, balance, truth, rational solutions, adjustment, agreement, negotiation, mercy, fairness, arbitration, probity, dignity, Scales of Ma'at.

The Image

Two figures listen to the outcry of the wire bird. In which way might we perceive this court? What will we put on the scales?

Stories from the Card

Scenario 1: like the lightbulb, the wire bird is made by humans. It's part of the legal system which promises to uphold law, equality, free speech, fairness. Fine tune your nimble mind and make a legal system that cries out at all injustice.

Scenario 2: lit by artificial light, the secretive backroom ripe with dealings and negotiations—money and favor are exchanged like greetings. Mind you, the bird denounces, reaching the heart of the trapeze artist like a police siren.

Scenario 3: inner law, societal law, universal law—thinking they can truly be separated costs a great deal in the long run. Ma'at has been seen as both a principle of mortal law and as regulator of stars. The swinging trapeze is like an apparition, the shuddering of the heart as it oscillates between the *pillar of justice and the pillar of mercy*. Something is dawning and the sun infuses the clarity of right action from the bottom up.

Scenario 4: today it's the heart's bold mercy that fills the air and the judge's mind, infusing both with expanded equilibrium. The greening at the judge's chest is the revitalization of the heart. Ma'at weighs each heart on a scale, not only at death but every single night in dreaming—she sends a verdict to your morning, leaves it on the breakfast table. Personified as female, Ma'at is the scales that weigh you up each night and ask you who you are becoming. In ancient Egypt these scales invoked the spirit of truth and fairness. And the feather against which your heart is measured is not simply weightless—it is the feather which asks: *is your heart true?*



THE HERMIT

Possible Themes

Introspection, integrity, retreat, loneliness, quiet, solitude, self-development, self-examination, contemplation, authenticity, seeking.

The Image

A wise elder breaks through to the matrix of the shapeshifter. His brain has aligned with the heart as the dragon-snake crosses through his eye and rises like the kundalini serpent. Below is a sacrum bone for grounding, and across the diagonal above is a red gateway from his dreaming.

Stories from the Card

Contemplation might become laughter. It may be a didgeridoo, your breath by firelight, prayer. You might do it in complete solitude or by turning in despite the crowd. Slow down. The quick fix to enlightenment, the pill in the busy schedule has no bearing here. Light the wick, keep your candles to hand, pay attention. A path may light up in any number of ways. In a dream an owl may shine a light your way; a shabby crone might tell you something has been completed because of your ordeal; a flower might reveal your fundamental essence. Sometimes it comes as shadow demanding its dues, demanding you to shake it up and look again. Or you might wake weeping because something vital is missing. The hermit wants you to turn first to the neglected territories, the unknown corners of your being. Once all your dogs return to you, devotion to your own calling is sniffed out and you can decide what load to put down and what to carry. The circle of Self will lead the way. Generations of ghosts can be freed from above and below. This is where the rewiring is being done. This is the place you can find release.

...solutions can only come about in an individual way that cannot be foreseen. One cannot think up ways and means artificially, let alone know them in advance, for such knowledge is merely collective, based on average experience, and can therefore be completely inadequate...in individual cases. (Jung) ^{xi}

Text on the Card: Sweet potency. Secret patterns align.



WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Possible Themes

Change in circumstances, fate, design, opportunity, loss, movement, new phase, trigger.

The Image

A figure crouches and births repeated rounds of the zodiac. She holds the shiny new Aquarius figure upside down by her pinky. Birthing souls float in the foreground of her towering shin.

Stories from the Card

Our personal time and the *zeitgeist* are wound together on the cyclical wheel of manifest time. This is the wheel of history where archetypal forces play out. Some call this wheel of time *Kalachakra* and when you pay attention you will feel it in your own *time wheels*, your own chakras. *What is the quality of time?* Each quality has a ripe moment when we can work with it along our inner wheels as we separate, investigate, integrate.

What is ripe today? What is no longer available? What riches are coming or going? Food today may be famine tomorrow. Incarnated qualities are never fixed and though we think we know this, change tends to take us by surprise. What surges on the shore of time and what drops away?

What are you prepared to change and what is preparing to change you? Dreams will speak of shifts in the making long before you notice change in waking life. The big wheel will bring developments into the little chakra wheels of your body by energetic shifts, perceptions, moods. What is on the shores of change? Are you convinced it is external or have you orchestrated it in the blueprint of your being?

Change is a constant and if we befriend liminal places, we might become a creative force that partakes consciously in our becoming.



STRENGTH

Possible Themes

Passion, courage, fortitude, strength, instinctual drive, self-esteem, confidence, eagerness, harnessing wild desire, inner power, self-control.

The Image

A woman learns about her lion nature as her features become increasingly feline. Another is exploring the molten core with her hand. In the foreground a musician plays the lion tails—shaped like suns. In the background another being is possessed by a devouring leonine instinct.

Stories from the Card

Call upon the inner lion, the dignified gait, solar mane, unquenchable eyes. Can your instinct fuel your awareness or are you a slave to your lion? Who is the lion in your family? Will you walk over other people to be first? Can you contain your lion without demeaning it? Some lions have lost their roar and send out begrudging calls for help. Others eat everything they see, leaving nothing untouched or unspoiled.

Gather strength and courage. Sometimes strength lies in these 2 letters: NO. Demand respect. Take the situation in your hands and assert yourself. Speak up and stand for who you are, not the mask you've settled for... or your lion will be after you, savage and unrelenting. Nothing gets past that golden gaze. Will you match such an ancient, weathered stare?

This instinctual power is deeply creative and the lion can mean coming into your 5th house, governed by Leo: your creative nature, the unleashing of a highly charged and unique expression.



THE HANGED ONE

Possible Themes

Surrender, sacrifice or *making sacred*, suspension, addiction, limbo, patience, powerlessness, shamanic consciousness, initiation.

The Image

An upside down figure with butterflies streaming out of her head.

Stories from the Card

You hang bound in your chrysalis, a little crystal case of surrender, while the shadow dancer floats all around you, fluttering with intimations of your entire life and glimmers of constantly shifting emotions. This holy love. Berries surround your chest, ready for distillation. Maria Prophetissa whispers in your ear, on the banks of inherited time; all that has come before is part of the waves of becoming, all the voices are still present as the family gets larger, more intricate—like these butterflies. Maria shows you what she found at the edges of the known, as she created substance and device—blazing her way along the Nile and the rivers of gnosis, riding secrets of number and ritual and geometry in ecstatic cries.

You hang bound like a pupa, or a mummy, in Maria's apparatus for distillation... until you slowly let go and slip down through the hole in the top of your head, flutter into a great whoosh of butterflies. Like your first breath. The sound of a forest of butterflies is the sound of surrender. A door swings open in the middle of your chest and a stream rushes towards your head and out amidst the flurry of opalescent wings. Like the first rain. It rushes right through the middle of you yet you are in the middle of it! The work is in the still suspended silence of the chrysalis where your synapses slow down and dilate enough to hear the creaking of Odin hanging from his tree. This is the finest place from which to hear your soul requirements.

It is required
You do awake your faith ^{xiii}

The Greek word for soul is *psyche*. The Greek word for butterfly is *psyche*. What is being cocooned in this suspended space?



DEATH

Possible Themes

Transformation, rebirth, endings, total metamorphosis, destruction, regeneration, elimination, letting go, transition, new beginnings.

The Image

A girl has come to the forest of Psyche, to the amber honey hive where the blue-black bird of renewal awaits with the alembic and the resulting gold: the lead that was cooked within has been transformed and released as the surrounding golden sphere.

Stories from the Card

At times of great change we get a glimpse into the soul forest, into the central axis. The girl wears the triangle ring that connects her to the Fool, life force and origins. She is bound to her ring, bound to remember. Remember the wind that moves you especially in moments of high distress where the world as you know it gets fractured. For a moment all has moved and you're off your map. This is not what we know as physical death but revolution. The total transformation of a situation.

The bee flies with heavy pollen stuck to its body and vanishes into the hive. There the bee as alchemist turns pollen to sweet honey. This numinous geometry where substance is transformed. The blue-black bird offers you a drink from the bottle of distilled nectar. This is what you have reaped from this particular situation.

And the opposite can be true—not so much an end but a reassociation. Experiences from the past, seemingly done and dusted but not assimilated may hover like ghosts in the forest of butterflies. At transformative moments, often through dreaming, the full experience becomes part of you through a belated integration. The soul can now harvest it. What in you died a long time ago? What never made it past childhood? The blue-black bird holds your forgotten flight ready for you at all times—there is always renewal if you walk this way. At her heart a wild essential flowering will help you re-member. What did you bury long ago? Whatever has brought you to the liminal place, it is a stepping stone to rebirth.



TEMPERANCE

Possible Themes

Synthesis, integration, moderation, distillation, middle way, blending, solutions, tempering, restraint, compromise, redistribution, reconciliation.

The Image

The alchemist discovers how new color harmonies make a whole.

Stories from the Card

The alchemist in the lab when an alembic has burst into a chaotic confusion of affect. Chemicals fizz and coil, they twist and howl in the heat. The red fire rises up behind—a whole cavalry of angry intent. Creative power and expression are born of the black lilies of regret. New relation to the whole and to each other. Blue exalts the orange glow. They work together despite their past collisions. For every beautiful thing that rises, for every harmony, there is a prior stage where we trampled through the mud.

Below, silver moonshine liquifies to amenability—a reflective pool for all to drink from. Above, the dawn rises in a glint of yellow consciousness. The temperance angel burns myrrh and watches as you work in cinnabar and quicksilver. New harmonies get transplanted to the soul.

Temperance in your physical system is its homeostasis, the body as alchemist. Enquire and watch for clarity and synchronistic answers over the next few days. What might your body need? Perhaps more minerals, water, tenderness, the stretching of your spine—work with the delicate act of balancing each part.

I am the mediatrix of the elements, making one to agree with another. (Quoted in Jung) ^{xiii}



THE DEVIL

Possible Themes

Shadow, obsession, abuse of power, hubris, corruption, greed, humiliation, bondage, nigredo of alchemy.

The Image

A crying woman is being eaten alive by that which torments her. The struggle unleashes sun glyphs into the radioactive air which in turn become the peacock's colored tail.

Stories from the Card

Shadows rip through you like ghosts, their pupils switching between an opaque, uncanny white and consuming, dull obsidian. The air is corrosive, full of stunted, grating sounds. What has shackled you to the wall of this shrinking, airless place? What ravaging vortex of primal need has set itself to an obsessive tune?

It is commonly said of the peacock that it has an angel's feathers, a devil's voice, and a thief's walk. (Quoted in Jung) ^{xiv}

... it would seem that the route to our angel is through our devil. Or is this the shadowed angel you've been wrestling with for years?

Sit with your devils, the ones that ring bells incessantly in your head and refuse to let you sleep—listen in—watch their deformed heads rage with a full spectrum of temptations... and with shame, malice, hubris, abandonment—cradle them like screaming babes, lest you think that monsters have dreamed you up. If you can wait it out without dismissal or acting out, without talking down or deceit, the gnashing of teeth may become the peacock's tail. Not everything can be changed but naked engagement does more than we can know. The shackled potency might deliver you to yourself in a whole new light.

This devil may of course belong to someone else. Learn to distinguish between what is yours and what is not. You cannot put another's material in your alembic.



The “omnes colores” are frequently mentioned...as indicating something like totality...The first part was completed when the various components separated out from the chaos of the massa confusa were brought back to unity in the albedo and “all become one”. Morally this means that the original state of psychic disunity, the inner chaos of conflicting part-souls...becomes the “vir unus”, the unified man. Eating the peacock’s flesh is therefore equivalent to integrating the many colours. (Jung) ^{xv}



THE TOWER

Possible Themes

Awakening, radical revelation, revolution, eruption, catapulting change, upheaval, renovation, release of pressure, breaking down of old structures, new awareness.

The Image

A figure is traversed by lightning.

