



Tarot Association  
of the British Isles

# TABI NEWS

*Issue #9 23rd September 2003*

Welcome to the Autumn 2003 edition of the TABI Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy this issue, which features all the up to date news from TABI, an interview with Johanna Sherman, creator of the Sacred Rose tarot, and our first ever Tarot short story, by New York reader Michelle Swan. Our reviews for this issue are of new new book *The Tarot Courts*, by Kate Warwick-Smith, and decks *Ramses Tarot of Eternity* and *The Gothic Tarot*. Plus we have our usual range of fascinating and fun features, including how to create a deck, a tarot journal and a great cocktail...!

With best wishes,

**Shelley King**

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## CONTENTS

GREETINGS FROM TABI.....	3
PROMOTING TAROT & TABI.....	5
CONFESSIONS OF A TABI FREE READINGS MONITOR.....	6
AN A-Z OF TAROT .....	8
MIXING THE MAJORS: MOVIES, COCKTAILS AND TAROT.....	10
TAROT FICTION: A MISTY DAY .....	16
IT'S THERAPEUTIC, IT'S HOLISTIC, IT'S HEALING, IT'S FUN - IT'S <i>TAROT</i> ?!!!.....	18
FEATURED FREE READER: DARK FLOWER.....	21
MAKING YOUR OWN TAROT DECK: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE .....	25
TAROT JOURNAL .....	28
THE TABI INTERVIEW: JOANNA SHERMAN.....	32
THE ADVENTURES OF MADAME FIFIE.....	36
FEATURED SPREAD: GRIEF LAYOUT.....	39
BOOK REVIEW: THE TAROT COURT CARDS .....	40
DECK REVIEW: GOTHIC TAROT.....	44
DECK REVIEW: RAMSES TAROT OF ETERNITY .....	46
PLACES TO GO, THINGS TO DO.....	50

### *How to get the most from the newsletter*

Clicking on the page numbers in the contents table will take you directly to the page you want to view. If you want to make the text on a page look larger, please use the magnifier, or go to "View" and set the option to "Fit Visible" or the similar command that appears on your version.

### *Availability, Notification of Accuracy of TABI News*

We do our best to keep the information in TABI News up to date and accurate. If anything needs updating or correcting for future reference, please let us know. TABI News currently appears as a PDF file on the TABI website and on the databases of TABI's e-mail discussion lists. We send out notification of new issues of TABI News to reach a wide and interested audience and for each issue we endeavour to ensure that all contributors are kept informed of the release date. If you should wish to be removed from our mailing list, however, please email us at [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk)

### *Submissions*

**We welcome submissions, although as a non-profit organisation are unable to offer payment.** Please send articles, ideas or suggestions to the Editor: [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk) We wish to thank all of our writers and volunteers for their input and all of our members for their interest in TABI. Please note that article copyrights remain with the authors. The articles, reviews and information are offered for interest purposes and are not necessarily reflective of the views of or indicative of an endorsement by the Tarot Association of the British Isles.

# Greetings from TABI

The Who, What and Where...

## WHERE WE WILL BE

TABI's Endorsed Readers will be giving readings at the following events.

### **Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 October 2003**

London Halloween Festival at Queen Mary College, Mile End, London.

### **Saturday 8 November 2003**

Children of Artemis WitchFest UK at Fairfield Halls, Croydon.

### **Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 December 2003**

Herstmonceux Christmas Festival at Herstmonceux Castle, Hailsham. East Sussex.

### **Spring 2004**

Children of Artemis WitchFest Britain at Fairfield Halls, Croydon. (PROVISIONAL)

### **Saturday 12 June 2004**

Children of Artemis WitchFest Wales at Cardiff International Arena, Cardiff. Wales.

## WHAT'S NEW

TABI is currently planning a redesign of our website <http://www.tabi.org.uk> If you have any suggestions, please send them via the Editor at [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk) and please bear with us while some exciting new changes are under construction!

## WHO WE ARE

The Tarot Association of the British Isles is a primarily online community run by volunteers with a passion for tarot and the esoteric. TABI was formed in January 2001, to provide support, information and resources for UK tarotists of all levels. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced reader, you are welcome at TABI.

Our aims are to provide a supportive and friendly environment for all those interested in tarot - whether you want to study, play, provide or receive readings, or just chat and network with others of a like mind - and to promote the use of tarot as an ethical tool for guidance and self-development.

## MEMBERSHIP

In order that TABI may continue to grow and fulfill our aim of being the premier resource for UK tarotists, we have recently launched a formal membership programme. Membership of TABI costs £15 per year, and entitles you to the following:

- Membership Certificate

- TABI Keyring and Pen
- A free in-depth reading
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Opportunity to apply for Endorsed Reader status
- Free online beginners' training, in a mentored study group.
- Participation in fayres and festivals
- Invites to social events and regional meetings
- Access to advanced courses/masterclasses/workshops
- Chat groups and forums
- Discounts on TABI merchandise
- Use of TABI logo for personal website/stationery
- The chance to practice your skills and meet other like-minded people, in a fun and friendly environment

If you would like to apply, please send a blank email to: [membership@tabi.org.uk](mailto:membership@tabi.org.uk)

### **TABI SERVICES**

**Readings:** Our Free 1-3 card reading service is still proving extremely popular. To request a reading, please visit our website: <http://www.tabi.org.uk> If you would like a longer, in-depth reading, we are pleased to confirm that these are now available in return for a donation to TABI. For further details or to request a reading, please send an email to [admin.ian@tabi.org.uk](mailto:admin.ian@tabi.org.uk)

**Training:** Beginners to tarot can take our FREE training course, based on Joan Bunning's Learn the Tarot, in an online mentored study group. Upon completion of the course, students may join TABI and start working towards earning their Certificate of Endorsement. For more information, contact [trainingadmin@tabi.org.uk](mailto:trainingadmin@tabi.org.uk)

**Endorsement:** As there is no central governing body for tarot, and no qualifications, it can be difficult to know how to find a reader. Recognising this, TABI has created a system of Endorsement, whereby our readers agree to adhere to our Code of Ethics and undergo an ongoing process of mentoring to ensure that TABI readings are of a consistently high standard. For more information, contact [admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk](mailto:admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk)

**UK Readers Listing:** If you would like to promote your reading service on our site, please contact [ukreaders@tabi.org.uk](mailto:ukreaders@tabi.org.uk)

### **CONTACT US**

What would you like to see on our website or newsletter? Do you have suggestions, questions or thoughts on the subject of Tarot in general? Please feel free to get in touch with information you think may interest us, or with any questions – we'd love to hear from you!

Newsletter: - [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk)

Membership: [membership@tabi.org.uk](mailto:membership@tabi.org.uk)

Training & Endorsement: [training.admin@tabi.org.uk](mailto:training.admin@tabi.org.uk)

## Promoting Tarot & TABI

*By TABI's Events Coordinator Troy Stephens*

TABI's name and reputation is growing fast and we are receiving an increasing number of requests to present talks and workshops about all aspects of Tarot and TABI. Last August Amanda and I accepted an invitation to give a talk to the Croydon Gathering of The Children of Artemis. The Children of Artemis promote an ethical approach to Wicca, in accordance with the Wiccan Rede "An it harm none, do what you will". They present an accurate view of Wicca/Witchcraft and provide a safe method for newcomers to meet genuine and ethical covens. The Croydon Gathering was the first to be established in the UK and each monthly meeting attracts well over 60 people.

I had several weeks' notice that I would be giving the talk and so I decided to do some research about the history of the Visconti-Sforza cards. There is always something new to learn and I discovered that there are three quite separate Visconti-Sforza decks and that each deck was painted at a different time. I also found that the couple whose marriage the Visconti-Sforza might commemorate could not stand the sight of each other and that their marriage was one of convenience and mutual dislike.

In case I developed sudden memory loss I made some cards containing an outline of my talk together with a reminder of some basic details about the Tarot. (Imagine how embarrassing it would be to forget the number of major Arcana cards!)

To begin the talk, I outlined the history of the cards and spoke about some of the theories of their origins. I felt that I was on less controversial ground when I explained the difference between the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. After talking about the meanings of some of the cards I went on to describe how they are used in a spread to give a reading. To conclude, I spoke about using the cards to create a Tarot Altar and we then performed a short spell based on one taken from Janina Renee's book *Tarot Spells*. I had made colour copies of the cards needed to perform the spell, together with details of the words to be used and, luckily, they were just enough copies available for everyone to follow and take part in the spell.

Amanda then spoke about TABI and how it came to be formed and what its aims and objectives are. When she spoke about TABI's training course and the system of endorsing readers, we were pleased to see that many of the audience nodded in agreement.

After the talk we answered several questions from the audience. When we sat down I realised that we had been talking for over an hour. We then had many of people around us asking us questions about Tarot and TABI. It was good to see so many people with an interest in Tarot and I think that we recruited some new members.

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*The Croydon Gathering of The Children of Artemis meet in the upstairs bar of the Spread Eagle Pub, Katherine Street, Croydon, on the first tuesday of the month at 8:00pm.*

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# Confessions of a TABI Free Readings Monitor

*By Clare McHale [Dark Flower]*

Since becoming TABI's Free Readings Monitor, and I know who I hold responsible for that, in fact each time I try and add up some statistics I stick pins in a voodoo effigy of her, do you feel the burn yet Ribbitcat? Do ya? Where was I? Oh yes, since becoming TABI's Free Readings Monitor, my head has exploded, but nonetheless I shall endeavour, (I've been watching Morse on DVD), to bring you the latest tales from that smelting pot of all humanity that is The TABI Free Readings Zone. You may now read the following announcements to a Morse soundtrack that's dot dot dashing out an SOS to the world to save us all from the evil of Mathematics.

