

The Unofficial
Wild Unknown
Tarot Card Meanings

by Carrie Mallon

Notes

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This text in this document was originally presented, and can still be found, on my blog at carriemallon.com. I have not included images in this document. Images of each card can be found on the original blog posts, those images were included courtesy of the Wild Unknown.

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Introduction

When I discovered the Wild Unknown tarot deck back in 2015, I was immediately intrigued. There's something so simple yet so evocative about these images. As I formed my own relationship with the cards, I started sharing my personal views on the deck on my blog at carriemallon.com. I didn't know if anyone else would ever read these posts, but I enjoyed writing them.

As it turned out, other people did enjoy reading them! Lots of people have emailed me or left comments thanking me for my input on the cards. Over the years I have received many requests to combine these posts into a downloadable and printable PDF, and I'm happy to finally offer this to you. The versions contained here have been revised, expanded and updated as of 2018.

As the inside of the deck's box states, there are no rights or wrongs. Take what you find valuable from my thoughts on the cards, but trust your own intuition. I hope what you find in this document will be valuable to you as you deepen your connection to your own deck!

The Major Arcana

The Fool

Deck Creator's Keywords: innocence, naivety, starting out, spontaneity

Carrie's Keywords: potential, leap, adventure

The Fool Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Our fool is a baby chick perched on a tree branch, one foot stretched out as though he is about to step off. Buds and blossoms are unfolding on the tree branch. It is spring-time, and the world is brimming with new life. Potential is bursting forth everywhere! Even the chick itself is a form of fresh, invigorating energy – a spring chicken, as they say.

The sky is orange and yellow, as though the sun is just starting to climb up the horizon. This brings to mind the metaphoric resonance of 'the dawn of a new day.' Sunrise is a time of adventure and potential. Where might this new day, this fresh blooming energy take you? The possibilities are truly endless.

The Fool is not concerned with yesterday or tomorrow – the Fool is immersed in the now. And it is always the now, as one moment gives way to the next. The Fool reminds you to place your attention here, in the present moment.

The chick and the branch are black and white. The bright white of the branch makes it look charged with pure energy. As the bright colors of dawn descend along the horizon, they give way to black lines near the bottom of the card. What might be in this black void? You simply don't know. The Fool is literally heading out into the wild unknown.

There is an interesting use of lines in the Wild Unknown tarot. The direction of lines in the cards give clues to the energy the cards hold. In the Fool, the sky is lined horizontally. These static, horizontal lines seem to me to represent energy that is still free-flowing; the energy is there, but hasn't yet been guided into a particular direction. This fits in well with the Fool, a card brimming with limitless, not yet fully directed universal energy.

The Fool Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many classic tarot decks, the Fool shows a person who looks poised to walk off a cliff – similar to this Fool, who is poised to walk off the branch and into that black void of the unknown. In fact, taking a leap into the unknown is a core message of the Fool in any tarot deck. This card speaks of pure, unbridled potential. In order for that potential to take shape, risks are required. Taking a leap doesn't necessarily guarantee a favorable outcome. But if you never leap, you remain stuck on the precipice, never fully immersing yourself in all that life has to offer.

The Fool is card 0, giving it a special role in any tarot deck. Without a fixed number, the Fool is unbound and free, often thought to represent each of us as we journey through life. In some tarot traditions, the Fool is considered to be the character who encounters the various lessons that we see in the rest of the cards. In a spiritual sense, the Fool is infinite universal energy. The Fool is the creative force that animates the entire universe. Without this undirected universal energy, no other manifestations of creation would be possible. The Fool is the energetic magic that allows the entire adventure of life come into being.

In a reading

In a reading, this card can ask you to consider the timeless conundrum of the Fool: are you naïve, about to leap unprepared and face disaster? Or are you filled with a spiritual trust that the universe will support your leap? The Fool asks you to tune into your primal instincts instead of overthinking.

The Fool is also a reminder that there are no right or wrong decisions. The most important thing, the Fool might advise you, is to say YES to life in whatever way feels expansive for you. Sometimes your best option is to remain on the branch until you are ready. But more often, the Fool nudges you to open your heart, set out, and trust that whatever happens from there is a meaningful adventure.

The Magician

Deck Creator's Keywords: action, self-empowerment, purpose

Carrie's Keywords: creation, yang energy, doing

The Magician Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

In the first incarnation of this post, I described this Magician as a cheetah – but upon further consideration, I believe this is actually a leopard. Mythologically, the leopard is known for exuding confidence and independence. Seshat, the ancient Egyptian goddess who invented writing, wore leopard skin. Leopards have long been heralded as powerful and capable creatures.

This Magician is proud and alert; he has a powerful stance and his gaze is focused. He is sizing up his surroundings, not with any urgency, but with a natural awareness of all that is at work around him. Surrounding the leopard are rays of orange and yellow light – colors that convey active energy and vitality. The rays emanate out from a singular point in the distance. This shows a concentration of energy which was previously undirected (as we saw with the Fool) but which is now available to the Magician through his understanding of the four tools before him. The Magician has an innate ability to tap into – and actively channel – infinite energy.

The lemniscate symbol appears on his chest. We'll see this symbol on a few more cards from the Wild Unknown tarot (it also appears on several cards in the Rider-Waite tradition). This symbol is sometimes referred to as 'the infinity sign' suggesting the never-ending nature of all life and all matter. This symbol also shows the ways that the wisdom and archetypes within tarot transcend space and time – this is why the cards have resonated with so many people for so long. The tarot goes through different incarnations and different artistic interpretations, but its core messages always remain relevant.

The four suits of the deck – sword, pentacle, cup and wand – are laid out in front of the Magician. The Magician is attuned to the dynamic nature of life, and these four suits are the emblems of that dynamic nature. His front paws rest on the pentacle, suggesting his ability to take raw materials and create something tangible.

He faces right, a direction that is symbolically linked to activity and conscious

awareness. He is ready to act not out of stress, but out of intention. The Magician shows the power of directing your energy wisely, and the importance of having confidence in your abilities. Your greatest skill is in knowing that you are an empowered creator.

The Magician Tarot Card Meanings in General

In other traditional decks, such as the Waite-Smith tarot, the Magician is depicted as a human figure with one hand pointed towards the sky and one hand pointed towards the ground. This invokes the spiritual axiom “as above, so below.” This implies a deep understanding that the true nature of the universe is creative. And as a creative being inhabiting the universe, our true nature is to create in whatever way speaks to us. The Magician takes these ethereal spiritual principles and applies them to mundane life in our world. The Magician shows that your highest potential unfolds when your ego (or conscious awareness) is aligned with spiritual energy.

The Magician is archetypal yang energy. This card is about light, conscious awareness, masculinity (not in a gender sense, but in an energetic sense), and action. It is worth noting that the energy of the Magician is intricately linked to the energy of the High Priestess. As the first two cards in the tarot deck, they lay the groundwork for the sweeping concepts of “yin” and “yang” energy that is explored in various manifestations throughout the rest of the cards.

In a reading

In a reading, the Magician can speak to the power of concentration. Where is your attention being placed? The direction of your concentration may need to be re-adjusted towards your capabilities. Instead of looking to what you do not have or what you wish you had, the Magician invites you to pay attention to all that you DO have. Too often we sit around waiting for life to happen to us. The Magician invites YOU to happen to LIFE. This is how you step fully in to your radiating power.

The four suits present in the card speak to your mental, physical, emotional and creative energy. Are you purposefully paying attention to these aspects of yourself? It is time to check-in with how you are distributing those various energies. Make sure you are doing so with conscious intent, giving your power and your energy to things that really matter.

The Magician shows that you can be a conscious creator. Be willing to take action when you know what needs to be done. When you walk purposefully through life, awakened to the always-present light of your creativity, you are embodying the ways of the Magician. You are capable of directing unlimited universal creativity through your consciousness – let yourself step fully and confidently into that truth.

The High Priestess

Deck Creator's Keywords: mystery, non-action, going within

Carrie's Keywords: being, yin energy, intuition

The High Priestess Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The High Priestess is a tiger, regal and dignified. Many different members of the cat family have long been known for their spiritual energy, and it is a common notion that members of the cat family can see beyond our mundane realm. This tiger sits under a black sky and a crescent moon – the first of many crescent moons we will see in this deck. Before her chest sits an sphere colored with blue and purple. This provides the only splash of color in the otherwise black and white card.

Her expression seems both serene and alert as she gazes to the left of the card. The Magician looked to the right. In one symbolic interpretation, the “right” direction represents light and objectivity. The “left” direction of the High Priestess, in this interpretation, represents dark and subjectivity. This interpretation seems even more apt when you consider that the Magician was surrounded by glowing, sun-like rays, while the High Priestess is enveloped in a night-time sky. In this deck, as well as in many symbolic systems, night time is associated with feminine or yin energy.

The sphere before her contains swirling blues and purples, colors that represent spiritual receptivity and intuition. This sphere could be thought to represent the ethereal energy of dreams, mysteries, and unconscious awareness. Instead of the energy emanating from without and being channeled, as in the Magician, the energy is channeled inward and concentrated in this sphere.

The High Priestess does not try to pin down the sphere. Rather, her paws are spread out around it, suggesting complete confidence in her inner knowing. Notice again the contrast with the Magician, who rested his paws on the pentacle. He also stood upright on his haunches, with his neck turned. She is laying down with a relaxed posture. She is not active, she is receptive.

The High Priestess knows how to be immersed in dreams, visions and the complex realm of unconscious awareness without letting these energies overcome her – but also

without her needing to overcome them. She is willing to let things be what they are, even when what they are is indescribable in words. The High Priestess is attuned to the experiences beyond conscious understanding. She does not strain herself to explain the mystery – instead, she immerses herself completely in that mystery.

She asks you to tap into your intuition, to let yourself experience dimensions beyond the relatively small scope of your conscious awareness. Non-rational ways of knowing are valuable even while being fleeting and hard to pin down. The High Priestess shows the part of your awareness that goes deeper than the surface, she asks you to soften into your inner knowing. While the Magician spoke to the visible power of doing, the High Priestess speaks to the quiet magic of BEING.

The High Priestess Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many decks, the High Priestess is portrayed as a woman in long robes sitting between two pillars. The space beyond the pillars is thought to suggest the mysteries that elude simple explanations. She often holds a book in her hands, usually some type of spiritual tome. This shows her connection with the numinous.

While the Magician is associated with archetypical ‘yang’ or masculine energy, the High Priestess is archetypical ‘yin’ or feminine energy. These two cards form an inextricable pair, each speaking to one end of the spectrum of human experience. Both of these energies are equally essential to living an integrated, self-actualized life.

The High Priestess is very much associated with the concept of intuition, and as tarot is an intuitive art, many tarot readers feel a strong connection to this card. Our broader society generally places more value on the Magician-like energy of conscious awareness and action. But as tarot readers, many of us identify with the High Priestess as she speaks to the importance of unconscious awareness and being.

In a reading

In a reading, this card could indicate that your intuitive understanding is essential right now. Instead of straining to pin down answers with your conscious mind, listen to something deeper. The High Priestess invites you to pay attention to your dreams, your visions, your meditations. The answers that you seek are likely right there within you, but you need to shift your perspective in order to access them.

This card can ask you to let yourself sit serenely with mysteries. Questions are often more useful than answers. The sphere before her represents your own inner sphere of spiritual energy. Now is a powerful time to let yourself sit with that energy, to take a few deep breaths and let it be exactly what it is without forcing it to take any particular shape. It's often when you stop straining so hard that some type of knowledge finally 'clicks' within you.

The High Priestess is linked to your intuition and inner knowing. She invites you to sit with the shadowy, less easily accessible parts of yourself. Get to know the whole spectrum of your inner landscape. The more intimately acquainted you become with your whole self, the more of a constant connection you'll have to your intuitive knowing.

The Empress

Deck Creator's Keywords: the mother, sensuality, creation, nature

Carrie's Keywords: nurturing, abundance, sensuality

The Empress Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Empress here is portrayed as a lavish, unapologetically luscious tree. A waning crescent moon peeks out above her from the night time sky. The colorful tree stands out against the darkness around her. Remember that the High Priestess was also cloaked in darkness. Night time in the Wild Unknown seems to be associated with the realm of the feminine, signifying mysteries and inward-moving energy.

The Empress is at home in the sensual, life-sustaining energies of the natural world. This card is associated with nurturing in all of its guises: anything from literally mothering a child, to tending a garden, to cultivating a creative project. The Empress breathes life into the world around her. Although it is nighttime, the tree glows as though to offer a safe haven to any creature in need of care.

This particular Empress is unapologetic about taking up space. Her branches and blossoms sprawl freely across the card. She is completely at home in her own skin (or in this case, bark!). She invites us to give ourselves that same permission to inhabit our own flesh and to ground ourselves into the earth that gives us life. She cares for others, providing safety and sustenance; and she is cared for as well, taking in nutrients from the soil and sky. In this sense, the Empress asks you to embrace your own role both as a nurturer and as a receiver of nurturing.

The edges of the tree are brimming with pink, red and purple life. The colors evoke blossoms and fruit – signs of the Empress' role in creating and sustaining life. Note that this is a deciduous tree, which goes through the repeating cycles of the seasons. She will have color in autumn, lose leaves in winter, and then burst forth with new leaves and blossoms in the spring, bearing fruit once again in the summer. This is an apt way to show the cyclical, life-affirming energy of the Empress.

The Empress can also invite you to pay attention to your own natural rhythms. Much of this wisdom is achieved by noticing physical things: your own breath and body,

as well as your mother Earth and the stars. The Empress is not about force (that is more of the Emperor's thing). Instead, she is about flow. The Empress embodies the wisdom of dancing with the changing cycles that are always within and around you.

The Empress Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Empress is the archetypal mother symbol in the tarot. She is the ultimate care-giver and comforter. In some decks this card is depicted by a pregnant woman, representing her role in giving and sustaining life.

While the High Priestess is associated with spirituality in a more esoteric sense, the Empress shows that all aspects of the physical, mundane world are aspects of spirit. Experiencing the full range of sensual pleasure available to us on this planet is another mode of connecting to the divine, and the Empress reminds us that sensuality can be just as sacred as prayer or contemplation. This isn't to say the Empress encourages over-indulgence (that would be the Devil's domain). Instead, the Empress encourages reverence for physicality and a profound gratitude for all that life has to offer.

In a reading

When the Empress appears, she might ask you to consider what you are nurturing, as well as what may need to be nurtured within you. She often shows up in readings to highlight the importance of self-love and self-care. Are you tending to yourself with as much reverence as you would give to someone you love dearly? Giving yourself that fertile soil to grow from is essential.

This card can also ask you to place your focus on contributing to the cycles of life and creation. You are a sacred conductor of life-force, and now may be the perfect time to direct that life-force into creating something beautiful. Life is rich with opportunities for you to grow, to experience your senses, and to step fully into your authentic nature. The Empress encourages you to find those opportunities and step into them fully and completely.

The Emperor

Deck Creator's Keywords: the father, protection, logic, stability

Carrie's Keywords: structure, discipline, order

The Emperor Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

In all decks, the Emperor and the Empress form a pair. In the Wild Unknown Tarot deck, this pair is represented by a pair of trees. While the Empress is portrayed by an always in flux deciduous tree, the Emperor is an evergreen tree. Whatever rough weather, whatever time of year, the evergreen tree remains solid. The Empress will grow new leaves, blossoms, fruit, and go through cycles. The Emperor will remain consistent.

The Emperor has a solid, stable energy. As the father archetype of the tarot, the Emperor's approach is that of structure, logic and rationality. This card speaks to the power of consistency, and the importance of order in our lives. In order to complement the more free-flowing approach of the previous card, the Emperor brings self-discipline to the proceedings. Remember that discipline is not the same thing as punishment. A healthy level of discipline is necessary in order for us to learn, to create, and to thrive. The Emperor reminds us that discipline can be a positive thing.

There is a black sun (possibly an eclipse) in the card's background, radiating gentle orange and yellow, the only color in the card. The colors are a throwback to the Magician – but instead of emanating widely, this sun is a concentrated ball of energy. The Magician's energy is expansive and creative; The Emperor's energy is firmly rooted, sensible and logical. The Emperor applies his energy in very specific ways with an explicit structure in mind. This might seem quite overly regimented to some, but it this ability to create structures can pave the way for incredible results.

While the Empress was surrounded by the night sky, the Emperor's domain is the clear light of day. He has a vivid understanding of where he is and where he wants to go. He is a natural authority figure, and may sometimes come across as overbearing. But at his best, the Emperor is an effective leader. The Emperor is not just about fathering or leadership for your own gain. The Emperor is about leading by example, and taking into

account the best interest of the whole.

This Emperor is a commandeering tree who dominates the landscape and can see all that is around him. He offers shelter and protection from the stark surroundings. While the Empress offered protection in the form of nurturing and loving care, the Emperor offers protection by offering logical guidance. The Emperor gives you a chance to catch your bearings and find an orderly path out of the wilderness.

The Emperor shows us the power of structure and consistency. He is a masculine (yang) balance to the feminine (yin) energy of the Empress. He may come across as harsh, and she may come across as soft. They work together to show us ‘the middle way.’

The Emperor Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Emperor is often portrayed by an older man with a long white beard, nodding to his association with fathering. It’s important to note that while the Emperor can be associated with fathering in a literal sense, this card often speaks to a more symbolic type of fathering: creating structures, systems and rational approaches.

The Emperor is card four of the major arcana, and this has an important numerological significance. Four is a stable, solid number: a table has four legs, a square has four equal sides. Four-ness is associated with structure and form, the domain of the Emperor.

Like all cards, the Emperor has a shadow side which can manifest itself in an egoic desire to forcefully control oneself and others. This card asks you to find the place where order is beneficial and creative, instead of controlling or stifling.

In a reading

The Emperor might ask you to consider where the themes of structure, control and order are at work in your life. Are these energies helping you thrive, or are they boxing you in? At times this card can speak of external authority figures, but it often speaks to your internal sense of authority. When this card appears, it may ask you to consider how you can further step into your role as the CEO of your life. It may be time to step up and take control. If you want your life to go in a particular direction, the Emperor asks you to ensure you are steering your ship that way.

Self-discipline can be a form of self-love if administered correctly. The Emperor asks you to develop healthy self-discipline. Stay accountable but do not set unrealistic standards for yourself. Setting up boundaries for yourself might be restricting, but if done right the boundaries you establish for yourself are the very things that will lead you to a greater sense of freedom.

The Hierophant

Deck Creator's Keywords: mentor, working within the system

Carrie's Keywords: societal structures, belief systems, instructor

The Hierophant Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A crow (or perhaps a raven) is perched upon a key. His beak is open as if he is preaching to us. He seems to have a lot to say! His wings and feathers are ruffled, giving him an air of restlessness. He is unable to relax until he has delivered answers and implemented systems.

To me, the key symbolizes the systems, structures and answers that the Hierophant values so highly. He believes he has THE key – the one thing that will unlock what we all need. But will this key really unlock the universal answers? The Hierophant seems to be convinced that it will. He may not have considered the possibility that we each have our own individual 'keys' to our own truth.

A jagged stream of orange and yellow descends from the sky, culminating at a point as it enters the key. These are the colors of vitality and knowledge. This symbolizes the power bestowed upon the key. It is charged with energy from a higher plane. The Hierophant wants to teach us things, and he has faith that his teachings are infused with ultimate knowledge.

The background of the card is filled with thick vertical lines. This stands out as a contrast to the horizontal lines we saw in the Fool, and the spiraling lines of the Magician. The vertical lines convey a heavier energy, there is a sense of rigidity and weight. This is a card of structure, tradition and order.

The Hierophant can symbolize not only organized religion, but schools, businesses, and any kind of societal structure. At his best, the Hierophant brings forth passion-infused teachings and order. At his worst, he becomes convinced that he has the one and only answer, refusing to see other possibilities.

The Hierophant Tarot Card Meanings in General

In classic decks like the Waite-Smith tarot, the Hierophant is represented by a

priest or other religious figure, and in older decks this card was simply titled Le Pape (the Pope). But this card is not just about religion, it is about any sort of group identity. The Hierophant is related to educational systems, political affiliations, and any other philosophical ideologies.

This card sometimes receives a negative connotation for its association with belief systems that are forced upon, but in a positive sense this card reminds us of our power to define our own belief systems. This card can even be associated with mystical or occult belief systems. In fact, it was an influential tarot practitioner named Antoine Court de Gebelin who retitled this card from the Pope to the Hierophant, as the title “hierophant” relates to mystical ancient Greek rituals.

On the shadow side, the Hierophant can speak to conformity and hive mind. Humans are naturally wired to form communities and going against society’s belief systems can be scary or even dangerous. But at its best, the Hierophant shows that group identities can be helpful. We can learn from the right authority figures, and participating in traditions and rituals can help us cultivate our individual sense of self. The Hierophant energy is at its best when it is not about forcing beliefs, but about leading us deeper into our own authentic beliefs.

In a reading

When the Hierophant appears, it may be useful to consider your relationship with societal authority figures. Would it be beneficial for you to engage in ritual or learn from an expert? Or on the other hand, is your individuality being stifled by the pressure to follow the crowd?

This card can also ask you to revisit your own belief systems. Our pre-determined thoughts and viewpoints are always influencing us, and this influence often takes place on an unconscious level. In a reading, this card may be asking you to bring a conscious awareness to how your beliefs are influencing your experience of reality.

The Lovers

Deck Creator's Keywords: union, desire, values, joy

Carrie's Keywords: relationships, harmony, passion

The Lovers Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A pair of geese are flying in unison. There is harmony in their parallel wingspans, their parallel necks, and the parallel black and white of their markings. Although they maintain their own separate identities, they also fit together naturally as a pair. This card gives a sense that everything is exactly how it should be.

The geese are effortless in their soaring – they aren't flapping their wings frantically, they're simply letting the wind carry them. This is a card of flow, ease, grace. The Lovers are not trying to impress each other, neither of them tries to be anything other than what they are. They value each other as individuals, and they value their unique perspectives even as they cherish the connection they share.

In many depictions of the Lovers, the two face each other. However, in the Wild Unknown, the geese both face forward. There is powerful symbolism here. They are on a journey together, no doubt. But at the same time, each also travels their individual path.

Again, I'm drawn to the use of lines in the Wild Unknown. In the previous card, we saw static vertical lines. In the Lovers, we have radiating lines, giving the card an expansive energy. This is the first card that is significantly different in the first and second editions of this deck. In the first edition, the background is teal and dark blue; colors that show serenity and peace.

In the second edition, pictured above, the background is splashed with all the colors of the rainbow. The presence of all colors here suggests a radiantly passionate energy. This is reminiscent of the boldly colored rays we saw in the Magician, but there are subtle differences here. In the Magician card, the rays emanated from a point off center. In the Lovers, the point is directly above the geese and in the center of the card, showing equilibrium.

All of the design elements come together here to convey a message of harmony, ease and unity.

The Lovers Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many decks, this card shows two naked figures watched over by an angelic being. This imagery suggests that the connection of the lovers is not just about flesh and lust, there is a spiritual energy to the bond. Through experiencing love, we can gain a greater connection to the divine forces of the universe.

The most obvious association of the Lovers is, well, love. But there's a lot more to this card than first meets the eye. The Lovers is a multifaceted card: it can speak to sexual desire, platonic connections and all sorts of unions. But on another level, this card also speaks to the development of your own personal values.