Stories from the Card

A song that drags you to it, a shore whose tide is calling, a blue-white sky kiss that shatters the illusion of a coherent body. The revelation sets off a revolution, elemental rain and fire irrevocably shifting what you know—you are pelting at the seams, shedding every skin at once while the lightning rocks right through you to reach the world. It's encoded on your soul, this blasting into light. You cannot force this nor would you want to. More often it happens in the shattering of a cherished dream, a crisis, a paradox beyond the boundaries of containment—some emergency that is in fact *emergence*.

Trust you cannot see the whole picture because it is beyond human capability. Trust you are never alone. You will not find this in any book—you may read it but you cannot take it in without direct experience, without elemental nature taking hold of you at such a time and calling out your inner name.

...in psychic life, it is the heat, the fire of passion, the flame and ardor of emotion that provide the basis of illumination, that is, of an illumined consciousness, which rises from the combustion of the fundamental substance and enhances it. (Neumann) ^{xvi}



THE STAR

Possible Themes

Hope, promise, resources, guidance, inspiration, regeneration, replenishment, healing, peace, spiritual impulse, gifts, upliftment, encouragement, ascension, forgiveness, song, cleansing polluted waters.

The Image

The star at the center of her chest turns all tearful sorrow into crystal clear waters that irrigate the land. In accordance with lunar phases, life germinates and spirals up towards the star and its bright hope.

Stories from the Card

Here at the river of time where no moment weighs the same as any other. It eddies and spirals in unexpected ways. Here you find Pegasus trotting with a hoof of crystal, one of water, one of obsidian and one of poetry. He splashes through the water and keeps track of your intent. Waters of inspiration, when regret or satiation has cut short your flight. If you have cradled grief like an only child, this is Pegasus reminding you to cry out and cleanse your inner waters. Pegasus knows about all that as he was born in the womb of Medea and the torrents of her torment. He knows about the dark. He bathes you in the river of release, whispers you a poem, gallops you on his back to remind you of resilience. Let his song reach your waters and regenerate your being.

In ancient times the star symbol was connected to our eternal life. Climb the mountain in your heart. Here live the waters of forgiveness. The star is the place where life itself is redeemed.



THE MOON

Possible Themes

Mystery, dream guidance, depths, intuition, porousness, night vision, unconscious desires rising, fluctuation, uncertainty, illusion, cycles, rhythms, lack of clarity, enticement, moodiness, sensitivity, vulnerability, longing, rest.

The Image

The misty moon floats on the tidal waters of our world, affecting them. The Chartres labyrinth with the hearted rose at its center drifts in and out of view. Women in the four corners dance to the full moon. Three owls that wax and wane have night for eyes—keen readers of the mysteries.

Stories from the Card

In her realm reality is always shifting, lunar tides move your moods like sails. Dogs howl to her rhythms. Dreams gather all your stray dogs and bring them back to you. Winding paths that seem blocked may actually show you a way through but the opposite may be true. Your dogs will smell it on the wind, despite the mist. This ghostly light makes vision hazy and decisions blurry. Nothing is quite as it seems; the sands shift beneath your feet. The drag of the tides on pebbles, pulling in and rushing out like hungry breath—it pulls and pushes at you. Plants are growing in her quiet, doing things underground. An owl soars across as midnight strikes, the white of its belly translucent. The night is full of intimations, full of memory and promise—fleeting reconnections wash into your dreaming.

Oh Moon. The wolf's howl reminds us of our allegiance... and of longing. You are always here and not here yet it's by your tides that we must walk our labyrinth, here in the experiences of incarnation. Mistress of hide and seek, you of the secret waters.



THE SUN

Possible Themes

Vitalization, wholeness, clarity, achievement, joy, consciousness, collaboration, initiative, reward, progress, enthusiasm, optimism, success, brightness, emergence, vocation.

The Image

A man whose essence radiates from his chest. Plants, sea and sky lean into the sunlight round his head. A blackbird with a sun glyph alights.

Stories from the Card

The circular sun symbol emerging from the wing of night—an Eye opening a clear, aligned gaze right at you. Bullseye. The clarity of this gaze radiates and reveals. Solar consciousness. In the morning breeze, birds sing cheerfully and the quest is clearly delineated before you. You may have trundled through a lot of night to get here.

Sun is your wiring, your nervous system sheathed in illumination. A yellow glow that is the inside of eternal sunlight. A repartee that is bright, fast, funny, full of circulating light... unless it runs burning or epic, too hot to bear—arrogance that shrivels and short circuits you.

You ride in with fresh enthusiasm like a father carrying his boy on a bicycle, whooshing down the sunlit valley suspended in the silence before time when all is possible. You arrive, greet this new day and zip past as the world kicks into gear—like Helios steering the sun's course after a long night. Remember Helios' son Phaethon who was unable to steer such heat, keep the fiery horses of the chariot on track. As Moon needs Sun, so Sun needs Moon. Balance out your energies: do not scorch or insist on rational bright daylight at all times.

Burn but do not burn yourself out, burn to a crisp or burn those around you. All your burning is connected to the night, to the mystery; remember to keep the night bird close by as herald. The veneration of Apollo at Delphi is due to the collaboration with the Pythia. The relationship of opposites holds the center.



I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself, and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse
All prophecy, all medicine, is mine
(Shelley) ^{xvii}



JUDGEMENT

Possible Themes

Reckoning, results, consequences, understanding, maturation, settlement, resurrection, discernment, rewards, renewal, recognition, honesty, liberation.

The Image

A figure stands as tree, robed in sage, surrounded by forest and animals. The tree of life, robed in Sophia. Four leaves surround the heart-rose. Four birds perch round the tree, four more animals surround it—the double quaternity. Here in the place where the heart and the rose are One, where none of the dream voices are missing.

Stories from the Card

What needs revisiting? This is a time of reckoning and it may belong to you or to another. Where does your unified voice fit in to the greater scheme of things? Have you shown life enough respect thus far? And are you being treated with respect?

Stand and wrestle honestly with everything you carry. This includes owning what is yours, becoming responsible for it, extending the scope of your heart. Aspects of yourself may need hard discipline—ethical considerations are fundamental. Getting to know yourself does not mean free reign to whatever surfaces. This is why it takes courage. You may discover things you do not like. The tension of opposites, the creative inclusion—it's hard work. We kill any number of instincts to fit in. And yet they haunt us till we love them without reserve. They do not ask to take the lead and wreak havoc in the world but for us to bear the tension of our opposites and forge the mystery of ourselves from there. Authenticity lives in paradox. Your liberation lies in the emergence of the entire range of your strange song. As it reveals, it shifts. Synthesis changes reality. This cracks the heart open in unimaginable ways—this is intimacy with life. Beat all of your wings if you would reach the kingdom inside you.

Then listen to the voices of others—know the difference. Listen for the great chorus of voices that surrounds you, for the cry of the Earth, for the expressions of need and of wonder. We have become ten thousand things and from that ten trillion more. The original, essential thing runs through all of these as does the liquid sunlight—a fragrance beyond time and beyond name. We need to witness—this is one of our great tasks, this consciousness in the making.



Go to the waters of the Nile and there you will find a stone that has a spirit... Take this, divide it, thrust in your hand and draw out its heart: for its soul... is in its heart. (Quoted in Jung) ^{xviii}



THE WORLD

Possible Themes

Totality, completion, prize, attainment, arrival, actualization, satisfaction, coming home, living your purpose, worldly concerns, participation, gnosis.

The Image

A pregnant woman cloaked in stars with a bird of paradise for hair. A natal chart surrounds the pregnant belly that surrounds the tree that surrounds the golden center. In the soil a tree root grows the four elements along its length.

Stories from the Card

The circle of the natal chart: a personal ring and seed that each of us is bound to. This is not fate but inner germination. Creativity and free will make it grow. In each seed, a potential philosopher's stone awaits.

The Circle is without beginning and without end.

Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge, Philosophical Tree. Morphing Tree. Guardian Tree and Portal tree—may we treat you with awe. Intoxicating Ambrosia Tree—every ancestor holding lymph out for you. Sephirot Tree, Yggdrasil and Axis Mundi. It is the Tree of golden apples and the Tree of the devotee, Hazel tree and Oak, the Banyan and the Ash. Cypress in its silence, a living compass. It is the Kalpa tree, the Sky-High Tree. The Tree where the conference of birds finds rest.

The Amrita Tree versus The World Tree—but these are one! This then is the alchemical wedding that produces the golden child. *Our gold is not common gold.*^{xix}

She is the tree of life for everybody who understands her and a light which is never extinguished. (Quoted in von Franz)^{xx}

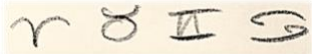
MOVING ON TO THE MINORS BUT FIRST...



A Note on the Zodiac & The Saturn Spiral

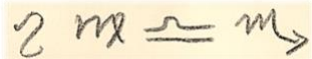
All 12 signs of the zodiac are spread across the minors—this is mainly as a keeper of time since the minors relate more to the movement of our daily life (thus the fluid sketching). There are some correlations between sign and card which are mentioned within each card; however, these placements are mainly a sky calendar. You may also find that you pick a card simply for the sign it houses.

Early on, with the 2s, you will find the first four signs in their corresponding elements/suits:



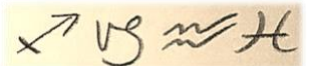
Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer

In the middle, with the 6s, comes the second lot:

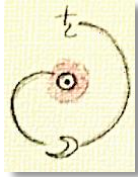


Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio

And with the 10s, we get the last batch:



Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces



A Story

Along with the signs you will find a Saturn spiral—a reminder of our incarnation and development in earthly existence. Saturn is at the threshold as Lord of Manifestation and Grand Architect of the physical plane. The spiraling takes us into Moon, the soul-making in lunar cyclical time and emotional tides. Here Moon is sacred body-vessel in which we experience what gets transcribed to soul. The ongoing movement carries all this substance to the ever-present Sun, the enlivening essence and core light of the heart.



ACES

Within the most hidden recess a dark flame issued from the mystery of *eyn sof*, the Infinite, like a fog forming in the unformed... Only after this flame began to assume size and dimension, did it produce radiant colors. From the innermost center of the flame sprang forth a well out of which colors issued and spread upon everything beneath, hidden in the mysterious hiddenness of *eyn sof*. (Quoted in Edinger)^{xxi}

Black and white is for our eyes to remember that things are not always what they seem. A visual cue. The invisible influences are many more than the visible ones. These cards bring in a memory, genetic imprint, ancestral whisper, soul shudder, communication, the winds of new influence—more than meets the physical eye since very little starts in the visible dimension. The black and white teem with life and possibility because they are not constricted by physical laws of manifestation. It's a way of instantly recognizing a great distance and the possibility that these cards, rather than colorless, are capable of continually changing color.

A Story

The Aces come from the depths of cosmic ocean. They get washed onto shore like bright star fish, glistening in the early sun, not knowing this strange new territory. This ocean is warm and the drag of waves pulls on colored pebbles as the whole beach begins to hum with molecular vibrancy and possibilities spinning into being. It's a majestic orchestra whispering across the expanse of the bay. At this very spot, as time

trembles into waking, a new event is born that gets bound to your body. If you take a rough crystal and polish it up, you get a magnifying glass, a reading stone like those used by the ancients. Through this you can look for evidence of beginnings, of time shimmering into being like the nervous system of a star fish; as this happens the Aces unwind their blindfolds and yield of their essence for story to begin. Aces may signal which element is at the heart of the matter, what world is developing. They assume color gradually as experience engraves itself upon the soul.

Lastly, the little white booklet uses the word *hoodwink* for the blindfold of the Aces—it did originally mean to blindfold and to conceal. *Wink* meant to hold one's eyes closed. Consciousness is the alchemical Mercurius, a trickster that leads to emancipation across a series of slippery slopes, paradoxical conundrums and ambiguity. Poetically, the word *hoodwink* expresses it as it winks at you while covering your gaze in a game of hide and seek. This is well illustrated by the trickster Mercury who persuades the cows, stolen from his brother, to walk backwards so that they can't be traced. Inner work isn't straightforward, complexes come into play and the shadow fills one's pockets with surprises. Reality is infinitely creative. We are born into flesh and orientate mainly with the senses of the body. We can no longer hear what is beyond the speed of light, that vastness in potential... we get hoodwinked. What we see is partial. Perhaps we might try out dragonfly eyes occasionally or trust our dream eyes. The light of the One in the Ace is one we cannot directly see. Semele paid for total vision with her life. When Zeus promised to grant her a wish, she asked for him to reveal himself in his full glory. As he could not break his oath he tried to persuade her to chose again but at her refusal, he finally conceded. And the magnitude of light blasted her to pieces.