## **TABI Free Readers Random Raffle**

[In appreciation of the hard work the Free Readers do on behalf of the organisation]

The 1st TABI Free Readers Random Raffle (tri monthly draw), covered June, July and August of 2003. Active members of the Free Readers Team were allowed up to 5 entries per month during the competition period, and the only requirement was to post some, or all of their monthly readings to the TABI Free Readings Yahoo group for discussion or comment.

There were 50 eligible entries, all vying for a **£15 Amazon** voucher and as each reading came in it was added to an Excel spread sheet. The competition ended at midnight on the 31st of August, and a list of the entries posted to the FR group for members to double check. The Readers with the most entries were Julia and Gav, but all the Active Readers had at least 1 chance at the voucher.

On 4th September 2003 the draw was made by the Free Readings Monitor [Clare/Dark Flower - who isn't included], using a random number sum for Excel as supplied by Ania [thanks Ania :] Congratulations go to number 34 - **Julia** on winning the first ever prize in the first ever TABI Free Readers Random Raffle. Your name will go down in history ;) We hope you enjoyed that voucher! The next draw started on the 1st of September and will end on the 30th November 2003. Good luck!

On a side note I asked my new Leonardo da Vinci Tarot deck [by Iassen Ghiuselev & Atanas Atanassov], for a card that would represent the winner of the 1st Random Raffle, it came up with XI-Strength. According to the decks LWB this card represents energy, hard work, moral strength, courage, laziness, impulsiveness and weakness. Energy and hard work are phrases that definitely spring to mind when thinking of Julia, who has chalked up a whopping 22% of the total entries for the Raffle.

Before I told Julia she'd won the raffle, I asked if the Strength card had any significance for her and she said, "*The Strength card has been featuring a lot for me lately, due to an "interesting" development in my personal life - which has quite knocked me off my feet!*" Her response to finding out she'd won the raffle was slightly less mysterious, "*I don't believe it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*" *Wonderful, thank you so much!!!!!!!!!!*"

All & Sundry Sadistic Statistics

[Why Sadistic? Because it's Maths, and Maths is Evil!]

The following Sadistic Statistics cover the 3-month period June – August 2003.

**June** was a good month for Ray and the 70s.

52% of Free Readers were Active and they handled 59 requests between them.

93% of the requests were Completed and only 7% made Inactive due to circumstances beyond our control.

18% were posted to the Free Readers Yahoo list for discussion.

Amongst the Completed Readings, requests from men added up to only 9% of the total, with a whooping 91% from women.

The main culprits for Inactive reading requests in June were men at 75%, but our **TOP READER** stepped up to save the day. **Ray** did 33% of the Completed Readings and redeemed men's reputations in the process. The men of Earth salute you Ray! Thanks ;)

And just for the heck of it: 39% of requests were from people born in the 1970s; 11% specifically mentioned the word Future; 18% the word Love and; our largest reading request was 135 words long.

In **July** and **August** part of the database was on the fritz, so I couldn't go insane with dubious statistics, but apparently... ;) **July** saw 52% of the Free Readers Active. 91% of those posted at least one reading to the FR Yahoo list, and one Inactive Reader also posted to make up a grand total of 30 for the month. 3 times as many as June!

**August** saw a drop of 9% in Active Readers, no I didn't go insane and lock them in a dark dank cellar, but it was a close run thing! If it hadn't been for the heat, August would've continued the increase in posted readings, but after a slow start to the month the 43% of Active Readers [and 1 Inactive Reader], got the total up to 28 with only 3 requests having to be made Inactive!

Our **Top Reader** for **July and August** was **Julia** (yes, the same one who won the 1<sup>st</sup> Random Raffle), with a whopping 22 posted readings to her credit - Thanks Julia, you can get off the treadmill now I've put the whip away. No wait a minute, you got a voucher, that should be thanks enough. Get back on that treadmill! ;)

Thanks for your Time and Beware the Moon, or at least this section of the next Newsletter, which will have more of the same from The TABI Free Readings Zone.

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*Would you like to join Clare's Crazy Crew, otherwise known as TABI's Free Readers, and earn yourself a chance at that £15 Amazon voucher? For information and instructions, send a blank email to [reading@tabi.org.uk](mailto:reading@tabi.org.uk)*

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## An A-Z of Tarot

Our continuing journey...

### *D is for... Decks*

*By Ian Stevens*

There is, and essentially there has only ever been, one Tarot deck. A tarot deck consists of seventy eight cards split into two Arcana which means secret remedy or elixir, or possibly just secret or mystery.

There are twenty two Major Arcana cards, said to represent the Jungian Archetypes. The fifteenth century creators of the Italian game Tarocchi which is said to be the original purpose of the cards would not have heard of Karl Jung however as he wasn't born until five hundred years later, it's also doubtful if they had heard of archetypes.

Precisely what the original intended symbolism of the Majors was is a matter of some debate, try keying in "history of Tarot" to Google and see how many different versions you come up with.

The rest of the deck is made up of fifty-six cards known as the Minor Arcana, these are split into four suits with four court cards and ten pip cards per suit, not dissimilar to standard playing cards, which are precisely what the cards of the Minor Arcana were. It is possible that all 78 cards were designed as a set but it's more likely that they were originally separate and came together sometime in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Visconzi-Sforza deck created in the mid fifteenth century survives almost intact and has all the Majors and Minors present.

What is pretty certain is that the cards were not originally designed or used for any other purpose than for playing card games.

It was not until the eighteenth century that they started to be used for divination. Scholars of the occult began to see mystical meaning in the Majors and to invest similar properties to the courts and pip cards, which at that stage were just that, representations of the appropriate number of the four suits.

They had good reason for their interest; the twenty-two cards in the major Arcana correspond to the sum of the signs of the astrological Zodiac and the ten planets of an astrology chart. The number twenty two also corresponds to the twenty two paths of the Kabala, a fact that could well have been known to the original designers, even if they hadn't heard of Jung. The interesting thing about the astrological connection is that in the fifteenth century, and even the eighteenth century there were only five planets, plus the Sun and the Moon, that were recognised. Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were yet to be discovered, yet there were three slots in the Major Arcana sitting there waiting to accept them. The full ten planets also fit very neatly into the ten sephiroth (spheres) of the Tree of Life (Kabala). Spooky or what, or maybe just a coincidence, either way it struck chords with the occultists of the eighteenth century and has done so ever since.

So for the next two hundred years Tarot cards were being used for divination, yet there was still only one standard deck. The Majors and the courts were traditional stylized images, different artists would alter them in detail but they were essentially the same. The pip cards had no images at all but showed the requisite number of Swords, Cups or whatever in the same way that playing cards show hearts or diamonds. There is no reason why it should not have remained this way forever, after all Tarot cards are only a means to focus the readers intuition or psychic abilities, it doesn't matter what's on the cards as long as each card can be linked to an area of the human psyche and thus given meaning does it?

Although some decks such as the Tarot of the Master had started to include some symbolism on the Minors it was Arthur Edward Waite and Pamela Coleman Smith who started the rot by drawing pictures on the pip cards of the minor Arcana. Published in 1909 the deck proved very popular, people found meaning and symbolism in the images, some of it intentional and perhaps more importantly some of it the product of their own intuition and imagination. This became the Tarot standard for the next few decades and began to spawn imitations or clones. It soon became obvious that there was another attraction of having artwork on all the cards, apart from their symbolism and meaning as tools of divination they became nice things to have and desirable pieces of art in their own right. There was of course no reason to copy the precise symbolism chosen by Waite and decks began to appear that bore no resemblance to Waite and Coleman-Smith's original, while the interpretations of their deck became ever more imaginative.

Over the years the number and variety of Tarot decks increased and in the last few years there has been a positive explosion in the number of decks being published. The internet has played it's part in this providing a free(ish) and easy publicity machine for any aspiring deck designer. There's now a bewildering array of different tarot decks, decks for all occasions and all seasons, there's big ones, small ones, traditional ones, scary ones, sexy ones, beautiful ones, bright ones, dark ones, humorous ones and some downright ugly ones. This has created the phenomenon of the deck collector, people with dozens or hundreds of decks that are stored away like rare stamps and which may never be divined over or see a Celtic Cross in their life.

The decks continue to proliferate so there is now a deck for every interest and proclivity, bounded only by what is legal and considered not to be too tasteless. You can already get the Alcohol Tarot and Erotic Tarot, I predict that in the next year or two we will see the SM Tarot (Judgment, The Hanged man and Justice are tailor made), but maybe we will have to wait a bit longer for the Arsonist Tarot and the Serial Killer Tarot. Also the big corporations are including Tarot decks in their merchandising so we have Star Trek Tarot, Star Wars Tarot and Lord of the Rings Tarot, calculated exploitation if you ask me.

Yet, the Lord of the Rings Tarot is actually quite attractive and the idea of an SM Tarot would probably bring a smile to most peoples faces, so perhaps it's a good thing that Tarot is no longer considered a dark and disreputable art and that it can be open, popular and above all, fun. And anyway without all the decks to talk about UKTarotTalk would be a very quiet list indeed.