Especially as the Lovers follows the Hierophant (a card that is associated with external belief systems) the Lovers can show our desire to define our OWN beliefs, to establish our own identity. This may seem paradoxical, but it is through this process of understanding our unique self that we are then able to forge more meaningful connections with others.

In a reading

In a reading, this card may be asking you to consider the relationships in your life. It might be a good time to focus on creating connections that are uplifting, yet still leave space for your unique identity. Beyond relationships, this card can ask you to consider your passions in general. What is currently lighting you up? This card can be a gentle nudge to explore your desires and to go towards the things that make you feel joyful.

The Chariot

Deck Creator's Keywords: strong will, achievement, triumph

Carrie's Keywords: autonomy, control, willpower

The Chariot Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A horse looks out from the card, her mane blowing freely in the wind. She faces us head on, as though unafraid to deal with anything – problems, joy and conflict – directly. She doesn't shy away from life! She shows up fully and completely for all that life has to offer, and trusts her ability to take charge in any situation.

The Chariot shows the importance of mastering the way you present yourself to the world. This card is sometimes associated with ego, and while the term 'ego' has a bad reputation, the truth is that having a healthy ego is really important. Having a strong idea of who we are as an individual is essential to our ability to be authentic, to set goals, and to live our lives the way that is right for us. This is a card of autonomy, of your ability to choose how to show up in your life.

The card is black and white, with the exception of the red corners. The red here is bolder, unlike some of the more watered down colors we've seen in earlier cards. The use of color here is more commanding. Red is a color of confidence and assurance. Four is a number of stability, and the positioning of the color in the four corners shows the self-control associated with the Chariot.

The body of the horse becomes less and less detailed towards the bottom of the card. This shows that The Chariot can channel external as well as internal energy and direct it through her own determination. For better or for worse, the Chariot is so focused on the task at hand that nothing else seems to matter. There is a singular determination at work in this card.

I like to think of the Major Arcana as three sets of seven cards (with the addition of the Fool). In this view, the Chariot is the last card in the first row. In some ways, this card reminds me of a young adult, someone who has certainly matured but may have a narrow view of their overall growth. The Chariot speaks to a dogged determination to go in a certain direction, but on the shadow side Chariot energy can sometimes become

TOO pushy and forceful.

This horse wears a chain around her neck, adorned by a single pentacle. To me, this symbolizes the mastery she has gained so far. She is proud of all the ways she has developed so far. The challenge of the Chariot from here is to remain open to all that she still has to learn, instead of succumbing to an overly inflated ego! On her forehead is a black crescent moon, which suggests to me that in her soul is still open to receiving new wisdom. But another challenge for the Chariot is reconciling the knowledge of her soul with the insistence of her ego.

Above the horse, we see the now-familiar theme of rays emanating from a singular point. This time the origin of the rays is a round, white orb – possibly the sun. These emanating rays show energy that is expansive, powerful and unstoppable. The Chariot is a card of action. The Chariot is actively doing, going, moving.

The emanating rays here are black and white. The monochrome coloring shows a no-nonsense energy. Sometimes, we need to quit screwing around and start taking ourselves seriously. The Chariot asks you to set goals, believe in your ability to overcome adversity. When you maximize your willpower it is possible for you to succeed against all odds.

The Chariot Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Chariot is often illustrated as a person driving a cart. The card is typically pulled by two creatures, one black and one white. The contrasting colors show the necessity of rounding up all the seemingly contradicting elements in our lives and pushing them into one coherent direction.

There are many cards that speak of ease and flow, but the Chariot shows a counterbalance to these concepts. The Chariot is about determination, hard work and grit. In a metaphoric sense, you are a charioteer and the chariot you drive is your life. You have a responsibility to assert your control over that chariot and to take ownership over the direction you are headed.

The Chariot draws your attention to you and your path. This is a common theme in the visual presentation of this card in various decks. This card asks you to stay in your lane, to be aware of what YOU are doing. A shadow side of this can be selfishness and

inflexibility. But at its best, Chariot energy brings you in touch with your most powerful autonomy.

In a reading

In a positive sense, when the Chariot shows up in a reading it can remind you to tap into your dogged determination. This card can be the kick in the pants you need to do hard things. Instead of avoiding difficulty, the Chariot challenges you to be like the horse in this card and face challenges head-on. Be willing to start sorting through your whatever obstacles you currently have. This might not always be easy, but if you believe in yourself you CAN do hard things.

The Chariot also asks you to consider the current state of your ego. Do you have a healthy sense of self confidence? Or on the other hand, have you become so set in your ways that you're missing the bigger picture? Be equally willing to own your strengths AND your opportunities for further growth.

Justice

Deck Creator's Keywords: decisions, karma

Carrie's Keywords: justice, integrity, cause and effect

Justice Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A pure white cat and a pure black cat gaze out at us from an entirely black and white picture. Their tails intermingle in the center of the card, bringing to mind the symbology of the yin-yang. Every bit of dark is intermingled with light, and vice versa. Feminine and masculine, right and wrong, black and white – it is tempting to think they exist as singular realities, but each is always imbued with a hint of the other. The Justice card is a reminder of this truth.

The background lines are a mirror version of the pattern on the back of the card stock. The lines lead to a diamond in the center of the card. The half of the diamond on the side of the black cat is white, and naturally, the half of the diamond on the side of the white cat is black. Each must contain a splash of the other!

An elegantly decorated sword is positioned high above the cats, suggesting the power of the blade comes from a higher, spiritual realm. The point of the blade rests directly above the center of the diamond, showing that true Justice takes into account all the complexities of a situation. That area between the black and white polarities is sometimes referred to as the “gray area.” Justice urges us to take into account these nuanced gray areas as we come up with our conclusions. For it is often the case that decisions must be made even when there isn't a “black or white” answer.

Also worth noting: at this point in the Major Arcana the Wild Unknown tarot deviates from the Rider-Waite tradition by placing Justice as card number eight (Arthur Edward Waite famously switched the order of Justice and Strength).

The symbolism in this card shows that ‘for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.’ These is the ideal traditionally associated with the Justice card – karma, truth, decisions and morality.

Justice Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many decks, Justice shows a human figure holding an upright sword in one hand, scales in the other hand. The scales are an obvious sign of balance, of weighing all sides of the situation. The obvious association of Justice is that of a literal legal system, but this card also ties into the ethical decisions we must make in our daily lives.

Even actions that seem small have a ripple out effect either in the physical world or in a physical sense. Thus, there are two planes of Justice; karma is the spiritual plane. Although it is much more complex than some people make it out to be, there IS something to the concept that our “vibrations” attract certain things into our experience. Justice is the tarot card that represents this concept. This card asks you to take responsibility for your real world actions AND your energy.

Living with integrity is one of the most challenging yet most rewarding things we can do. Justice asks you to give serious consideration to your values and beliefs. Once you have clearly defined your values, beliefs, ethics and so on you must then ask yourself: are you living in line with these principles? Integrity means walking your talk. Integrity also means standing up for your principles when they are at risk in the real world. Thus, this is a card that speaks heavily to the real-world work of social justice, activism, and seeking equality.

In a reading

In a reading, Justice might ask you to consider how your own choices are influencing your reality. It may be time for you to give some weighted consideration to all of your options and make a careful choice about how to proceed. Remember that things are nuanced and you may not find one easy “right answer” right away. Be willing to look at your situation objectively and respect the full complexity at work.

This card is also a good reminder to step into your full integrity. Take back your power to define your own beliefs and to stand up for what is right.

The Hermit

Deck Creator's Keywords: solitude, self-reflection, meditation

Carrie's Keywords: introspection, meditation, seeking

The Hermit Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Who better to portray the ideals of the Hermit than a tortoise? He wears his home on his back so he can literally go within. He peers out at us with a calm expression. He is not hiding out of fear, but rather out of a deeper wisdom that compels him to withdraw from the outer world. The Hermit senses that what he most needs right now can be obtained in the INNER world.

The scene around the Hermit is dark, but he carries a lantern upon his back, an orange flame giving the only splash of color in the card. The flame is vivid and confident. We might otherwise assume the Hermit is a timid character, but the flame shows otherwise. It takes great power indeed to turn away from the expectations, opinions and norms espoused by society. But the Hermit teaches that when you cultivate this inner power – through meditation, introspection and self-discovery – you can practice true authenticity.

Directly in front of the Hermit we see a splash of white illuminated by his lantern. This shows that he has a highly developed internal guidance system, and even though he may not be able to see the entire path before him, he carries a light that will always illuminate the next right step. He lets his path unfold naturally in each moment and trusts the spiritual pace of the universe. As a tortoise, this Hermit is not one to move quickly. He doesn't focus on racing to a proverbial finish line. He knows that he must take time to reflect, to contemplate, before he embarks upon any given path.

The Hermit Tarot Card Meanings in General

Although all archetypes are gender neutral at their core, many tarot decks show the Hermit as a stereotypical “wise old man” complete with a long robe and flowing white beard, carrying a lantern. The archetypical Hermit appears in many well known stories (think Dumbledore in Harry Potter or Gandalf in Lord of the Rings).

The Hermit is often associated with a monk or some other type of spiritual seeker. While the Hierophant shows the search for knowledge in the outer world through experts and existing structures, the Hermit shows the importance of turning your search inward. That is not to say the Hermit cannot represent external help, as this card is often associated with mentors and guides. But the type of guidance the Hermit offers leads the seeker to their OWN understanding, instead of imposing a pre-determined belief system as the Hierophant might.

We all have an inherent inner guidance system, which serves as our own Hermit's lantern. This card reminds you to quiet yourself and listen to that inner guidance, for it will rarely lead you astray.

In a reading

When the Hermit appears, it is often a reminder to activate your internal guidance. Instead of seeking the answers from other people or avoiding being alone with your thoughts, the Hermit asks you to meditate. Journal. Contemplate. Turn your focus away from external distractions and explore what is within you. If you do feel as though external support could be useful, remember that the best mentors are those who only guide you closer to your own truth.

The Wheel of Fortune

Deck Creator's Keywords: destiny, fate, change of course

Carrie's Keywords: turning point, changes, fate

Wheel of Fortune Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

In the Wheel of Fortune card, we find ourselves in a trippy world, a visual representation of the cosmically intertwined web of life. The Wheel itself serves as a focal point, a complex structure of tangled branches which serve as spokes, and woven rainbow threads.

The colorful thread shows a vital force that unites everything. There is inherent meaning in what might otherwise seem to be random chances of fate on a spinning wheel. Everything is connected through complex patterns. We may not be able to untangle events to understand why they unfold the way they do, but there is an unfathomable system at work in the turning of the wheel.

This card often shows changes that are beyond human understanding or control. You could think of these changes as fate or destiny, or you could think of them as simply random happenstance. Either way, the wheel brings changes that we may not be able to do much about – the changing of the seasons is one such example of this energy.

In the top half of the card, night abounds. The branches of the wheel are white, in contrast to the dark branches in the lower half of the wheel. An owl gazes out at us from the top of the wheel. Owls are a symbol of wisdom. The owl is not phased by change and does not try to control the movement of the wheel. Instead, she observes and adapts.

The lower portion of the card merges into a daytime scene. This turning of day to night, night to day is one manifestation of the Wheel of Fortune that we are all intimately familiar with. On a symbolic level, this can also show our fate changing from clarity to confusion, success to failure, and infinite other twists. Sometimes changes that at the time seem meaningless become rich with meaning only once we have gained distance and perspective. Such is the way of the wheel.

There's a sense of mystery inherent in the Wheel of Fortune of the Wild Unknown

tarot. We can't grasp how or why the wheel turns. It's structure at first glance seems chaotic, but on closer inspection we see the rainbow threads and find hope that there is a higher order at work. This is how we've come to speculate on the concepts of destiny and fate.

Our best option is to embody the wisdom of the owl. Instead of bemoaning the unseen forces that turn the wheel, we can try to accept inevitable change and roll with the turning.

Wheel of Fortune Tarot Card Meanings in General

Many depictions of this card include creatures in the four card corners that represent the four fixed signs of the zodiac. These can symbolize the wisdom that allows you to maintain your sense of stability even as change is enacted in your life.

It is also worth noting that we are not ENTIRELY powerless to the forces of motion. The greek god Anubis is often featured in this card, a god who had many roles including guiding souls from the world of the living to the underworld. Thus, you could consider that there are universal forces working in your favor to help you navigate changes. You may even have more influence than you believe you do in the turning of the wheel. Sometimes this card serves as a reminder of your role in stepping up and having an active say in your destiny.

Another key theme that comes through in this card is the notion that 'what goes up, must come down.' If you are having very good luck, it is not likely to last forever. The same is true of very bad luck. As the saying goes, the only thing constant in life is change. You are wise to know when to actively influence the forces of change in your life, and when to step back and accept that what will be, will be.

In a reading

The Wheel of Fortune draws your attention to changes that are currently at work both within you and in your outer world. If you have been avoiding accepting these changes, it may be time to face them directly. Remember that from a cosmic perspective, the shifts happening for you are not necessarily 'positive' or 'negative.' Instead, they are neutral forces.

If at this time you feel a negative emotional reaction to the turning hands of fate,

remind yourself that you may not yet be able to see the bigger picture. As the imagery in the Wild Unknown really shows, the workings of fate are complex and tangled. Practice shifting your perspective so that you can best process whatever turning point you are reaching.

Strength

Deck Creator's Keywords: patience, mastery of emotions, courage

Carrie's Keywords: fortitude, patience, gentle power

Strength Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Strength card is quietly dominated by the presence of a lion. The lion faces straight forward. Like the Chariot, this lion is not one to shy away from life. Strength offers you a way to approaches even difficult situations with patience and conviction.

In the original version of this post, I referred to this lion using feminine pronouns (she, her). Several commenters pointed out that as this lion has a mane, it is actually a male lion. One commenter pointed out that this lion could be a “two-spirit, genderqueer or trans lioness.” For simplicity's sake, I will use gender neutral pronouns in this updated version.

As I've stated a couple of times in these posts, I believe that all archetypes at their core are gender neutral. The Strength card is typically associated with “feminine energy” because it shows a strong and confident yet calm approach. But the term “yin energy” might be more appropriate as this phrasing does not have the distracting gender connotations.

The lion carries a rose in their mouth. Although their teeth are sharp enough that they could easily rip the flower in half, they do not. Instead, the flower is held carefully, showing a gentle fierceness. The lion's mastery is achieved softly, not through brute force. Instead of exerting their will to solve a problem, they work WITH the problem.

Above the lion is a sun, emanating orange and yellow rays. This adds to the sense of pride we already associate with lions. On the lion's forehead is a lemniscate, enhanced with orange and yellow. This shows a broad scope of infinite energy.

I tend to draw comparisons between Strength and The Chariot as they show variations on a similar theme. The Chariot shows more of a firm-hand control, Strength shows more of a patient mastery. The Wild Unknown does a magnificent job portraying the traits that we have come to associate with the Strength card.

Strength Tarot Card Meanings in General

Traditional depictions show a woman leaning down towards a lion. The woman cradles the lion's jaw with her hands, gently persuading the creature to cooperate. Instead of exerting a copious amount of energy trying to force the lion to do something, she knows her energy will be better spend if she remains calm.

Strength reminds you that sometimes you must play the long game. Meaningful changes take time. You need to have the patience to hold space for others. You need to have the courage to face challenges. And you must have the fortitude to keep showing up no matter what setbacks you encounter.

Strength speaks to your ability to calmly coerce other people to agree with your approach. Tolerance and compassion go a long way when you want to show the validity of your vision. But Strength also speaks to your ability to walk side by side with your own inner demons. Instead of ignoring them or trying to beat them into submission, your best approach is to gain mastery over them by tapping into your courage, your gentle (but fierce) power.

In a reading

In a reading, this card is often a reminder of your inner courage. Just as the lion on the card radiates both patience and boldness, you hold both of these traits within yourself. It is time to step into your reserve of inner courage and do what needs to be done. Have patience with yourself, and have compassion for those you encounter.

Remember that you don't need to force anything to happen. Instead, look at how you can conserve your energy by working WITH your challenges. When you are simultaneously calm and courageous, you are truly a force to be reckoned with.

The Hanged Man

Deck Creator's Keywords: sacrifice, letting go, new perspectives

Carrie's Keywords: surrender, alternate perspective, liminal

The Hanged Man Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

What better creature than a bat to represent the Hanged Man? To us, he seems to be in suspension. He stows away in his topsy-turvy stance all day, and is active at night. Everything about the bat's lifestyle offers a new perspective.

The Hanged Man may seem to be upside down, but to him, being upside down IS right-side up. He is adept at seeing the world, and all of reality, from a different angle than what we would call normal. Normal is a relative term, the Hanged Man would tell us.

Bats hang this way because their wings are not strong enough to come into flight from the ground. Instead, they hang from their feet and can only break into flight when they let go and plummet through the air. This Hanged Man knows that now is not the time to fly – but when the time comes, he will be ready. He is at home in the realm of the liminal – liminal meaning an in-between state, the pause between breaths, the threshold that straddles both here and now.

The metaphor of only finding flight once you let go is appropriate here. This card asks you take the spiritually potent step of relinquishing control. You spend so much energy – physical, emotional and spiritual – trying to hold on. Perhaps if you let go, you will connect with your power in unfathomably potent ways.

The Hanged Man seems to have a secret. The protective wrapping of wings and the red glow of his eyes give him the air of someone who knows something that we don't. He has learned how to let go of the normal filters of awareness and find comfort in discomfort.

The Hanged Man Tarot Card Meanings in General

Traditional depictions of the Hanged Man show a human figure hanging by one

foot, the other leg crossed over so that his body shape resembles an upside down four. As the number four is numerologically associated with control and structure (think card four, the Emperor), the upside down four shows our potential of releasing that innate need for control.

The messages in this card relates to the Norse god Odin. Through the sacrifice of hanging himself on a tree, Odin gained access to the wisdom of the runes. Thus, the Hanged Man tarot card is commonly associated with themes of sacrifice and suspension. You often need to give up one comfort or another in order to fulfill whatever higher objective beckons you.

I personally associate the Hanged Man card with the concept of radical acceptance. Radical acceptance is the spiritual practice of accepting reality exactly as it is. Instead of trying to ration away the darker parts of our experience, radical acceptance asks us to sit with all that is. This does not mean condoning things that are bad or wrong or difficult. It simply means accepting that they are real, that they are what they are.

In a reading

This card asks you to consider the infinite perspectives currently available to you. Challenge yourself to consider your situation from a new angle, coerce yourself to question certain aspects of your reality.

Doing this might require you to devote to surrendering your ego's desire to control. Letting go of the urge to control is very much easier said than done! In fact, learning to surrender can be incredibly uncomfortable. Remind yourself that experiencing discomfort is okay. In fact, this discomfort is absolutely necessary for your spiritual development.

Death

Deck Creator's Keywords: necessary ending, closure, transformation

Carrie's Keywords: closings, elimination, transformation

Death Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

There are no holds barred in this Death card. It's a literal picture of decay, showing the fading remains of a deceased bird. The feathers show that what is now bones and dust was not so long ago vital and alive. 'How can this be? It isn't fair.' We have countless questions with no satisfying answer. It just is.

The card is entirely black and white. The lack of color hones conveys what at first glance seems to be an inherent harshness. But the truth is, Death is not harsh. It seems that way to us because we are scared of what we can't control or fathom. Death – not only physical death, but any matter of transformation – is an indiscriminate, sweeping force. It is unbiased, unattached, dispassionate.

There is a comfort in the impersonal quality of death. For all of our differences, for all of the strange and unique types of lifeforms in the world, we all will eventually meet death. Regardless of the clothes we wear or the personas we adopt, we are all subject to this inevitable energy.

Of course, this card means much more than literal physical death. We see the Death card and realize that some situations in our lives are beyond hope of having life breathed back into them. Relationships decay, friendships dissolve, careers are vanquished. Habits, thought patterns and beliefs are laid to rest.

Sometimes we choose our endings, but often they are unceremoniously forced upon us. We can try to deny, we can cling to situations even as they are rotting before us. But no amount of wishing and will-power can counteract the sweeping force of Death.

There is wisdom in respecting closures, and even embracing them. After the hollowness of winter comes the regeneration of Spring. After one chapter comes the next. We see these cycles repeated throughout nature, the universe, and our own psyches. Infinite deaths make way for infinite transformations.

Death Tarot Card Meanings in General

This card frequently features skeletons or grim reapers, physical representations of the concept of death. In older decks this card did not have a title and is still sometimes referred to as the untitled arcanum. This card is given the number thirteen, a number which for various reasons has long been associated with ill omens.

In the Waite-Smith depiction, Death is upon a horse and has already trampled over a king. This reminds you that no matter what privileges you have in the earthly realm, you are still subject to swift endings. A priest makes an offering to Death, and a woman faints away at the site of Death. Only the child pictured in the card looks on at Death with openness and curiosity. This reminds you not to assume that endings are BAD. Sometimes endings seem brutal as they occur, but they pave the way for your next chapter.

The Waite-Smith depiction also shows a hint of the sun rising in the distance. This is a reminder that all of life is cyclical. Endings and transformations are just another part of life's infinite cyclical dance.

In a reading

In a reading, this card does NOT need to be negative or scary! But it does pack a punch, and may ask you to dig into your shadow. Death might ask you to examine what changes, transformations or endings are currently at work for you.

From a personal growth standpoint, this card may particularly challenge you to confront what YOU need to end. If you've been entrenched in unhealthy patterns, if you've been keeping yourself in a situation you know is not good for you...it's probably time to end that stuff once and for all.

Death is a part of life, and most deaths are metaphoric NOT literal. Remind yourself that we are all subject to these indiscriminate energies. There are times that you can enact your will to keep something going, but Death asks you to accept the times when endings are imminent.

Cultivate the belief that whatever transformations occur for you are making space for you to emerge into a fresh new chapter. Decaying material must be trimmed from plants in order for them to grow new life – in a metaphysical sense, you must also be

willing to be pruned of what is dead in order for you to become more fully alive.

Temperance

Deck Creator's Keywords: healing, renewal, balance

Carrie's Keywords: blending, moderation, balance

Temperance Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A heron stands with one wing outstretched as if to protect the orange flames in front of her. Blue water droplets descend to meet the flame, but neither destroys the other. The heron has a moderating effect over the seemingly contrasting elements.

Forces that seem to be opposites can be brought together with a blend of skill, patience and magic. This is the energy we see at work in the Temperance card. If left unchecked, fire and water will destroy each other. But in this image they get along beautifully.

I get a sense that the heron is moderating the flames and droplets. Through her influence, both are able to thrive in measured proportions. In this way, Temperance reminds you of your ability to moderate the energies at work around you. Through methods both mundane and magical, you can be an active force, you can influence the direction of the life force around you.

The Heron here knows that equilibrium is the key to well being. The background lines slant inwards to meet at the card's center, adding to the sense of calm and balance in this card.

This card also hints at transformation. By bringing together different energies in just the right proportions, something wonderful can emerge. You can apply these lessons in the external world, but most importantly in your inner world. As a human being, you are naturally a mix of contradictions: love and anger, light and dark, pessimism and optimism.

Instead of gravitating towards extremes, Temperance represents your ability to work with ALL of your inner contradictions. You can create your own magic when you skillfully blend those contradicting elements of your psyche.

Temperance Tarot Card Meanings in General

Traditional depictions of this card show an angel standing with one foot in water, one foot on land. With a serene expression, the angel pours water between two cups. These are visual cues that represent themes of balance and moderation.