ACE OF SPARKS



Horse-dragon (longma), detail bottom right

Possible Themes

Essence, beginnings, self-discovery, exhilaration, creative urge, sexual energy, initiative, vigor, arousal, questions of identity.

The Image

A blindfolded head. Horses bathed in inspirational light gallop in the crown. A gecko swerves round the Aries glyph on one cheek. Longma, or horse-dragons, float around the neck.

Stories from the Card

A spark. Essence comes to life. Fire rips inspiration out of night. This is your passion brimming at the rim of your mind, all that you might be able to do—every ground you will cross at a gallop or escape like a horse spooked by flames. This is the incandescent heat that forges your being and your vision. The fire will inspire your life onward; it may press forward fueled by anger or excitement, depending how you stoke it. These horses lead the caravan of night that carries the new stories in. For each light, a vision, for each vision, a becoming, for each becoming a soul pearl. Aries, the beginning, the spring that sparks to life, the ram that rumbles: *I am*.

The horse-dragon was revered in ancient China—a mythic being known as *longma*. These creatures presented themselves as precursors to the Pholarchos through a dream where a mysterious tarot teacher was in charge of their esoteric manuscript. It is said a longma brought the yellow river map on its back, making this being a divine messenger. The ancient diagrams used for divination were fashioned from the map carried by the longma.

A dragon horse is the vital spirit of Heaven and Earth... it comes out of the midst of the Ming river carrying a map on its back. (Quoted in Visser)^{xxii}



ACE OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Surrender to love, empathy, psychic channel, fertility, ecstasy, imagination, emotional connection to the whole, embryonic feelings, sustenance.

The Image

A blindfolded face, made by the same substance as the surrounding bloom of jellyfish. Coral and sea anemones grow out of the crown.

Stories from the Card

Coral. It orchestrates the miraculous unified spawning rhythm by the light of the full moon. The spawns are like the bag of white pebbles from the aforementioned dream (see introduction). It's like the Tao's ten thousand things beginning to manifest.

The water suit is full of jellies which are about 90% water. They could be seen as a transparent emotional, *watery* body. Jellyfish are amongst the oldest animals on the planet, perhaps 600 million years old; they have survived every mass extinction—just like love. These jellies are bioluminescent mandalas, carrying light they float in the sea like wandering altars. This substance of theirs, this unity in circles, is millions of years old. This is the world of the jelly before words. This is where feeling ripples quietly in the depths before we're aware of its sting. And yes, feelings can turn us to stone like Medusa's stare if they go unrecognized. This place is teeming with sacred life and longing: the longing for connection, tendrils reaching in all directions. It craves you. A soul membrane, a bioluminescent jellyfish portal that might just barter with the speed of light and let you see infinity. A mandala with constellations and whole worlds you might step into as through a dream portal. How far does this fiery translucence go?



ACE OF WINGS



vas hermeticum with planets, detail bottom left

Possible Themes

New idea, pursuit of wisdom, clarity, clean break, originality, reason, insight, inventiveness, intelligence.

The Image

A proliferation of swallows, hummingbirds, cranes, songbirds and birds of paradise flutter out of the blindfolded head. Lightbulbs occupy one side where a man hanging off the ladder is practicing his new wings, areal acrobatics, flexibility of mind. Below, on the same ladder, the seven traditional planets emerge from a vas hermeticum.

Stories from the Card

Wings. You step through to a flutter of wings and feathers and high pitched warbling: you're high in rarified air above a tropical forest. The scents from below are heady and you can't see straight. An army of nightingales seem to be lifting your body with their song. The hummers are tickling you, playing tag using your body as hiding place. A swirl of swooping and fast flying. The chirping is almost like laughter: high, infectious, exhilarated laughter—it sounds like crystals shimmering in the sun, little shots of lighting rippling through the air. The feathers, whiter than snow, are too fast to follow—the only way to perceive them is by a peripheral catching on. This is the realm of Nous.

Read life for the clues to your active questions. Don't jump to conclusions, allow for expansion—the importance is knowing your questions. Life will respond. Synchronicities will smile at the interest shown.



ACE OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Promising projects, practical solutions, material conditions, health, birth, seeds of gain, new physical pattern, centering, productivity, wealth.

The Image

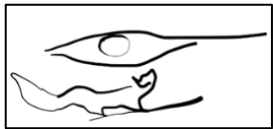
A blindfolded head sprouting every kind of plant and dotted by intense jasmine—bountiful spring coming into bloom. Marigold and sage leaves float through the early morning dew.

Stories from the Card

Spirals. Let's walk it. Eons of it. Fast millennia and slow surging arcs of matter forming. The world becoming form through flitting wings, fast fingers, spider weaves and dainty legs—charged particles bursting pathways in the brain, budding earth, spawning water. The Oneiroi spiral in

and spiral back out beyond the farthest shores of Okeanos: they dream themselves into being. Dance of the One, dance of the ten thousand things—in every culture, in every direction—a dreaming into being.

Cause for celebration: first breath, air, sunlight. The great miracle. The seasons as elemental forces speak through us—voices get calibrated like fine instruments with incredible base notes so that we attune to the body. There is such intense beauty to behold, all of it free—though here we do learn to use money and practical measures to maintain the homeostasis. The senses come alive, hands touch, caress, choose. Projects take shape, we begin to build. Talent shows its face and we explore the tools to express it here and now. What new thing is manifesting in your life? How can you best tend to it?



2s



2 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Harnessing vitality, intention, polarization, aim, alliance, getting ready, restlessness before action, creative tension.

The Image

Two horses are forming out of incandescent flame and light. Aries and the snake, accompanied by trumpet and morning glory, announce a fresh new world. The red mane points direction like an arrow.

Stories from the Card

The ram of *Aries* trumpeting the spring—the first rituals of becoming. Here it seems you could conquer every land and more besides. You begin to desire one thing over another. Get some fuel in your belly and ready yourself for action. These are not full horses yet—no hooves to strike the ground and spark into action. But the flames in the mane begin to find their direction.

Text on the Card: Snake: potency. Vita (life).



2 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Relationship, attraction, affinity, beginning of romance, connection, engagement, consummation, partnership, caring, concord, good match.

The Image

There is a bay on the island of Rhodes that is shaped like a heart. Below the waters this coral is shaped in a similar blue shape. The arms of coral make contact with each other, discharging warm, electrical vibrations. Two fish are calling to each other across the spawning coral.

Stories from the Card

The deep sea heart is pulsing—it fills the coral and ripples into the water as story and life. The yellow current is set off, a living vortex at the center of the image; this creates a circuit that feeds back into the heart and out into all things.

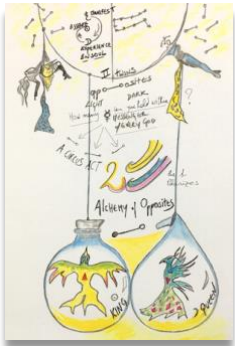
Fish 1: “I drink the water as I come to you drawn as by a magnet, drawn by your pinky tail, drawn right to the center of the coral by you. I let desire flood me”.

Fish 2: “You come close. *You’re beautiful*, I whisper. A current runs through the sea. You recognize me and call me by my name”.

The *Cancer* crab is up in the corner, moving sideways in the zodiacal circle, putting a geographical map on the wall. What experiences begin here? The Axis of nurturance and the womb of the imaginal. Write your dreams, this dialogue enriches soul. It is a kind of belonging.

The pull of attraction leads to a new place. From mother love, we widen our circle to all kinds of other love—we experience the width and surprise of the heart, the strange new seas.

As Corall grows under Water and is hardened by the Air, so also is the Stone. (Maier) ^{xxiii}



2 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Debate, stalemate, respite, denial, opposition, impasse, doubt, questions, dilemma, blind spot.

The Image

Two circus twins swing their winged thoughts in glass vessels; they form a language to communicate with each other despite opposing views.

Stories from the Card

... shut up! No, go ahead. You were saying? Ah, not that again. Surprise me. What on earth were you thinking? You fool—Know it all. This must be a misunderstanding. You wish! I simply don't have the words. No, no, what were you thinking? Let's get it all out on the table. No, let's not. You cannot dominate every conversation! What would you say if—no, no, no—I dare you to try it out. Think this through... I dare you.

... the acrobatics of repartee—bright, fast, funny, furious. How it can clarify or simply muddy the waters. A flitting duel of tapping blade on blade, unfinished thoughts clashing. Or total silence. Persuasion. Exhilarating debate. Realities twisted out of shape. That's not what happened!

The power of the word. Dispute, discourse, debate. The thrilling play of *Gemini*... without and within. Perhaps a novel perspective needs some space. Ensure you are being heard and that you are in turn lending your own ear to others.

Text on the Card: (from top down) Gemini Twins. Opposites. Light—dark. How many opposites can you hold within? Mercury messenger of very God. A circus act. The One polarizes. Alchemy of Opposites. King. Queen.



2 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Juggling situations & projects, cause and effect, expansion, adaptability, playfulness, change.

The Image

A sphere is separating into two leaves as the bull scatters starry flowers down between them. The two leaves are pointing above and below. The upper one has a white spirit root with colors forming. It is as the trees of the great religions where the roots are in heaven and the foliage spreads on earth. It has a wing supporting a spiral, or spirit upholding this materialization. The bottom leaf is in lush green growth.

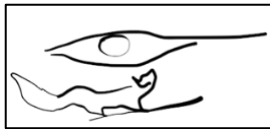
Stories from the Card

Viriditas, the green cloak of Venus. The beginning of the earth suit, dedicated to incarnation, to the bull of Venus and its beauty, to its love of nature: “*for the joy of it*”. It’s fundamental to the soul’s journey, this passion for life. The sphere bursts open with life... ten thousand flowers. The pleasure in the manifest, textured world. In this, the appreciation of *Taurus*.

The leaves are shaping up, finding color. They are like hands seeing how many flowers they can hold. We take on all manner of activities and we’re busy figuring out how many we can juggle successfully.

As we keep adding, some may eventually have to be removed: the balance is in constant flux as are our abilities.

Text on the Card: Cross of matter (pertains to a natal chart's 4 directions in the earth plane). For the joy of it.



3s

Synthesis, creation. “One begot two. / Two begot three. / And three begot the ten thousand things” (Tao) ^{xxiv}



3 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Gaining ground, synthesis, increasing energy, discovery, enhancement, confidence, willpower, enterprise.

The Image

Crescendo of creative outpouring from bottom to top figure who is being lifted up by the 3 snakes—the muse takes off. Above the outstretched arms a creative venture bubbles into golden-red life, fueled by passion. Inspiration has taken hold and burns by the blue-white winds of spirit.

Stories from the Card

Song enables passion for life to flow forth. The wave of passion creates—that is its calling. The fabric of your divine nature is on fire, your song is clear and something has been created. Singing may fuel your projects and inject them with greater vibrancy—either literal song or the inner music of your potency.

Many activities in small communities bring people together—their accompanying song turns common chores into meaningful rituals.

Text on the Card: Passion. And the fire made them dance, turning the heart to divine song (starts in fine ink).



3 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Grace, support, emotional abundance, celebration, deepening commitment, sharing, emotional growth, success in the arts, friendship, following the heart.

The Image

In the depths of the sea a woman plays the accordion. The music rises like kisses through waves and sky, permeating all. Halfway up a pregnant woman dances with 3 dragonflies. Above, a man standing on a cup plays the drum and sings to the moon.

Stories from the Card

Music unleashes its kisses on the world, a kind of soul graffiti. The very water is full of kisses, full of connective delight. Love is kissing the swelling belly into shape. Those dark blues are fingertips making a mark, leaving prints all over like an extravagant, sweet caress. Exchange is everywhere: rich, irresistible, full of numen. Every object has its glow.