# Mixing the Majors: Movies, Cocktails and Tarot

*By Clare McHale*

Put your feet up and grab a glass for the first part of our feature, from the Fool to The Chariot! Part 2 next issue...

If the Major Arcana are archetypal images from the human community, then it's not much of a stretch to apply some of their associations to the silver screen, and the many, many drinks held aloft on it. And who knows, maybe the drink associated with your Personality card will turn out to be your tippie of choice in the future; but if you decide to work your way through the whole selection, pace yourself, as there are no plans for an article on Major Arcana hangover cures!

In this article the choice of movie and drink parings come from 'Hollywood Cocktails' by Tobias Steed and Ben Reed. The choice of Tarot cards is down to me, so feel free to dive in and shuffle, shake, and stir your way to some fun Tarot recipes of your own.

## *0 The Fool*

A **Zombie** for breakfast? If you're the youthful Holly Golightly the drink fits the time and the card, or rather the movie. 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' (1961) stars the lovely Audrey Hepburn as the free spirited lead character, whose past is less than happy, but who's determined to live for the moment, flitting like a brightly coloured butterfly from party to party, man to man, very much footloose and fancy free – for now.

**Zombie Ingredients:** 20ml light Rum, 20ml Golden Rum, 20ml Jamaican Rum, 20ml over-proof Rum, fresh lime juice, fresh passion-fruit juice, fresh pineapple juice, sugar syrup. Pour first 3 rums into cocktail shaker, add large dash lime juice, 2 large dashes each of passion-fruit and pineapple juice, dash of sugar, shake quickly, strain into Highball glass full of ice, then float measure of over-proof rum on top and add a garnish if desired.

*See note at end of article for Sugar Syrup recipe.*

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Fool:

- The Buck, created during prohibition [1½ oz Brandy, 1oz lemon juice, ¾ oz crème de menthe, ginger ale, a few seedless grapes]
- Shirley Temple (mocktail - no alcohol) [A dash of grenadine in a large champagne glass full of 7-Up or ginger ale, decorated with cherries.]
- Fancy Free [1½ oz of rye, dashes of maraschino, dash of orange bitters, dash of Angostura bitters]

### **1 The Magician**

The devotion, charisma, resourcefulness and creative mind of the Magician sits well on Cary Grant as C K Dexter Haven in 'The Philadelphia Story' (1940), as the ex husband of spoilt socialite Tracy Lord (Katherine Hepburn), and Dexter skilfully manipulates all and sundry with a charming smile, in his efforts to win back his ex-wife, aided and abetted by his partner in crime, Tracy's younger sister.

And the movies drink of choice is the **Kir Royale** definitely sounds as if it fits the top-notch cast, including James Stewart and Elizabeth Imbrie as society reporters intent on dishing the dirt.

**Kir Royale Ingredients:** 10ml Crème de Cassis, dry Champagne  
Pour crème de cassis into Champagne flute, fill slowly with chilled dry Champagne.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Magician:

- Blue Blazer, described as a spectacular and very difficult to serve and drink, a challenge worthy of the Magician? [1 teaspoon or more sugar (or 1 tablespoon honey), 4 oz warmed Scotch, twist of lemon peel or grated nutmeg] – this drink involves lots of boiling and dissolving.
- Black Magic [2 oz vodka, 1 oz Tia Maria, dash lemon juice]
- Fascinator [2 oz dry gin, 1 oz dry vermouth, 2 dashes pastis, sprig mint]
- Pastis - aniseed flavoured French liqueur.

### **2 The High Priestess**

'All About Eve' (1950) encompasses the dark side of the High Priestess, the obsession of Eve, played by Anne Baxter, to become a movie star, her passive aggressive campaign to use and manipulate successful actress Margo Channing, played by the wonderful Bette Davis, and the shallowness of the whole back stabbing Broadway scene as portrayed throughout the film. The whole thing leaves you gasping for that Martini variation the **Gibson**.

On a side note the Gibson is thought to be named after Charles Dana Gibson who created the first American glamour girl, named strangely enough, the Gibson Girl, and if our High Priestess isn't a Gibson Girl I don't know who is.

**Gibson Ingredients:** 50 ml gin or vodka, dry vermouth, a pearl cocktail onion.  
Fill mixing glass with ice, pour in few drops dry vermouth, stir until the ice is coated with vermouth, strain off liquid and top up mixing glass with more ice, add gin, stir until the glass frosts then pour into a Martini glass with or without ice and garnish with the onion.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the High Priestess:

- The White Lady, a deceptively virginal cocktail created during Prohibition, it may have originated in Paris [generous 2 oz of gin, ½ to ¼ lemon juice, ¼ oz triple sec, ½ egg white]
- Leave it to Me, [1 oz London Dry or Plymouth gin, ½ oz dry vermouth, ½ oz apricot brandy, dash of grenadine, dash of lemon juice]
- Shady Lady [3 oz tequila, 1 oz cranberry juice, 1 oz apple brandy, 4 dashes fresh lime juice]

### **3 The Empress**

David Niven as the main character in ‘My Man Godfrey’ (1957) might seem a bit of a stretch for the Empress card, but when this undercover Austrian Count becomes butler to the Bullock family, he spends most of his time looking after the demanding group, as well as falling in love with one of the daughters, Irene, played by June Allyson.

Nurturing and loyal, with a strong sense of family, and already Godfrey is fitting the bill, put that with the lethargy, abundance and gluttony of the Bullock family, and is it any wonder that the aristocratic butler is helping himself to the odd tray of **Vodka Martinis!**

**Vodka Martini Ingredients:** 50ml vodka, dry vermouth, 1 green olive or lemon zest

Add 2 drops of vermouth into mixing glass full of ice, stir gently, strain excess liquid, add more ice, vodka, stir again, when mixing glass has frosted strain into chilled Martini glass, garnish with strip of lemon zest of green olive.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Empress:

- Diana [2 oz white crème de menthe, or peppermint schnapps, 2-3 teaspoons cognac]
- Green Lady, [1/2 oz green Chartreuse, ½ yellow Chartreuse, ¼ oz lime juice, 1 ½ oz London Dry gin, sliver of lime] - French
- The Shrub, based on an old English idea of soaking fruit [2 quarts Jamaica rum or brandy, 1 pint (or less) lemon juice, grated rind of 2 to 3 lemons, 2 lb (4 cups) sugar]

### **4 The Emperor**

Anyone for a **Dry Martini**? The book of ‘Hollywood Cocktails’ links this stylish drink with the movie ‘After Office Hours’ (1935), and with Clarke Gable, the “King of Hollywood”, as it’s star, it seems a fitting match for the Emperor. That and a rather tenuous secondary link with ‘Gone with the Wind’ (See the Tower), scarlet and red are colours associated with the Emperor.

The ram is also associated with the Emperor and is a rather fitting connection to Gable, who was a bit of a hell raiser in his time, though I’m not sure where the stars bad breath comes into the equation. You can’t deny he was a Hollywood powerhouse, with ambition, authority, strength and maybe a dash of ruthlessness thrown in, and many of his screen characters were charming cynics, sound familiar yet?

**Dry Martini Ingredients:** 50ml Gin; Dry Vermouth; 1 Green Olive or Lemon; Zest.

2 drops vermouth into ice filled mixing glass, stir, strain excess liquid, add more ice, gin, stir again, when glass frosts strain into chilled martini glass, garnish with lemon zest or green olive.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Emperor:

- El Presidente [2 oz rum, 1 oz fresh lime juice, 1 oz curacao, dash Angostura bitters]
- The Kir, a French aperitif, [teaspoon or less of crème de cassis, chilled white burgundy], named after the wartime mayor of Dijon, a left wing politician.
- Alexander [2 oz dry gin, 1 oz crème de menthe, 1 oz fresh single cream]

### **5 The Hierophant**

For a tale of sacrifice, mercy and morality you can't do much better than the old favourite, 'Casablanca' (1942). Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine helps old flame Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman), save refugees and the resistance movement from the hypocrisy and rigid conformity of the Nazis, all the while denying the passion and history between them, because Ilsa is now married, and their love must be sacrificed for a higher cause.

Dooley Wilson as Sam provides a backdrop to the **Champagne cocktails** as Rick and Ilsa share a poignant toast to simpler times.

**Champagne Cocktail Ingredients:** Dry Champagne, 25ml brandy, 1 white sugar cube, Angostura Bitters. Liberally douse a sugar cube in Angostura bitters, place in Champagne flute, add brandy, top up slowly with Champagne.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Hierophant are:

- The Bishop [1 large orange, 12 cloves, 1 quart inexpensive port, 1 tablespoon honey, 1 teaspoon allspice (optional), a few dashes of cognac]
- Old Fashioned [2 teaspoons sugar syrup, 3 dashes of bitters, 1 ½ oz rye, twist of lemon, slice of orange]
- Church Parade [2 oz dry gin, 1 oz dry vermouth, 1 oz orange juice, dash orange bitters]

*See note at end of article for Sugar Syrup recipe.*

## **6 The Lovers**

Is a perfect card for the ‘**Knickerbocker**’, another version of that old Hollywood favourite the Martini. This drink mixes opposites, dry and sweet vermouth and is a favourite tippie of William Powell and Myrna Loy as the married crime-busting duo Nick and Nora, the main characters in ‘The Thin Man’ (1934), who banter their way to solving a murder between drinks.