Temperance means making sure you do not have too much or too little of any one thing: creating balance is a common aim of various spiritual practices. But remember that balance does not have to mean everything is “equal.” Sometimes you need more fire than water or vice versa. Balance simply means that things are working together in harmony, not that they are rigidly divided into proportions. In this regard, Temperance shows that in a spiritual sense, balance is not a science but an art.

This card is sometimes associated with healing. In many alternative healing modalities, illness is considered to be a result of some type of imbalance in the body. Temperance shows the well-being we can experience when our bodies – and our minds – are “balanced.”

In a reading

It is essential to cultivate your awareness of what energies are at work around you. In a reading, Temperance may ask you to become aware of these energies. Is there too much or too little of one energy or another in your life? It may be time to consider how you can return to a sense of equilibrium.

Temperance also shows the power you gain when you embrace your contradictions. Instead of expecting yourself to fall into only one extreme way of being, let yourself be all that you are – even when those things seem to clash. You have the ability to temper all of your inner energies so that they work together to form a unique, powerful blend.

The Devil

Deck Creator's Keywords: negativity, materialism, addiction

Carrie's Keywords: bondage, inner demons, materialism

The Devil Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A smug goat looks out at us from the card. He's got a sly smile going on and we can only see one eye, giving him a shady air. His ears are cocked to the side, alert and ready to take advantage of what he hears.

Upon his forehead is an upside-down pentagram, a symbol our culture has come to associate with negative forces. Elphias Levi said: "A reversed pentagram, with two points projecting upwards, is a symbol of evil and attracts sinister forces because it overturns the proper order of things and demonstrates the triumph of matter over spirit. It is the goat of lust attacking the heavens with its horns."

Indeed, the Devil card shows the human tendency to value the physical world over the spiritual world. This can manifest in fairly inconspicuous ways; such as enjoying decadent food, having sex, or doing anything else that might be deemed naughty. This can also manifest in more insidious ways; such as becoming stuck in destructive behaviors, bowing to your inner demons, or any other way that you might cause damage to yourself or others.

The card's background is dark and bleak. There is no sign of light, the Devil dwells in the realm of shadow. Exploring your shadows and confronting your inner demons is crucial, because it's when they are left to roam freely in the dark that they cause real issues. By bringing these parts of yourself to the light, you can learn to accept, heal and integrate them.

The goat's feet are surrounded by orange and red flames, yet he does not burn. This tricky, treacherous fellow can walk through fire (maybe he's even the one conjuring the blaze). He looks as though he wants to lure others with his wily ways. We've come to associate the force we call "the devil" with addiction, enslavement, and negative patterns. Once you become aware this energy is at work, you can begin to free ourselves.

The Devil Tarot Card Meanings in General

Many depictions of the Devil show a goat, or Baphomet. The first insinuation of goats being associated with the Devil comes from the bible: “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”

But then in the Middle Ages things really got heated up when the collective folkloric vision of the Devil began to get mis-mashed with various beast-like pagan gods (including Pan, depicted as part man, part goat).

Fast forward to the 1800s and Elphias Levi created an image of Baphomet (a figure we don't know much about, but which the Knights Templar were accused of worshipping in the middle ages). Levi had a more all encompassing vision of Baphomet, not as a figure of pure evil but more of a unity of radical opposites such as good and evil. The image of the Devil in the Rider Waite tarot was inspired by Levi's depiction of Baphomet.

In the 1960s, the Church of Satan was founded and used Baphomet in their iconography. Thusly the image of Devil-as-goat has been firmly embedded in our cultural associations.

In a reading

The Devil card often draws your attention to where you feel trapped, restricted or blocked. In some cases, this bondage is caused by an external situation (a negative work environment, a toxic relationship and so on). But more often, these energies are manifesting internally. As such, it is important to willingly look at your inner demons: your secrets, your shames, your addictive tendencies.

This can seem quite heavy, but the truth is that simply acknowledging what is enslaving you is a hugely powerful step in finding liberation. Once you are able to clearly identify your demons, you can get to know them better and find appropriate ways to free yourself.

This card can also serve as a reminder to look for satisfaction beyond the material trappings of your life. It is natural to crave certain comforts of the flesh, but those

passing things rarely bring you lasting fulfillment. The Devil asks you to look beyond the trappings of the material realm and make space also for the ethereal things that bring your life meaning.

The Tower

Deck Creator's Keywords: unexpected upheaval, crisis, change

Carrie's Keywords: breakthrough, collapse, chaos

The Tower Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

An evergreen tree stands in the dead quiet of night. Two bolts of yellow lightning descend from the sky, striking the tree at two points. The top portion has already been violently ripped off and engulfed in flames, and the lower portion looks about to topple as well.

This image alludes back to the Emperor card, in which we also saw a solid evergreen tree. The Emperor seemed to be magnificent, sturdy, and invincible. But in the Tower, we see that there are forces of upheaval which can unexpectedly strike even the strongest of us.

Sometimes unexpected events seem jarring or even violent. But there is often a universal intelligence at work, forcibly clearing away certain aspects of our lives to make room for something new. Forest fires speak to this truth. Although the flames can be utterly destructive, they can also be beneficial in that they clear the way for new growth.

The Tower shows moments that are difficult at the time, but when we look back we say 'thank goodness that happened.' Like when your partner leaves you, but then you find a relationship that is a much better match for you. Or when you get fired, but eventually find an unexpected new career path which brings you greater fulfillment.

When a change is necessary but our ego won't let us make that change, we experience the Tower. If we don't listen to the whispers of our life, an explosive turn of events will force us to pay attention. On the other hand, if we DO listen to the whispers, we can encourage the tower's dismantling. But even when we choose a sweeping change, it will still be intense!

Tarot reminds us that life is always dynamic. One minute you are the Emperor, strong and solid, and the next you are the Tower, experiencing chaos. When we look at the bigger picture we find order in disorder and necessity in the Tower's jolt.

The Tower Tarot Card Meanings in General

The imagery in this card often shows a literal tower, a man made construct in the process of crumbling. Human figures are sometimes shown freefalling through the air. What these people once assumed to be true – the constructs of their ego – has been suddenly shifted dramatically. Thus, the Tower is sometimes associated with “ego death,” a loss of the “masks” people wear. The Tower strips away your false sense of self and gives you an experience of radical reality.

The lightning striking the structure could be thought of as representing a burst of insight. As such, this card can be associated with sudden breakthroughs. As difficult as Tower energy can be, it is also liberating. The Tower gives you revelations that may be unwelcome initially, but ultimately lead you to a greater experience of self-actualization.

In a reading

The Tower often appears in times of intense shifts and upheavals. Keep in mind this applies just as much to internal shifts as external ones. You might experience a lot of resistance to these changes. This card asks you to consider in what ways dramatic change in your life could be valuable – even if at first glance it only seems destructive.

Remember that in the midst of it, things might feel chaotic. But resisting and fighting against this chaos only makes the blow harder. At times, Tower energy can lead you to feel like you’re having a breakdown. But look for the ways in which what could be labeled as a breakdown might actually be a **BREAKTHROUGH**. You may be experiencing a shake up so that you can then experience a new, more empowering level of awareness.

The Star

Deck Creator's Keywords: hope, peace of mind, generosity

Carrie's Keywords: authenticity, inspiration, peace

The Star Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Way up in the dark of night, a large star glimmers spectacularly. Ten smaller stars are scattered about, but the center star commands attention. This star is adorned with the colors of the rainbow, blending into one another. The full-spectrum color gives the star an air of holistic, healing energy. All colors are present, all colors are even, and they are contained safely within the star. All is as it should be.

A commenter pointed out that this is most likely a depiction of the North Star, with the cluster of stars to the right being Cassiopeia. This is symbolically reverent, as we talk about following the North Star when we embark on our own authentic path. The Star represents the magical sensation that comes when you live in a way that feels true and right to you.

The Star gives its light freely, without holding back. But it is also unassuming. The star draws attention quietly, with a sort of serene power. A beautiful, calming influence is present in this card. This star is a reminder that hope is present even in the darkest of nights.

The positioning of the bright star is near the top of the card, and the lines on the card draw our attention upward. The lines are sparser at the bottom of the card, and get darker and darker as they near the top, giving the visual effect that we are standing far below, looking up at this glowing beacon of hope.

As with many images in the Wild Unknown, there is a simplicity to the star. It isn't weighed down with heavy symbolism or overwhelming imagery. After enduring the chaos of the Tower, we reach the peaceful, smooth reprieve of the Star.

The Star Tarot Card Meanings in General

Many decks, such as the Waite-Smith tarot, show a naked woman leaning over a

pool of water. Her nudity could be thought of as representing authenticity, a complete willingness to show up exactly as you are. The woman pours water from two jugs, which could represent inspiration and creative flow. The Waite-Smith depiction shows seven stars, which could represent the seven chakras and the Star's association with holistic healing.

I often associate the Star with the infinite creative well we each have access to. We are always plugged into this universal energy, this wellspring of spiritual life force. The Star card offers us the gift of letting down our barriers and reconnecting to that source energy.

This card also has some healing connotations. The Star offers you a reprieve, a chance to make peace with whatever turmoil you've experienced. The Star shows that despite your battle scars, you can still be vulnerable. You can still trust, you can still find a way to show up in this world as your authentic self. Your greatest strength is activated when you devote to being real.

In a reading

The Star is often a reminder to listen to the quiet whispers of your inspiration. What "north star" are you being beckoned to follow? Even if you have been hurt in the past, now may be the time to step forward with renewed hope. Healing, integration and acceptance are readily available to you. Let your guard down and experience this holistic energy.

The Moon

Deck Creator's Keywords: lack of direction, vivid dreams, fears

Carrie's Keywords: bewilderment, imagination, altered consciousness

The Moon Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A waning crescent moon hangs in the center of the sky, at the darkest point. It has a yellow hue, but doesn't emit any rays of light to guide us. It is only a pale, partial reflection of the sun. As enchanting as the moon can be, it can be equally perplexing. Things aren't always as they seem under the light of the moon.

The moon is positioned between two evergreen trees. The evergreens we saw in the Emperor and even the Tower were full and healthy-looking. The evergreens here, though, are sparse and have a more chaotic, lopsided appearance. In the realm of the moon things are trippy. Is it just your mind playing tricks on you, or is something abnormal really going on?

The ground is not visible in this card. The Moon is a energy that can make it hard to catch your bearings. Up might be down or down might be left might be right. This can lead to wildly imaginative adventures...or it can lead to confusion and anxiety. In the faint light of the moon, you question what is real and what is imagined, what is beautiful fantasy and what is pure madness.

The moon shows a nighttime world of imagination and psychic exploration. This can be a stunning psychedelic experience, offering you access to new dimensions. But it can also become misleading or bewildering. This is an untamed landscape where anything is possible. It is an intriguing place to explore – as long as you don't become lost forever.

The Moon Tarot Card Meanings in General

Classic depictions of this card show a crayfish, a dog and a wolf between two pillars. The crayfish represents your ancient lizard brain, the most primal part of your consciousness. The wolf represents your instincts that are still wild, things that you still have even if "civilization" leads you to repress them. The dog represents the tamed parts

of your consciousness, the parts that society smiles upon.

The Moon reminds you that consciousness is vast and deep. Some parts of your awareness feel safe and comfortable – other parts feel mysterious and scary. The Moon speaks to all of the ways the vastness of your unconscious can manifest: dreams, fantasies, visions, illusions, anxieties and instincts.

It can be daunting to explore the huge chambers of your consciousness. There are certain aspects of yourself that you may be terrified to face, leading you to deny and repress them. The Moon reminds you that when you refuse to integrate these energies, the energies can be destructive. But when you are willing to step gently into the Moon's glow, you can integrate these unconscious energies into your conscious awareness. This is a continuation of the process that began with the Devil.

In a reading

When you see the Moon, it may be useful to consider where you are currently experiencing bewilderment. Your imagination is the most powerful tool you have when it is used with reverence. But when your imagination runs away with you, you may find yourself lost in the shadowy confusion of your unconscious mind.

It can be so healthy to make space for the trippy and the abnormal in your life. But it is also important to make sure you don't lose your orientation completely. Look for ways that you can let your imagination roam while maintaining your connection to something solid.

The Sun

Deck Creator's Keywords: new vitality, assurance, enlightenment

Carrie's Keywords: joy, enlightenment, radiance

The Sun Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Sun of the Wild Unknown is practically bursting with light! Glorious rays dominate the card, emanating nearly to the brim with orange and yellow beams. We are naturally drawn to the powerful, bold and welcoming energy inherent here. The Sun asks you not to hold back, but to unleash your full brilliance.

The splendor of the sun is a life-affirming sight, especially after the darkness of the Moon. The sun always rises, even after the darkest of nights. What once seemed bewildering is made clear and understandable when viewed in this direct light. The Sun shows your ability to reach an aha moment, to gain utter and total clarity. Thus, this card is associated with the concept of enLIGHTenment.

This card reminds you that each day is a new offering, brimming with possibility and potential. The sun infuses vigor and greatness to everything that basks in its rays. We see a glimpse here of the truth that there is an eternal life force that resides in mortal beings. There's a radiant energy to the Universe that will never be extinguished.

In the four corners of the card, the rays begin to blend into green and blue coloring, showing the hints of the ordinary world drenched in light. There are birds in each corner, flying towards the edges. The birds are champions of the sun, expanding and heralding its positive energy. This also shows how expansive the Sun's energy is – it is not hemmed in but burts forth freely.

There is an unstoppable sense of LIFE in this card. The sun itself is a necessary life force, it seeps energy into the food we eat and into our very cells. This is a card of vigor, celebration, understanding and living out loud. The unapologetic prominence of the sun is worth noting once again. There is no shirking here. This is a card of letting yourself take up space.

Above all else, the Sun asks you to soak in the joy of being alive. Joy is a more

potent word than happiness, because true joy can contain happiness AND sorrow. True joy is about being fully present for all aspects of life, about letting yourself fully feel the radiant life force that infuses you, and knowing this is the same energy that infuses the entire universe.

The Sun Tarot Card Meanings in General

Traditional depictions of this card show a human-like figure (possibly a child or a cherub), naked and with arms outstretched, riding a white horse. The figure is naked because they have nothing to hide. They are fully comfortable embodying all aspects of their existence. The Sun speaks of being bold and open.

The literal sun is often associated with a joyful reverence of life. This card is about being fully and gloriously alive. It is a continuation of the energy that started with the Magician: stepping into your true power, owning your radiance, embracing all that life has to offer.

But on the other end of the spectrum, the Sun is a powerful force that can burn us if we look straight at it, and there is some discomfort associated with this tarot card at times as well. The directness of the Sun can be welcome and warming, but it can sometimes be blinding and dazzling.

In a reading

When you see the Sun, it might be useful to ask yourself if you are saying YES to life. Are you fully plugged in to the radiant energies at work within you, or are you unconsciously dulling those energies? The Sun asks you to take whatever bold action would make you feel the most expansive at this time.

If you've been experiencing some struggles, this card can be a sign that life is still on your side. New viewpoints of greater clarity and understanding are available to you, choose to let yourself bask in that warmth.

Judgement

Deck Creator's Keywords: rebirth, forgiveness, awakening

Carrie's Keywords: calling, rebirth, absolution

Judgement Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A white bird, possibly a dove, draws attention from the upper portion of the card. Rays of light surround his outstretched wings. He has a serene, welcoming, all-encompassing energy. The bird looks like a spiritual force, perhaps an angel or other guide.

A flock of small black bats rises to meet the open-winged embrace of the white bird. The card is entirely black and white, making use of the contrast of light above and dark below.

The closer we get to the bottom of the card, the more the bats blend into the darkness. The bats have been slumbering, entrenched in darkness below, waiting for something to inspire them to emerge into the light. The bats are now ready to awaken, be more fully alive, to respond to a higher calling.

The angelic bird welcomes the bats without discernment. He seems to say "Come on up. I welcome everyone. Your past mistakes are in the past. You are forgiven. You can begin again. You can choose to soar into the light, and I will embrace you."

And the bats are responding "YES! I'm ready and here I come."

The Judgement card shows you that it is always possible for you to embrace new energies, to shed old skins and step into more aligned ways of being. This card is often associated with feeling a calling – just as the bats feel the call of the bird above, you may feel called towards something.

Finding the power within you to say YES when feel such a calling is a potent landmark of your spiritual journey. This card reminds you that you are not bound by your past. You can shed old skins, you can be reborn time and time again. You can be forgiven and most importantly you can forgive yourself.

By doing this, you awaken powerful forces both within you and in the universe as

a whole. Judgement reminds you that when you listen to the whispers of the universe, and when you act upon your highest callings, you experience the full exhaltation of life.

Judgement Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Judgement card often contains a lot of biblical energy. An angel trumpets from above, raising the dead from their slumbers. As such, one connotation of this card is the concept of spiritual forgiveness and absolution of sin. When you are weighed down by your past, it is difficult to rise up to meet your future. Thus, Judgement gives you the gift of a clean slate, washing away what was so that you can embrace what is and what will be.

Many decks (including the Wild Unknown) have moved towards a more holistic way of showing these concepts instead of relying so heavily on Christian imagery. This card has been depicted showing a phoenix, alluding to the way that you can metaphorically die and be reborn from the ashes.

Metaphoric rebirth is always available to you, infinite times, even in this one lifetime. Who You Are is always evolving, morphing, shifting. This card asks you to step fully into that dance, to be willing to devote entirely to your endless becoming.

In a reading

When you see the Judgement card, you may be feeling “called” towards one thing or another. Now is a powerful time to listen to your inner voice, to tune into the messages of the Universe. Let your ego quiet and align yourself with the murmurs of your deeper self. This is how you can more clearly hear what is “calling” you.

Your story going forward does not have to be marred by the story of your past. Now is an excellent time to energetically cleanse what is no longer serving you, to forgive yourself and to believe in all that is possible. The most effective way to find fulfillment is to constantly awaken to your callings, to embrace completely what gives your life purpose.

The World

Deck Creator's Keywords: completion, wholeness, contentment

Carrie's Keywords: unity, integration, actualization

The World Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The World is one of the most enigmatic images in this deck. This card speaks to me in a wordless way. I can feel the energies of wholeness, interlocking, and integration that are traditionally associated with this card, but I have a hard time breaking down the image!

In the center of the card we find a complex sphere made up of interconnected rings. In the background is a dark, starry sky. The sky gets lighter as we reach the bottom of the card, suggesting the duality of light and dark, conscious and unconscious. The imagery makes me think of life and spiritual energy concentrated together (much like our literal planet earth) and surrounded by a vast, mysterious Universe.

The sphere's core is a bright, emanating white. This reminds me of an energetic center of spirit, bursting forth to infuse all of creation. The second ring is comprised of flowers and seems to represent non-sentient life (plants, water, earth, fungi, etc). The third ring looks like snake skin and could represent sentient life (animals and humans).

The final ring looks like an energetically colorful piano! This could represent the senses of unity, purpose, and LOVE that protect and complete the previous layers. In other words, the spiritual component.

A few additional interpretations have been described in the comments section of this post. One of my favorite interpretations comes from a commenter named Karen who wrote: "in 78 Degrees of Wisdom, Rachel Pollack divides the major arcana into three rows of seven, with the Fool on the top, representing the three levels of consciousness. The white light in the middle is the Fool, innocence and new beginnings. the seven flowers represent the first line, consciousness – concerns of love, society, and nature. The next ring is our subconsciousness, a tightly-bound web of things we hold on to, our psychological drives. And finally, the last ring is superconsciousness, the outward expression of spiritual knowledge, release of archetypal energy. So then the world

represents the unification of all of these areas of experience.”

No matter how you interpret this imagery, the circle itself invokes a sense of wholeness. It has no beginning and no end. Regardless of our current challenges and emotional turmoil, we are always, already complete beings. We only need to shift our perspective, to zoom out and see the whole picture. We are perfect in our imperfections. Everything will be okay, everything is okay. Everything have purpose, everyone is cosmologically significant, all are connected. The Universe is creating a story, and we are essential to the plot.

The World Tarot Card Meanings in General

As the final card in the major arcana, the World carries a sense of completion and wholeness. Traditional imagery on this card shows a dancing human figure. The human figure is surrounded by a laurel wreath – a symbol of success. As such, this card can be associated with completion, the sense that something has reached a spiritually ordained conclusion.

This card is also associated with duality becoming unity. When the card contains a human figure, the person is sometimes considered to be equal parts male and female. I think of the World as a sort of combination of the Magician and the High Priestess: the World is about both “doing” and “being.” The World is an integration of supposed opposites: light and dark, flesh and spirit, the individual self and the One That Is All.

In a reading

This card often shows up to remind you that you are whole and complete exactly as you are. Even when you feel lacking or not enough, the World reminds you that you ARE enough. Something within you is likely ready for integration. You’ve gained great wisdom through your experiences, and this card asks you to hold space for integrating whatever lessons are most prominent for you right now.

Trust that you are where you should be, and choose to look for the dynamic meaning unfolding in your story. You are a whole and complex creature, let yourself revel in all facets of your existence. Now is the time to be what you are – magic in motion.

The
Minor
Arcana

Suit of Wands

Ace of Wands

Creator's Keywords: inspiration, new beginnings

Carrie's Keywords: igniting energy, momentum

Ace of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The ace is the introduction to the suit of wands – and what an introduction it is! An ace always contains the potential for the entire spectrum of each suit, and this ace contains the core essence of wands energy: fire, momentum, and enthusiasm. The Ace of Wands piques your curiosity and sets you on a course to explore the rest of the wands cards. Here you have the igniting energy, a flash of momentum which can propel you forward.

Patches of fresh blossoms and leaves are sprouting from the wand in the card's center. This sprouting foliage gives the effect of bursting life and untapped potential. The imagery throws back to that of the Fool, where we saw a chick perched on a branch. Perhaps this is the same branch?

Around the wand is a field of white-hot energy, which merges into orange and yellow rays. These are primal colors, associated with energy that is directly connected to source. This is a reminder of the suit's association with fire. There's a radiating energy at work in this card, as indicated by the lines radiating outward from the central wand. The use of lines here show an energy that is not stagnant, but in radiant motion. Fire is an active, outward moving element.

The Ace of Wands is a brilliant flash of inspiration that might lead you anywhere. You are in a position to blaze your own trail. The only way to find out where this initial momentum will lead you is to keep following that warmth!

Ace of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a hand extending from a cloud, grasping a wand. It is worth noting that the hand is actively holding the wand. This card does not show a passive energy, but an active energy. Sometimes in life, you are required to be bold. You are an original creation, and you are asked to draw upon that originality

here. There are times when it is best to take the “tried and true” route, but this card reminds you that sometimes you need to embrace your own way of showing up in this world.

This card is traditionally associated with an initial “spark of inspiration” or “flash of genius.” As the ace is only the onset of the suit, sometimes it is a fleeting energy which is hard to grasp on to. This is why one of my key phrases for this card is “igniting energy.” It is the spark that gets you started, but sometimes it can be just a flash in the pan – gone as quickly as it arrives.

However, if you are able to fan the flames, this card will certainly open up exciting portals for you to explore!

In a reading...

The Ace of Wands asks you to embrace what compels you. It is not a time to dwell on what you “should” do, but instead a time to embrace what you WANT to do. There is a special momentum that can only be unleashed when you move in the direction of your desires.

Martha Beck says that life is like a game of “you’re getting warmer, you’re getting colder.” The Ace of Wands asks you to tune into what it is that feels warmer for you right now. It may be something big, or it may be something subtle – but if you keep moving in the direction of the heat, your life will always be an adventure.