Text on the Card: Poem (by the pregnant girl). Soul map (by the accordion). The waxing moon declares: “*I love you too*”.



3 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Heartache, separation, understanding from suffering, disappointment, jealousy, sorrow, quality filter, quarrel.

The Image

Falcon-head glides away as the yellow plumage reaches up through the central figure and comes out of her mouth as little whirlwinds. The trapeze artist holds a dagger as she swings through the air.

Stories from the Card

Discovery jolts us. Separation shudders the fabric of stability. Perhaps we are the ones getting recreated by the loosening of what we know. A storm in consciousness begins, something is moved in the matrix. The winds of our becoming sweep through us, clean us out.

Whirlwind screams reach the stars. The tearing creates incredibly malleable material, a luminescence in the night. It's a place where new perspectives might wash in and drive us in unexpected directions. Yellow illuminates a budding consciousness.

Text on the Card: "Until the internal lyric becomes conscious" (Mead) ^{xxv}



3 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Joint work, foundations set, gain, ability, dexterity, effort, results of skilled craftsmanship, tenacity, dedication, recognition.

The Image

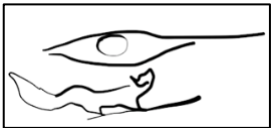
Three figures apply their specialized skills to fulfill a group project.

Stories from the Card

The green energy surges up through the roots, grounding their endeavor. It flows like lymph invigorating their achievement. Months of practice, each contributing their expertise, has prepared them for a dazzling performance. They have argued often but they've found enough common ground and common sense to make a virtue of their differences. Rosemary infusions sustain their focus. They are feeling quite pleased with themselves and they've earned this satisfaction with their sweat and perseverance.

...their genuine efforts have made a large heart bloom above the roots as everything created gains a life of its own. Aromatic oils waft through the heady air.

Text on the Card: Poplar magic.



4s



4 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Harvest, celebration, completion, success, rite of passage, reward, generosity.

The Image

The central couple marry, producing two slim dragons with four eyes in their tails. Twelve flames flare out of the dragon mouths, celebrating completion. Sun and Moon unite in the alchemical wedding. Something is established and festivities brighten the air.

Stories from the Card

All gather to celebrate success. Two pairs of magicians fly through the sky, streaking it with panache. Dragon head and dragon tail adorn the long red skirt as destinies shape up. A flowing rhythm fills the air like a gentle tambourine. The aerial magicians lock eyes and wait till all present grasp the four things needed. The *fourth* is a new, stable state after the *three* has created a fresh reality out of its creative play.

... we come to one of the central axioms of alchemy, namely the saying of Maria Prophetissa: "One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the one as the fourth". (Jung)^{xxvi}

Text on the Card: Festa (celebration).



4 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Stagnation, conservative energies, boredom, hurt feelings, lack of stimulation, discontent, dullness, apathy.

The Image

A circus acrobat crouches above the water, barely dipping her toes in. Four turtles come to her and she turns away. Four cups fall from the moon.

Stories from the Card

She's dressed up to the moon but even that bores her now. She pours her champagne into the sea. The cups empty out and everything feels stagnant. Oh, another full moon dragging over a splendid place—so what? She's forgotten how to engage, forgotten she's held up by cosmic aerial silk and that she only has to sway slightly to get going again. Even the rainbow seems bleak and runny today, like a cold. Lots of small details have worn away at her shine, dulled the fun. The moon drags her colors across the sky and her glow drains into the sea, becoming unavailable. And so the acrobat does not notice that four merry turtles have found her and they're splashing out persuasions—invitations to join them and renew. They nibble at her dormant silk. Through the water light warbles across their backs making a moving mosaic.

She keeps meaning to jump—just waiting for the right moment. Waves rise so she considers stalling a little longer. The wind starts, surely a sign the weather will turn against her. Does she see a fin out towards the island? They don't exist here. Still, who can tell. She'll wait till it's gone then dive in. A turtle raises its head above the water just beneath her, stays there looking at her with archaic eyes. It slowly nods at her... perhaps it is asking for food...

Text on the Card: Invitation.



4 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Rest, contemplation, taking stock, solace, emergence, resolution, truce, recovery, withdrawal.

The Image

The dancer is birthing from the swell of infinite circumference—the magnified iris of the divine Eye. It lifts him into an awakening. The dervishing grey skirt lights up as it emerges. The Eye streams upwards as kundalini serpent. The hands are sharp, perceptive as swords. The swirling brings many voices on the wind.

Stories from the Card

Slow down, rest, restore your energies so that a fresh wave may rise up. This is a card of realignment. Thought-daggers pierce the heart until the heart of the matter is understood. Whispers of far reaching truths are received. A still, quiet clarity rises through the Eye. Now the four daggers in the heart align and activate purpose. They enhance the new potency coming through.

We each have our cross to bear and with any luck, it becomes our emancipation. Our material is our potential treasure. The wound is housed with the gift. The Pluto glyph on the dancer's shoulder reveals an acceptance of the continual descent in order to resurrect. A receptive ear is listening in to pattern and complex and ancestor. The yellow light activates the pulling of all connecting threads. The dancer rises like a growing tree, the one planted long ago—the one fed by the ancestors. In his meditations he hears the repeating aspects from eons past, brings in the great invisibles, observes the pouring out of archetypal patterns that need to be understood—time is a certain kind of patterning that holds great depths of information in its folds. Time to dress down distraction and turn the compass to the direction needed.

Text on the Card: on destiny—remember from whence you have come—patterns (bottom, left of the eye). Respect the great invisibles (bottom right of circle). (Some dates of approximate syncretic movements are dotted around with planetary aspects).



4 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Holding on, creating security, possessiveness, self-protection, playing it safe, establishing order, avarice, investment, hoarding, building wealth.

The Image

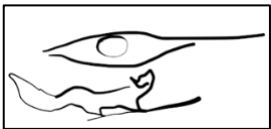
Cassandra is held in a net. She has refused Apollo's advances and in turn he curses her so that none will believe the gift of prophecy he has bestowed upon her. And so his gift is annihilated along with the richness of her voice.

Stories from the Card

Courage to be in the world—to give *of* yourself. Courage to build in the world—to give *to* yourself. Apollo's advances are an inner penetration, an opening to a gift. Would you be a mouthless muse with no contribution of your own? What is held too tightly becomes sterile. What is rejected for too long loses belief in itself. If your dreams gift you something to grow, cultivate it. Tend to your garden.

Believe in yourself and give of yourself but know what boundaries are necessary so that you will not become depleted. Generosity in giving and receiving creates a flowing current that irrigates the world.

Text on the Card: Apollo's curse.



5s



5 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Frustration, creative conflict, strife, disagreement, attraction of opposites, rebalancing, challenge, amorous conflict, adjustment, antagonism in the workspace.

The Image

Two dancers in a heated tango disagree on which direction to turn. The tussle sets off the golden bullet that lands a creative spark. Their companion carnival serpents are aroused while the transformation frogs decide whether to intervene. As the dancers have stomped out several times, the central frog holds the gang together despite the altercation—a mercurial overseer of operations.

Stories from the Card

Here are challenges of firming something up and delivering. The opposites rise in feverish disagreement when in creative pursuit; it is their interchange and their eventual synthesis that makes something come into being. Caution: the swagger of pride may blind intent and botch up the essential life of the vision. Remember what you are serving. This struggle sparks the pursuit of progress and sets potential in motion. Being able to hold the paradox without taking sides, the flexibility of keeping both sides close, makes way for new vision, new landscape, new realities. External rows ignite the flames, spur the work on. When Michelangelo said the form was already in the marble he did not mean that chipping away to find it would be easy.

Two snakes shed skins of misunderstanding, regenerate ways of connecting. They serve the archetypal creative flow and work through the dancing partners but beyond their personal aspirations. The couple need to channel this flow without identifying with it, without being wiped out by transpersonal forces. The struggle unites in the heart of the frog who does not fight change: from tadpole he hops into frog—and if he gets kissed he accepts the semblance of prince too. All the while the snakes turn on their axis, stream the motion, regain control, loose it again: they are sentinels of ascension.



5 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Disappointment, grief, learning from mistakes, acceptance, regret, partial loss, longing, emotional honesty.

The Image

A violinist with a jellyfish body and five jellies for an arm plays the violin at the bottom of the sea. Two fish swim in her chest.

Stories from the Card

Her body becomes jellylike. There's an emerald grotto with a white phosphorescence rising from below. It's brilliant white, almost blinding, filled with thousands of darting fish. The light resonates with a kind of musical buzzing. Two fish rise and slip into her: one carnation red, one cerulean blue. They insist on filling her with these hues and having them play out on the violin.

The loneliness is excruciating. Wailing womb, wailing water, wailing wall. This is the tearing of the heart. Her tears are the benediction and release, the body's ritual of washing clean. Not everything is lost. Emotions are registered in a parallel body within the one we know—it's just as present though it cannot be weighed upon a normal scale. Music alters the emotional body in a kind of prayer. It uncovers each emotion and fluidifies it. It opens doors to places otherwise unreachable; music is both location and traveling vessel. Out through the jelly portal, the place of renewal.

This may also pertain to the beginning of a maturation process where you relate to others as individuals. It may include Psyche's ordeals in the tale of *Eros & Psyche*.^{xxvii} The two fish bring new colors, different to your own. This is rich, you discover you have your own center and that you can stand alone. You begin to relate more intimately, more personally—without becoming fused into the same color as another in order to fortress yourself against the loneliness of the frightened child.



5 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Defeat, blame, conflict, fear, difficulty in communication, confusion, divisiveness, accepting limitations, remorse.

The Image

The glass woman surrounded by daggers.

Stories from the Card

A white hummer flies into her excited hands, allows itself to be cupped. She shows everyone its loveliness, exclaims: “*Look, a hummingbird!*” They bond and race each other round the room. She’s forgotten to put the fire screen in place and on a particularly fast swerve, the hummer falls into the brilliant flames—she retrieve him quickly but still too late. Her shock turns into a gigantic white bird that eats at her own heart: each peck of the sharp beak is a recriminating thought. It makes her wretch dry dust—she cannot release it, cannot swallow—too busy regretting and thinking how she could have avoided loss.

It seemed so innocent... so fresh... so young. A treasure she must not lose. It becomes a fixed, impaled thought which multiplies and turns outward in defence. The blame turns into ghosts rushing at her. Unborn, dark sounds form, her hair gets tangled in the blades, her skirt turns to jagged glass. The very air bleeds her humiliation. Until one day she hears a distant chime, like a tiny new hummingbird forming on the wind, a fragile thought: “*allow space for wonder, do not let the mind swallow up the heart*”.

Text on the Card: and so we bleed.



5 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Poverty, victimhood, illness, alienation, deprivation, insecurity, strain, loss of faith, hardship, exclusion, lack of self-worth, fighting for life.

The Image

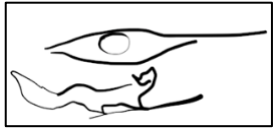
A woman holds up her fists to punch whoever comes close. Her bed sheets wrap round her and form into fox and wolf: internal allies she may meet outside in waking reality in the magic of synchronicity. An X on her temple marks her out. This is a place for recovery and the homeless.

Stories from the Card

A figure at war with reality, either because circumstances are too harsh or because her ability to cope is fragile. Something has deeply shaken the foundations of stability. The problem may be an internal one of faith or an external one of drastic conditions. Sometimes physical circumstances are so extreme that it makes us question our sanity and our ability to cope. Sometimes it makes us want to check out. Sometimes we've been told over and over that we are not worthy, that we cannot make the mark, that we're all wrong. Sometimes we tell ourselves, bury ourselves in mud of our own making. Certain circumstances emanate from our expectations and we need to think outside the box, outside what was taught. Which limits are being weighed up?