The Lovers star sign is Gemini, yin and yang, duality, opposites yet one, and the musical note D, underlines the measurements needed to mix the perfect blend.

**Knickerbocker Ingredients:** 50ml Gin; Large dash of dry vermouth; small dash sweet vermouth. Add gin and both vermouths to mixing glass full of ice, mix well, strain into frosted Martini glass.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Lovers are:

- ‘Sex on the Beach’ [2 oz vodka, 1 oz peach schnapps/brandy, 2 oz dash blackberry liqueur (optional), 2 oz cranberry juice, 1 oz orange juice, 1 oz pineapple juice]
- Sloe Comfortable Screw’ [2oz vodka, ½ oz sloe gin, ½ Southern Comfort, 4 oz orange juice]
- ‘Grand Passion’ [2 oz gin, 1 oz passion-fruit juice, dashes of Angostura or peach litters]

## **7 The Chariot**

Claudette Colbert as Ellie Andrews in ‘It Happened One Night’ (1934) epitomises the forward motion, resourcefulness and hasty decision making that can characterise the Chariot. As a spoilt heiress, Colbert manages to escape from the confines of her father’s yacht determined to rush headlong into an unsuitable marriage, but on her trip she samples at least one ‘**White Lady**’ and meets the dashing and dynamic reporter Peter Warne, played by Clarke Gable, who recognises a great story when he sees one, and tags along for more than just a bus ride.

**White Lady Ingredients:** 50ml gin, fresh lemon juice, triple sec, egg white (a Pink Lady needs an extra dash of gin and grenadine).

Mix gin with large dash of lemon juice, dash triple sec, and egg white. Shake in cocktail shaker and strain into frosted martini glass.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Chariot are:

- Sidecar [2 oz cognac or armagnac, ½ oz lemon juice, ¼ Cointreau, twist of lemon peel]
- Golden Cadillac [1 oz Galliano, ½ oz white crème de cacao, 1 oz double (heavy) cream]
- Horses Neck [2 ½ oz bourbon or rye, ginger ale, peel of a lemon, cut in a continuous spiral]

### **Sources of Information:**

Hollywood Cocktails by Tobias Steed with cocktail recipes by Ben Reed  
ISBN 1-84000-199-2

Cosmic Tarot by Jean Huets, ISBN 0-88079-699-5

Bar & Cocktail Book by Michael Jackson, ISBN 1-84000-563-7

Tarot for Yourself by Mary K Greer, ISBN 1-56414-588-3

The Wordsworth Ultimate Cocktail Book by Ned Halley, ISBN 1-85326-762-7

### **Thanks to:**

TABI members Ribbitcat, Diana, Shelley and Bethan and my younger brother for the loan of the great cocktail books.

### **Other Cocktail Resources:**

\*Cocktail.com - large collection of cocktail recipes.

<http://www.cocktail.com/>

\*DrinkBoy: Adventures in Cocktails

<http://www.drinkboy.com/>

\*Cocktails and Beer resources at About.com

<http://cocktails.about.com/>

\*About.com's Cocktails Resources A-Z list

<http://cocktails.about.com/library/blatoz.htm>

\*Bols Cocktails - Over 10, 000 Cocktails Online

<http://www.bolscocktails.com/>

\*MisterLUCKY: Cocktails

[http://www.mrlucky.com/html/b\\_cocktails.htm](http://www.mrlucky.com/html/b_cocktails.htm)

\*The Webtender - An Online Bartender

<http://www.webtender.com/>

\*BarDrinks - Welcome to your party place ....

<http://www.bardrinks.com/>

\*Martiniware.com - everything to make the perfect Martini

<http://www.martiniware.com/>

\*LUPEC: Dismantling the Patriarchy One Drink at a Time

<http://www.lupec.org/>

## Tarot Fiction: A Misty Day

*By Michelle Swan*

TABI's first foray into tarot fiction...

The quiet Saturday had begun with a boundless blue-sky day. Without warning, a mist settled over the sky blocking out the sun. I loved gray days as much a sunny days, so I continued my walk to Pelham Bay Park.

As I walked, dreaminess took over me as my golden sandals touched the dewy grass. Hoof beats came from behind yet with the mist I could see nothing. The park has riders from the nearby stables, so I kept walking. I noticed the hoof beats still behind me instead of moving away. My instincts made me stop and stand my ground. Out of the mist came a magnificent ebony horse with a rider dressed in a fine silk black cloak and hood.

I should have been scared yet strangely I wasn't. The rider stopped and got off the horse. The rider is standing a few feet away. I still could see no features. The rider pulled of the hood revealing a skeleton. I couldn't move as my mind scattered into a thousand pieces.

"Don't be afraid" came a rich masculine voice from the skeleton.

He outreached his bony hands and butterflies came fluttering around me. They're colors as vast the rainbows. Their gentleness and beauty calmed my fear down.

"Come with me, Michelle"

"How do you know me?"

"I'm Death. Much is known to me."

"Look, I'm not ready. I have...."

A deep rich laughter came from him. "Just because you see me doesn't mean, I'm here for you. I want to show you something." Death turned to his horse. "Shadow, stay here."

Death looked back at me. "Come along, time in not my ally here."

Death walked past me then turned to me still rooted to the ground. "Shell" he said using my nickname.

Running from Death is a futile exercise. So, I had no choice to follow, I walked right by his side. As I did, I noticed the world around us begin to blur. I looked down at my toes now surrounded by warm white sand and my skin feeling the warmth of the sun.

"How?"

"This is his paradise." He looked down at the golden watch on his left wrist bone. The idea of Death having a watch made me smile.

He noticed my smile. "Carrying a hourglass is heavy. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I like to be hip. Now go, he's waiting for you. Not much time" He shooed me away with his arms. "Go on, Shell. He's right there by the shore."

A man with his back to me is sitting where the white sands meets the crystal clear water. As I walked closer, the man turned around. There staring back at me is my own face now masculine.

"Dad?"

I had never seen my father so young and carefree.

"Michelle, Michelle"

My father hugged me fiercely. My tears flowed like a waterfall. He had been dead for a year and half now. I had never had my goodbye because I had learned of his death after he had been buried.

My father and I sat on the shore with our hands linked talking. All too soon I heard Death cleared his throat. We both looked at him.

"I guess I have to go back."

I didn't want to leave my father; I wanted to stay with him. He tilted my chin up to meet his eyes.

"It's not your time. You have a whole life waiting for you. Know that I'm always close by."

My voice trembled out "I will".

I hugged and kissed my father one last time. I brushed the sand from my legs and walked to Death. I took one last look back and my father waved at me. Death put his arm around me in comfort, as we walked away. The beach faded away and in no time I'm back at the park.

"Thank you. I needed to see him."

"I know he regretted not saying goodbye. It's only temporary, one day you'll be together. Remember, they can see you, even if you can't see them." Death whistled and Shadow came running out. "Until we meet again, Michelle."

"Goodbye."

Death and Shadow went riding off into the mist. I headed for home with a smile on my tear stained face.

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*Michelle Swan is an actor and Tarot reader from The Bronx, New York. She has been a devoted lover of Tarot for over four years. A new overseas member of TABI, she is happy to submit what will be hopefully the first of many more writings to the newsletter. Michelle can be reached at [JettSwan@aol.com](mailto:JettSwan@aol.com)*

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# IT'S THERAPEUTIC, IT'S HOLISTIC, IT'S HEALING, IT'S FUN - IT'S TAROT?!!!

*By Julia Clasby*

Think of the word “Tarot” and what sort of images spring immediately to mind? A curtained booth at the end of the pier, perhaps, wherein sits a swarthy, romantic Gypsy with golden earring, twinkling eyes and a ready invitation to look into the future and unlock the secrets of your destiny? Or maybe a sympathetic, homely clairvoyant, who unearths all manner of unknowable facts about your past, present and future over a cup of tea and biscuits in her cosy parlour, simply by laying the cards? How about a slick, “psychic” showman, whose stunning insights turn out to be nothing more prosaic than well-practised cold reading, using Tarot cards merely as props? Or an evil, terrifying dabbler in the occult, casting wicked spells and calling upon negative forces to help with his malevolent plans?

Whatever image the word Tarot *does* evoke, chances are it won't involve very much positive, empowering, or of relevance to the everyday world (let alone sheer fun!) – for instance, an ordinary man or woman using the cards because they've recognised the value of honing their *own* intuition and consulting their *own* Inner Wisdom when confronted with a choice, a challenge or a “fork in the road”; or exploring the Tarot because they are interested in personal growth and development, and wish to gain greater insight about themselves and their direction in life; or simply choosing a card with a particular theme as a focus during meditation. Yet, for decades now, these are just a few of the positive, practical everyday uses which people worldwide, in all walks of life, have recognised the Tarot is ideally suited to!

Now, this is not as “faddy” or plain off-the-wall as you may think....

## About intuition

Intuition (aka gut instinct, a hunch, “just knowing”) is a valuable gift that we're all born with – it's like our own highly personal interpreter or assistant, a bridge between our conscious and unconscious minds enabling us to access direct knowledge or “Inner Wisdom” without rational thought. Indeed, there exist a wide variety of workshops, classes, seminars, books and guides offering to help us recognise, awaken and hone our intuitive powers for greater achievement in all areas of our life, such as career, relationships, personal growth and development, etc etc (books include “Intuition” by Gina Giacomini, lecturer, author, seminar conductor; “The Executive Mystic” by Barrie Dolnick, founder of a consulting company which assists individuals and corporate clients; “Intuitive Healing” by Dr Judith Orloff, MD, psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry at UCLA, to name but three). Research has even identified using intuition as being one of the key attributes of “lucky” people (ref. *The Luck Project* undertaken by Dr Richard Wiseman).