Two of Wands

Creator's Keywords: determination, willpower

Carrie's keywords: personal power, originality

Two of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Two of Wands is one of the most boldly colored cards in the Wild Unknown tarot. Horizontal lines brush the card with all the colors of the rainbow. The use of color is strategic in this deck – the full spectrum of hues gives this card a sense of multi-faceted energy.

Two Wands point towards the horizon. The angular positioning suggests you can reach right out and take hold of them! The Wands beckon you forward. What might you find if you embrace their power (which is really your power)? What waits for you off the beaten trail? Are you ready to continue on your unique path, even when it holds struggles and dangers?

The horizontal lines in this and other cards in the Wild Unknown (such as Temperance and the Fool) suggest energy which is currently stable and untapped. This energy is powerful, but can't reach its potential until we come in and direct it. This imbues the Two of Wands with an energy of potential. It is invigorating to be in this place where you sense you can make things happen, but now you are tasked with actually taking action. It's not just enough to be pointed in the right direction, you must actually embark in that direction.

This card shows the moments when you realize our own ability to direct your personal power to shape your life. You are a creator, and this card reminds you of our ability to harness your energy and make bold moves. Now is not the time to be a passive bystander, now is the time to be engaged with the myriad forces of energy in the universe! You are not separate from those forces, you are capable of influencing the way those forces take shape from here. Harness that power, learn to use it effectively.

Experiencing the Two of Wands can be exciting, but it can also be daunting. As Marianne Williamson says, our greatest fear is not that we are powerless but that we are powerful beyond measure. The Two of Wands asks you to acknowledge your power and

step fully into it, even when doing so is outside of your comfort zone.

The Two of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

In her book *Learning the Tarot*, Joan Bunning describes how the Two of Wands ties into some of the themes explored in the Magician. The Magician, Bunning writes, is associated with the archetype of power in all its forms. The Two of Wands brings that theme down to earth, showing the way that the macrocosm of universal power can be harnessed on a micro-level by you as an individual.

As is the case in much of the suit of wands, sometimes this card requires you to take risks. You might be compelled to move forward based on little more than the direction of your gut. Living authentically requires you to embrace your creativity. This isn't about forgoing sensibility or logic, but about imbuing your approach with your own unique flavor.

With the Two of Wands, the initial enthusiasm of the ace has started to take shape, but is still largely undirected. As such, this card reminds me of a quote sometimes attributed to Goethe: "what you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Only engage and the mind grows heated, begin it and the work can be completed."

In a reading...

The Two of Wands is an invitation to step up to the plate. Especially if you have been shying away from your own power and your own desires. Now is the time to embrace who you are, what you believe, and where you want things to go from here. This doesn't mean you need to become egotistical and steamroll over others! But it does suggest now is a time to claim – or reclaim – your ability to direct universal energy in your unique way.

Three of Wands

Creator's Keywords: self reliance, future visions

Carrie's keywords: exploration, surveying

Three of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Three wands are bound together, forming an inverted triangle. As you gaze into the center, you see a rainbow swirl. Is this a vortex? Another dimension? The future? Or something else entirely? That is for you to find out.

Branches jut out from the wands, they stand in contrast to the perfectly pruned wands we saw in the previous card. There is a juxtaposition in this card of structure and liberation: the wands come together to form a cohesive shape, yet the wands themselves are rugged, not perfectly manicured. These wands are free-spirited, yet also collected.

The background is filled with horizontal black lines, indicating a stable energy. This lack of flashiness draws your full attention to the wands, and above all else, to the colorful vision at the center. The swirling rainbow beckons you to leave behind the drab, colorless surroundings and explore all the magic life has to offer!

You are a visionary if you let yourself be one. You can look beyond obstacles. You can see beyond the mundane world. Endless terrain is out there for you to explore, if only you choose to say YES. The Three of Wands offers you a chance to survey the landscape around you. You need not rely on someone else's map – you are exploring the wilderness for yourself, charting it according to your experience, your interpretation.

Your future is a blank canvas – and all the colors of the rainbow are available for you to create your experience going forward. There is no guarantee of exactly what you'll find as you continue your explorations. Magic and wonder abound, yes – but illusions and setbacks are part of the journey, as well.

Some structure is useful, so give yourself a moment to survey your inner and outer landscape. The Three of Wands is about trusting your gut, but it's also about surveying the energies around you. It is about action, yes – but it is about the kind of action that is born of intention, not impulse. The paradox here is you can only do so much planning

and intention setting – eventually, you’ve just got to venture on and see where this portal takes you.

Three of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a human figure looking out at a vast terrain. He is eager to explore, but allows himself a moment to pause and assess the situation. The figure on this card is not a rogue adventurer looking for a thrill. He is someone who is deeply curious about the world. He is a leader whose explorations and observations can benefit the greater good.

As such, this card can ask you to engage deeply with your life experiences. Be curious about yourself, be curious about the world around you. Do not assume you understand anything. Let yourself look even at mundane realities with fresh eyes, for there are treasures everywhere that can only be perceived by those who are energetically open.

In a reading...

Sometimes this card is a reminder that if you want to live a deep, meaningful, magical life there is no way to be truly “secure.” The Three of Wands does not ask you to behave recklessly, but to know that risks are inherent in any endeavor. You must be willing to survey all that life has to offer and embrace it all as a package deal.

You are asked to adopt a higher perspective, to be open to more than the surface level layers of your life. Be a living, breathing example of what you want to see more of in the world. Embrace your visions and bring them into reality.

Four of Wands

Creator's keywords: completion, celebration

Carrie's keywords: milestone, celebration

Four of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

In the Ace of Wands, we saw the seed of potential. The Two brought a realization of personal power, and the Three showed visions of where this all could take us. The Four of Wands now blends a recognition of how far you've come with a renewed conviction in where you want to go from here.

The first two wands cross to form an X, the lower two wands forming the same shape below. The two X's meet in the middle, forming a small diamond. The crossing wands give the sense of energies meeting, stabilizing and then transforming.

Beyond the wands is a larger diamond, mirroring the shape of the small diamond. The small diamond has a blue center, a color associated with intuitive receptivity. The large diamond is filled with emanating yellow and orange rays, colors that represent planning and action. The entire image suggests the combination of intuition and intelligence.

Beyond the large diamond, black and white lines border the four corners. They are reminiscent of the pattern on the back of the cardstock. This shows a portal which was once mysterious and closed has begun to open and take shape. We're now in the midst of actively exploring new dimensions.

The four wands almost look to be dancing, the X's bringing to mind a human figure, arms and legs stretched out with happiness. Just looking out this card makes me want to throw out my own arms and say "yessss! Whooo!" The Four of Wands reminds you to celebrate how far you've come without denying how far you have to go.

Amidst the bustling, excited energy, there is that calm, blue center. It is the tranquil core that gives the deeper meaning to achievements. The center is the place within us that knows the actions we've taken are part of a sacred journey. We are on our own wild path, and we find joy in the landmarks we encounter along the way.

The Four of Wands shows celebration of what has transpired tinged with an anticipation of the future. We've started to move closer to that condensed rainbow energy we saw in the Three of Wands. We've passed the threshold – we are on our way! High five yourself for what you've already done and then keep on keepin' on.

Four of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

Four is a number of stability, and wands are the suit of momentum. As such, the Four of Wands is often a symbol of milestones on your journey. It is important to recognize these milestones, even when they seem small. Giving yourself the chance to celebrate little victories gives you the chance to replenish, and then move forward with even more vigor.

The Waite-Smith tarot version shows two people wearing floral crowns, arms upraised, standing in front of a castle. This imagery suggests the ways in which this card can be associated with various milestones on the human journey: birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and so on. Sometimes you need to remind yourself to actively seek out reasons to be jubilant.

In a reading

This card can be an invitation to celebrate where you are right now. Even if things aren't ideal, even if you haven't reached your final goal, it's important to choose joy. Life is a culmination of small moments, and this card asks you to be present with the joy that resides in those small moments.

Give yourself credit for what you're doing right. Remind yourself of what is going well, and give yourself a chance to get excited about that! You may still feel like there's a long way to go, but it is also important to acknowledge how your journey has unfolded so far. You're doing better than you may realize, so make sure to celebrate every little milemarker along your path.

Five of Wands

Creator's Keywords: conflict, competition, lost

Carrie's Keywords: hassles, conflicts

Five of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The ace through four of wands were full of bright color, but the Five of Wands is entirely black and white. The lack of color makes gives this card a starker, less vibrant energy than the earlier cards. A point of conflict has been reached in the progression of the suit. There is a slowing of momentum here: what was once an engaging experience is now getting off course.

The wands are haphazardly dispersed about the card. Black and white background lines extend from various angles to divide the card into portions. This gives the impression that each wand is separated from the others in it's own little forcefield. They aren't working together and none are going anywhere.

The wands do seem to reach towards each other, but not to make a genuine connection. On the contrary, they almost seem to be defending their own territory, unwilling to compromise. They are scattered at best, working at cross-purposes at worst. Without a unified vision, progress is hard to attain.

If it seems like life is testing you... well, maybe it is. Derailments are part of the package. Conflicts will arise, annoyances will try to thwart you on your path. You may not always be able to make things better immediately, but you can certainly make things worse, based on your reaction! In order to re-harness vitality, you need to know when to wait out the bumps and when to move in a more productive direction.

Five of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows five people brandishing wands. Each wand is eschew, as though in conflict with one another. A lot of energy is being exerted, but it doesn't seem to be creating anything productive. Thus, one of the first things I often think about when I see this card is "am I spending my energy wisely?" There's no point in getting all riled up if it's not going to lead to meaningful action.

This card sometimes relates to conflict with other people, but in a somewhat minor sense. It's the way that sometimes even little things about others annoy you. You may then start to micromanage them, or they try to micromanage you – and no one likes to be micromanaged!

Most often, this card represents any minor hassles. Typically these are small annoyances, yet still things that get under your skin. There's nothing wrong with acknowledging the petty stuff that irritates you, but at the same time, by dwelling on it you might only be giving it more power.

In a reading

The Five of Wands might draw your attention to where you have gotten off track. Have you been giving your energy to things that only drain you? Are you letting minor hassles throw you entirely off course? Are you too invested in competition?

Perhaps you just need the patience to ride out a rough patch. But you may also need to bring things back to center. Reclaim your power, re-articulate your vision, and trust that in time you'll move forward productively.

Six of Wands

Creator's Keywords: victory, rising up

Carrie's Keywords: pride, acclaim

Six of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A green and blue butterfly floats in a clear sky. This butterfly appears tranquil and free, but the dark heap of wands at the bottom of the card show she has earned this experience by going through the thick of life. The Six of Wands can indeed indicate a sense of pride in who you are and what you stand for. At this moment, our butterfly is on the up and up, flying without inhibition. The colors convey intuition and inner calm.

The six wands below throw back to the discord and hassles of the previous card. They look like a chaotic trap, a sticky situation that our butterfly was able to rise above (both literally and metaphorically). The wands below descend into the dark, while the butterfly ascends to the light.

The Six of Wands shows times of triumph, both internally and externally. There are times when others do recognize your triumphs, when the outer world supports your actions. But perhaps the times of internal triumph are even more crucial – the times when you do what must be done not in order to receive external acclaim, but because YOU really believe in your path.

Six of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

The sixes in tarot are generally about finding a new sense of harmony after the disruption of the fives. As the suit of wands is association with momentum and instinct, the Six of Wands can show a return to, or reaffirmation of, self-confidence.

The Waite-Smith tarot version shows a person riding a horse, villagers around him holding up wands victoriously, as though congratulating his return from an important battle. There are times when this card indicates that you have the support of the “village.” No hero really acts alone, and sometimes this card is a reminder to tap into

the motivation that comes from the right people in your life.

That said, on a deeper level this card is about tapping into an internal sense of self-approval. This is important because no triumphs will fuel you for the long run if they are only performed for external acclaim. The Six of Wands invites you to connect with the part of you that makes no apologies for who you are. Go forward and be the bad ass that you truly are.

In a reading

Sometimes this card is a reminder to look for evidence of how amazing you really are. You may already be feeling it, and if so, let that momentum carry you forward! But if you've been lacking confidence or unsure of yourself, it is important to confirm to yourself that you really are doing just fine.

This card encourages you to follow the butterfly's example and tap into your strength of spirit when you are faced with adversity. Do not wait for external approval or permission to soar. Let yourself soar simply because it is a reflection of your true nature.

Seven of Wands

Creator's Keywords: courage against odds

Carrie's Keywords: conviction, defiance

Seven of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

One wand stands ablaze above its companions. The flame radiates a white light, piercing through the surrounding darkness. The six remaining wands lean away from the central wand. They seem taken aback by this sudden display of pyrotechnics. The only colors in the card are the orange and red of the flame, the colors of primal and instinctive energy.

There are times to rise above adversity peacefully with your head held high, as we saw in the previous card. But this card reminds us that there are also times when you need to let loose a surge of adrenaline. Sometimes you've got to ignite your fighting spirit. Sometimes you've got to stand up fiercely, defy the status quo and declare what you will (and will NOT) stand for.

We all have our limits with how much we'll put up with. The Seven of Wands wants you to learn not to take any shit. Don't be silenced. Don't give up. Don't sit quietly by doing what everyone else is doing. Be brave and bright, be engulfed by your true power!

However, it's also important not to light up like a fire cracker only to have your adrenaline rapidly fizzle out. The Seven of Wands shows a sort of fight or flight mentality. It's a quick burst of conviction – just monitor your energy carefully to make sure you don't crash and burn.

Seven of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

At it's best, the Seven of Wands is associated with a healthy stubbornness. Doing meaningful things requires conviction. In the Waite-Smith tarot version, a person stands in a defensive posture. He holds one wand and is fending off six others.

Perhaps this level of adrenaline is necessary for now, but as mentioned above, the

energy of this card is not always sustainable. Part of your self-discovery is trusting when it is time to burst forward and defy all hurdles... but also trusting when your energy is better spent elsewhere.

In a reading

Sometimes this card asks you to consider the age old question: what's really worth fighting for? There are times when you are tasked with simply going with the flow of life, but the Seven of Wands reminds you that sometimes you need to go against the grain and be assertive!

In her book *Learning the Tarot*, Joan Bunning mentions that this card can indicate either attacking OR defending. Both of these can be wise expenditures of energy when they are truly in alignment. Your task is to determine how to use these energies effectively and with integrity.

Eight of Wands

Creator's Keywords: news, change, action

Carrie's Keywords: aligned action, coincidence

Eight of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Eight wands are sprawled out in a circle like spokes on a wheel engaged in a sacred dance. A rainbow bolt strikes down from above, merging with the top wand. This dramatic, concentrated rainbow is the only surge of color on the card.

The rainbow hues seems to imbue the wand with a quickening, an energy, a message. It is reminiscent of the bolt of color entering the Hierophant's key. Both of these cards seem to show a concentrated, otherworldly knowledge. The Eight of Wands shows the moment in which this knowledge presents itself. But if you're not looking out for it, you might miss it.

The Eight of Wands makes me think about the concept of synchronicity. This is a term coined by Carl Jung to describe coinciding events which we interpret as meaningful but are not causally related. As these eight wands moved in their pivotal dance, the rainbow energy just so happened to descend and merge itself with this particular wand at this particular time. These two events could be entirely unrelated, but we perceive these coincidences as ripe with significance.

The Eight of Wands often suggests incoming messages, a quick arrival of news, or sudden action. This card can show a 'Eureka!' moment, where we have a sudden burst of energy to take the next step. This card reminds us that change is constant, but we can always choose to take our own action and find purpose in the seemingly random events of our lives.

Eight of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Eight of Wands evokes the phrase "strike while the iron is hot." There are moments in your life when everything aligns for you to take a certain aligned action. If

you hesitate, if you doubt your instincts, you might miss that opportunity. There is a magic that can only happen when you are in tune to the rhythms of life. If you step into that dance and act when you are called to act, a power is unleashed.

Traditionally, this card has also been associated with completion. Many depictions of this card show the eight wands all pointing in the same direction, signifying that they are close to a destination. In this view there can be a sense of resolution in this card. If you've been at something for quite a while, this may be a sign that all of your efforts are tying together to wrap something up.

In a reading

If you have a gut-level, instinctive knowing of what action you need to take, the Eight of Wands is a confirmation to take that action. Let yourself be tapped into the energies of the universe, and make your move when the timing is aligned!

This card can also be an invitation to look for meaningful coincidences in your experience. It is likely that these coincidences are not random at all – they are little winks from the universe, giving you the nudges you need to keep moving in the right direction.

Nine of Wands

Creator's Keywords: inner strength, stamina

Carrie's Keywords: protection, stamina

Nine of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A stack of wands starts at the bottom of the card, narrowing as it leads upwards. Each wand gets smaller than the last, giving the effect of a stairway or a narrowing tunnel. The wands are unruly, branches jutting about. A yellow crescent moon is suspended at the pinnacle.

The wands are noticeably thicker here than in any of the previous cards in the suit. In fact, they look almost like logs! They are sturdy, they are solid and fixed. These are wands that are built to survive a stomping.

The rest of the card is lined with vertical black lines which ascend into peaks of blue and purple. It is rare to see vertical lines in the Wild Unknown. They add to the solid, protective feel of the card; providing a steady energy. Blue and purple are colors of knowledge and spirituality, suggesting that this protection serves a higher purpose. I sometimes associate this card with energetic protection. Guarding your inner energy from outer intrusion is an art.

The wands here could be viewed as a staircase, ascending towards the moon. Or they could be a sort of fortress surrounding the moon. Are the wands trying to entice someone to climb their way up to the moon, or are they trying to protect the moon from intruders? Either way, they seem to serve as an enduring support system.

Nine of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

There is an old proverb which says "fall down seven times, get up eight." In some ways the Nine of Wands is an echo of that sentiment. In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a human figure standing in front of a makeshift fence. He has a bandage around his forehead, and his body posture is tense. He looks like he's already been through some interesting ordeals, and now he braces himself for what is to come.

Although no tarot card is entirely “positive” or “negative,” the Nine of Wands is particularly ambivalent. Sometimes this card shows the benefits of energy protection, the good that comes from watching out for what matters to you. But sometimes this card shows the way that being on-guard can be exhausting. As such, this card is often a reminder to check in with your own energy. You may sense that you need to buckle down and keep pressing forward – or you may find it is time to redirect your energy.

In a reading

Sometimes you will see this card when you are being called to draw on your reserves of stamina. Remember that you are strong. You are capable of handling whatever life throws your way. At the same time, it is also important to protect your energy.

Continuing on even when life has knocked you down is admirable, but it can also lead to weariness. As the saying goes, you’re not sprinting, you’re running a marathon. This means you need to ensure that you persevere for the long haul. Know that you do not need to be super human. Do what you can, but make sure your energy is fortified and protected all the while.

Ten of Wands

Creator's Keywords: burden, the hard road

Carrie's Keywords: overextending, energetic clutter

Ten of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The card is dominated by a black lined background which reminds me of heavy rain. The dreariness is so thick that you can hardly see the dark wands scattered about. It's hard to find the way forward when all you can see is a cluttered bundle of wands.

This card brings back to mind the cross-purposes we saw in the Five of Wands. But in the five, the wands still seemed to have a fighting spirit. In the ten, the wands look almost as though they have given up, they lay about in utter disarray. They've reached a dead end, they're overextended.

The suit of wands is about enthusiasm, instinct, personal energy and movement. Tens are about taking the suit to its logical conclusion. Thus in the Ten of Wands, we see a depiction of burn out. What was once excitement has become too much of a good thing. There is no focus, the excitement has essentially imploded upon itself.

This card reminds you that enthusiasm is not the only necessary ingredient! The fiery energy of wands can lead to taking on more projects, tasks, and plot lines than you can reasonably follow through with. When you reach this maximum capacity, everything becomes slowed and burdened. It is now necessary to prioritize and declutter so you can get on with the good stuff.

Ten of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Waite-Smith tarot version shows a person hunched over, trying to walk forward with a huge bundle of wands in their hands. However, all those wands obscure the person's vision, so it seems as though they are not making much progress!

In some instances, the wands represent energies you consciously chose to bring into your experience. Being a multi-passionate person is great... until you find you have

so many hobbies and interests and projects that you're not actually getting anywhere with any of them.

But this card can also show those experiences in which everything in life just seems to happen at once. You might feel like you're putting out metaphoric fires right and left, and this can be quite exhausting. In such instances, this card can be a sort of warning sign, reminding you to take breaks, to delegate responsibilities, to not expect yourself to do EVERYTHING.

In a reading

The Ten of Wands may be an indicator that there's some energetic clutter taking up space in your life. It may now be necessary to tie up loose ends and let go of things that no longer light you up. Reaffirm your priorities and, as they say, be careful about biting off more than you can chew.

Don't put too much pressure on yourself, especially if you feel like you're fighting an uphill battle. Manage your expectations of yourself and others. It may also be necessary to adapt a broader perspective. Instead of fixating on all the clutter in your view right now, take a step back and look at the bigger picture. An unobscured view could do you wonders!

Daughter of Wands

Creator's Keywords: free spirit, visionary

Carrie's Keywords: optimistic, self-assured

Daughter of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The court cards of the Wild Unknown bare the titles Daughter (equivalent to Pages in the Rider Waite tradition), Son (Knight), Mother (Queen) and Father (King). These titles are more in line with the natural world theme of the Wild Unknown, and I like that they are less hierarchal than the traditional titles.

I've had some difficulty making sense of the choice to use snakes in the suit of wands. However, as I pondered this further, I began to look into snakes in the Chinese zodiac. In this system, snakes are associated with the fire element, which is in turn associated with the suit of wands. Snakes also seem powerful, forward-oriented and independent. Perhaps this is how the connection was drawn.

The Daughter of Wands is a sweetly charming character. She is coiled around a blossoming wand, her body forming a figure 8, or the lemniscate symbol (representing infinity). She looks graceful and flexible. She takes whatever suits her fancy and incorporates it into her environment.

She is colored with red and yellow, making her stand out from the harsh black background. The tip of her tail curves gracefully, giving her an artistic flair. She is a creative and original character, someone with an infinite imagination. She lives life in her own fresh, original way – she is not bound by the status quo.

There's an innocent confidence to this card. The Daughter of Wands moves not with a cocky arrogance, but with a quiet assurance. She has sweet faith that things will work out for the best.

The wand around which she is coiled is white and bursts forth with pink flowers. This adds to my view of the daughter of wands as an artist – everything she touches bursts forth with beauty.

Page of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks use the title Page instead of Daughter, so you can think of these names interchangeably. The Page is the onset of the court cards, and has a fresh perspective in her interactions with her suits. As such, the Page of Wands represents the part of you that is intimately connected to your own instincts.

The Page of Wands moves through the world in a creative way, not because she is trying to do so, but because she is yet unburdened by the pressure to conform. As such, she has some similarity to the Fool – both are confident, but also possibly a little naive.

In a reading

This card can remind you of your own artistic potential. Your very life is a work of art. You are being asked to step forward into something that resonates with your authentic self. You have the ability to make the world a more beautiful place. Use your charm to your advantage and cultivate a belief that you've got what it takes to succeed.

Son of Wands

Creator's Keywords: charming, adventurous

Carrie's Keywords: adventurous, fired up

Son of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Son of Wands (titled Knight of Wands in other decks) is a one man victory parade. He is a beacon of self-confidence and assurance. The wand he holds seems to literally be a beacon, sending out heat waves that ripple across the card. The energy is alive and vital, radiating outwards without inhibition.