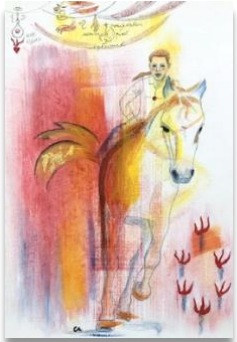
The wolf's cry knows where the moon is, where the clan is, and it always knows how to orientate. The wolf also knows what limits are set on its reality and finds ways to work with these. Or perhaps you need to imagine that in extreme circumstances, wolf behaves in radical ways that break an instinctual pattern upheld by the species. What is really the difficulty here? Call on all your allies. Fox is guide, inventor, keen observer. In folklore it knows how to hold up its tail when it crosses a river—forever resourceful. Are your allies internal or external? They may be either or both. The mystery is richer than we can fathom.

Text on the Card: howls of healing.



6s

The 6s are children with suns on their chest, all irradiating the deck with their enthusiasm. They are fresh and hopeful agents of renewal. From the heart of the minors, they carry a harmonious sunny fulcrum to resonate with.



6 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Victory, glory, fame, applause, acknowledgment, leadership, acclaim, honor, respect.

The Image

A boy on a horse gallops to the finishing line. Leo is in full swing above them. The sun is being alchemically cooked above the flaming heart.

Stories from the Card

The boy was miffed he was not a real lion but when he understood he had his lion within, it changed his whole demeanor. He discovered bravery and began vaulting on his horse. First it was just to show off, then because it felt like flying and then because the syncopating of their perfected rhythms was exhilarating beyond measure. Once they were ready as a team, they undertook their mission. Now they are an admirable pair and applause trails behind them like fire. Everyone involved in the event are feeling the victory as their own. A splendid win.

The willingness to shine bright. In this, the enthusiasm of *Leo*.



6 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Nostalgia, reunion, idealizing the past, affinity with nature, connecting to home, happy memories, re-evaluation, childhood legacy.

The Image

The child huddles with the magician who passes her a clown nose. They are supported by a large cup surrounded by vegetation.

Stories from the Card

Emotions brim in the cup. All the interconnecting leaves make a tapestry of memory. This is the girl's magic place, the place of resources. When she holds her clown nose she feels invincible because it brings the memory alive of when the magician materialized the shiny red ball in her palm from nothing—her palm had been empty! The nose is similar to the magician's one so that every time she wears it she feels connected up ... a vital red thread running through her life. A legacy from childhood.

The ability to call up where you've been, what you've felt, what the secret family connections are. Which are the helpful resources and which are ready for transformation? In this, the penetrative power of *Scorpio*.

Text on the Card: Cooking Soul. Incarnation—Soul Song Map—Essential Quest (on Saturn Spiral).



6 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Support in adversity, leaving difficulties behind, going with the flow, trust in creation, journey, solace, solutions, perspective, sanctuary.

The Image

A boy catches a lift on a falcon's back. The speed fills the sky and makes the boy feel free.

Stories from the Card

Falcon is master of the sky and his swiftness makes the boy's smile ring like a bell as they whoosh along their trajectory. The sun on his chest couples with the bird in an echo of the Sun God Ra with his falcon head. After the underground night journey that is full of trials, Ra emerges with the new day—revitalized and ready to bathe the world in his light.

In adversity we create the most astonishing solutions and we encounter the most surprising help—as novel as making the sky. The harsh journeys to higher ground are the ones we remember best.

The ability to find equilibrium. In this, the sustenance of *Libra*.

Text on the Card: Geometrie. We have even made the sky! Joy unbound. Revel.



6 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Sharing resources, generosity, gifts, patronage, exchange, charity, benefit.

The Image

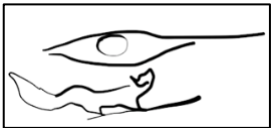
The wise young gardener holding certain plants in the light and certain ones in the shade.

Stories from the Card

This boy fosters the generation of energy through sharing material resources. He senses what to share and when. He brings to light which plants work as medicine so as to help the community. It's clean giving, without the expectation of return. He develops the understanding of what space is reserved for him and which for another, and so he easily stands up for himself and defends the other. Thus each flower has its space to grow. He is even aware of what needs shade and what needs light.

Translating plant communications. In this, the discrimination of *Virgo*.

Text on the Card: hear the plants' poetics.



7s



7 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Bravery, competition, overcoming obstacles, challenge, bullying, aggression, proving something, determination, teaching skills.

The Image

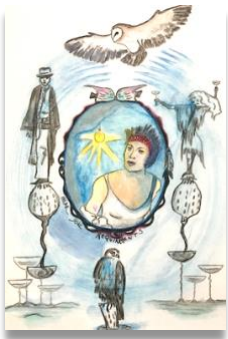
Artemisia, named after the goddess Artemis, is personified in a flaming dress. The rising fire of visionary action in the world. This plant has powers that enhance dreaming and it's traditionally placed under pillows to amplify our nightly travels. In the image, one inverted leaf serves as blueprint in the greening ground, a compass to its nature—this enables the plant to grow upwards in a flourish.

Stories from the Card

Your vision may be back to back with competing ones, jostling with other ambitions fueled by such fire. How solid is your project—are you backing it with intent, hard work, conviction? It may be praiseworthy or it may be more bully than hero... What internal figure might be antagonizing you, undermining your effort in a backward pull? What external competitor with similar capabilities may be grappling with you? And who might be envious of your talent and your achievements? Artemis, or Diana, is unstoppable.

Of these worts that we name Artemisia, it is said that Diana did find them and delivered their powers” (Herbarium) ^{xxviii}

Text on card: Ready Go! (Glyphs for the fire signs and planets are all present).



7 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Temptation, seduction, over-extension, authentic choice, imagination running circles round you, true vision or fantasy.

The Image

A woman looks through a mirror at the various figures present. "*Hear soul requirements*" appears beneath her.

Stories from the Card

A swirl of options and temptations crowds into her mind. A cacophony of voices. At first she cannot tell what's what, what holds weight, what is just debris on the wind or the scattering of empty dreams. She keeps asking for guidance but just meets the blur of passing fancies and the marketplace of sellers. Then the wisdom owl opens its wings and unleashes a gentle whirlwind that sweeps most things away. A falcon perches in the center. She feels falcon mind in hers, a magnetic ball that always senses North, holds orientation. Veils lift and scatter in the wind.



7 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Flexibility, wit, trickery, strategy, scheme, evasion, prudence, cleverness, clearing, experimentation, research.

The Image

A child is surrounded by seven hummingbirds that pull feathers out of her shoulders, fashioning wings that gently lift her up.

Stories from the Card

Hummers boast an enquiring mind and an astounding metabolic rate. Their speedy wings can beat up to 80 times per second. Here is a mind that is as flexible as a child at play. Thoughts that can levitate just out of reach, a crafty fugue. A white lie wee as a hummingbird's swerve of the tail. Shifting the light, staying unreadable. Nothing too serious... most of the time. It may just be a prank to keep the gathering on their toes... or perhaps just testing ability, how far it can take this—this precocious mind. It can get out of any sticky spot and invent on the spot. Its helpful tricks are light as birdsong and it's capacity for strategy is like fast forward flight.

Text on the Card: Sing with them and fly (in the folds of the skirt).



7 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Time out, pause, delay, stages in a process, bearing fruit, waiting for results, patience, respecting cycles, assessment, evaluation.

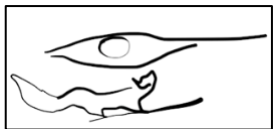
The Image

The artist merges with the spirit of the tree. Her hand holds a toad and her wrist grows roots.

Stories from the Card

Progress has been made, a stage is completed. Now watch and listen. Regular, steady rhythms, lying low, pausing for just long enough—rooting the harvest and the effort like a tree. There may be room for expansion but it's too soon to know. The arc of falling leaves and new leaves mark time—they move gradually with the seasons, no big crash bang entrances and exits. Nature reminds us that we are underscored by her rhythms and her cyclical time. The subtle reality of microscopic creation does not make it any less grand. In their quiet way, toads will hear earthquakes arrive days before they actually present themselves. Time to take stock.

...and time to listen to old growth forest. Billions of saplings planted in military lines will not make up for lost old growth. This is no time for quick fix solutions that hide the underlying problem. Untold riches are being annihilated. Listen to the elders, find them, protect them. Carbon footprint, fox print—pause and listen to the Earth. It will advise you on what it needs and on what you need.



8s



8 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Assistance, synchronicity, velocity, progress, activity, swift rendering, acceleration, development, mobility.

The Image

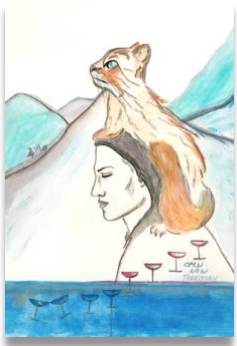
Tiger-footed Mercury dances, every molecule vibrating rapidly as it turns from red cinnabar to vapor, to quicksilver. Tattoos on both wrists morph along with the process. The cock crows to announce this new dawn, this new state... an approaching tiger pup sustains the transformation as its tail evaporates, becomes a fantastical composite that is mobile as liquid mercury. They assist each other and celebrate cooperation.

Stories from the Card

Mercury, the quicksilver of chemical association, mental association, emotional association, spiritual association: connective vapor, messenger of every god.

Cinnabar, in its vermilion red flamboyance has been associated with numinous substances such as dragon's blood and blood of the earth. A great deal of alchemical wonder was sparked by how heating this hard ore produces mercurial fumes which condense into silvery, slippery, liquid mercury—otherwise known as *quicksilver*.^{xxix} (Not to be tried at home!). In Italian it's *argento vivo* or *living silver*. And indeed, this substance is both quick and extremely lively—just like Mercurius who animates alchemical operations, fires up consciousness, enlivens synchronicity, calls in its allies.

Text on the Card: Messaging between realms (below the Mercury glyph in top left corner). Argento vivo (on t-shirt).



8 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Absorption, moving on, leaving what is known, questing within, aimlessness, unconscious change, self-pity, escape.

The Image

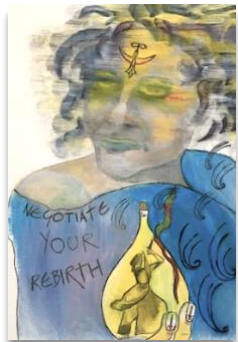
A man surrounded by mountains immerses himself in the lake while the cat climbs to his head, wanting to keep dry as long as possible.

Stories from the Card

As the waters get deeper the mountains seem to get taller. The cat climbs higher, digs its claws in. Then man can feel the cold water seep into his clothes. Fish and algae tickle his bare feet, slip into his pockets. He closes his eyes and finds access to a buoyant stretch of magnified feeling. It courses in amazing shapes. He's a captain mooring into himself, leaving everything he knew behind. It's like falling through every blue of the chromatic scale, each shade leaving a trace on the soft moonscape of his heart.

Jupiter in Scorpio will amplify work with the unconscious, bring up hidden depths and secret feelings. Even a cat will enter water with the auspices of Jupiter, its faith and its ability to find meaning. Old conditioning may be brought into question as the unknown waters take hold.

Text on the Card: Open new Territory. Jupiter in Scorpio (glyphs on the mountain slope).



8 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Oppressive ideas, interference, obstacles, chronic mental restriction, negative beliefs, distortion, conditioned response.

The Image

A figure blurred by pain and twisted perceptions. He holds an alembic, a vas hermeticum, in which a smaller version of himself attempts to crack the glass with a dagger in order to get out. He is unaware that the infinity bird hovers at his third eye.

Stories from the Card

When our minds become obsessive or stuck in negative thoughts, they limit themselves to a small array of repetitive, blinkered sounds. They turn vision fuzzy, catch the soul in a net and bend the world out of shape.

Call in the nightingale...it has an extensive repertoire—even by bird standards—consisting of more than a thousand sounds that it stitches into a fluid, harmonious extravaganza. Call in the nightingale to negotiate rebirth and sing the full song of your soul.

The infinity bird caresses the air with its wings in a soft figure of eight, infusing the brow with yellow light. The same light of consciousness is in the vessel where the struggling shadow figure is being forged—he attempts to cut his way out of the scrutinizing light but this seeming prison is the inner work that binds him to his freedom.