Tarot cards communicate with us in the ancient language of pictures, symbols, feelings and senses – pictures and symbols are also the language of the unconscious mind (think of the subject

of dreams and their interpretation/ symbology, for instance). By interacting with the cards, we can activate and hone our intuition, helping us expand our awareness and insight, and so make decisions with greater clarity and foresight.

### **About Psychology and Tarot**

Authors, teachers, therapists, psychologists/analysts (from the eminent C G Jung himself through rather less famous explorers of the human mind) spanning many years up to the present, have contributed a wealth of ideas and literature considering how the symbolic/archetypal images of the Tarot may be linked in with modern psychology, broad-spectrum theories of personality development, etc, and demonstrating how valuable a therapeutic, empowering, even healing tool Tarot cards can be (with a little help from synchronicity, too!).

By way of illustration, a token selection of published titles follows - their authors are, I think, people whom it would be difficult for even the most hardened sceptic to dismiss as lightweight, uninformed pedlars of nonsense!:-

- “*Personality, Divination and the Tarot*” by Carl Sargent (past teacher of specialist psychological subjects at the University of Cambridge, author and journalist in the fields of science, Western medicine and the psychology of fantasy, who suggests the Tarot is a “super-theory” of personality and a “powerful tool for understanding ourselves”);
- “*Tarot Therapy*” by Jan Woudhuysen (therapist and lecturer on Tarot worldwide);
- “*Tarot and Psychology - Spectrums of Possibility*” by A Rosengarten, Ph.D (licensed clinical psychologist, Tarot practitioner and continuing education workshop leader for psychologists and other helping professionals);
- “*The Way of the Tarot*” by K Hamaker-Zondag (founding member of a school of Jungian psychology, counsellor and lecturer);
- “*Tarot for the Healing Heart – Using Inner Wisdom to Heal Body and Mind*“ by Christine Jette (registered nurse holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, healer, professional Tarot consultant and teacher);
- “*Personal Development with the Tarot*” by C Summers and J Vayne (Tarot experts, writing from a Jungian angle);
- “*Strategic Intuition for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*” by James Wanless, Ph.D (author, pioneer of new thinking for organisational and personal transformation, motivation and empowerment, speaker, counsellor and trainer throughout the world on the art and strategy of designing the future).

In addition, I think the enduring popularity of the cards, together with the fact that there exist hundreds, if not thousands of publications devoted to using them in very positive, healing, spiritual ways (not forgetting that there are currently more decks than ever, with a huge variety of wonderful designs and themes from which to choose) surely reflect an awareness and appreciation among people everywhere of the Tarot’s versatile, pleasant and practical nature, and

its usefulness as a tool of self-knowledge and self-empowerment. Personally, I have found it a fascinating and invaluable aid in my work as Women's Stress Practitioner/Therapeutic Counsellor and Gestalt Tarot Consultant.

### **Where it all went wrong - ?**

So how has something apparently having such positive potential, earned such a negative reputation? Well, I believe the answer is twofold. Firstly, Tarot cards have been put to some rather unfortunate (mis)uses over the years, by all sorts of dubious individuals often having less than positive motives, and/or little credibility, and/or even less honesty. Since bad news or scandal tends to attract more attention and imprint upon our memory banks somewhat more thoroughly than good, it was probably inevitable that the Tarot would eventually come to be associated with con-artistry, bunkum and "evil doings". Consequently, the mere mention of that simple, five letter T-word nowadays often incites ridicule, hostility, scorn, terror, not to mention sheer disbelief that any half rational person could find a use for such nonsense! As the old saying goes: mud sticks.....

Secondly, I feel the Tarot itself has unfortunately been confused with the *uses* to which it's been put by aforesaid dubious individuals. Simply stated, it is a deck comprising (usually) 78 pieces of card, bearing on one side symbolic/picture images (often exquisitely designed and executed), and on the reverse, a decorative pattern. Now, the Tarot is really no different to any other object insofar as it is neither good nor bad *in and of itself* – it is the *use to which somebody puts the object* which determines whether it will have a positive or negative effect. Just as a hammer is a useful and helpful tool when used by a carpenter to knock in or extract nails, yet becomes a dangerous weapon when used in a threatening way by one individual against another, so the Tarot exists and can be put to either good use or bad - but it cannot reasonably be said to be *responsible* for how someone chooses to use it!

Notwithstanding the above, of course, it is undeniably true that a Tarot deck *can* be used purely for playing various card games, or for "fortune-telling" - which were, in fact, the two prime uses up until about the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when the cards were diverted to a third, ie. the more occult, esoteric use with which many people still associate them today – just as an encyclopaedia, for example, can quite easily be used for the purposes of bibliomancy or propping open a door! But to the many seekers, healers, counsellors and complementary therapists, myself included, who have worked with the cards and experienced for themselves the remarkable ability of those mystical, symbolic/archetypal images to exercise and develop the intuition and help provide greater insight, awareness and depth of understanding about whatever it is that's being considered, and who recognise and wish to share with others through their work such a "gift", the original or intended purpose of the cards is somewhat irrelevant; the fact is, they seem to "work" admirably when used as a tool to help individuals connect with their Inner Wisdom/Higher Self. Confining the use of Tarot to *only* the mundane or frivolous may appear tantamount to harnessing a thoroughbred to a rag and bone cart!

## Featured Free Reader: Dark Flower

Meet TABI's regular Free Readers...

### **Real Name/Reading Name**

Clare [Dark Flower on the TABI lists]

### **Area**

North East England near Durham City

### **Age**

32 in October

### **Non-tarot occupation**

None due to illness (ME/CFS)

### **Spiritual leanings**

None, I'm not religious at all, though do like the respect shown for people and the planet in Wicca and Paganism.

### **Astrological aspects ie sun/moon/whatever signs and how you think this affects your tarot approach:**

This is good timing, I'm working through TABI member Mick's posts on Astrology in the TABI forum <http://www.tabi.org.uk/forums/viewforum.php?forum=18&107>

Sun – Scorpio

Moon - Capricorn

Ascendant: Libra

Apart from the fact that I like to know everything and can keep a secret, I don't think it effects me, but it's interesting to learn more about it and to find how spooky the card/star sign meanings can be at times in relation to your life.

### **How long have you been involved with tarot?**

I've been involved with Tarot seriously since I took the TABI free training course near the end of 2001, before that I'd had a couple of general Tarot readings at a professional's home. They were interesting, but dissatisfying, as they didn't really connect with how my life was at the time, more how it could have been, and of course, I wanted to know the whys and wherefores of the cards, but it was a vague interest until the 2001 compulsion.

### **What drew you to it?**

Curiosity, mystery, art, adaptability, helping people, and later the great Tarot community I discovered online. A lot of things really, I just felt compelled to investigate more at that particular time, (late 2001) and once I started, and stumbled across Aecletic.net and TABI, I was hooked!

### **Do you read for yourself?**

Yes, I try to read for myself sometimes. Not so much at the moment though as I'm concentrating on being the Free Readings Monitor and doing my required reading per month ☺ Plus real life gets in the way a bit and I have a home study course on the go. I like looking at cards that are related to me in some way, so the Astrology thread is great fun and I now have a lot of cards to look at and consider from my birth date and star sign associations.

### **First deck? Why did you choose it?**

My first deck was the Robin Wood Tarot, I searched and searched to find an appealing deck that wasn't covered with religious associations in one way or another, and I came across a review for the Robin Wood Tarot deck on <http://www.dooyoo.co.uk/> I think, where it specifically said that the deck could be used by anyone, even though the creator is Pagan herself, so I investigated further and loved a lot of the artwork.

I got it cheap from Amazon zshops too ☺ I was, and am happy with the Robin Wood Tarot, as I really wanted a deck that could be used by someone who wasn't religious, it seemed important at the time, I got the idea stuck in my head and it wouldn't let go, so I'm lucky I found it!

Now I buy decks that appeal to me in some way, artwork is usually the first draw, and I don't worry so much about the religious affiliations. We bring our own perspective to the artwork and readings, and if we respect the artist's intentions and beliefs, then there's no disrespect involved using a deck from another religion.

<http://www.robinwood.com/>

<http://www.cafeshops.com/robinwoodent>

### **How many decks do you have now?**

Crikey, not as many as I'd like! I'm waiting on the Leonardo Tarot at the moment, Amazons taking their own sweet time about getting it for me! I have about 10 decks, but work mostly with my Robin Wood as I still consider myself a Tarot baby. I'm trying to restrain myself, I'm getting almost as bad about collecting Tarot decks as I am with books and if that happens I'm going to have to start sleeping downstairs so they can have the bedroom!

### **Fave deck(s)? Why?**

Robin Wood – first deck, nice artwork for the most part, though don't like the overly cute baby/sun card so much. I preferred it to the Rider Waite, the Fools a bit camp in that deck ☺

Victoria Regina, great greyscale artwork that captures the imagination, excellent collage deck by Sarah Ovenall. <http://www.thefool.com/> It also gives me real hope that one day I'll be able to make my own Tarot deck!