The angle of his head makes him look like he's marching with some swagger. The extended tongue just adds to this effect. If he could talk, I can almost hear him saying "I do what I want, and I do it well!" Rather or not this attitude is merited is still up for debate!

His self-confidence is admirable, but it also borders on cockiness. He stares straight ahead – he might have a plan, but he certainly doesn't seem to have a back up plan. He's banking on one thing working, and might not have the maturity to deal if it doesn't.

The Son of Wands is constantly seeking new adventures. He isn't someone to stick around when things get boring or stagnant. He's the life of the party, he knows how to be suave (but it can be hard to tell when he's just blowing smoke). He's fired-up about life, and always engaged in one thing or another. His priority is following his next great adventure, but he struggles to enjoy the present moment. He's always up for a good time – but he might be gone before you know it!

Knight of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

The knights are the metaphorical teenagers of the court cards. As such, their relationship with the energy of their suit is somewhat inconsistent. Therefore the Knight of Wands is full of enthusiasm for life, but may also be restless or easily agitated. He is willing to take risks, but sometimes those risks get him burned. He can be charming and attractive, but might not stick around when things get boring!

As a court card, the Knight of Wands can represent a specific person, an aspect of personality, or an approach to life. Consider how this card's approach might be helpful, but also be aware of the less beneficial aspects of this energy.

In a reading

This card can suggest that you need this type of fired up, adventurous energy in your life. What feels hot to you right now? How can you dive headfirst into what lights you up? March towards excitement, but be cautious of the implications of your actions.

Mother of Wands

Creator's Keywords: attractive, vibrant

Carrie's Keywords: devoted, warm

Mother of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A snake curls protectively around a nest of eggs, a wand held at an angle seems to serve as added armor. This mother is someone you wouldn't want to mess with. Although she can be kind and warm, she is fierce and loyal, and not afraid to stand her ground.

She holds her values dear to her heart and isn't afraid to live in a way that lines up with her moral code. She doesn't do anything halfway – she's in it to win it. She pours all of her love, originality and unique energy into everything she does. She is a true artist, more devoted to her craft than the son or daughter.

The background is filled with horizontal lines, colored throughout with orange and red. It gives the Mother of Wands a strong, stable energy. She is so vibrant that she almost has an energy field around her. But unlike the emanating energy of the Son of Wands, her energy is steady. She channels her energy in a more effective way.

More so than any other depiction of the Queen/Mother of Wands, this card gives me the impression of someone who holds their beliefs dearly. She's willing to fight for what she knows is right. Even so, she knows how to have fun. She has a warm life force, a kind of palatable cheeriness that draws others to her.

Queen of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

The queen radiates the energy of the suit of wands from the inside out. Devotion is one of the keywords I associate with this card: she is clear about her passions and devoted to nurturing them. Others gravitate towards her inner warmth. She sets a keen example for living a creative, passionate, radiant life.

In many decks, the Queen of Wands is shown with a sunflower. This symbolizes her blossoming life force. She knows who she is and lives securely from her glowing

center. She is not oblivious to the hardships of life – she is willing to stand up completely for what she believes in, even if that is risky or uncomfortable. But even so, she’s an eternal optimist, always oriented towards the good in herself, and drawing out the good in others.

In a reading

The Mother of Wands may be asking you to follow her example. Practice gratitude and protect the things that matter to you. Keep your attitude bright and good things will come your way. Live with your whole heart, be devoted to your path. You’re not here to half-ass things. Let your zest for life color everything you do!

Father of Wands

Creator's Keywords: creative, charismatic

Carrie's Keywords: exuberant, assertive

Father of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

If you thought the Mother of Wands stood her ground, wait until you meet the Father! He is someone you do not mess around with. He knows his domain, and he has complete confidence in his role as the master of this territory. He is the boss here, and in both subtle ways and bold, he'll assert this belief.

The background of the card is black, which adds to the dominance of the snake. He stands out as a bold, exuberant character. He isn't afraid of the night, or anything else. A bolt of pure red and orange descends. These are the colors of raw power.

The bolt also adds a bit of drama to the card. This Father/King of Wands does have a flair for the dramatic. He enjoys entertaining, and even if he wouldn't admit it, he likes keeping others on their toes. You're never really sure what the Father of Wands is going to do next.

But unlike the Son of Wands, the Father does have a master plan. He's learned a thing or two, and he doesn't take action just for the sake of it. He takes measured but bold steps, and it isn't hard for him to find results.

King of Wands Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, the King of Wands is poised upon a throne. His seat and his robe are decorated with salamanders, a creature associated with the fire element. He leans forward in his throne as though he's about to jump up and take part in one thing or another.

As the culmination of the court cards, the king is highly adept in working with the energy of his suit. The King of Wands knows how to take the fiery energy of wands and channel it into something productive. He sees opportunities everywhere. He's never one to sit idly by, he always wants to be learning, doing, engaging. His pace is fast but he is

not careless. He's has honed his instincts and now trusts that they will not lead him astray.

In a reading

The Father of Wands may ask you not to shy away from your own power. What do you want to create? How can you use your hard-earned skills to make it happen? What plan feels both solid and exciting to you? The Father of Wands invites you to try out his approach to life and watch the results as they are magnetized towards you.

Suit of Cups

Ace of Cups

Creator's Keywords: love's beginnings

Carrie's keywords: emotional energy, raw feelings

Ace of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Like many cards in the Wild Unknown, the image on the Ace of Cups is simple but evocative. A classy, elegant goblet resides in the center of the card. The background fills the card with a blue glow and brings to mind stained glass, or possibly fish scales. A splash of warm yellow and orange hover above the glass, as though the goblet contains multitudes of energy.

As the introduction to the suit of cups, this ace sets the stage for what we will encounter as the suit unfolds. The Wild Unknown offers the keyword “love's beginnings” for this card. In my perspective, though, cups are the watery suit of the WHOLE emotional realm. Throughout this suit we will see experiences of friendship and love, but we'll also encounter the more difficult emotional states such as loneliness and grief.

The Ace of Cups is a vessel containing the potential for all emotional states. The varied components of the human emotional landscape are brewing in this goblet, and soon we will explore them in depth as they pour out through the numbered cards.

Ace of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many decks, the Ace of Cups shows a hand extended, palm out, holding a cup. Water is often overflowing from within the cup, suggesting the depth of emotional energy present in this card. Emotions are flowing freely, unburdened by repression. After all, this state of flowing freely is how emotional energy stays healthy.

The fact that the hand is depicted in a palm-up position is worth mentioning as well. As opposed to grasping the cup, the hand receives the cup. This is a reminder that the suit of cups energy is often considered to be a receptive energy.

In a reading

The Ace of Cups can signify the onset of feeling-based experiences. This card can remind you to open your heart, to allow your emotional energy to move freely. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is that you are feeling without labeling it as ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ This card often appears when we need to proceed with compassion and respect the signals our feelings are giving us.

Two of Cups

Creator's Keywords: connection, love

Carrie's keywords: connection, bond

Two of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Two of Cups shows the sharing and growth that you experience through your connections. Two elegant cups sit side by side, roses are propped against the cups. The blossoms cross over in just the right manner that each red bloom is positioned directly above the opposite cup. This shows a sense of reciprocity and mutually exchanged beauty.

The red roses provide the only color in this card. Red is a color of the lower chakras, associated with physicality and life force. This seems appropriate, as bonding with the meaningful things in your life helps you feel fully alive.

For a human being, connection is necessary. We thrive when we feel in touch with something. Meaningful interactions with others encourage us to blossom. This card is often associated with romantic relationships, but it can show the value of ANY connection: friends, family members, even just a brief moment of camaraderie with an acquaintance.

While this card is traditionally associated with human relationships, it can also show a bond to anything you find meaningful. Your pet, your favorite artist or a song that really gets you going. The Two of Cups shows that plugged in, warm-fuzzy state that comes from any meaningful association.

Two of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

In many decks, the imagery on this card shows two human figures holding cups as if to offer cheers. Even people who have no familiarity with tarot can easily intuit the concepts of connection and sharing at work in this card. It is sometimes compared to the Lovers card from the major arcana, and there are some similar themes here.

However, as I said above, this is not only a card of romantic connections. As with

the Lovers, the Two of Cups sometimes asks you to examine your connection to a particular aspect of yourself. Especially if you have been feeling distanced from something vital lately, the Two of Cups asks you to plug back in to the flow of life.

In a reading

The Two of Cups can encourage you to reach out to others. One of our most basic needs as human beings is to feel seen and valued. Tell someone you appreciate them, make an effort to strengthen a bond or offer a kind word. Despite the complications and conflict that accompany human interactions, this card shows our ability to forgive, bond, heal and encourage one another.

Three of Cups

Creator's Keywords: friendship, support

Carrie's keywords: community, network

Three of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Three birds are hanging out on a branch, twittering away to one another. The sun sets behind them and they are silhouetted in the warm glows of red, orange and yellow. Three cups line the bottom of the card. It is a comfortable scene of community, sharing and enjoying good company.

These birds could be gathering for any number of reasons. Perhaps they are showing support for one of their number. Or maybe they are just gossiping about the days' events! This is another of the more straightforward cards in the deck. The image successfully evokes feelings of social gatherings, chatting with interesting folks, and the pleasant side of interacting with a group.

The sunset is one of the most notable aspects of the imagery here. This deck is strategic with use of color, and this is one of the few cards that gets a verifiable color bath. The warm colors conjure that beautiful feeling when the sun is going down and you're somewhere you know you belong.

Three of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot tradition, this card shows three women standing in a circle, each holding up a cup in an intertwining manner. There's a lot of talk in the metaphysical community about "finding your tribe" and this is the tarot card that correlates to that concept. When you find a network of people who uplift you, magic happens.

This card reminds you that your group identity is just as valuable as your individual identity. The network you interact with has a profound impact on your energy. Deciding who to surround yourself with is one of the most empowering things you can do.

In a reading

This card can speak to any type of community togetherness. We humans are social animals, and we benefit from getting together with others to laugh, chat, and shoot the breeze. This card can be a good reminder to value and strengthen your friendships and your sense of community. You don't have to go it alone. When you need support, turn to those you can count on.

Four of Cups

Creator's keywords: selfishness, greed

Carrie's keywords: withdrawing, apathy

Four of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

We go from the landscaped colors of the previous card to a monotone scene. Four cups line the bottom of the card, and a rat has himself sprawled out over the whole shebang. Rats are often associated with being sneaky and generally icky. This rat sure looks like he's trying to hoard these cups to himself.

The bottom of the card is dark, giving the impression that the rat is in some lower dwelling, perhaps a sewer or a hole. But the bright white light of the moon spans the top half of the card. The rat doesn't have his eye on the illuminated world though – his focus is on the underbelly.

Now, an aside: clearly, I adore the Wild Unknown. I wouldn't be writing about each card individually if I didn't! But this is one of the cards in the deck that baffles me more than others. It certainly conveys the keywords given by the deck creator (selfishness and greed) but to me, it doesn't open up as many complexities as the Waite-Smith tarot depiction of the Four of Cups.

That being said, there are two ways to look at selfishness, and we can use both of these as a lens for interpreting this card. In some circumstances, selfishness is merely... selfish. The rat is guarding what he has, unwilling to open himself to other possibilities, keeping himself focused on his own emotional landscape.

Four of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Waite-Smith tarot version shows a person sitting under a tree. A hand extends from a cloud in the sky, holding out a cup towards the person. He seems to be unaware of (or entirely ignoring this offering). His arms and legs are crossed, body language that suggests boundaries.

This card tends to get a bad reputation, but it's one of my favorites, and it has a

very nuanced message. In some circumstances, this card suggests a person who is closed off from opportunities. Being too absorbed in your inner world can be a detriment, leading you to miss golden opportunities. Disconnection and apathy can be inherent in this card.

But in another view, emotional withdrawal does not have to indicate a negative form of apathy. Sometimes you need to hole yourself up, forget about what shiny things the outside world is offering, and let your emotions stabilize. After all, four is the number of structure and stability, and cups are the suit of emotions. Therefore, the Four of Cups can advise you to come back to your own emotional center.

In a reading

In some instances, the Four of Cups may ask you to consider if you've been being whiny, sulky or apathetic. It's easy to get stuck in a "poor pitiful me" mindset, and if you're in that energy this card may be asking you to re-assess your attitude.

In other instances, the Four of Cups might indicate that a healthy type of withdrawal is in order. Instead of looking to external factors to fix you, this card can indicate a need for you to come back home to yourself. Especially if you've been feeling emotionally wonky, this card can ask you to give yourself the space to let your feelings be processed and integrated.

Five of Cups

Creator's Keywords: loss, grief, regret

Carrie's keywords: sadness, heavy emotions

Five of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A horse hangs her head dejectedly. Her posture is slumped, even her mane looks raggedy and depleted. Darkness seems to be cloaking her, and she is gazing down into the bleak abyss. The coloring is entirely black and white, accentuating the dreary atmosphere. All is not gloomy here, though. Above the horse things are getting lighter and five cups are suspended in the glow. She does not look to them, though. For now, she is mired in gloomy emotions.

The fives in each of the suits show challenges. In the suit of cups, the five shows difficult emotions. Feelings of sorrow, loneliness, despair and mourning dwell in this card. As much as you might wish to avoid these feelings, they are part of the package, just like more pleasant feelings.

This card can ask you to question the way you label your emotions. States of sadness are not inherently 'bad.' Sadness, regret, and loss are part of being human. They are part of what gives life meaning. And often, if you can find a way to let yourself feel these feelings fully and completely without judging them, they begin to lift on their own.

There can be poetry and art within this state of emotional turmoil. These feelings drive you to reflect deeply upon yourself. They can lead you to seek ways to express yourself, to come to a greater union with the forces of the cosmos.

This card can also remind you not to set up camp in your sorrow. It is one thing to let yourself really FEEL what you are feeling, but it's another thing to put your focus entirely on sadness without lifting your head to see the hope and light that is somewhere within your experience.

Five of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

The suit of cups is about the entire range of the emotional spectrum and the Five of Cups speaks to the heavier feelings in that holistic spectrum. Decks based off the Waite-Smith tarot tradition usually show a person in a long black cloak, hanging their head. In front of the person are three toppled cups, representing the source of difficult emotions. Two cups remain standing behind the person, but for now they can only see what has been lost.

This is a delicate card to navigate. It is true that sometimes you can successfully re-route yourself from feelings of despair, turning to face what is good and hopeful. But this card can also be associated with very real experiences of depression. It is not useful to tell a depressed person to “just look on the bright side.” As mentioned above, the Five of Cups does not ask you to dwell in depression, but it can ask you to give validation to the hardships you encounter. Validation might be the first thing you need in order to find a path forward.

In a reading

In a reading, this card might ask you to hold space for your difficult emotions without judgement. Remind yourself that it is okay to be not okay! Remember that even if you feel alone, you are not alone. Difficult feelings are part of the universal human experience, and they can tap you into something transformative. Feel your feelings and stay energetically open to the return of the light.

Six of Cups

Creator's keywords: memories, childhood

Carrie's keywords: kindness, nostalgia

Six of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

This card is notably made up of two halves. In the top half, an evergreen stands against a horizontally lined backdrop. This half is black and white, and the horizontal lines show a stable energy. It would be easy to think that what is above the surface is the total sum of this tree if we weren't privy to seeing the bottom half.

Below the surface, an intricate system of roots sprawls out with wild abandon. The roots are colored in all the shades of the rainbow. They are intricately intertwined, there would be no efficient way to separate them even if you tried. The roots are vital to the tree above, even though they are not typically visible. The roots here are an apt metaphor for the complexity that lays beneath the surface of yourself and each human being you encounter.

Just like with the tree, you can't easily see the myriad of factors that underly all creations. Each of us has a story, a tangled root system of memories, emotions, patterns and dreams. Sometimes you are consciously aware of the role of these roots. Other times they affect you in subtle ways on a subconscious level. Remembering that there is more at work than what meets the eye can help you meet yourself and everyone you encounter with kindness.

Six of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

Although this is one of my favorite cards in the Wild Unknown deck, the imagery here is quite different than many decks. The Waite-Smith tarot depiction shows two humans who appear to be children. The older child offers a cup filled with flowers to the smaller child. The presence of children on the card has led it to sometimes be associated with innocence, childhood or nostalgia for the past.

My strongest association with this card in any deck is that of kindness: simple, spontaneous acts of good will that do not ask for anything in return. Sometimes it is

necessary to see beyond differences and embody the energy of altruism. It is true that there are many “dark” aspects to human nature, but the Six of Cups reminds you that humans are also capable of embodying tender loving care.

In a reading

In a reading, this card can ask you to consider how you got to where you are. It can show the importance of reflecting who you are ‘below the surface’ – your personal past, as well as your ancestors and the collective unconscious – and acknowledging the effect these have on who you are ‘above the surface.’

This image in the Wild Unknown tarot adds another layer of complexity to this interpretation. Even when we can only see who people are above the surface, we can remind ourselves to practice kindness, and that all of us have a wild rainbow of roots beneath the surface.

Seven of Cups

Creator's keywords: illusion, deception

Carrie's keywords: sensory overload, fanciful thinking

Seven of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Seven of Cups shows an enchanting, if perplexing experience. Seven cups are juxtaposed against a mountain. The cups seem to be floating, and the closer you look at the card it's harder to tell which way is up and which way is down. The moon in the top half of the card and the sun in the bottom half suggest that you can't always trust your initial assessments. Sometimes your perspective is only an illusion.

The center cup is upside down while the rest are right side up. Each of these cups offers a choice, and this card often suggests that you have plenty of choices. The challenge is figuring out which choice feels right. Too many options can actually lead you to sensory overload, lost in smoke and mirrors. You might find yourself awestruck at everything out there, yet unable to get a firm grasp on what to do next.

As cups are the suit of emotions, the Seven of Cups can be associated with fanciful thinking. You may enjoy the dreamy process of building castles in the sky, and this can certainly be a good thing! Your task is to know when being a dreamer is serving you and when it is preventing you from grasping onto something solid.

Seven of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the iconic Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a silhouetted figure entranced by seven cups. Each cup holds something strange: a snake, a castle, a dragon and other such curiosities. The fact that the person is shown in silhouette suggests that they are completely enthralled by these wonders, to the point that they are frozen in a sea of fancy.

This is a card that can have a positive message. It can ask you to embrace your inner dreamer, to open yourself up to all the wonders of the universe. However, this card can also come as a warning. It may be necessary to make sure you are not merely building castles in the sky, living in fantasy to the detriment of reality.

In a reading

This card can ask you to examine your tangled feelings. Where are you caught up in mesmerizing fantasies? Where are you tricking yourself into thinking you're progressing when you're really just going in circles? There may be a need to sort out what is just smoke and mirrors and what is productive.

Eight of Cups

Creator's Keywords: moving on

Carrie's keywords: seeking meaning, moving on

Eight of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

This majority of this card is filled by a dark, tall, towering mountain. The craggy peaks seem ominous at first glance, but in the dark, we can't really tell what these peaks might hold. At the base of the mountain are eight cups in varying states of shatter and disarray.

There's a forlorn feeling to this card. The goblets seem to have been left out in the rain. They still retain some of the elegant beauty they once held, but the beauty is now giving way to damage. I can imagine that these goblets were once respected and cherished. They served a purpose and had meaning.

The Wild Unknown gives a simple phrase for this card: moving on. Occasionally, moving on is an easy process. Situations come to an end, we have proper closure, and everything feels okay. But more often than not, moving on can feel heavy, sorrowful and difficult.

In this imagery, the broken cups can no longer serve us in the way they once did. Even so, we might wonder if they are REALLY beyond repair. Moving on is the most difficult when the situation is not entirely bad. We might wonder if a situation is salvageable even when we know in our hearts it is time to seek deeper meaning.

Eight of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

A notable difference in the Waite-Smith tarot depiction is that the cups are not broken as they are in the Wild Unknown version. Sometimes your heart knows you need to move on even if there are still SOME good elements of your situation. It is one thing to move on when you know things are shattered, but it is a much more nuanced process to move on when the situation isn't so cut and dry.

To me, the Eight of Cups is closely linked with the never-ending journey of the

soul seeker. You may sense in your heart that you are here for a purpose, and you may feel a yearning in your heart to find meaning in your experiences and in the universe. The Eight of Cups shows the poignancy of this energy.

In a reading

This card might suggest that you consider where you find meaning in your life. Have you remained in situations that are no longer as fulfilling as they used to be? Is your emotional energy being drained? It may be time to assess what you need to leave behind in order to rise towards your next vista of fulfillment.

Nine of Cups

Creator's keywords: bliss, wishes granted

Carrie's keywords: desire, gratitude

Nine of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

This is one of the most colorful cards in this deck. It brings to mind a sunset with the gorgeous shades of pink, purple, blue and green. The more bold colors (orange, red and yellow) are absent from this card. The chosen colors are strategic – all of these colors evoke feelings of comfort, peace, and happiness.

The horizontal lines show a stable, calm energy. There are no turbulent waters here. Things seem tranquil – maybe even to the point of feeling a bit stagnant! This is a card of enjoying the things that make you feel good – a nice meal, beautiful music. It's a card of indulgence. Let yourself feel pleasure, and be grateful for that feeling!

The crescent moon hanging in the distance reminds me that it is important to feel good NOW, not hinge our positive emotions on reaching some far away goal or distant state. Life is happening around us every moment, and we can generate the feelings we desire in big ways and small every day.

Nine of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Waite-Smith tarot version shows a man sitting in front of a horseshoe shaped table. Nine cups are lined up on the table, and the man looks quite satisfied indeed with this gathering of his cups. His body posture is wide and relaxed, suggesting he allows himself to enjoy what he's got.

I associate the Nine of Cups with the sometimes paradoxical concepts of gratitude and desire. These energies can seem at odds, but in truth they are partners. It is natural to crave more, to desire what is not yet manifest in your experience. But in order for this desire to be spiritual and not just superficial, it must be coupled with gratitude. As the common saying goes, if you are not grateful for what you have now you will never have more.

In a reading

This card can serve as a reminder to let yourself really enjoy the abundant pleasures in your life. Even things that seem simple, like a bowl of cereal and a roof over your head – can seem like ultimate luxuries if you have the right perspective. Feeling gratitude is essential.

There's also an interesting balance at work in this card. On one hand, it is always a good idea to appreciate the luxuries we already have, but on the other hand, we don't want to become too complacent. It's good to continue to stretch ourselves and expand our horizons even when we are perfectly content where we are now.

Ten of Cups

Creator's keywords: harmony and joy

Carrie's keywords: kinship, joy

Ten of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Kinship, joy and harmony are the words that come to mind when I look at this card. Five cups form a semi-circle around the top half of the card, five cups complete the circle at the bottom of the card. Each cup sends forth five beams of light, one for each of the cups on the opposite side of the card. And while each cup is sending light, it is also receiving light.

The sending and receiving embodies the saying “you get what you give.” Life isn't just about receiving endless positive energy and good vibes. It's also about broadcasting those things and creating more beauty. Even in a scientific (yet poetic) sense, we are creations of stardust. And as Julia Cameron says, we can continue creation by being creative ourselves. We are in a reciprocal relationship with the Universe.

All of the colors of the rainbow are present in this card. There's a sense of wholeness and completeness here. This card echoes some of the sentiments of the World. Everything is as it should be, positive energy is permeating your very existence.