He must be enclosed in the *vas Hermeticum* and heated until the “moistness” that still clings to him has departed...the original chaos and the sea (the unconscious). Some kind of coming to consciousness seems indicated. (Jung)^{xxx}

Text on the Card: Negotiate your rebirth.



8 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Apprenticeship, talent, discipline, commitment, refining skill, preparation, training, practice, repetitiveness.

The Image

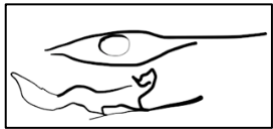
A man learns to use a diamond polishing mill. He is flanked by multiple geometries of sacred union in various stages of completion.

Stories from the Card

Ungaretti wrote: *I am illuminated by immensity.*^{xxxii} And so we are. The light circulates. This apprentice polishes the lapis, the stone he has been making throughout his life. The stone that circulates the light. He remembers the secret origin of every passion he has felt and every terror too.

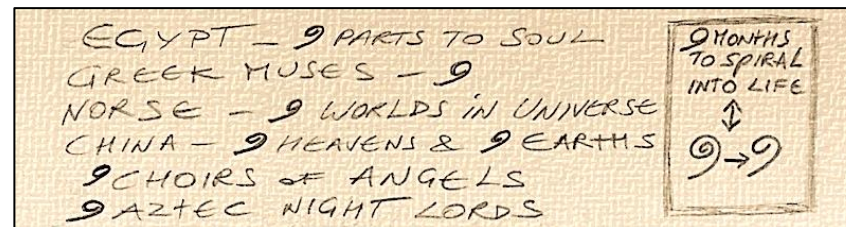
Whatever you apprentice in this life, let it circulate the light. Every facet of true meaning shines on the infinite faces of the diamond. Diamond body, eternal body, light body, lapis.

Text on the Card: Diamond Body. Polish the diamond. Apprenticing infinity in the here and now. The love that I feel for you is always love for you.



9s

3x3 is 9. It equals a multiplied power of creativity, a climax. The 9 of magic math. This number is glorified in numerous cultures across the globe. You may want to add to this list of ancient 9s:



A pictorial detail in each 3 of this deck develops in the corresponding 9. 3 reaches for 9 as its creative outpouring is distilled in an oval vessel.



Ovals in the 9s as vessels (alembics)

9 is active culmination, harvest, portal. An ecstatic still point where an essential quality is discovered and rooted in the heart.



9 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Potency, peak experience, determination, endurance, will coupled with imagination, ability to fight, solutions constellated by crisis, initiation.

The Image

A dancer lifts his heart to heaven. The eye in his heart opens and the dancer sees right into it. The chest and back hand release a red-gold vapor. A horse-dragon sustains the flames of vision and acts as dragon throne. An approaching multiplicity of flaming hearts strengthens resolve. The Sagittarian arrow on the man's forearm points to the vision of the sacred heart.

Stories from the Card

The ecstatic still point where an essential quality is discovered and can be rooted in the heart. It may come through arduous struggle and sacrifice. Persevere till the eye in the heart is fully open, awareness present. This is not a time for acting out but rather a time for letting the heart work upon you as it inscribes its map of meaning. Dance may release tension.



9 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Fulfillment of a wish, realization of a dream, flowing feelings, contentment, creative imagination, telepathy, visitations, emotional stability.

The Image

The portal of the heart. Beyond is a scene dominated by the all seeing Eye at the top of the mountain. Nine dragonflies from the pregnant woman's chest cross through and meet Nine orcas. The music of the heart crosses the waters like a harp.

Stories from the Card

As the heart beats it is love that circulates with the blood. This scene is filled with the awareness of the underlying love that sustains life. A distillation of the heart's song. Intimate connections within and without. Culmination of deep exchange. Telepathic communications based on the soul's mysterious abilities to travel—a dragonfly ability to inhabit all realms beyond space-time constraints.

The heart realm is beyond geography—it crosses dimensions, most often in the dreaming. It may communicate with the Self, it may meet with the Eye. It may demand communications that foster wholeness. It may speak with souls that seem impossibly far. This is a place stripped bare of all pretense, where the beating heart conveys across every border and every threshold.

Text on the Card: Dreams & emotion in motion. The whale comes on shore to look into your eye—dreams will love you to completion.



9 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Cruelty, facing demons, nightmares, fear, estrangement, sense of doom, guilt, anguish.

The Image

A man has a dagger for legs, blood at his chest and nine small beings aiming at him—perhaps in attack, perhaps not.

Stories from the Card

I need more grace than I thought (Rumi) ^{xxxii}

A brain eclipse. High voltage tremors. He is nailed to terror. His very foundations are bleeding. In the nightmare he tumbles down into a Pholarchos cave, dauntingly high and deep. Cruel icicles crowd in on him and he turns a still gaze upon them just as they're readying to puncture his softest parts. Unexpectedly, they falter and grow fast wings that emit disconcerting sounds, ontological whisperings that revive the frozen center of his belly. His silent scream turns to gasps. He forgets how long he's held his breath which now comes forth in great gushes that gather momentum like tiny whirlwinds of release. His being is held in silent embrace by a fluttering multitude. He's now the still point in the eye of the storm. At times only despair can force us to find new solutions—a nightmare might press in to provoke breakthrough energy.

Nadi Shodhana or alternate nostril breathing can lead us to the other side of most nightmares. *Nadi Shodhana* is Sanskrit for *clearing of subtle energy channels*. If you are traffic jammed by overwhelming frequencies or you're feeling under attack, this technique may create a palpable inner temple. Make each breath as slow as possible. It is easy enough to find detailed instructions for it.

Text on the Card: Daggers or angels. Climax.



9 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

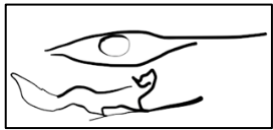
Harvest, prosperity, enjoying fruits of one's labor, solitary accomplishment, profit, peace, right choices, material well-being, fulfillment.

The Image

A man rooted like a tree holds treasure on his lap.

Stories from the Card

The entrance to the garden has marble mosaics patterning the ground. Delphic sculptures the man has fashioned himself surround this sunny resting spot. He leaves gifts for the muses. He has completed the rock garden at the back so that the magic space has an entrance and an exit. It has become a temenos. He is secure in his accomplishments, a peaceful oak with strong roots. A lush orchestration now drops fruit on his lap—a harvest of everything he has grown with loving care, discrimination, patience. He seeded his ground and waited through long nights, dreamed with it, whispered to it in extensive solitary tracts of dedicated time. In those quiet nights he had no idea what would come of it, just tended to the embryonic shaping up. The air is calm yet crackling at the edges like a fresh sheet of music floating across fragrances of orange, lemon, bergamot. The gods are smiling.



10s

10 denotes what is established here in the world. It's a more passive number than 9, and more complete. It is steady and ongoing, a fully present legacy of what was built through the previous numbers. Some of the potential in the Ace develops colorful stories as it moves through each card and finally presents itself in the 10 without the blindfold—here it can take stock of what it has been through and gain some perspective. The Ace is unveiled within a specific context and a cumulative arc of experience: it now sees through the eyes of the 10.



10 OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Too much responsibility, overwork, taking on too much, release, a burden about to be shed, burnout, dazzling achievement, rebirth.

The Image

A head with hair of fire and piccolo trumpets adorning his temples. Horse-dragons and a dragonfly are flanking his neck while a gecko tickles his cheek and a white spirit horse races across his brow. He is moved by an inexorable, *Sagittarian* quiver of inner purpose.

Stories from the Card

The horses have been galloping within him for decades—stampeding, coupling, rousing. He has delved into adventures, daredevil activities, heroic projects. He may be worn too thin now, unless he has found ways to regenerate and keep his drive within workable parameters. His eyes blaze through the night, he never rests. Certainly he has mastered his ability to ride the flame and he has great wisdom to impart in this regard but it's time to reign it in somewhat—deal with one horse at a time. You cannot live by vision alone. Drink water, cool off. Allow the earth of you its space.



10 OF CORAL

Possible Themes

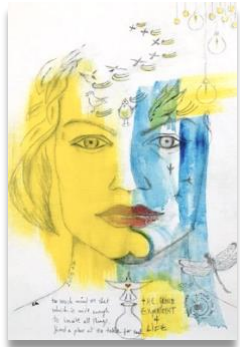
Fullness, showering of love, bringing nourishment to the community, exquisite beauty, recognition of value, ultimate happiness, great sharing, attainment, easy flow of feelings.

The Image

A head surrounded by waves of coral. Jellies and a serpent rest at her neck. Mermaids swim up and down her cheeks. A snake rises to her brow, entwining with coral, kissing its tip, coming to life. A dragonfly approaches. She feels the interconnection between all things, as with *Pisces*.

Stories from the Card

Rosa Angelina. A woman named both Angel and Rose. She has the transfiguring ability to plunge and surge as emotions do, unperturbed by the ride. Her eyes have aged and they are more perceptive, receptive, kind. She carries staggering amounts of inner space and there is nothing she forgets to water. An old, centered soul rippling towards those in need. She seems gentle yet her voice has an unexpected, fluid range. She's graceful with her guests and beauty follows her like an enveloping breeze. Her smile is like a caress and... she sees you—really sees you.



10 OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Injury, attack, betrayal, helplessness, despair, struggle coming to an end, final letting go, death of old thought pattern, release, new dawn.

The Image

A head with feathers for hair and a sweep of birds alighting at the brow. A white phoenix with red heart has emerged from the alembic below. A dragonfly arrives on the scene. The awakening of *Aquarian* ideals.

Stories from the Card

The winds of the mind have awoken a storm, a relentless onslaught that affects both within and without: taunting, back-stabbing, betraying, mortifying. What seemed pure ended with some twisted rope around its neck in a sophisticated, impossible patterning. A grand storm and then silence. The slow, painstaking rewiring of the mind, its release from trauma. After the flooding, the glow of consciousness. The phoenix takes on the experiments of death and rebirth, expansion, delivery.

Text on the Card: Grand experiment of life. Too much mind or that which is wide enough to invite all things, find a place at the table for each.



10 OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Legacy, stability, home, prosperity, enduring structures, tradition, permanence, extended family, security, property, comfort, continuity.

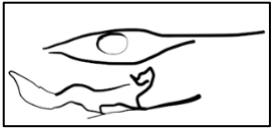
The Image

A head with flowering mouth and eyes, cattail fluff for hair—the dragonfly and jasmine blossom rest in its softness. A stream of open-eyed sage leaves flutters down one side. Her staying power and determination to build something that will endure echo *Capricorn*.

Stories from the Card

The realm of riches. Her steady, far-sighted persistence has enabled an intricate, thriving world. It's like a vibrant ecosystem, a nurse log, an old growth forest. When she has left this plane, all of this will carry on thanks to her resolve: it has its own stability and an ongoing life that hums with delight, spreads out, climbs up overarching domes of plenty. A legacy for the next generations... but well before that, this is a time to savour and share all that has been built.

Text on the Card: And the moon spiraled her in because she loved her.



DREAMERS

The dreamers are being impregnated by a dream. If you pay attention to something in a dream you may recognize where it fits in with your waking life—what is trying to emerge that is just below the surface of your awareness?



DREAMER OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Free spirit, self-confidence, joyful movement, bursting free, start of projects, trusting vision, daring despite fear, ignition, speaking up, messages.

The Image

Vision streams through the blood and rises to consciousness—everything is set alight. The dreamer stands on the verge of becoming, a steep cliff where visions take shape.

What is trying to step through the threshold of your awareness?

Dream 1

A girl swaggers in and defiantly remarks that she doesn't believe in dreaming. She's holding up cards as she scrutinizes the other mumbling gamblers. Her poker face blushes as the blood of urgency brightens the dream, leads the way. Two tiny lights shine on one of her cards which flashes in a succession of images that she recognizes but cannot locate. She is struck by a pulling connection but uncertain of its origins. There is an ancient patterning all around her that she knows but cannot grasp—awe and loss hit her at the same time. Then the card turns blank and words appear: *“We spiral into the caves and teach abundance. You have to believe what you are. Unde Origo Inde Salus”* ^{xxxiii}

Libido intensity symbolized by blood is necessary to forge the connection between man and man and between man and God. (Edinger) ^{xxxiv}



DREAMER OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Delving into the unconscious, tenderness, learning trust, impressionability, romanticism, kindness, dependency, taking emotional risks, artistic talent, gentleness, new connections, innocence, mediumship, understanding which feelings are yours and which belong to somebody else.