Cosmic Tarot by Norbert Losche, <http://norberthlosche.claremc.co.uk> (my site), again the artwork and lack of symbols, some of the cards are pretty standard, but others are lovely, for example the High Priestess.

I like dark art too, so the Vampire Tarot by Nathalie Hertz is fun, though could be darker, but whenever I see a Vampire deck I always think they go for the obvious Death image, some sort of skeletal vampire or tomb. Death is about transformation and surely becoming a Vampire is a transition and a half, so why not show that becoming instead of literally death? One of life's little puzzles ☺

At the moment I'm fancying the Gothic Tarot

<http://monolithgraphics.com/pages/tarot.html>

[http://www.illuminationtarot.com/insights/gothic\\_tarot.html](http://www.illuminationtarot.com/insights/gothic_tarot.html) [one of my fav Tarot sites]

<http://www.cards4magic.co.uk>

### **Most used deck for public readings, if different? Why?**

I don't do public readings as yet. I would like to at some point way in the future and will hopefully by then be able to take a few different decks and use them with confidence. The Robin Wood Tarot would be amongst them.

I'd love to just shock the he\*\* out of one of those Seekers that's only asking you a question as a test, with a really dark and evil looking deck ☺

### **Fave tarot book and/or author?**

So far I only have a few books, but like Mary K Greer's writing style, A T Mann, Jean Huets book on the Cosmic Tarot, Sarah Ovenall's companion book for the Victoria Regina Tarot, same with Robin Wood's companion book, and I recently got Rachel Pollacks 78 Degrees of Wisdom – heck, I just like books in general and would like to get the Stuart Kaplan Tarot Encyclopaedias at some point too.

### **Fave/most used spread?**

I like the 3 card spreads as they're less complicated and easier to remember than something like the Celtic Cross. I use varying 3 card spreads for most of my TABI free readings, a lot of them supplied by TABI's newsletter Editor Shelley.

### **Do you use reversals or other system ie Elemental Dignities?**

Yes, I use reversals; though they rarely come up, and I think Elemental Dignities are interesting so will probably look into that subject more in the future.

**Do you use other disciplines in your readings ie quabalah/astrology?**

Not at the moment, though I often try to spot the cards astrological associations just out of curiosity. I don't know enough about the subject to utilise it in readings.

**Do you add psychic impressions to your readings?**

No, I'm not psychic or sensitive in any way, another reason I like Tarot you don't have to be. It's a skill you can learn.

**Do you rephrase? Why?**

I hadn't thought about it until I got involved with TABI and they brought it up! Yes occasionally I ask if I can rephrase, though mostly the reading or spread chosen does it for me anyway! But not in a sneaky way! ☺

Rephrasing usually comes about if a Seeker is asking directly about someone else rather than focusing on them-selves.

**Are there any questions/subjects you wouldn't take on?**

I wouldn't try and diagnose illness or death, though I've only recently put that into words after preparing some notes for an ethics workshop with Ribbitcat and reading Bethan's code of ethics at her website. <http://www.allthingstarot.freeserve.co.uk/>

Also, no 3<sup>rd</sup> party readings, or illegal ones, you know, how will my bank robbery go on Saturday? That kind of thing. The rest is on a wait and see basis, I wouldn't do a reading I felt really uncomfortable with, even if I couldn't explain why to the Seeker.

**What is your favourite theory for 'how tarot works'?**

Archetypes, they seem to be the basis for a lot of interesting things like psychology / criminal profiling. Tarot can help access the unconscious mind and bring clarity to a situation; it's the Reader and Seeker who personalise it.

Who knows what else is at work? Sometimes it just makes me smile ☺

**How would you describe your reading style?**

Considered, calm and non judgemental, but maybe you should be asking one of my Seekers that question! I don't get much feedback, but when I do it's usually a general thank you, so I can't be too bad! Of course, they could just be being polite \*lol\*

**Do you read professionally?**

No, I don't read professionally, but would like to at some point. I would opt for email/post and occasional face-to-face readings if I were able to go to fairs etc...

=====  
*Visit Clare's website at Tainted Tarot <http://taintedtarot.co.uk>*  
=====

# Making your own Tarot deck: a beginner's guide

*By Bagheera*

Create my own tarot deck by hand? I really liked this idea of creating something uniquely mine, and relished the thought of the challenge ahead.

I told myself to be pragmatic: I was not an artist in the sense that I could draw a horse, tree, person. I needed to find an alternative art technique that worked for me. I looked around at many tarot designs (a good place to start is [www.aeclectictarot.com](http://www.aeclectictarot.com) with over 300 tarot designs). I discovered the art form of tarot is portrayed in very diverse media ranging from hand drawing to carving to computer generated images. After some deliberation I decided on a collage form for my deck.

## *Choosing a theme*

Which theme would I use for my deck? This decision should be at the top of the list of tasks, without it there is no focus for manifesting your ideas. Archetypal images are found all around us, ranging from ancient enduring art cultures such as the Greeks, Egyptians and Celts to modern-day, potential themes like Star Wars, Harry Potter or The Matrix. All these are equally valid tarot themes; indeed the archetypal images contained in The Matrix are to be found in the myths and legends of all cultures. The true test of an archetype lies in its universal application. The format of archetype you choose will be applied in varying degrees to your themed tarot deck.

## *Mental preparation*

Once you have settled on your theme you should then take a close look at a couple of traditional decks (the more the better) and examine the hero/villain relationship (or the wise person/fool, male/female etc). Compare these to the proposed characters in your chosen theme. If you find strong links then not only are these of universal use but they can easily be applied to the deck under construction. Remember that with recurring themes the outer image may look different but the inherent message is the same.

## *Tools*

What is required on a practical level? A working bench of some sort is a good start. Depending on your chosen media, you may also need some or all of the following: good quality art card, a pair of sharp scissors, a model-making knife, water based glue, a roller for pressing cut out images onto a background, the usual assortment of water based colour pens, pencils, rubbers, paint sets, a ruler, a camera, a magnifying glass... The list is endless but do as much preparation as you can before you start. Good lighting is essential.

If you are planning to use a computer to make your deck, there is a wide range of software packages out there that allow you to manipulate images. These vary considerably in cost and

level of expertise needed to use them effectively. Microsoft Home packages include basic tools, and for the more adventurous Adobe Photoshop is a good choice.

### **Template**

How big are your cards going to be? Once you have decided this, you will need to make a template. Cut a piece of thick card to the size you have chosen. Then carefully cut out the centre of the card, leaving a border (picture 1). This is your card viewer and forms the template for your deck. The viewer is placed over your selected images (cut outs, drawings etc) to show you what the finished card will look like (without border at this stage).

Once the card details are finalised, you can add a border to complete the card. I used a black border without embellishment, but any colour will do the job. The border is a useful place to include card title, astrological symbols and so on if required. A good tip is to make your borders separately (use your template to cut out the shape) as this can then be placed over the finished artwork.

Now using the template, cut out your first card. The template should sit nicely on top, showing the area to be worked in.

Is your pack going to have a design on the back of the cards? Something to consider, but a decision is not required until the final stages.

So that done, you are now ready to start creating images.

### **Creating images**

Where are images to be found? The scope is as wide as your imagination. I found many in magazines (National Geographic, Time, art magazines, to name a few). Second-hand bookshops can save you time and money. Access to a computer gives you the Internet, a seemingly endless source of material (but be wary of image copyright laws in many cases). Auctions, car boot sales, camera-friendly museums, your local zoo, newspapers... you get the picture.

If like me you decide to use collage, it's great fun. Select your images and a background and play around with them until you are happy. Then simply glue into place and remove the template. Attach a border and your basic card is ready for finishing.

### **Order of work**

Once I had completed the above steps, my first thought was: which card shall I make first? The choice is entirely yours, but here are a few ideas.

*Freestyle:* choose one as the spirit moves you until all 78 images are completed. A note on timeframes: it took me two hours a night for six months (plus a day each weekend) to finish my deck, and it took Frieda Harris (Thoth Deck artist) over 5 years. It's up to you.

*A more ordered approach:* I started with the major arcana (trumps). My first card was The Fool (representing the beginning of a journey) and my final trump card was The World (completion of the cycle). Next came the small cards (minor arcana) and I started with the suit of Fire: ace then king, queen, prince and so on through the numbered cards (2 to 10). I repeated this sequence for Water, Air and finally Earth.

*Other:* there is of course no set way to proceed. You may choose any other sequence eg all aces first, then Court cards, then numbered cards and so on. The pattern you choose needs to be one that helps to create and maintain continuity of thought and assists the building of ideas for the next card in the sequence.

I suggest that as your pack develops you keep a journal of your ideas of how the card develops and what ideas etc you pick up. That way you have them jotted down for future reference.

### **Printing stage**

Take your completed deck and back design (if using) to any reputable copy company. They will reproduce your pack for an affordable price. Laser printing and office document handling companies abound in telephone business pages and on the internet, and I was very pleased with the one I chose.

Think carefully about your choice of card to print on; consider the thickness. I then had my deck laminated (by the same company, inexpensive and effective). The printer should also be able to trim your deck; this is important so that you don't end up with a deck that feels awkward in your hands.