The tens represent the culmination of a suit's energy. As such, the Ten of Cups shows an ultimate realization of the watery, emotional suit of cups. This is a card of kinship to the universe, a connection to yourself, and a sense of joyful belonging.

Ten of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in general

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a nuclear family embracing under a wide rainbow. The children dance while the adults embrace each other with arms outstretched. As such, this card has traditionally been associated with family love, but it is not limited to this realm. The Ten of Cups is associated with all types of love and joyful emotions.

Sometimes this card comes up as a reminder to tune in to the harmony underlying

your situation. Even in times that seem difficult on the external plane, there is an invitation to find your own internal sense of serenity. The Ten of Cups reminds you to take the common spiritual advice “be love” and implement it in real ways.

In a reading

This card can remind you of the importance of gratitude. It can show times of joy and connection with yourself, your environment, and your fellow human beings. If you want to receive love, joy and harmony; start by being an embodiment of these things yourself.

Daughter of Cups

Creator's keywords: emotional, romantic

Carrie's keywords: open-hearted, optimistic

Daughter of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The cups court cards in the Wild Unknown are represented by swans. Symbolically, swans have been associated with love, elegance and grace. Of course swans are at home in the water, making them natural fits for the suit of cups! There's also something that seems a bit tender about swans. They are creatures that seem simultaneously fragile and powerful.

The Daughter of Cups (often called the Page of Cups in other decks) is a young swan. The lake around her is calm and stable. Her reflection shimmers in the water as a full spectrum rainbow. This shows that she holds the potential for a full range of emotions, and she welcomes any emotional experience without labeling it as negative or positive. She allows herself to fully feel whatever it is that she is feeling, but ESPECIALLY the good stuff.

There's still a sense of innocence in this card. Although the Daughter of Cups has the potential to embody any number of emotional states, she is still young. Some might even venture to say she is naive. She favors the rose-colored glasses view on life. She sees the good in all that is. She knows how to look on the bright side. She's in love with life! Perhaps there is a difference between being naive and believing that love conquers all.

The Daughter of Cups has a simple approach to life, but there can be great power in simplicity.

Page of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks use the title Page of Cups for this card. The Waite-Smith tarot depiction shows a person standing near a body of water, holding a cup. A fish pops out from the cup, and the person gazes right back at it. Fish are a symbol of the unconscious, associated with the watery realm of dreams and feelings. This suggests

that the Page of Cups has an unfiltered relationship with intuition, and interacts openly with this type of energy.

As the “youngest” of the court cards, all of the pages have a straightforward relationship with the energy of their suits. They are raw in their approach, and may sometimes come across as clumsy and childlike. But there is something important to be learned from the pages’ unadulterated approach.

In a reading

In a reading, this card can ask you to open your heart. There is magic in vulnerability. Sometimes we need to trust our intuition and our own good nature. The Daughter of Cups reminds you to show your true colors to the world, because, as the song goes, they are beautiful like a rainbow.

Son of Cups

Creator's keywords: peaceful, introspective

Carrie's keywords: hyper-sensitive, romantic

Son of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Son of Cups (often called the Knight in other decks) still has some of the child-like innocence of the daughter, but brings new levels of complexity. While the Daughter of Cups seemed to be in stable water, the lines in the background of this card are slanted. He inhabits a more varied, multi-dimensioned emotional sphere.

The Daughter faced us head on, while the son is gazing to the right. Instead of a rainbow of color in the water, the son has a rainbow of color coming forth from his cup. He's a little more reserved with his emotions than the daughter. He holds them closer so that he can examine and understand them. He still sees the poetry in life. He is still drawn to self-reflection and beauty. But he can also be prone to dark moods and hurt feelings.

I view the Knights/Sons as embodying paradoxes, flip sides of a coin (I wrote a more detailed explanation of the court cards here). In this vein, the Son of Cups is introspective, but that can turn into being self-indulgent. He is poetic, but that can turn into being sappy. He is sensitive to the point of being hyper-sensitive. He is intuitive, but that can turn into ignoring logic. Essentially, the Son of Cups is still learning to handle the spectrum of his internal world.

Knight of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Knight of Cups is often described as a sensitive soul. He certainly has a romantic way of looking at the world, gravitating towards drama and a flood of emotions. This can be a beautiful thing, as he teaches you to fling yourself straight into the direct experiences of your emotions. However, it can also present a challenge as he is not the best at maintaining perspective and clear thinking.

The Waite-Smith tarot Knight of Cups rides a white horse, another symbol of his romantic nature. This card reminds you how potent it is to connect deeply with life, but

make sure you don't lose yourself in the rolling tide.

In a reading

This card can ask you approach a situation with sensitivity, imagination and compassion. This card can also call you to examine your deeper feelings and motivations. Is the emotional energy at work within you healthy? Or is it bubbling wildly? The Son of Cups offers you the chance to hone your skills in navigating your emotional landscape.

Mother of Cups

Creator's keywords: psychic, insightful

Carrie's keywords: empathic, heart-centered

Mother of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Mother of Cups lives in a world shrouded by both mystery and beauty. She dwells in the night-time, just as the Empress and the High Priestess did. Night-time is the realm of the feminine and of inward flowing energy. However, if you look closely, there are white vertical lines dispersed in the black background. There's a bit of the opposite contained within the darkness.

The Mother herself stands out, a white swan against a black background. She faces to the left, the direction associated with mystery and yin energy. One wing is outstretched gracefully over an intricate goblet. Blue, purple and pink stars sparsely dot the sky behind her. These colors are often associated with spirituality and receptivity.

The Mother of Cups has more mature emotional intelligence than the son or daughter. She is wise to the deeper implications of the world, she sees more than just what meets the eye. She is highly sensitive, yet does not let her sensitivities overwhelm her. Her intuition can seem almost magical. She easily senses what type of care and love is needed in a given situation.

As a court card, the Mother of Cups represents an aspect of the human psyche. This card is associated with the part of you that feels a deep connection to many different life forms. She represents your sensitivity to the world of dreams and myths. She asks you to embody her ideals of living with kindness and compassion.

Queen of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

The more common title for this card is the Queen of Cups. The tarot Queens have an internal mastery of the energy of their suit. As such, the Queen of Cups is adept in the watery energy of emotions. The Queen of Cups is highly tuned in to her own feelings, and she is also strongly empathetic. She is aware of the subtle undercurrents of emotions in herself and in others.

The Queen of Cups lives life in a heart-centered manner. Kindness is usually her ideal intention. This doesn't mean she is naive. In fact, unlike the more starry-eyed emotional approach of the Son/Knight and Daughter/Cups, the Queen has a more holistic understanding of emotions. She can process even the most difficult of feelings while remaining centered.

In a reading

The Mother of Cups can ask you to tap into the traits within yourself that align with her personality. Emotional sensitivity could be needed in a situation. This card can be a gentle reminder to tune into your own feeling states as well as the feeling states of others. There is a time for rationality and logic, but the Mother of Cups reminds us that intuition, trust and the whole spectrum of human emotion can and should also be integrated into our daily lives.

Father of Cups

Creator's keywords: supportive, diplomatic
Carrie's keywords: emotionally intelligent, diplomatic

Father of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Father of Cups (traditionally known as the King) is just as entrenched in the feeling-world as the Mother of Cups, but he comes at it from a different perspective. I mean this literally AND figuratively! While the Mother faced left, signifying receptivity, the father faces right, signifying activity. He has an adept level of emotional intelligence and embodies this awareness as he interacts with the world.

This card has a white background with vertical black lines that could possibly be rain. While the Mother's background was mostly dark, the Father's is mostly light. It is interesting that each of these backgrounds contains a piece of the other's color, reminiscent of the yin-yang. There's a bit of the opposite in each side of the spectrum.

While the Mother was a white swan, the Father is a black swan. He looks to be simultaneously poised and productive. He is able to face situations with a sense of dignity and leadership, while remaining considerate of the needs of all parties. He understands the emotional landscape of the outer world and therefore interacts with others diplomatically. He has a calming, stabilizing presence and strives to create peace.

A black cup resides in the top center of the card. As opposed to the Mother's ornate goblet, this one is rather plain and simple. The Father of Cups is a master of the emotional realm, he is capable of navigating emotional energy from a centered, level-headed frame of mind.

King of Cups Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks use the title King of Cups for this card. As the final rank in the court cards, the Kings have achieved a high level of proficiency in their suit. Therefore, the

King of Cups is above all else someone who is highly emotionally intelligence. He not only senses the emotions of other people, he also senses how he might best interact with these emotions.

At his best, he can be a compassionate leader, a counselor, or even an activist. Kings take their understanding of their suit and impose it upon the external world. The King of Cups understands what other people truly need and strives to be an influence for positive change.

In a reading

When you see a court card in a reading, it may be asking you to consider how you can embody the positive traits of the card. The Father of Cups might ask you to approach a situation with your head held high. It is possible to be sensitive while also maintaining your leadership. If the Father of Cups were to adopt a slogan, it might be the ever popular “keep calm and carry on.” He is a protector and an encourager. Keep facing forward and stay centered in your approach.

Suit of Swords

Ace of Swords

Creator's keywords: truth, mental clarity

Carrie's keywords: mental energy, clear thinking

Ace of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Ace of Swords ushers into the suit of thought and intellect associated with the air element. As the suit unfolds, we will see the manifestations of this energy that come in the numbered cards. But as with all aces, the Ace of Swords is like a seed, containing the essence of its suit.

This shows the full spectrum possibilities of the mental realm. As the suit unfolds, we will look at these possibilities in detail. The Ace of Swords contains the potential for cleverness, cunning, deceit, understanding, comprehension and more.

The white sword is positioned directly in the center and almost seems to pop out of the card, offering itself to us. The pure white sword is intense and glaring. There is nothing to hide, we are looking upon this sword and seeing it fully, despite the darkness in the background.

White lightning bolts descend from the sky, furthering the electric, charged state of this card. It brings to mind the term 'bolt of clarity.' The Ace of Swords is often associated with clarity: those moments when things suddenly seem graspable. However, like lightning, those moments of clarity can be quick and fleeting.

A colorful band of what might be snakeskin is wrapped around the center of the sword in a figure eight. This is a sideways lemniscate, or infinity symbol. It is hued with all the colors of the rainbow, showing that a complex, holistic energy resides here.

Ace of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot version of this card, a hand extends from the sky, grasping a sword. The sky is clear and cloudless, alluding to the mental clarity offered by the Ace of Swords. When you feel besieged by misunderstandings or doubts, the Ace of

Swords offers you new perspectives.

It is sometimes said that all aces can be thought of as gifts. The Ace of Swords offers you the gift of intelligence, rationality and clear, firm thinking. The truth, as they say, will set you free, and the Ace of Swords can be just the straightforward burst of truth that you need.

In a reading...

The Ace of Swords can speak of new ideas, fresh perspectives, and the potentials of the mental realm. This card can show times of clarity bursts which seem to be graspable, but are often fleeting. It can also be a card of undisguised honesty. Hidden motivations and beliefs are ready to be excavated, for worse or for better!

This card can also suggest that the best approach in a given situation is to 'grasp onto' the qualities in the swords suit. Use your mental facilities to determine how to proceed. Be upfront with yourself and others. Activate your own cleverness to approach the situation at hand.

Two of Swords

Creator's keywords: blocked vision, stalemate

Carrie's keywords: avoidance, indecision

Two of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Two dark swords form an X. At the peak of the blades, the sun has been eclipsed by the moon. Clear light is trying to make its way out from its source, but the light is obscured. There's a sense of straining in this card. The swords seem to be trying in their own way to impose logic, but instead they are only butting up against each other. Gone is the burst of clarity we saw in the ace!

This can be a card of contradictions. You want to understand things, but you don't necessarily want to understand things as they actually are. You may be straining to impose your mentally constructed version of reality onto the world instead of easing up and seeing things as they really are.

Psychologists describe a phenomenon known as confirmation bias. This is the tendency human beings have to prioritize information that confirms their existing thoughts and beliefs. When you see the Two of Swords, it may ask you to become aware of where you might only be looking for information that confirms your current thinking.

The Two of Swords also shows that sometimes the harder you think about things, the more convoluted they get. This is represented by the moon obscuring the sun. You may say you WANT to see the full clear light of the sun, but is this really the case? Or, in fact, is it your own thinking that has created this block to clarity?

Two of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

In Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a blindfolded person sitting in front of a body of water. She holds two swords up against her chest – the swords are positioned similarly to the ones here in the Wild Unknown depiction. The blindfold suggests a sort of willful avoidance of the situation at hand. The positioning of the swords seems to be

blocking out any potential to shift this energy of avoidance.

The water in the background of this version is also worth mentioning, as water is symbolically associated with intuitive knowing. The fact that the water is there, yet the person remains on the land, suggests relying solely on the head without any input from the heart. This is not to say that your brain is not a powerful tool – but when you try to rely only on your mental prowess, you may find yourself at a stalemate in life.

The Two of Swords often comes up when you are having a difficult time making a decision. That difficulty may be linked to confirmation bias, or relying too heavily on your head without enough input from your heart.

In a reading...

This card might ask you to consider what you are denying, repressing or avoiding. Are you straining to see things as they really are, or are you straining to see things as you WANT them to be? This card often appears when we feel like we are at a standstill.

Avoidance doesn't make things go away. This card can ask you to ease up on all the mental energy you are spending on avoidance. Make a decision, get out of your head. Trust that the truth will set you free or it will imprison you, you get to decide which perspective to adopt.

Three of Swords

Creator's keywords: heartbreak, betrayal

Carrie's keywords: mental pain, isolation

Three of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Two swords are crossed in an X over the center sword, and the three blades are entangled in blood red bindings. This aptly describes the tightly wound sensation of troubling times. The red drapes down from the blades' edge like actual blood.

This card in most decks is one that brings up a visceral reaction. It speaks of raw wounds. The Wild Unknown offers the keywords betrayal and heartbreak, and this card is often, undeniably, associated with pain. But as the suit of the mental realm, this card can also speak to the ways we create and deepen pain with our thoughts and words.

When you experience mental pain, you may feel isolated, disconnected from the universe. It is essential to remember that even during difficult times, you are always connected to all that is. You are never really alone, no matter what your thoughts might try to tell you.

In this image, the swords are gathered on a dark background. But notice that there is light beyond the darkness. When I see the Three of Swords, I often think of a quote from Khalil Gibran: “the deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.”

Although swords are associated with the mental realm, this card always reminds me of the mind-body connection. When we have painful thoughts, we can feel that pain in our body. This is why we use terms like “heartbreak.” This can be a heavier card, but it is an important card. Pain is not necessarily bad – it only wants to be understood. This willingness to interact with your pain is the first step towards letting in the light.

Three of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Of all the imagery in the Wild Unknown, the Three of Swords is the most

reminiscent of the Waite-Smith tarot depiction. The Waite-Smith version shows a plump red heart being peirced with three swords. That particular imagery also draws upon something mentioned above: the connection between mind and body.

The imagery in the Waite-Smith version also shows a storm and rain in the background. Unlike the clear mental state shown in the Ace of Swords, the Three of Swords shows what happens when mental energy becomes brooding.

In a reading...

This card can represent the worries, struggles, misunderstandings and negative thought patterns that are a natural part of the human experience. If you are experiencing painful thoughts, this card can ask you to consider how your thoughts themselves might be heightening your struggle.

This card also serves as a reminder that we learn from difficult experiences. We can use our reasoning and story-telling skills to make sense of our experiences and lay the groundwork to move beyond the rawness.

Four of Swords

Creator's keywords: stillness, mental power

Carrie's keywords: reprieve, contemplation

Four of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

When we look at tarot as a holistic system, the Four of Swords is an appropriate way to follow the previous card. While the Three of Swords showed tightly wound struggles, the Four of Swords shows the the process of integrating things from a more spacious place.

A lamb rests at the bottom of the card, a serene expression on her face. She looks out at us with a peaceful expression. In the center of her forehead (or her third eye) is a luminous orange and yellow sphere. These are colors of concentration and vigor. Her thoughts are centered and powerful.

Four swords are posed over the lamb. They are all different lengths and designs, but their spacing is even. This gives the card a sense of equilibrium. The sky above is clear, suggesting space for a mental reprieve. Instead of the tightly wound mental energy at work in the two and three of swords, the four has a sense of spaciousness.

The number four is often associated with stability (as in The Emperor, number four in the major arcana). When you combine that quality with the suit of swords, you find the mental stability we see in this card. The Four of Swords reminds you that it is necessary to take a reprieve from action and make space for contemplation.

Four of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Traditional depictions of this card show a human figure laying down, often in a church setting. There is a sense of mindfulness in this card, of harnessing your mental energy in more effective ways. Instead of letting your mental energy run unchecked, it is useful to become aware of your thoughts.

This card can also speak to the importance of planning. Instead of rushing into

action, it may be necessary to put some deep consideration into what you desire to do next. Let yourself think through all of your options, let yourself explore different perspectives. Do what it takes to feel prepared and ready before taking your next move.

In a reading...

This card can suggest consciously choosing to stabilize your thoughts. It can be useful to do whatever makes you feel the most centered and alert, such as journaling or meditation. Plan, prepare, and quietly stabilize yourself. Treat your mental energy as a precious resource, and do what you need to do to bring it back to full capacity.

Five of Swords

Creator's keywords: self destruction

Carrie's keywords: criticism, betrayal

Five of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A worm has been divided, a grim black sword has pierced this creature right through the center. Two additional swords pierce through the top half of the worm, and two through the bottom half. It is an image of maliciousness and ill will.

The suit of swords deals with communication, logic and thoughts. In all suits, the fives show challenges or discomforts posited by the suits. In the Five of Swords, we see the way people sometimes cut down others – and themselves – through fighting, hostility and spite.

This card can hint at environments that are wrought with power struggles and questionable ethics. We are all human, and we all succumb to the influences of pettiness, harshness and aggressive behavior from time to time. Being aware of these patterns is necessary, as it is the only way to transcend them.

The Wild Unknown gives the keyword “self destruction” for this card. Although we do sometimes face ugly behavior from outside sources, it is true that many of us dish it out to ourselves. This card can ask you to examine your self-talk and your choices. Pay attention to the influence of your inner critic. If you aren't treating yourself with respect and honor, that is the place to start.

Five of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tradition, this card shows a human figure holding three swords. Two more swords are sprawled on the ground behind him, while two other humans are visible in the distance. There is a sense that the person holding the swords has “won” some type of confrontation, but at what cost?

Humans like to be right, and if you don't check yourself you might value being

“right” over all else. The desire to “win” can cause us to betray our values and principles if we let it. When someone’s main motive is to gain power or to show dominance over someone else, it is a red flag.

The Five of Swords also speaks to one of the harmful effects of the ego, manifesting in the form of sabotage. Sometimes that sabotage is external, projected out onto others. Other times, we sabotage ourselves.

In a reading...

This card can ask you to balance your own needs with the needs of others. Is there a way that everyone can win in this situation? Do not react and lash out in an auto-pilot manner. Instead of becoming your own worst enemy, become aware of destructive tendencies and change your approach.

Six of Swords

Creator's keywords: hope at last, travel

Carrie's keywords: reeling, recovering

Six of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Six swords rest in a heap at the bottom of the card. The scene at first glance is dark and dreary, the swords are in the midst of what seems to be a heavy rain. There is some difficulty present, but a rainbow arches high above and a clear sky waits beyond.

When we look at this card as the successor to the Five of Swords, a coherent story emerges. The five showed a picture of hostility and battle, and the six shows the aftermath. The healing process has begun, but there is still work to be done on the road to recovery.

There are times when you are surviving more than you are actually thriving, and the Six of Swords is a representation of those times. Stressful events can leave you reeling even once the actual event has passed. It is natural to require some space to to sort yourself out in such instances.

Notice that the swords here are giving themselves that ability to recover. Instead of forcing yourself to just “get over” things, sometimes you need to let yourself lie there in a metaphoric heap for a while! It is inevitable that eventually you will move from where you find yourself now and head towards your own personal rainbow. This card asks you to be patient with yourself as you navigate this tender process.

Six of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Decks that draw from the Waite-Smith tarot tradition often depict this card by showing human figures huddled in a boat. One person rows the boat, while two others are huddled over and bundled up in cloaks. The boat carries them forward, but also offers them the opportunity to rest and recover. Soon they will reach new shores, but for now they are still slightly reeling.

This card is usually less associated with major traumas and more associated with the micro-struggles that impact us on a daily basis. It typically shows up during times when you are lacking the mental, physical and spiritual energy to engage deeply with life. Sometimes the best thing you can do during such occasions is to trust that you are moving towards a more holistic awareness.

There is no need to rush yourself, but there is also no need to dwell on the difficulties. Look for ways to expand your perspective of your experiences. You will not always be in this in-between place, you are already moving closer to the awaiting new land.

In a reading

This card can suggest that the climax of a struggle is over, but now we are sheltering ourselves from the storm, hoping that the rains will eventually lead us to salvation.

This card can serve as an affirmation of how far you've come. You may still have a way to go, but you are on your way out of the thick. Things might still seem in flux and you may not be able to see your final destination yet, but you can choose to keep traveling in the right direction.

Seven of Swords

Creator's keywords: secrecy, self-interest

Carrie's keywords: sneaky, aloof

Seven of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A fox peeks out with one eye from her curled up perch atop a sword. Six more swords are suspended above in a horizontal line. The card is entirely black and white, the background lines are diagonal and meet in the center of the card, leading our eyes to the fox. The lines reiterate that even though she may seem relaxed, she is very much aware of her surroundings, she is using her mental power to size up the situation.

The fox is huddled up in a ball, her bushy tail wrapped around her gives her an air of aloofness. Perhaps this is because she's doing something shady, or perhaps it's because she'd simply rather act alone. She can take care of her own business, and it would be foolish to underestimate her aptitude.

The Seven of Swords in most decks is often associated with cleverness at best, deception at worst. This card can draw your attention to some of your more slippery mental tendencies such as procrastination, avoidance, cynicism and dispassion.

However, this does not need to be written off as a negative card. This card reminds you that sometimes it is useful to find cognitive distance from a situation. There are times when your best approach is to sneak away and watch out for yourself. It is up to you to discern when this approach is helpful – and when it is hurtful.

Seven of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

One of my favorite takes on this card comes from one of my favorite tarot books, *Learning The Tarot* by Joan Bunning. Bunning describes the Seven of Swords as being associated with “hidden dishonor” whereas the Five of Swords is associated with “open dishonor.”

The Seven of Swords often shows up when you are doing something you know

deep down isn't that great, but you're trying to justify your actions to yourself. It can be a representation of the mind games we play to try to avoid guilt, shame and accountability.

That said, sometimes it is okay to be secretive. It is a fine line to walk, and this card asks you to be totally honest with yourself about how and why you are navigating this line.

In a reading

This card can ask you to take an honest assessment of any secrets you are keeping. Where are your intentions? Are you acting out of self-preservation or have your thought cycles become overly wry? If you really need to watch out for yourself, so be it. But if you are dodging responsibilities, it is time to re-evaluate your approach.

Eight of Swords

Creator's keywords: trapped, powerless

Carrie's keywords: stuckness, limiting beliefs

Eight of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A butterfly is wrapped up tightly and hangs from a sword. Seven more swords surround the butterfly and lean in as though threatening to tear her apart if she moves. The horizontal background lines are stable, indicating that the energy is not expansive. The butterfly is bound up around itself, unable to stretch its wings, unsure how to navigate the surrounding swords.