The Image

The crystal cup supports the translucent soul sphere. Three whales bathe in its presence. The cheetah bows as the soul surges in a shape very like the cheetah's in order to anoint its brow.

Dream 2

The dreamer watches the ocean from a high promontory. A white seal beckons to her and she is too afraid to follow. More seals join the first and then whales join the seals. The wind is changing and the sky is ominous. Will it rain? As the first drops start the coolness washes her skin, softens her composure. Before she knows it, she's precipitating into the ocean like a tall waterfall. Whales roll her into a cave where a cheetah squats low and drinks from the shore. She wonders if the water is not too salty for drinking but in response she hears: "*These are the waters that heal broken instinct*". Her head is fuzzy and connections are slow—something about obliteration... yes, this liquid had been wiped out but it's here again—it floods the heart with a timeless presence. This is the grail and in the grail is the heart and in the heart is the soul.

What is trying to step through the threshold of your awareness?



DREAMER OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Detachment, fine-tuned perceptions, alertness, inquisitiveness, eloquence, gossip, vigilance, indiscretion, examination, calculation, uncomfortable confrontation, intellectual pursuits.

The Image

A young dreamer rides in on a raven. Glowing concepts buzz around her head like fireflies.

What is trying to step through the threshold of your awareness?

Dream 3

As the raven flies her gently through the balmy night the crepitation of boisterous cicadas rub up against snippets of a philosophical debate. The mix makes for cackling chaos but more importantly—where's it coming from in the dead of night? The raven swerves round a sycamore and the mysterious scene comes into view. A troupe of actors are practicing their lines while hanging from oscillating wires held up by bird beaks: a swallow, an owl, an eagle, a woodpecker hover above. As the actors speak, underscored by indefatigable cicadas, the birds steer them through the air in a startling choreography. The dreamer understands that they are gaging the distance between expression and intent. The fireflies start to whirl around like muted thoughts looking to shape up, gain a coherent life force; the fruitful glimmers intensify till they illuminate their meaning. The dreamer's thoughts had been so secretive—unknown to herself, a cacophony of half truths. Now each abstraction turns into a floating, concrete geometry and the raven flies through each one of these as streaming words scatter across the night.



DREAMER OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Study, amiability, directness, pregnancy, openness to experience, vision quest, diligence, involvement, prudence, herbalism, new opportunity.

The Image

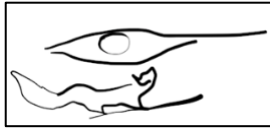
A sunny garden opens in the mind of the dreamer.

Dream 4

Sticky pine fragrance lingers. The dreamer walks through an arch of greenery that is alive, sentient. She opens her dream eyes and the sky is piercing blue. A geomantic creature with iridescent orange and soft gold wings settles on a large cedar branch. The dreamer gazes in awe—she'd forgotten about this friend but suddenly their first encounter comes flooding back. A gentle burst pervades her head, like bright liquid. The arrival of Sol. Rippling yellow permeates the surroundings. Geography and spatial relations become a language that carries meaning. Her body is inhabited by long lost elements and she leans into them, learns them once again. She wakes, opens her physical eyes, stands up. Still the dream continues. The blue of the dream sky surrounds her still as if ready to whisper to her—as if it's watching her rather than her watching it... another world has just walked into this one.

While dreaming, if you encounter something you don't recall knowing but then remember during the course of the dream (as with the creature above), studies show that this indicates the neuronal network is being reconnected—this reassociation can be fundamental to identity.^{xxxv} If you have recently remembered something, especially in a dream, pay close attention to it. Is something you are learning serving as reconnective tissue? Bring these long lost friends to your table, eat together.

What is trying to step through the threshold of your awareness?



QUEENS & ALLIES

The Queens have companion animals, overseers of the instinctual realm, with whom they consult.



QUEEN OF SPARKS



Heart Dragon, detail

Possible Themes

Dynamism, exploration, inspiring others, self-respect, purpose, intensity, self-assurance, magnetism, honesty, intuition.

The Image

Her face is criss-crossed with rich mineral ore from the heart-cave. This cave is where her companion dragon lives and where she becomes a Pholarchos when needed. A blue spray of rain is visible through her molten lava hair—this is the dragon's gift (the Chinese dragon's potency is transmitted through fertilizing rain).^{xxxvi}

Stories from the Card

The queen knows what she is made of. She nurtures constant becoming and never submits to stagnation. She is adamant about feeding the realm with creative intent. Mirrors line the halls so that the central flames may reflect vision and potency in every direction. Incandescent impulse gets honed. She who can go into the mystery and fearlessly do battle, return with a prize yet be unfazed by flattery. She is friends with the *slim dragon that rises through the vortex wheels*, the chakras. The slim dragon is slithering across her head like a crown, breathing more lava and stamina into her hair. The queen keeps a steady gaze and an inner smile of resilience.



QUEEN OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Mysterious depths, emotional regeneration, awe, replenishment, vivid imaginal life, independence, being a target of longing, erotic love, devotion, prophecy.

The Image

She is surrounded by spawning coral and floating soul spheres. Water pours from her sleeve and a white panther stretches in her lap.

Stories from the Card

Even wild creatures relax their alertness in her presence, they allow themselves to be nuzzled. She looks into their eyes, feeds them a watery elixir—it's like surging upwards into an elated world. We all loved her as children. We still do. We would wear antique pink and peach and turquoise wigs in turn to say: *I love you* to her in different guises. The queen would persuade us to tell our own eyes in the mirror: *I love you* and let the network of the iris spin us through into the timeless place. *I love you* would send us flying. She walks into unknown places in her long coat that streams water. Just watching her opens emotional connections with something Other—her infinite network of belonging.

The queen walks in gracious strides, instincts intact as a great cat's. She relates when her heart chooses to and this is not defence but independence.



QUEEN OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Truth, clarification, discrimination, discernment, criticism, self-reliance, fairness, effective communication, nurturing of ideas, cutting through the dross, analysis, spokesperson.

The Image

She stands in the wind holding two owls. A third approaches through the cloud formations up left.

Stories from the Card

She stands at the highest observation point. The winds meet here from all directions: they clean the air, refresh the mind, deliver messages. This is a place where the queen can get perspective as she communes with her owls. The hills below stretch far into the distance, giving them necessary space. She watches the conference of birds pass over; their flight paths have been a favourite subject of the owls' daily discussions.

...by the time you have climbed to see them, you will have stripped for the climb and something will have dislodged on the way. The queen will ask straight questions and expect clean answers—and you will feel impelled to give them.



QUEEN OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Sensuousness, enjoyment, appreciation of the world, riches, pragmatism, good health, affection, competence, satisfaction, being at ease in the body, calm, philanthropy.

The Image

The queen sits on her bull, wrapped in a finely spun cloak. Her eight-pointed crown is fashioned from Etruscan gold.

Stories from the Card

An opulent banquet is laid out in the sprawling gardens. Dionysian delights such as swollen blackberries, ripe figs, intoxicating cherry nectar invite guests to come and feast, sigh, make peace. She has organized a jovial team to oversee proceedings and they are brimming with the pleasure of being involved. The queen makes everyone feel worthy, easy, generous. Arriving here is exhilarating and laughter fills the air like dappled sunlight—even the buzzing of bees murmurs like soft-spoken grace as it penetrates the Greek jasmine canopy. Aphrodisiac scents stimulate the very air.



THE KINGS

The kings have animals as part of their crowns, a sign that wisdom has been codified and traditions are being upheld accordingly.



KING OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

Conviction, leadership, power to rally, establishing identity, long-term goals, domination, charisma, persuasion, foresight, decisiveness, unrelenting energy, motivation, calling, politics.

The Image

The king moves forward in the red-gold atmosphere, activating the dragon on his crown. A chiseled longma adorns his collar.

Stories from the Card

Horse-dragons stream behind the red veil, streak the air with gold, turn it into a living esoteric manual with daily instructions for the realm. The tall king consults this book daily, like a special destiny. Whatever it maps out, he sets up as daily mission. His courage is ferocious and he has harnessed the raw power of Mars into a sophisticated calling that is bridled by instinctive intelligence. He quests for his people, channels his great heat with staggering determination. He would never become the warrior god on a rampage and he rarely acts out in the heat of battle.



KING OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Tolerance, counseling, compassion, diplomacy, mercy, protection of the needy, creative responsibility, advocacy for the arts, oration.

The Image

The king's inner poet is at work, raising a bowl to his lips which color when he considers how to address his kingdom. The poetry is gathered in the bowl for further refinement. The turtle emerges from a cave to listen to the king's pronouncements and his lilting voice. A coral crown reacts to the temperature of his song, ensuring excess involvement does not bleach the reefs.

Stories from the Card

Beauty and art are deemed to be of great value in this land. The king's eyes are the blue of night and just as deep—eyes that swim to his soul for solutions. He speaks poetically as he knows the rhythms will go straight to the heart of his people. He establishes a rule of mercy. Some have thought they could fool him but he knows what to listen for and it's not manipulation that will turn his ear to a cause. He has a keen sense of humanity's loneliness and so coordinates all manner of events that invite meaningful gatherings in which different kinds of people share across borders and cultures. These memorable occasions extend like glorious stretches of the Great Barrier Reef—the world's largest living structure. The king remembers *all* coral reefs, their plight being central to his efforts.



KING OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Objective judgement, progressive thinking, swiftness, abstract thinking, moral conviction, certainty, command, intellect, mental prowess, law, mathematics, sublimation.

The Image

The activity of the king's mind is visible through his skin. His yellow and sky blue eyes reflect this quicksilver process too. Speedy hummingbirds make his crown weightless. Light falls in every direction, illuminating fragments of swift movement.

Stories from the Card

He juggles concepts, fits them into a bigger picture, weighs up what should be implemented. His rule is sharp, above board, fair. However, he will turn everything on its head and play devil's advocate if there's a just cause at stake. If this man asks you for evidence, there will be nowhere to hide from his insistence—he adds you up in a minute, hears your answer before you do and already has a persuasive proposition to bounce back at you. He's like an aerial acrobat in a small space-craft—it seems dangerous as he breaks and accelerates but for him it's child's play. He perceives large patterns instantly, senses where they're heading and acts accordingly. His eyes change color as they measure probabilities or consider new algorithms. Above all, the king defends the ethics of his land.



KING OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Financial knack, quality, know how, nose for success, social position, gradual progress, dignity, dependability, stubbornness, resoluteness, territory, medicine, management, hierarchy.

The Image

Green and gold move through him—the enchantment of a midsummer night. He's at home in the elements. Antlers adorn his crown, musky and full of a particular kind of seductive weight. A midnight sun streams through the king.

Stories from the Card

He holds himself with dignified simplicity, never underestimates the responsibility conferred upon him. The king knows the crown is borrowed. He had a dream years before his kingship where he stood in a forest clearing and the silence spoke to him:

“When you come to the place of the visions of richness, you will illuminate with your own two eyes visions of a much greater richness”

He was asked to fashion rings with precious stones that would recall origins, ancestors, gifts from the gods, so that all these binding invisibles would be remembered here. His manufacture is impeccable, irreplaceable—no cheap alloys and no lead. Outside by the circular fountain, friends meet on special days to accept the rings, gather their bearings and remember things long forgotten.

There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground (Rumi) ^{xxxvii}



THE TRAILS

The Trails are the spiritual psychopomps of the deck. They are named after the paths that enable us to find our way home when lost in the woods... they're active paths. Their teachings are wise and their advice may be quite practical. In a black & white version of a painting, tones and shades transpire in ways we cannot see when the colors are present. These serve as a skeletal structure and backbone onto which the possibilities of the Aces can stratify. The secret workings come into focus. Trails prepare us for experiences that are truly novel where the black and white dissuades us from attributing our usual color schemes and expectations. Trails are about discovery.