### **Conclusion**

Making your own tarot deck allows you to understand more deeply how the images and the cards work together and challenges the mind to find new ways of looking at old symbols. I offer the reader these ideas; for those who are keen for new experiences in deepening their tarot practices, and for those who wonder if making a tarot deck is a great alternative to buying one.

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*The author has been a practising magician for 14 years. Areas of special interest include ritual, meditation and yoga practices, and tarot. He welcomes exchange of ideas with like-minded people; please email him at [bagheera444@yahoo.com](mailto:bagheera444@yahoo.com)*

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# Tarot Journal

*By Lyn @ TarotArt*

TABI member Lyn shares her experiences of journalling and tarot...

Keeping a Tarot Journal is a wonderful way to enhance your Tarot work. It very quickly becomes a dear friend, someone with whom we are happy to bare our soul. After all, is that not what we do the minute we lay down our Tarot cards? And, not unlike a Witches Grimoire (Book of Shadows), the more you use it, the more powerful it becomes!

A Journal's benefits are immense. It rapidly becomes a collection of everything Tarot, but more significantly it becomes a reflection of ourselves and with time, refines the meanings of the cards as they reveal themselves and talk to us as individuals. And, for those of us on a spiritual journey - it can become a handbook for life.

Whilst there is an ocean of wisdom to be found in Tarot books available today, (and by all means record the meaningful messages as you come across them - not forgetting to acknowledge their authors), remember that the most significant meanings are the ones we identify for ourselves. Lets face it, many a best seller probably began as a personal Tarot Journal!

## ***Getting Started***

There are many different ways to use a Tarot Journal. Getting started is usually the hardest part and first things first - you need something to write in. Elaborate does not necessarily mean better, however, a beautifully designed blank page book/notebook whether handmade or purchased, will probably appeal more than a bunch of lined loose leaf refill pages housed in a tatty ringbinder. The latter of course, if cared for appropriately, can be beneficial as one can rearrange pages and sections as one's Journal 'grows' and it provides an opportunity to change the 'shape' of your Journal as you progress. Either of course will do the trick, and as always, 'best' is simply what 'works' for each different person.

A spiral bound book is a good choice. It is a little more accommodating if you choose to paste in images etc, as additions such as these can tend to 'bulk' up pages of a solid spined notebook. A special pen is not a bad idea either - black permanent ink on unlined pages - most impressive!

## ***Methods of Journalling***

How you choose to use your Tarot Journal is as individual as the pages you write on. For beginners to Tarot a 'card a day' is a great place to start. This can be approached in a number of different ways. You might like to pull a card at random each morning and this becomes your focus for the day. Of course you can pull a card at night to reflect the coming day - just make your intentions clear at the time. At the end of the day you note down (in brief) the days events and by dedicating a page or two to each individual Tarot Card it is not long before very personalised meanings begin to develop and you see patterns starting to form.

Of course you may prefer to work through the deck in order, one card at a time. Each card in turn is reviewed, notes taken, thoughts pondered and you may discover that this is a great way to allow the symbolism of the card to speak personally to you. Whilst you could dedicate a lifetime of study to the symbolism within the Tarot, it will never surpass your own individual interpretations if you are brave enough to trust them! However, the good news is (with Tarot Journal on hand), we do not have to go in search of a higher education to get the most from our cards. The answer may be as simple as *looking* at them! The Tarot is a picture book. The question is, how well do we use these images before us?

On an every day basis our minds filter out ‘unnecessary’ detail all the time. We ‘see’ things at face value simply because if we didn’t, our already busy minds would simply ‘reel’ all day processing information that was irrelevant for that moment. Take for example the tree at the edge of your driveway. You see the tree on a daily basis and probably do not give it too much, if any, conscious thought at all. You see it for what it is, a tree. You do not bother (on most occasions) to process at a conscious level, any further information pertaining to colour, height, shape, uses, species etc. The simple fact that it is a tree is all the information you need to negotiate your driveway and avoid walking or driving into it! Detail in this instance is irrelevant. Because our minds are so used to filtering the images that appear before us we have to retrain it when we do not want this to happen.

So, we see a card before us in a reading. We recognise immediately that it is a particular card and often it is there that it stops. Rather than *looking* to the card itself for meaning and inspiration, we head straight to the filing cabinet in the brain looking for the appropriate file so we can rattle off the multitude of meanings that we have gathered together and depending heavily on ‘other’ people’s interpretations or ideas. But how often do you find that the ‘file’ is missing and consequently ‘draw a blank’!

### ***Interpreting images***

Beginners to the Tarot will find their first impressions of a card will offer valuable information. Capture this information in the pages of your Tarot Journal and you could be well on the way to having a number one best seller! However, all Tarot users, regardless of experience will benefit from taking a ‘second’ glance at their cards, that is if they actually ‘see’ what is before them. Go beyond the name or the title of the card - every picture tells a thousand words.

Take the Justice card for example. Now, while it may be useful to know that the pillars in the ‘traditional’ card of Justice may to some ‘...call to mind the Kabalistic Tree of Life’, unless you know why this is, the information proves to be little more than useless. Remember too that depending on what deck you are looking at the pillars may be portrayed as walls or not even be there at all! This is why it is important to actually *see* the card before you. If we allow ourselves we can go way beyond the initial imagery. Different people will use different methods to achieve this so *how* you get there is not important. If you are looking at a card that has pillars then the fact that they are there immediately gives you something to work with. We all know, without a ‘degree in symbolism’, that pillars offer support and strength. So, are they forming part of a structure or do they hold something up? What is it that they support or give strength to? What do the pillars look like? If they are of Roman or Greek origin they may

simply be lending themselves to the theme of the deck. Do they look as if they are part of a church or castle structure? If the pillars were coloured we might be drawn to one colour in particular? Which colour? If they are the same colour then are we looking at balance? What does the imagery say to you? Write it down.

Taking the time to actually look at the individual aspects of the cards before you and imagining how they might relate to one another can add a whole new dimension to your readings. Let them talk to you and tell you a story. You may find a certain image within the card does not stand out at all. This could be because it is not an important trigger for you in this particular reading. Next time might be different.

You will get the most from the images within your deck if they are images you enjoy. If you work with a deck that works for you its symbolism will speak volumes! Your Tarot Journal will record all these intimate findings.

### ***Striking The Pose***

‘Striking the pose’ (you may prefer to do this in private!) is another incredible way to access information from the card. How does it feel when you mimic the figure/s in the cards? What might you be doing, saying, thinking? Be the person within the card and write down everything that you discover.

### ***Recording readings***

Recording in your journal ALL the spreads you lay out presents wonderful learning opportunities. Many times the cards go down, and it is not for days, weeks or even months later that the meaning reveal themselves fully. Any reading that is read and not recorded is a reading that is read but most likely forgotten. Of course there will always be the exceptional, mind blowing combinations, that are imprinted forever in our minds, but more often than not they are too easily forgotten. And of course, there is always the layouts that just don't seem to make any sense. Again, if recorded, their significance can be revisited at a later date. Remember to note the date of your spread and the deck used as this information is important if you wish to relook at something further down the track.

When you review a reading you can often get a glimpse of the ‘bigger picture’. Just as you will notice cards that reappear time after time, you will also begin to see what is missing! Over time readings, for example, with regard to your relationships may fail to turn up any cups. Is this because the relationships are based heavily on practicalities (if there are a number of pentacles/earth), or perhaps they are based solely on desire and passion (if you have lots of wands/fire). With no cups one might be tempted to ask - where is the love/feeling/emotion? If the suit of cups was to remain missing relationship after relationship you may be curious and start to ask WHY? It is here that the Tarot Journal takes on the role of teacher because we start to learn a whole lot of stuff about ourselves. Personal growth then becomes possible because we go in search of answers. We empower ourselves.

***Have Fun!***

Quote's, song lyrics, images and the likes, all make interesting additions to any Tarot Journal. As do drawings and sketches. Hunt out the kids art supplies and relive how great it feels to hold a crayon or coloured pencil again! Decorate and colour your Journal pages - give them life.

Introduce people to your pages. Who in your family or circle of friends is aptly described by the qualities of say, the Queen of Wands? Add their name/photo/image to your journal. Include personal experiences - when did you have a 3 swords experience? How did it feel? What did you do to get through it and come out the other side?

If you see the Major Arcana as the Fools Journey, identify the times in your life when you have passed through each 'rite of passage'. Each card will most likely appear several times over the course of your lifetime - how similar are these different experiences? If you don't write them down, you may never know!

While some folk are extremely disciplined and will religiously write in a Tarot Journal at a particular time every day, other's, take the 'every so often' approach and either is fine. The important thing to remember is that the more regular your entries, the more interested and focused you remain and the more beneficial your Tarot Journal will become.

Keep a few pages spare to dedicate to favourite layouts and for all those wonderful spreads you make up for yourself.

Also remember to include within the pages all the stuff you don't know. Note down questions as they arise then go in search of some answers.

Don't wait till you have the 'perfect' notebook, pen, writing style, etc. That day will never come and your Tarot Journal will never get started. Allow yourself to make mistakes - the pages do not have to be perfect - besides, unsightly scribbling out can be easily covered by a pasted piece of artwork (either yours or someone else's!!).

Most of all have FUN. Start a journey of discovery today.

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*Do you use a Tarot Journal? Send your experiences to the Editor: [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk)*

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# The TABI Interview: Johanna Sherman

*by Bethan Arrowsmith*

Johanna Sherman is the creator of the Sacred Rose Tarot. Here she shares her thoughts with TABI ...