This is the card that I associate with the concept of mental fog. This card shows those times where there seems to be no solution in sight, no matter how hard you try to think of one. The harder you think, the more trapped you believe you are. It's that sensation of stuckness that can manifest in many challenging ways, and the Eight of Swords can indicate that your thoughts are contributing to your stuckness.

This card shows those times when you feel stuck, and worse yet, you doubt your own ability to disentangle yourself. It can become tempting to give up your personal power and wait for another person or an outside circumstance to offer assistance. But as swords are associated with the mental realm, the first thing you may need to check is your thoughts. Your own limiting beliefs might be the very foundation of your conundrum.

Eight of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

The imagery in the Wild Unknown is somewhat similar to the way this card is depicted in the iconic Waite-Smith tarot. The Waite-Smith version shows a human figure bound up, blindfolded, and surrounded by a fortress of swords. The blindfold hints that there may very well be a way out of this predicament, but that knowledge has not yet penetrated the conscious mind.

This card tends to show up when you are experiencing stuckness in some area of your life. This could come in the form of blocked creative energy, an unfulfilling work situation, or unconstructive repetitive thoughts. We all have inner narratives about ourselves and our lives. When you see the Eight of Swords, it may be necessary to re-evaluate your narratives.

When I'm reading for clients and this card comes up, I often suggest starting with one simple mental shift. Instead of dwelling on thoughts like "I'm so stuck!" Shift that mental energy to thoughts like "I can figure this out." Just that small shift can make you more receptive to possibilities.

In a reading

This card can ask you to look at the stories you are telling yourself about your options. If you seem to be stuck or entrenched in mental fog, this card can remind you to take steps towards reclaiming your personal power.

Of course, this is easier said than done! You can begin by changing your thoughts, updating your stories. Instead of focusing on your confusion and lack of clarity, train yourself to look for steps – even small steps – towards freedom. When you consciously choose to loosen your mental constraints, a path forward will begin to emerge.

Nine of Swords

Creator's keywords: nightmares, anguish

Carrie's keywords: anxious thoughts, worries

Nine of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A jumbled mess of gross, horrifying confusion dominates this card. It is hard to discern what exactly you are even looking at. Eyeballs, devoid of sockets, are gazing blankly. Maggots and worms wriggle and grasp around everything. And is the center object a horn? A jawbone? Or something else entirely?

This card is a depiction of visceral horror, fear, and turmoil. If you were able to untangle your thoughts enough to calmly assess the situation, it might not seem quite as terrible. But as it is, everything is a jumbled, monochrome mess.

Considering the chaos in this picture, it is interesting to note that the nine swords are actually arranged in an orderly manner. Consider if you might be empowering your nightmares by harboring unnecessary worries. The human brain naturally dwells on perceived threats, but most of the terrible things you imagine will never come to fruition. Still, the power of your mind is intense.

When you get carried away in anxious thoughts, you may start to believe that everything is an out of control disaster. You assume that your perceived anguish is the reality of the situation. Although it is an undeniable fact that ugliness is part of life, it is necessary to discern how you might amplify that ugliness by closing yourself in your mental cave.

If you find yourself mired in this Nine of Swords energy, be gentle with yourself. Fear is a part of being human. It may help to do something to reframe your mental energy in whatever way works for you: meditation, talking to a trusted friend or therapist, and journaling are just a few ways you might sort through this heavy mental energy.

Nine of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Many decks, such as the Waite-Smith tarot, show a person in a dark room, sitting up in bed, hands over their face. Nine swords hover above in the darkness, suggesting the powerful weight of anxious thoughts. In a paradoxical way, this card can offer some comfort as it validates the fear that all humans experience. Especially as some of us in the spiritual world want to “just think positively” this card shows that this is not always beneficial, and it’s not even always possible.

That said, it is one thing to validate your fear and it is another thing to assume it is warranted. Look for small ways that you can begin to shift your perspective. Just affirming yourself that you are open to a more expansive story than the one being hammered in by fear is a powerful first step.

In a reading

This card can convey a need to loosen the grip of your worries, guilt, and negative assumptions. Remember to breathe! Things are likely not as bad as they seem. You may indeed be facing struggles, but remember that you do not have to be a prisoner of your own mind. Remember that no matter how bad things seem, the wilderness of your thoughts might only make them worse.

Step back, calm down, and look at the big picture. Treat yourself with kindness and know trust that you’re doing the best you can. Remind yourself that this too shall pass.

Ten of Swords

Creator's keywords: rock bottom, melodrama

Carrie's keywords: overkill, martyrdom

Ten of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A bull is splayed across the bottom of the card, merging with the darkness below. A sword is pierced through both of his hollow eye sockets, and nine more swords stab the body from above. It's not subtle! And it's not exactly the most pleasant image we've encountered in the deck, is it?

The Ten of Swords, though undeniably one of the darker cards in the deck, has always struck me as over the top. The Wild Unknown gives "melodrama" as one of the keywords, and this seems appropriate. There's SO many swords that it almost makes you roll your eyes. This card can show the ways that you might exaggerate situations and get into a "poor pitiful me" mentality.

A continuation is at work between the Nine and Ten of Swords. Notice that in the Nine, we saw eyeballs devoid of a home. And now in the Ten, we see a bull with empty eye sockets. This shows the natural way we progress from the grips of worry into the thralls of self-defeat. There's also a sense here that you've got nowhere to go but up. The damage has been done, the worse is over.

Since swords are the suit of the mental realm, this card also hints at the way you can overthink things. We all have a tendency to sometimes make things more complicated, ridiculous, and bogged down than they need to be. When your thoughts become burdensome, you become like the bull – pinned down by your own mind.

Ten of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

In decks based off the Waite-Smith tarot, this card typically shows a person laying on the ground face down, ten swords pierce their back. One of the person's hands is visible, and it has been speculated that he is forming a mudra for surrender. The sky is

black, but at the bottom of the card is a hint of yellow, suggesting that the darkest hour has passed. Dawn will inevitably come.

Although some of this person's trouble's may be real, it's easy to imagine them dramatically declaring "poor me! I do everything for everyone! And I walk uphill both ways in the snow as I do it!" This card definitely asks you to look at how you might be perpetuating the drama at work in your life.

In a reading

This card often indicates that the crap storm has passed. You've gotten through the thick of it, and things can only get better from here. Instead of fixating on how terrible everything is, train yourself to look for the light. Say no to drama and martyrdom! It's good to be realistic about your struggles, but check yourself if you're exaggerating things.

Daughter of Swords

Creator's keywords: honesty, insightful

Carrie's keywords: simplify, directness

Daughter of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

An owlet sits perched upon a solid black sword. She gazes forward at us as though she's got nothing to hide. Behind her, the night sky is splattered with rainbow hued stars. As a court card, the Daughter of Swords might represent a specific person, a personality trait, or an approach to life. For a deeper understanding of the court cards, see this post.

At the core of her personality, the Daughter of Swords might ascribe to the motto "keep it simple." She is a straightforward character who doesn't bother with frills or nonsense. What you see is what you get. She'd likely be a proponent of the Occam's razor philosophy: the simplest explanation is likely the best explanation.

The sword in this picture is positioned in a straight line. This is representative of the daughter's straight and narrow temperament. While others would swing wildly about getting caught up in complicated thoughts and over-analyzation, the daughter is more likely to cut to the chase.

Although she is a straightforward character, the Daughter of Swords does have an understanding of others' experiences. She is a good listener, always willing to consider different viewpoints – as long as they are clearly presented.

Page of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most tarot decks use the title Page of Swords for this card. The page (or daughter, in the Wild Unknown's depiction) is the "youngest" of the courts, and has the most uncomplicated relationship to her element. Swords relate to the air element and deal with the realms of ideas, reason, and communication. From this, it becomes apparent that the Page of Swords approaches situations directly and without drama.

However, the Page still has much to learn. As acute as her desire is to keep things simple, some situations are, in reality, complex. The page may be prone to naivety when it comes to her understanding of her suit's energy! For example, the Page of Swords communicates her thoughts directly, but somewhat rawly. Imagine a child who would flat out tell you they don't like your new haircut. They aren't trying to be mean, and to some extent the bluntness can be appreciated, but it may not always come across well.

In a reading

The Daughter (or Page) of Swords can suggest that you approach a situation as she would. Instead of getting caught up in mind games, look for the simplest solution. Clear your head and determine which of your thoughts are essential for the task at hand. When in doubt, tell the truth.

Son of Swords

Creator's keywords: determined, forceful

Carrie's keywords: critical, opinionated

Son of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A young owl is in mid-flight, his wings stretched out with resolution. As a court card, the Son of Wands may draw attention to an aspect of your personality in a given situation.

The Son of Swords gazes straight ahead. He's got a narrow focus, and nothing is going to take him off the course he has chosen. The background is filled with slanted lines, meeting in the center. This adds to the overall air of determination.

The owl holds a sword in his talons, ready to pierce his chosen target. He is full of opinions, but he may have a hard time differentiating opinions and facts. He can be a fierce debater, and a brutal critic. Some of his criticisms can be helpful, but he doesn't always know where to draw the line between helping and hurting. He holds his convictions firmly and can have a difficult time accepting information that doesn't align with the information he clings to.

On one end of the spectrum, the Son of Swords has the bound and determined, single-minded focus it often takes to accomplish difficult tasks. He knows how to lock onto a target and pour all of his efforts and abilities into his objectives. He's smart as a whip and isn't afraid to stand up for himself.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Son of Swords can be prone to wearing blinders. He can be stubborn and unwilling to see any other option aside from the one he's already decided upon. He can be condescending in his interactions with others and patience isn't always his strong suit.

Knight of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks use the title Knight of Swords for this card. As a court ranking, the

Knights tend to gravitate between extremes in their interaction with their suit. The Knight of Swords can be a constructive critic, or he can tear you apart. He can share his opinions with conviction, or he can berate anyone who contradicts him. He can bring forward valuable knowledge, or he can be smug and snarky.

Knights are the metaphoric teenager of the tarot, and like the stereotypical image of a teenager the Knight of Swords may be convinced he knows it all. To understand the Knight of Swords, it's helpful to contrast his approach with that of the Page of Swords. The Page of Swords is also direct, but is not attached to the idea of being right. The Page probably wouldn't be bothered if you agree with their stance or not. Whereas the Knight thrives on being right and clings firmly to what he believes to be true.

In a reading

The Son of Swords can ask you to closely evaluate your approach in a given situation. Do you need to be more direct, honest and focused? Or on the other hand, have you lost sight of the bigger picture? Step back and examine your approach from an unbiased perspective, and then use your wisdom to determine your next step.

Mother of Swords

Creator's keywords: experienced, all-seeing

Carrie's keywords: astute, witty

Mother of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

An appropriately regal looking snowy owl is perched upon a sword. She looks out at us with a knowing expression. Her symmetrical feathers and over the shoulder gaze lend to her air of dignity.

The card is entirely black and white. This seems befitting for the Mother of Swords because she prefers things to be drama free. What you see is what you get. The background lines are clean and straight. She will not tolerate shadiness and is quick to call anyone (including herself) out on their nonsense.

As a court card, the Mother of Swords shows personality traits and approaches to life. For a comprehensive explanation of how court cards function in tarot, check out this post. The Mother of Swords has a high level of mastery over the air element. This manifests in her clear communication, sense of humor, and no bullshit approach to life.

Notice how she perches calmly on her sword, as opposed to the Son who clung to his sword with force. She has nothing to prove to anyone, her main priority is that she is living in line with her beliefs and knowledge. This isn't to say she won't gladly share her opinions, but she shares them with an internal sense of self-assuredness.

Because of her adeptness, nothing gets by her. She is not easily fooled, and she can quickly grasp the core of any situation she's thrust into. She is adaptable and able to adjust to new information. She doesn't suffer fools, but she isn't unkind. She has a keen understanding of life and can be an excellent teacher.

Queen of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Most decks use the title Queen of Swords for this card. Queens can be thought of as the "inwardly mature adults" of the tarot. The Queen of Swords embodies authenticity. She knows who she is and she shows up in the world as who she is. She is

also a master at delivering knowledge with a sense of humor – you could say she'd be one of those people who always busts out the right hilarious gif at just the right time.

Unlike the Son of Swords who thinks he knows it all despite his relative inexperience, the Queen actually has the experience to back up her stances. Everything in life is a learning experience to her, and she finds incredible value in understanding herself, society, and the universe as a whole.

In a reading

The Mother of Swords can ask you to consider how her traits might be at work in your situation. At her best, the Mother of Swords can be delightfully witty, clever, and helpful. Instead of seeing the world through rose colored glasses, this card reminds you that sometimes you need to embrace the beauty of being a realist.

Father of Swords

Creator's keywords: fair, just, analytical

Carrie's keywords: analytical, principled

Father of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Father of Swords makes a powerful impression from the get go. Everything about him – from his piercing gaze to his technicolor sword – conveys knowledge, authority and mastery. Court cards can draw your attention to various aspects of your own psyche and the way you interact with the world.

As opposed to the sly over the shoulder glance we got from the Mother of Swords, the Father faces us head on. Like the Mother, he is not one to mince his words. He says precisely what he means to say, and he doesn't hesitate when he delivers a message. However, he is very practiced when it comes to thinking before he speaks. His stances are typically well-informed, he analyzes things intricately before coming to conclusions.

His sword is concentrated with all the powers of the rainbow. This shows that although he is the master of the airy realm of thoughts, analysis and judgement; he rules with a holistic approach. As opposed to jumping to conclusions, as the Son of Swords might, the Father thinks things through thoroughly.

He considers multiple angles of any given situation before taking rash action. His actions are always measured carefully and taken with full consciousness. Emotions do not cloud his judgement. This does not mean he is entirely unfeeling, but he processes the world through thinking. At his best, his decisions are made without bias.

Even when he isn't speaking, he is always at work analyzing and processing information. He is concerned with truth, equity and finding solutions that work. He is capable of sorting out complex, multi-faceted layers of information and finding a way to easily tie them together. A keen director, the Father of Swords sets clear boundaries and enforces the principles he believes in.

King of Swords Tarot Card Meanings in General

This card is most commonly titled the King of Swords. Kings are the “outwardly mature adult” of the tarot courts. The King of Swords could be considered a master of the sword's airy energy. He possesses intelligence, he is articulate, he is knowledgeable. Firm when necessary, the King of Swords takes action to ensure that reality aligns with his principles.

The King of Swords holds others, and himself, to high standards. He has a clearly defined moral code that he values strongly. As an example of how his traits might manifest, consider the positive traits of a lawyer, judge, or journalist.

In a reading

The King of Swords may ask you to evaluate how his approach is (or is not) at work in your situation. Are you acting in accordance with your moral principles? Are you thoroughly considering the facts? It is time to fully own your authority and make decisions with conviction.

Suit of Pentacles

Ace of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: prosperous beginnings

Carrie's keywords: material potential, organic growth

Ace of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

We have reached the introduction to the suit of pentacles! As with all aces, the Ace of Pentacles is a distillation of the pentacles realm. Pentacles are associated with the earth element; the tangible realm, physicality, money, homes and work. The Ace contains all of the potential of this element.

In the Wild Unknown, the Ace of Pentacles is a tree stump with a bright orange and yellow center. These are the colors of the substantial, material realm. This ace is solid and sturdy, sporting several branches growing in different directions. The potential of these branches is ready to fully unfold, and we'll see that process in the numbered cards.

At the center of this tree stump is a burst of color, a yellow and orange pentacle. The center of the stump is an important point, as it indicated where all of the growth that you can now see in the tree rings originated. As such, the Ace of Pentacles asks you to stay in touch with your own center.

This deck offers "prosperous beginnings" as the key phrase for this card. The Ace of Pentacles shows that growth comes when you are pragmatic and willing to commit to the nitty-gritty aspects of creation. Good things can blossom if we come up with a plan and take a down-to-earth approach.

On that note, the Ace of Pentacles often asks you to place your focus on the real world. There are other cards that ask you to focus on ethereal energies, but the Ace of Pentacles is more about what is measurable and practical. This card reminds you of the importance of staying grounded. A good way to do this is to tune into your physical senses and let them offer advice and inspiration.

In a reading, this card can ask you to activate your resources, both internal and external. Where are you right now, and what do you want to build from here? Every

moment gives you the opportunity for a new beginning. Get comfortable with where you are, while having faith that you are progressing. As you take your next steps, cultivate a sense of trust in the process. Things will unfold naturally as you continue to dig deep and do the work.

Ace of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

All four aces are often described as “seeds,” and that description is especially befitting to the Ace of Pentacles. Aces are pure potential, and pentacles describe the tangible, material world. Therefore, the Ace of Pentacles is the seed of potential for all that might unfold in the “mundane” areas of life: work, money, physicality and so on.

In traditional decks like the Waite-Smith tarot, the Ace of Pentacles shows a hand, palm up, receiving a pentacle. This suggests that the Ace of Pentacles doesn't always have to be about hustling; sometimes we must simply relax and let things grow at their own pace. This is what it means to be receptive – not to be inactive, but to be open to potential, to be patient as results begin to take shape.

In a reading...

When you see the Ace of Pentacles, it's useful to consider what “seeds” you are sowing. What potential is already taking shape in your life? And for that matter, what potential would you LIKE to see take shape? Aces are a reminder of your autonomy, and the Ace of Pentacles asks you to be open to letting healthy, prosperous seeds begin to grow.

When you are open to gifts, you are more likely to receive gifts. The Ace of Pentacles asks you to be receptive to whatever gifts and manifestations are in your highest good.

Two of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: balance and change

Carrie's keywords: flexibility, dynamic factors

Two of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A butterfly is positioned in the card's center, wings open wide. The background is filled with slanted lines, meeting in the middle. There's a sense of equilibrium everywhere: the two wings, two antennae, and the two lined background sections. And most notably, the two pentacles in a rainbow loop.

The two pentacles are forming a lemniscate, or infinity loop. We've see this symbol in several of the Wild Unknown's cards (such as Strength & the Magician). Here, this symbol reminds us that changes can be big or small. We're almost always adjusting to some form of change.

Life is dynamic, and the Two of Pentacles speaks strongly to this truth. You can't always rely on tried and true patterns. Instead, you must constantly be tuning into the energies at work in every given moment and make adjustments – both big and small – as necessary.

The Two of Pentacles shows the many ways that we juggle and balance in our daily lives. Even if we think we're focusing on one task, there's usually some form of balance going on. Some of this balancing is done consciously (for example, eating while driving) and some is done unconsciously (for example, we're always breathing and blinking).

This card reminds us that there are multiple facets at work within any situation. Our task is to navigate these facets with grace (and to have some fun in the process).

Two of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

This card often shows a human figure juggling two pentacles. Juggling is an act that takes precision and concentration, but it's also somewhat of a game. Therefore, this

card can be a reminder that life isn't just about doing everything "right." Instead, life is about constantly finding ways you can take meaningful actions with a playful attitude.

It's also helpful to be flexible. Don't push yourself so hard that you break, but stretching yourself is healthy. Don't get discouraged if what used to work no longer works. Instead, embrace the flexibility of trying and refrain from judging what transpires as a success or a failure. The Two of Pentacles echoes the old saying that life really is like a game, so don't take things TOO seriously!

In a reading...

Sometimes in a reading, the Two of Pentacles can indicate having more than one factor to consider. Can you maintain the multiple factors at work, or do you need to simplify? Are you enjoying the balancing process, or has it become tricky? Approach the situation with flexibility and use your ability to prioritize.

Embrace the dynamic energies at work for you and remember that the only constant in life is change.

Three of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: teamwork, determination

Carrie's keywords: planning, collaboration

Three of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A mountain dominates the top portion of this card, but the three colorful pentacles below are equally eye-catching. There's a sense of symmetry here. The mountain has three peaks, with the highest peak in the center. The pentacles form a similar pattern, but inverted. This gives the sensation that the pentacles are the foundation that the mountain relies upon. No great things can come to be all on their own – they are always supported along the way.

The pentacles are red, blue and yellow – primary colors. These three colors are the building blocks that can lead into infinite color combinations. We see this happening in the card as the connecting lines combine to form new hues. This shows that each of us have individual strengths, and by combining those strengths we can create things that are truly magnificent.

The Three of Pentacles is often associated with planning, blueprints and teamwork. We see that as these pentacles lend each other their unique energy, they are able to create something together. This is the type of growth that can only come from collaboration. There are times when you need to go your own way and do your own thing, but the Three of Pentacles shows that there are also times when it is better to rely on external support. Accepting that kind of support allows you to be a part of something greater than yourself.

This card speaks of the tangible progress that can be when we use our unique skills and draw upon the unique skills of others. Progress doesn't usually happen by accident. Progress happens when we actively engage in building, growing and strengthening. You can see this in how knowledge has developed over the course of time: one person comes up with a concept, someone else builds upon it, and someone else still that existing foundation in a new direction. Such is the course of creation.

Three of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Waite-Smith tarot depiction of this card shows three human figures working to build a chapel. Each of these figures has their own essential role in the process: a priest holds a vision for the final building, a craftsman has the tools to build the physical structure. None of them could build this impressive structure on their own, they can only achieve such greatness by collaborating.

This card also speaks to the value of planning. Sometimes you can simply wing it and things turn out fine. But when you see the Three of Pentacles, it may be wise to step back and create a plan. What is your overarching vision? What strengths do you have to work towards this vision, and where might you need to draw in outside support? Planning for what you want to create can be difficult, but is also immensely rewarding.

In a reading...

This card can ask you to consider the skills you currently need. What are you trying to accomplish? Do you have a clear method to get you there? What external resources can help you continue to climb your proverbial mountain?

You are capable of accomplishing heroic tasks, but you've got to tap into your true determination. Be respectful of the skills that others bring to the table, and let your own individual strengths shine through. You'll only reach the summit if you find as much fulfillment in taking each step as you expect to find when your goal is complete.

Four of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: possession, control

Carrie's keywords: comfort zone, rigid

Four of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Four pentacles form a diamond. They are bound together by intricately intertwined threads of blue, magenta and yellow. The lines in the background draw in towards the diamond, but are unable to penetrate its defenses. There is a sense of security and stability in the imagery, but at what cost does that come?

Diamonds are one of the hardest materials that exist. The Four of Pentacles is often associated with rigidity and stubbornness. In some instances, it can be beautiful to be as rigid as a diamond. But in other instances, being so hard and fast can be detrimental. As human beings, we sometimes become fixed in our ways for better or for worse. This is the energy at work in this card.

It is natural to feel the need for security and protection, but this card often shows a manufactured sense of protection. By clinging to anything – belongings, land, ideas – we believe that we can maintain control. Instead of an actual sense of safety, the Four of Pentacles often hints at the illusion of safety – an illusion that we try to maintain by clinging to what is familiar.

But the inevitable truth is that change is constant. There are times to hold tightly to the status quo. But as a long term strategy, this approach is not sustainable. You can't micromanage everything. You must learn to use your personal influence while also accepting that some things are simply out of your hands.

The pentacles in this card are bound together, perhaps in an attempt to keep them under control. This doesn't have to be a bad thing. In fact, as the suit of pentacles relates to the material realm, this card can sometimes assert the importance of saving money and protecting your assets. But often, if you're not careful, this type of behavior can turn into hoarding and short-sightedness.

Four of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the classic Waite-Smith tarot, the Four of Pentacles shows a person sitting hunched over on a box, clinging four pentacles close to his body, including pinning two of the pentacles down with his feet! How's THAT for maintaining control?