Trails build consciousness in each element or sphere of life. Empedocles who first distinguished the four elements of the Western tradition called them *roots*. How well rooted are the suits inside us? Which do we have trouble with? Which constantly call our attention? Which do we ignore? How do we hold the tension between them without always favoring the same ones?

The Trail of spirals may ask us to listen to our bodies, finances, pressing practical matters, home, nature—perhaps there's a need to ground our sense of reality. Coral may pertain to emotional life and relationships—do we give them enough time or is it a different kind of conversation we need—perhaps a deeper conversation with ourselves or an opening to the imaginal. What are we skirting round, what territory do we not dare cross in the vulnerable, forgotten corners? Ask the question—meditate with the card, put it under your pillow at night—ask the question. Where there is a question to be had, there is already an answer forming, something seeking attention. What is it you need to know? The Trail of Wings

may tell you. What has been too rigid or blinkered? What communications are pressing in or what needs to be assessed? What disputes need to be put to rest? And in the sparks of fire: are you following the Trail of your inspiration? Where is the heat? Or is there too much heat? Are you too aggressive or not assertive enough? What might you initiate? What cause would you back if you had enough energy? Does your intuition have the space it needs or is it shut up in the basement? What arrows are being shot in your life?

Trails invite you to journal your questions as writing is a hook for spirit—it is able to bring forth what was dispersed in mist, condense its vapors and make quicksilver. *It is able to bring forth what we do not see.* In writing, Hermes-Mercury as inventor of language and messenger god can work wonders. Often things are so much closer than we think. Trails encourage the writing which starts new *trails: new paths of knowledge.*



TRAIL OF SPARKS

Possible Themes

New horizons, heroism, adventure, future prospects, unpredictability, eagerness, distant travel, novel understanding of life, meaning.

The Image

A woman with fire coming out of her chest transforms into a white fox. This Anubis-like presence is ready to guide any essential quest.

Stories from the Card

An arctic fox can snuggle in snow and hear prey well beneath the thick blanketing. It reaches into the deepest regions of the unconscious where it can contact the frozen parts of self. Arctic fox is fire alive in ice. It can track into the furthest reaches of the North, the regions of ascending spirit. In fact it holds North in its eyes like a radar. It's nose is unsurpassable and it sniffs the spark you're after or the one that is after you—it can smell it clean as spring.

Tricky fox plays, darts ahead of you, keeps you on your toes. It has stopped to hear birds in another country as they set off for migration. Uncanny fox. They say its visionary tail can propel it into the bowels of the Kumistavi cave where it can sniff the moment of conception, near or far. And on certain nights, when the air feels sharp, it will climb to a peak and listen for souls departing from the earth plane. It can track the nine months either side of incarnation by turning its nose up to the wind. When you're in great need, it will journey you far and ensure safe return.

Journal your questions with the Trail and watch a new 'trail' unfold before you



TRAIL OF CORAL

Possible Themes

Travels in the unconscious, poetry, origins of beauty, union, image of perfect love, proposals, emotional exploration and guidance, cracking the heart open.

The Image

A figure stands in water under a full moon. Descending and ascending birds ride her arms. Two jousting horses flank the moon.

Stories from the Card

This secret is the life of everything and it is water, and water takes in hand the nourishment of man and of other things, and in water is the greatest secret. (Rosarium) ^{xxxviii}

Your dreams swim in her hands like bright fish, shimmering with pulsing textures. Their motion forms phosphorescent patterns in her hair, a kind of wiring that allows her to access every nuance of a dream so that she may walk you through the maze. She can gauge what stride is needed for every change of state and she shows you how to feel your way in the dark.

It is through the sphere of emotions, through working the storms of affect that we spiritualize matter and incarnate spirit. The birds of ascent and descent. *Solve e coagula*. You make and unmake your current standpoint and your current identity—this is the slow process of transformation through separation and unification. Dismember and Remember Self. The birds sing a tide of words: *Mine is the place you are lost and found. Mine is the zone of revolution and of stepping through. Mine is the numen behind love and strife.*

In the inner life of the individual, it is from occasions of intense affect faced consciously that the ego discovers the existence of the Self and becomes bound to it. (Edinger) ^{xxxix}

Journal your answers with the Trail and watch a new 'trail' unfold before you



TRAIL OF WINGS

Possible Themes

Philosophical systems, expansion of knowledge, points of reference, assertion, impatience, fanaticism, brilliance, dissociation, righting wrongs.

The Image

A metal bird filled with the starry night. Sophia rests her hand on its head while in the background the bird's shadow lifts its beak.

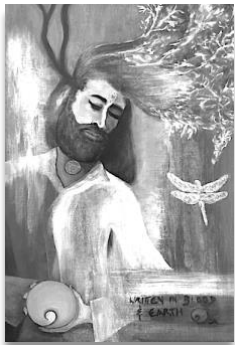
Stories from the Card

This bird contains the constellations and their myths. It fosters theory and philosophy. Hold on to these structural elements, engage with them. This is a net of knowledge that can support you, help you understand, give perspective. From this structuring, you will have a place to recognize and house your deepest intuitions.

Knowledge of symbolism is a net...in which one can at least catch the unspeakable mystery of an immediate experience of the unconscious. (von Franz) ^{x1}

Know the power of persuasion and that one word can change a life. Know about what gets lost in the translation of ancient texts, from one culture to the next, from one realm to the next. Understand that oracular fragments have agency in the world and that mantras carry multiple energies. Beware of language that confuses and tricks you into false beliefs. Beware of tyrants that use language to enthuse you into a quicksand of false hope. Words have elemental power and can cause earthquakes in a shaman's mouth. Know the power of prayer.

Let journaling unstick your mind. Follow the through line. There are indistinct areas to explore that hold your questions and your answers. They are close yet far away, and writing moors them to you. Answers may not become apparent instantly—remember your questions.



TRAIL OF SPIRALS

Possible Themes

Realistic appraisal, shouldering responsibility, practical wisdom, dependability, ability to complete things, endurance, steadfastness, realism, protection, simplicity, earth magic, healing, ancestry.

The Image

A figure with Artemisia absinthium growing from his hair holds a spiraling womb. A dragonfly visits.

Stories from the Card

Artemisia absinthium infused a whole night's dreaming with its ideas on the trajectory of the Pholarchos Tarot.

This Trail dedicates and propitiates. He creates rituals for worship and clay bowls that hold water for the ancestors. His throat chakra is glowing, aligning personal song. He hears messages through the body and physical symptoms.

The body is eloquent, receptive, part of the great mystery—there is no definite line between matter and spirit. Light condenses, light rises. Love gets sculpted into shape—find a place to house it well, ensure it gets all it needs, build upon it.

And when it is time, this Trail helps this beloved body pass its harvest into its light body. The dreaming will track the stages and the Trail will guide its orientation. And he can help pray for loved ones that are passing. Nothing is ever lost.

The small dragon... The 10s are visited by this same dragonfly who is checking on what has transpired in the four elements. They engage with water, air, earth, and their iridescence is like fire. In some cultures they are believed to heal snakes—if a snake is potency, dragonflies then guard the life force. Cavert^{xii} narrates how grubby nymphs at the bottom of a pond wonder why some of their friends climb up lily stems on scouting expeditions but then never return. Those that venture into the unknown realm above the water find that they are suddenly transformed into dragonflies and that even if they could contact their relations in the close yet distant bottom of the pond, they would not be recognized or believed. Dragonfly: agent of transformation, scout, guardian.

Text on the Card: Written in blood and earth.

*Journal your questions with the Trail and watch a new trail unfold before you
... start a new trail, a new path of knowledge...*

NOTES

- ⁱ Visser, M. W. de, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, p.63, (quoting Kwan Chung), (Forgotten Books, 2012)
- ⁱⁱ Ibid., p.60, (quoting De Groot)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Jung, C.G., *Children's Dreams*, p.211, (Princeton University Press, 2008)
- ^{iv} Franz, M.L. von, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*, p.184, (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1980)
- ^v Jung, C.G., *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W.,14, par.46.
- ^{vi} *Rosarium Philosophorum*, part 1, (18th century translation MS Ferguson 210)
- ^{vii} Franz, M.L. von, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*, p.156, (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1980)
- ^{viii} For further information see: Campbell, J., *The Symbol without meaning*, (JCF, 2013)
- ^{ix} Edinger, E., *The Mysterium Lectures*, p.153, (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1995)
- ^x Ibid., p.99
- ^{xi} Jung, C.G., *A Study in the Process of Individuation*, C.W., 9, par.528.
- ^{xii} Shakespeare, W., *The Winter's tale*, Act V: Scene 3
- ^{xiii} Jung, C.G., *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W.,14, par.9 (note 42 quoting from *Aurora Consurgens*)
- ^{xiv} Ibid., par.398 (quoting De Gubernatis)
- ^{xv} Ibid., par.388
- ^{xvi} Neumann, E., *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine*, p.84 (Bollingen series, 1971)
- ^{xvii} Shelley, P.B., *Posthumous Poems*, poem: "Hymn of Apollo", (John and Henry L. Hunt, London, 1824)

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- ^{xviii} Jung, C.G., *Psychology and Alchemy*, C.W.,12, par.405 (quoting Zosimos who in turn quotes Ostanes)
- ^{xix} *Rosarium Philosophorum*, part 1, (18th century translation MS Ferguson 210)
- ^{xx} Franz, M.L. von, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*, P.187 (quoting from *Aurora Consurgens*), (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1980)
- ^{xxi} Edinger, E., *The Mystarium Lectures*, p.250 (quoting Scholem's *Zohar: The Book of Splendor*), (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1995)
- ^{xxii} Visser, M. W. de, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, p.58, (quoting K'ung Ngan-Kwoh), (Forgotten Books, 2012)
- ^{xxiii} Maier, M., *Atalanta Fugiens*, Epigram 32 (translation British Library MS. Sloane 3645, see: Levity.com)
- ^{xxiv} Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, chapter 42 (translation by Gia-fu Feng and Jane English)
- ^{xxv} Michael Mead from an unknown audio seminar (see his Mosaic Voices website).
- ^{xxvi} Jung, C.G., *Psychology and Alchemy*, C.W.,12, par.26
- ^{xxvii} See E. Neumann's commentary for an in depth study of the ordeals: *Amor and Psyche: The Psychic Development of the Feminine*.
- ^{xxviii} Herbarium Apuleii Platonici, 4th Century.
- ^{xxix} I am indebted to Mathew Mather for first bringing cinnabar to my attention. For further information on its role in different strands of alchemy see: Haeffner, M., *Dictionary of Alchemy*, p.59 (Aquarian, London, 1991)
- ^{xxx} Jung, C.G., *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, C.W.,14, par.6
- ^{xxxi} Ungaretti, G., *Mattina*, (1917), (line in Italian: "M'illumino d'immenso").
- ^{xxxii} Rumi, Jalal al-Din, *The Essential Rumi*, (translated by Coleman Barks), poem: "Dissolver of Sugar", (HarperOne, 2004)
- ^{xxxiii} For the Latin see: Santa Maria della Salute, Venice
- ^{xxxiv} Edinger, E., *Ego and Archetype*, p.231, (Shambala, Boulder,1972)
- ^{xxxv} I thank John Hill for this precious information on the act of remembering within a dream.

xxxvi Visser, M. W. de, *The Dragon in China and Japan*, (Forgotten Books, 2012)

xxxvii Rumi, Jalal al-Din, *The Essential Rumi*, (translated by Coleman Barks), poem: “Spring Giddiness”, (HarperOne, 2004)

xxxviii *Rosarium Philosophorum*, part 3, (18th century translation MS Ferguson 210)

xxxix Edinger, E., *Ego and Archetype*, p.231, (Shambala, Boulder,1972)

xl Franz, M.L. von, *Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology*, p.192, (Inner City Books, Toronto, 1980)

xli Cavert, W.D., *Remember Now: Daily Devotionals for Young People*, “The Dragonfly Story”, (Abingdon Press, 1979)