Numerologically, four is about structures, stability and control. So in the Four of Pentacles, we see those principles applied in the earthly, material realm. This card tends to get a more negative reputation, but as I hinted at earlier in the post there can be positive aspects. The Four of Pentacles can remind you to watch out for yourself so you don't get conned or ripped off. It can also give you permission to maintain ownership over what is rightfully yours.

But this card also speaks strongly to the ways that clinging, controlling and possessing are ultimately unsustainable. It takes a lot of energy to hunch yourself up and refuse change. Sometimes you are better served by finding inner liberation and releasing the need to maintain the status quo.

In a reading...

In a reading, this card can ask you to examine what, and why, you are trying so hard to preserve. Where do you feel that things will fall apart without your management? What ideas, behavior patterns, goals or objects are you clutching? Is your energy being used efficiently, or to your detriment?

It's essential to find the balance between preserving the things that you value while also being open to the natural ebb and flow of energies. You don't have to cling so tightly. You can learn to relinquish a little control. You'll have so much more energy to use productively when you're operating less from a place of force and more from a place of trust.

Five of Pentacles

Deck creator's keywords: sadness, illness

Carrie's keywords: material struggles, scarcity

Five of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Who knew roses could look dejected and defeated? Not me, until I started working with the Wild Unknown tarot. In the Five of Pentacles, a rose takes on a human-like posture: bent over, weary, and worse for the wear. A shriveled red petal drops to the ground below. What was once a healthy, thriving blossom is now struggling to go on.

The background of the card is lined with black, giving the impression of a dark night sky, or possibly a storm. The environment here is harsh and unforgiving. But at the top of the card, five pentacles form a half circle of light. Perhaps this light is a reminder that better times might be closer than they seem.

This card speaks to the hard times which are inevitable in the human experience: financial duress, poor health, and other disadvantages. We all have times where moving forward seems difficult. There are certain times when we are impaired or lacking to some degree. Instead of being ashamed when you struggle, be gentle with yourself. It's not useful to dwell in self pity, but it is crucial to acknowledge that your struggles are valid.

This card hints of times of scarcity, but not just in a monetary sense. There are many ways to be impoverished: sometimes, we lack physical energy, necessary resources, acceptance, societal support. This can be a difficult card, but that is when it is useful to redirect your attention to the light. Even if things seem hard now, consider that there are still ways you can support yourself and re-direct yourself towards vitality.

Five of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

The Five of Pentacles is often considered to be one of the more difficult cards in the deck. This card shows the ways that poverty and illness can cause real distress in our lives. As human beings, we like to solve problems and focus on the good. Sometimes that

approach is useful with this card, as at times this card indicates that you are focusing TOO much on scarcity and need to re-focus on opportunities for abundance. But it is also important for us to honor, and not bypass, the very real difficult situations that can be reflected in this card.

When you experience rejection and lack, it is natural to struggle. Validate and honor your difficult experiences – but don't dwell incessantly on them, and don't make them out to be worse than they actually are. We all have times when our suffering truly is of a severe magnitude, but more often than not the Five of Pentacles indicates nothing more than inevitable bumps in the road. Keep your perspective and no matter how dire things seem remember to do what you can to keep facing the light.

In the Waite-Smith depiction, this card shows two battered looking people trudging along in the snow. They are just outside of a church window – that warmth and comfort so close at hand. One way of interpreting this image could assert that the figures have been rejected from the church, but another interpretation could suggest that comfort and support is often closer than we notice.

In a reading...

This card can ask you to look at where you are experiencing deprivation. It is entirely possible that your lack is caused by an external source, but just as often we are the bearers of our own deprivation.

Are you giving yourself the support, encouragement and inner resources you need? It may also be necessary to look outside the box. The top half of the card is filled with a white light – there is goodness to seek, if we remember to place our focus there.

If you truly are in a situation largely outside of your control, this card asks you to remember that this won't last forever. Energy ebbs and flows. Hard times come and go. Do what you can, and don't forget to ask for help! Others want to see you thrive.

The Five of Pentacles may be reminding you to prioritize our spiritual wealth. It is easy to fall into a scarcity mindset, and life becomes very draining when we set up camp there. What will support you not only in a material sense, but also in a spiritual sense? It's time to choose to look towards those things. When you focus on seeing potential, you'll start to find resources in unexpected places.

Six of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: prosperity, growth

Carrie's keywords: reciprocity, giving and receiving

Six of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A white branch is absolutely flourishing, stretching and opening its way across the majority of the card. Six bright orange and yellow pentacles adorn the branches, displayed like ripe and abundant fruit.

While the Five of Pentacles showed a sense of degradation and lack, the Six of Pentacles shows the growth that can happen despite of hard times. The background of the card is dark, but even so the branch is able to flourish.

The suit of pentacles reminds us that there are multitudes of different resources. Money is certainly one, but so is time, skill, and endless other gifts. This card asks you to examine the resources you have and do not have. There is an invitation here to practice gratitude for all that you have already received. It is only through really sitting with the magnitude of what you DO have that you can create room to receive more goodness.

The Six of Pentacles can also be a reminder to give a genuine assessment to what you lack, and how that gap might be bridged. For example, if you lack time, can you delegate or reprioritize? If you lack resources, can you seek external help and support?

Likewise, this card is an invitation for you to become aware of what other people have or do not have. As humans, we are only able to truly thrive and grow into our full potential when we support each other. When you have an abundance, open yourself up to giving. When you have a lack, open yourself up to receiving.

Six of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a standing person who appears to be distributing coins to two kneeling figures, while holding a scale in his other hand. This is a very literal depiction of the notions of giving and receiving. This imagery also

highlights another facet of the Six of Pentacles, which is that the distribution of power matters.

We all have inherent personal power that cannot be stripped, but unfortunately we are not all equal when it comes to financial power, political power and so on. As such, this card can highlight the importance of acknowledging the power dynamics at work for you on a small scale in your personal life, as well as on a broader scale in society as a whole.

One of the key themes that I see in the Six of Pentacles in any deck is that of reciprocity. In some ways, this card shows a more ‘mundane’ message of the spiritual themes in the Justice card. The crux of this is that ‘what goes around, comes around.’ If you take care of someone now, you will be taken care of when you need it. If you strive to give power and dignity to others, the same will come around to you. It isn’t about giving with the expectation to receive, it’s simply about realizing that the balance of giving and receiving is a natural truth in the universe.

In a reading...

In a reading, this card often speaks to the dynamics of both giving and receiving. What do you have a whole lot of? What is ripe and juicy within you? How can you give some of that goodness to the world? When you’ve got bounty, share it! Offer words of wisdom. Lend a helping hand. Support, encourage.

And on the other hand, where could you still use a leg up? Where might you find just what you need? How can you graciously receive praise, assistance and gifts? Cultivate the belief that giving and receiving are equally noble. Some days you will be in one position, and some days you will be in the other. Learn to embody the energy of each with grace, and you’ll blossom.

Seven of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: contemplation, reward

Carrie's keywords: evaluating, planning

Seven of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Seven dark pentacles form a perfect diagonal line across the card. The background lines bring to mind two possibilities: in one view, the pentacles are lined up against a wall. In another view, the background lines represent steady energy which changes directions where it meets the pentacles.

This card speaks to those times when you've already put the initial groundwork into something (which happened in cards 1-6) and now you pause to take a look at the progress. There are times to make sure that "all of your ducks" are in a row before you take further action – this card is about those times.

The idea of direction change is something that is traditionally associated with the Seven of Pentacles. When you take stock of your situation, you may decide to proceed as you have been – or you may decide to try a varied approach. Either way, the Seven of Pentacles reminds you to pause and consider where you are (and where you want to go).

It could be useful to tap into your "type A" tendencies. Get out your planners and make some updates. Revisit your goals and break them down. Take notes on what's working and what isn't working. Reconsider where you are placing your energy. Update your to-do lists and vision boards. Ask yourself how you can infuse your goals with fresh energy.

This card also shows the importance of acknowledging how much has been achieved so far. Even if you don't yet have a full blown harvest, you'll see the fruits of your labor already taking shape if you look closely. Remember to actually NOTICE all that you've already achieved, even if you haven't yet reached your final destination. By recognizing what you've already done, you'll create a conducive environment for further accomplishments.

Seven of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a person who appears to be a gardener. He rests his head on his gardening equipment, peering out on the results of the work he's put in so far. He is already seeing some results from everything that he has done, and he knows now is the time to plan for the future. Are his crops growing well, or do they need any additional nourishment? By considering these questions, he sets the tone for a favorable outcome.

The suit of pentacles is all about the earthy, mundane, practical matters of life. The Seven of Pentacles in particular asks you to take stock of these 'mundane' areas of your life. Where are things going well, and what can you do to continue that trajectory? And on the other hand, where do you need to make some adjustments to your strategies? A bit of useful assessment can do a lot to get you where you want to go.

In a reading...

When you see the Seven of Pentacles, it can be a sign to step back and analyzing the life you are building. Have you been working diligently to create something meaningful, or have you been drifting? Are things developing in a fulfilling way, or has something gotten off track? Don't be afraid to set goals, because you can always adjust them as needed!

Get re-organized. Evaluate where things are going well and where you could use a different approach. Make a blueprint. Check in with the results of your choices, work and efforts so that you can move forward productively.

Eight of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: craftsmanship, skill

Carrie's keywords: dedication, productivity

Eight of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

An intricate, well-crafted web expands across the entirety of the card. In the Seven of Pentacles we saw the assessments being made, and in the Eight of Pentacles the actual labor is progressing. The hard-working spider who has built this web sits in the center of the card, focused on the task at hand. Four pentacles, spaced evenly and purposefully, line either side of the web.

If you are going to build a web, you need to be devoted to your craft. You need to be willing to joyfully immerse yourself in your work. For the spider, it isn't about rushing through the process to get to an end result. It is about embracing each part of the work with dedication and attention to detail.

The Eight of Pentacles is a card of down and dirty effort. In order to take the passionate energy of the wands and the emotional energy of the cups and turn it into something real, we need to be willing to, well, do the actual WORK! This is the message of the Eight of Pentacles.

Eight of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a craftsperson hard at work. He is holding a chisel and concentrating on a single pentacle, while additional pentacles line the wall next to him. He is focused on the task at hand, and dedicated to getting things done.

The Eight of Pentacles shows the ways in which being mindful is not merely a mental act. This is a card of being fully present with what you are doing in this current reality, being aware of the sights, sounds and textures that surround you. This isn't a card of simply slogging through work, it's a card of being mindfully engaged with the

process.

In a reading...

When you see this card, it is a signal to tap into your good old fashioned work ethic. The spider is not swayed by distractions, doubts or outside influences. Be like the spider – just do what you need to do without drama. If you want to build anything meaningful in your life, you need to be ceaselessly devoted to the work that it entails.

How can you deepen your craft, your practice, your awareness? What skills do you have that should be activated in your current situation? Keep learning, keep evolving, and keep doing the work you need to do.

Nine of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: happy, healthy home

Carrie's keywords: luxury. Sovereignty

Nine of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

Four feathers overlap, forming a diamond shape. In their center, nine pentacles are carefully arranged in the shape of a smaller diamond. This card is the very picture of a comfortable, plentiful nest. Everything is where it belongs, there is a sense of purpose at work. This is no accident – it is the accumulation of the labor that has been built up throughout the suit of pentacles.

The feathers give the card a sense of composure. There's a sort of quiet dignity at work within this card. It reminds you that there are times when your best approach is to be measured and modest. This isn't out of self-filtering or a lack of authenticity, but rather as an exercise in self-control.

The card's background is filled with horizontal lines. Throughout the Wild Unknown tarot, we've seen the significance of lines. These horizontal line generally suggest energy that is stable. Building this sense of stability has taken energy, but the effort is worth the sense of comfort that is embodied in this card.

The horizontal background lines are colored with red near the perimeter, which gradually fades into orange and then yellow at the center. These are the colors of grounded, earthy energy. They suggest health and vitality; as well as confidence and self-sovereignty.

This card shows the happiness that resides along the positive spectrum in the suit of pentacles. The Nine of Pentacles is sometimes traditionally associated with refinement, good taste and an enjoyment of the finer things in life. As the pentacles are invested in the material realm, this card asks you how you might feel right at home in your flesh, in your environment, in this worldly plane of existence.

It's worth noting that you get to define for yourself what a comfortable, happy life

looks like. Abundance does not have to mean millions of dollars and impeccable possessions. The Nine of Pentacles reminds you that your inner resources (as symbolized by the pentacles residing within the nest) are often even more essential to your well-being than your outer resources.

Nine of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a human figure in a lush garden. Grapes and vines grow bountifully around her, suggesting she is tapping into all of the abundance available to her. She looks like a dignified woman, someone who pays attention to the finer things in life: delicious food, sensual music, and meaningful art. She has claimed her ability to decide for herself what makes life luxurious, she has given herself the gift of building a life that suits her taste.

A falcon is perched upon her glove hand, showing that she had devoted the time and effort necessary to earn the bird's trust. This also symbolizes that she has a deep understanding of her own primal nature and is able to be discerning in how she manifests her more unruly energy. Again, this isn't about repressing aspects of her nature – it's about cultivating a healthy sense of self-control. The Nine of Pentacles reminds you that self-control is not about self-punishment, self-control can be a healthy and enjoyable art.

In a reading...

This card can ask you to consider your current relationship with your worldly pursuits. Are you satisfied with your living situation? What are you getting from the foods you're eating? Are you engaging in activities that make you feel vital and capable?

It may also be wise to consider your sense of sovereignty. Are you governing yourself wisely? Are you working effectively with the less savory aspects of your nature? Consider how you might refine the ways that you show up in the world.

Remember that you are (as we all are) a work in progress. Enjoy where you are now, and continuing the fine work of building a life that is just right for you.

Ten of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: generosity, fulfillment

Carrie's keywords: stability, establishment

Ten of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

On first glance, this card appears to only contain nine pentacles. But upon closer inspection, you'll notice the tenth pentacle resides within the center pentacle. The pentacles are arranged in a diamond pattern, not unlike the design we saw in the previous card. But this time, they are not bordered by feathers. They are open, expansive.

That center pentacle holds a particular fascination. Not only is it actually two pentacles, it is also the pinpoint of the circular rainbow energy extending throughout the card. It's always important to note when the entire color spectrum is present in a Wild Unknown card. It highlights a sense of wholeness.

The deck creator gives "generosity" as a keyword for this card. With this in mind, it is interesting to compare the imagery on this card to the Nine of Pentacles. As we noted earlier, there's no feather nesting the pentacles here. They are free to multiply, to give generously without restraint.

The tens represent the suit's energy when it is taken to its natural conclusion. The pentacles energy is all about the material world, earthly matters, the body, finances, and nature. In the Ten of Pentacles, we see the picture of grace, health, and tradition in the material world.

This card speaks to the benefit of situations that have a solid foundation. Systems have been experimented with, and things have now found some order of normalcy. What is tried and true is the order of the day.

Ten of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In the Waite-Smith tarot, this card shows a family gathered in a town square, an

old man in a colorful robe who appears to be a grandfather figure watches over his relations. This shows a sense of structure that has been passed down among generations. You are directly effected by those who came before you, just as the next generation is directly effected by you.

The Ten of Pentacles often speaks to the positive aspects of convention. Although change can be healthy and necessary, there is also something to be said for establishing traditions that serve you well. Finding an approach that works well for you is incredibly satisfying, and this card suggests that you stick to the structures that benefit you.

In a reading...

When you see this card, it may ask you to examine your relationship with fulfillment. Are you satisfied with the current structures of your life? Are you enjoying your routines? What is your definition of success, and how does that definition match up with your current reality?

Remember that no matter how finite your current situation seems, life is still dynamic. There's always room for change and growth. It is entirely possible to be expansive while also being stable. This card asks you to find that centered approach for yourself.

Daughter of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: responsible, kind

Carrie's keywords: experimenting, trusting

Daughter of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

A fawn stands on a hilltop, gazing out at her surroundings. A rainbow arches above her, and the dark lines below carry this effect to the card's bottom. A single pentacle is poised in the rainbow's center.

The fawn's legs might still be a little shaky, but she is ready to go out and make her mark. She looks out with a sense of realistic optimism. She still has much to learn, but she also has an inherent knowing that she is well equipped to succeed.

The Daughter of Pentacles is not just a planner – she is a doer! She is eager to explore her surroundings, to consider (and create) her influence on the world. She doesn't waste energy wishing she was further along. She accepts where she is, and makes the most of the resources at hand.

It is true that she is still young, and like the Fool may be a little naive. She hopes for the best and takes accepts things at face value. She is willing to offer a kind word and a helping hand to those who need it.

She's not one to be reckless, but she's also not one to overly prepare. She's interested in the process of trial and error, observing the effects that different actions produce. She has a hands on approach in all matters.

As a court card, the Daughter of Pentacles might represent you or another person in your life. Court cards show different aspects of personality, and different approaches to life. For a more detailed explanation, check out this post I wrote all about how to read court cards.

Page of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

Although the Wild Unknown has chosen to call this card 'Daughter of Pentacles,'

the most common title is 'Page of Pentacles.' The Page/Daughter is the onset of the courts, and as such can be thought of as a beginner, just getting the hang of the pentacles energy.

As pentacles are associated with the element of earth and the material realm, the Page of Pentacles is interested in learning more about this energy. This card has a child-like approach to interacting with the suit, and is open-minded in her approach. She is optimistic about learning new skills and interested in all that the physical world has to offer.

In a reading...

When you see a court card in a reading, it is often asking you to consider how you might embody the traits of that card. This card can ask you to accept where you are, use what you've got, and be resourceful. What are you currently doing that is highly effective? Keep that up! And on the other hand, where do you feel insecure? What can you do to keep building your skills and confidence?

You've still got a lot to learn, but you're always gaining useful experience. Take ownership for your own progress. Keep your heart in the right place and stay willing to grow. You've got this!

Son of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: loyal, determined

Carrie's keywords: dedicated, thorough

Son of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Son of Pentacles leans into the card, pressing forward slowly but surely. An orange crescent moon frames a pentacle above him. The background is dark, but lightens where he gazes.

The Son of Pentacles is not one to act with great haste or passion. He is purposeful and careful in all that he does. Once he has decided to move in a given direction, that is simply where he goes. He sticks the course and slugs through the mud to reach his goals. He doesn't always trust easily, but if someone does earn his trust, he stands by them without fail.

On the positive side, this attention to detail can be essential. The Son of Pentacles is thorough and has unparalleled determination to finish what he starts. On the negative side, he can fall prone to tunnel vision.

Unlike the Daughter of Pentacles, who looked out with a straightforward gaze, the Son of Pentacles is looking down at his chosen path. He is so resolute in his endeavors that he may forget to look up and assess his current surroundings. He may have a difficult time with changes and flexibility.

Knight of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

In most decks, this card is titled the Knight of Pentacles. As a court card, this card may represent an aspect of your own personality, a person in your life, or a specific approach to life.

The knight/son is the metaphoric 'teenager' of the courts. As such, he is prone to swing between extremes as he interacts with his suit's energy. For example, the Knight of Pentacles pays incredible attention to detail... but he may struggle to see the forest for

the trees, so to speak. He is committed to his path, but may become very frustrated if things don't go according to plan.

In a reading...

This card may ask you to consider how you've been approaching a given situation. It could be necessary to call upon your work ethic, your willingness to assess reality and act accordingly. If you want concrete results, you've got to take useful action. Just make sure you're not obsessing with tiny details to the detriment of seeing the big picture!

Mother of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: domestic, loving

Carrie's keywords: of service, capable

Mother of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

The Mother of Pentacles is laying down, yet she is alert. A fawn is cuddled up against her, fast asleep. The fawn can rest soundly knowing that mother is there. The Mother of Pentacles is a nurturing, generous, warmhearted figure and others are comforted by her presence.

The background is hued mainly with greens and blues, colors of earthly, terrestrial receptivity. This coloring, and the single pentacle in the upper center, suggest grounded, comforting energy. The Mother of Pentacles is someone who easily understands material concerns. She catches on quickly to the subtle roots of problems and finds tangible ways to address them.

She is adept at making use of the resources available to her. Working in the material world, she is capable of creating anything she sets out to create. She might have a keen business sense, a green thumb, or artistic prowess. In whatever way she interacts with the material world, she prioritizes being of service to others and to the planet.

There's some purple near the bottom, a color of spiritual awareness. This shows that although she is resourceful with earthly concerns, the Mother of Pentacles is also attuned with her higher awareness. She knows she is connected to all that is, and this contributes to her caring demeanor. The stable, horizontal lines show energy that is unwavering and consistent.

Queen of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks refer to this card as the Queen of Pentacles. As a court card, the Queen of Pentacles may represent a person, a personality trait, or a specific approach to life.

The tarot queens show a maturity as they radiate the energy of their suit from the inside out. The Queen of Pentacles is highly attuned to all matters of the material world. She leads by example, naturally sensing how to approach the material world, physicality, finances and all things tangible.

In a reading...

The Mother of Pentacles can ask you how her character traits are currently impacting your life. Are you attuned with your physical surroundings? Are you giving enough attention to the people, plants and animals in your life? Consider how much you are willing to give help and support to yourself and others.

This card can also highlight a need for trust. Are you keeping the promises you make to yourself? Are you taking tangible steps to improve your life and the world around you? You have the resources you need to move through any obstacles. If you're having a hard time tapping into those resources, remember it is okay to turn to others for support.

Father of Pentacles

Creator's keywords: steady, entrepreneurial

Carrie's keywords: competent, director

Father of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in the Wild Unknown

An adult male deer looks out at his surroundings. It's hard not to immediately notice his rainbow colored antlers. When the entire color spectrum shows up in a Wild Unknown card, it isn't an accident. The Father of Pentacles is complete, present and multifaceted.

Black lines emanate out, drawing towards (or originating from) the black pentacle between the father's antlers. These pulsating lines show a more dynamic energy. While the Mother of Pentacles mainly directs her energy inward (towards addressing and understanding the roots of problems), the father directs his energy outwards (he is more concerned with solutions than causes).

He is one of those rare characters who seem to be completely secure in their own worth. He stands with his head held high and a sense of pride seems to emanate from him. He would never try to hide his antlers away. He has a positive self-image (not to be confused with an overly inflated ego). He has no qualms about who he is or what he stands for.

And he has earned this healthy self-esteem. He works hard to create results. He is a competent leader; not one to just watch from afar, he wants to make a real impact on the world. He has an innate business sense. He offers support to the external world, directing others in their pursuits. But he walks his talk and works steadily to meet his own goals. Like the Mother, he is reliable and straight-forward.

King of Pentacles Tarot Card Meanings in General

Most decks call this card the King of Pentacles. As a court card, this card may draw your attention to an aspect of your personality, or the approach of someone else in

your life. For a more detailed explanation, check out this post I wrote all about how to read court cards.

As the culmination of the courts, the King is highly proficient in the energy of his suit. The King of Pentacles is a master of the material realm. I sometimes think of the King of Pentacles as a metaphoric CEO – someone who has a firm handle on all aspects of life. He is an expert at strategizing and coming up with plans, and is concerned with real-world results.

In a reading...

This card can ask you to consider how the Father of Pentacles' personality traits are playing out in your situation. Consider how consistency and reliability are being portrayed by yourself and others. If you're facing challenges, consider what competencies you've developed that could be useful. Focus on solutions and step fully into your self-worth. Accentuate what you CAN do and own your abilities!

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