## **You purchased your first tarot deck in 1965. What deck was it and why were you drawn to purchasing it?**

The deck purchased was the Marseilles deck. It was from Bloomingdale's Department store in Manhattan. I was attending The High School of Art & Design at the time located a few blocks away. The deck featured in the film "Dr. Terror's House of Horrors" was my inspiration and found it at the gift counter on the first floor. What I liked about the deck is that the graphics were so compelling and in the motion picture stood up very well. I think it was purposefully chosen for this. The camera did not get lost in the details. In addition, with the deck I purchased a booklet, "The Tarot" by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. This was my first introduction to serious tarot study.

Ironically, I later found out that this deck was one of the first imported and sold to Bloomingdale's by a newly formed company: U.S. Games Systems. You can say that the road was be paved for me (no pun intended).

Another interesting point is that I always knew that I would be creating a deck in the future, that is how profound the images were and still are for me.

## **What was the status of tarot at the time?**

I knew the cards from my younger years in Coney Island. A historic amusement area and community in Brooklyn, New York. My family would frequent the gypsy fortunetelling palors

When I purchased my first deck I was sixteen years old at the time and all I knew of tarot was from a fortune telling background. Another deck popular at the time was "Zolar's Fortune Telling Deck" based on the Rider-Waite Smith deck but with phrases printed on both ends to indicate upright and reverse meanings. Overall, serious tarot study with applied pathworking and spiritual development was only amongst a select group.

I believe Stuart Kaplan was yet to get the copyrights to the RWS and the New Age consciousness was just beginning to show its potential.

## **How did your immediate family influence your early development?**

My family was encouraging. My grandmother and aunts loved visiting the Gypsy Fortune Telling Tearooms in Coney Island where they would

have their tealeaves and cards read. My godmother was able to take off the “malocchio” (evil eye) and my grandmother would go to a “strega” (Italian for *witch*) for problem solving. Superstitions were revered and a way of life though some did go to extremes and my grandmother’s dependency on these beliefs led her to take some drastic actions that undermined her health.

**Have you always been psychically gifted?**

Yes, as far back as I can remember, but not to the extent that I would get dramatic and declare prophecies to those close to me. The impressions would come to me, and I would say them in a matter of fact way. The day before my grandmother died, over breakfast I mentioned to my mother “ I do not think grandma is coming home (she was living with us at the time).She died that afternoon. Many years later when I had my horoscope chart drawn up that I found the energies were with me since birth.

**How was your time at the Pratt Institute and what did you study there?**

The first year of college was a tough one for me. This year I survived and developed into not a better student, but a different type of student. I eventually graduated with honors. My major was in Art Education, and minor in Child Development and Psychology. This came in handy later in life with the cards.

**Can you talk us through the deck creation process of the SRT and explain its influences?**

Deck creation is a very personal process. Very few people truly tap into a core of psychic reality, mainly because to be able to do so is too painful an experience. My recommendation is to create a deck for you alone to use. Not caring whether it is publishable or appeals to others. Keep it true to your inner core and make your own magic. If the Fates deem it a work for others to partake in, then you will find a means to present it to the world.

**One of the two most striking features of the SRT is the deck are the pupil-less eyes and barbed-wire like borders. Could you explain the thought behind these?**

Concerning the eyes, the question is why it was dictated to me to create the images in such a way. I always planned to put expressive eyes in, but the depiction or energy would falter and I would then take them out. Why this happen is an enigma to me. My only explanation is that the archetypal energies are not human. They are entities masked in human form.

The barbed-wire is the depiction of restriction. It is the thorns of a rambling rose climbing and entwining itself into a dense weaving of thorns. The painful process of breaking through barriers and the scars left behind. Anyway, if you have ever tried pruning one of this variety you would know what I mean.

**The back of card design is very distinctive. What inspired you to design the rose mandalas?**

What did inspire the rose mandalas was my search for a theme. In researching the rose theme I came across references to the flowers mystical lore. As a gardener, I always loved the rose and found its symbol repeatedly used in different art forms. At the time, I thought it would be a good idea to keep to a theme and include a reference for it on the back design of the deck

**What are 'Flashing Tablets' and how are they used in the SRT?**

The use of color is a powerful evocative tool. It reaches into the depths of the subconscious leading us to realms not readily available. Flashing Tablets are found in Ceremonial and Enochian magic. These are complex designs using complimentary colors in close proximity to each other, where an energy field develops. This field can lead to an altered state of consciousness. With the cards, it can open psychic doorways. In the SRT my color choices were purposeful. The suits alone could not produce the effect I wanted, nor the symbols. Due to the information overload in our modern society, I felt that it would help to include a built-in aid to the reader.

**Which is your spread of choice? I loved the Rose Cross Spread (p.212) in your book!**

It is hard to say; the dictates of the situation and the seeker's intent usually indicate what spread I use. I like to see the conflicts at work within the person and circumstances surrounding them. I always start a session with an overview of their birth cards and then an Elemental Power Spread (p.208).

The Rose Cross Spread is an effective spread for problem solving. As you know, it delves into the questions of karma, sacrifice and resolution. These issues are not for the faint-hearted. It is a favorite of mine for the getting down to business and no holes barred type of reading. I only do such a spread when called for, and when given permission to delve into realms so very personal.

I do encourage the personal creation of spreads. In creating a spread, you have to consider all of the ingredients necessary. What issues need to be addressed and how to allow the cards speak through the matrix you have created. Reflection, contemplation and actualization can only do this. The overall process is creative and unique to the creator/reader.

**Do you think that you will ever create another deck?**

If the spirit moves me, otherwise, I am totally content with SRT. Remember creative angst is not a pleasant experience.

**Why did you decide to write an accompanying book during the last few years?**

Maturity and experience dictated the need for this expression. In addition, I promised Stuart Kaplan that I would eventually get to it. Another author beat me to it and their creation became packaged with the SRT in a deck and book set. This was a great compliment until I read certain details that I did not agree with and that really did put my wheels in motion.

**Why did you find writing the book for the Sacred Rose so hard?**

I tried my hand at writing a newsletter (“Your Psychic Connection”) just to see if I had the discipline to sit down and formulate my thoughts. This was an experience! Is there a level of Hell that Dante forgot to mention? Then try writing a book! I have concluded that all art is masochistic and since human kind cannot live without it that does say great deal.

**What other tarot activities/events/organizations are you involved with?**

Presently, I am a paid up dues member of the American Tarot Association (which means that I owe dues to all the others). Locally, I participate in functions by The Tarot School (Ruth Ann & Wald Amberstone); otherwise, my dance card is free.

**Do you have any other projects lined up for the future?**

Other than the objective to stabilize my health issues. As a sufferer of chronic pain (due to a cervical spine injury and two lower back surgeries) my need to create is somewhat stifled and now limited to practical applications and life necessities. My next “big” project is a gallery web site.

My most called for and popular project is a Psychic Development Workshop that I gave a condensed shortened version of at the New York Tarot Festival.

**What do you still get from using tarot?**

Focus, understanding the various nuances of human experience and a belief in the intuitive process.

**Who really inspires you as a reader?**

Those who I have taught and now can teach me.

**Where can people view your other artwork?**

Recently, on a gallery web site that is no longer up on the Internet (<http://www.luckylady.net>). My next venture is to develop my own web site and gallery page. When it is up and running I'll let you know.

## The Adventures of Madame Fifie

Roving tarot reader Madame Fifie will be familiar to members of our discussion group UKTarotTalk, who vie to be the first to work out who her mystery querents are. Here we present the next chapter to her ongoing adventures...

Previously on *The Adventures of Madame Fifie*...

Reading for *Hamlet* by Dark Flower:

**Deck: Vampire Tarot by Nathalie Hertz**

**Spread: 3 cards, Past/Present/Future**

You slap the young Dane smartly across the face for the 'Old Crone' crack, then gently reassure him that he is not mad! He sits down, a little dazed and you begin your reading:

1. **Past - XV The Devil** - FROM LWB: 'Charismatic, bestial and passionate he personifies forbidden pleasure!' and "Soul, power, magnetism, accomplished desires, boldness, attraction, a passionate and explosive relationship, wild sensuality, luxury, money and hidden power."

[Could represent the Uncle or the Uncle/Mother relationship in the young Dane's eyes?]

2. **Present - XII The Hanged Man** - FROM LWB: 'Left to his dreams but still aware, his clever conscience makes him receptive to visible and invisible vibrations.'" and "Great sensibility, meditation, ability, patience, acceptance, a forthcoming and enriching event."

3. **Future - 3 of Swords** - FROM LWB: 'Lack of communication' and "Absence, opposition, scepticism and individualism.'

You look at the cards and begin to speak...

"You feel deceived and betrayed by those closest to you and the relationship between your Mother and Uncle clearly horrifies you. You feel that it is unnatural and perhaps that your Mother is too much under the influence of your Uncle and this disturbs you.

At present you can feel the undercurrents of emotion all around you, feelings are running high, especially your own, but you can't quite grasp what is happening. You need to calm yourself and try to figure things out logically. It won't do you any good to reveal your inner turmoil to those around you just yet. If you could talk to your family about this, it may help clear your mind, but you must take care and speak only to those you completely trust.

You must tell your Mother how you feel and ask her those questions which are burning in your fevered mind. You have to try, though I fear it will all come to naught."

The young man sways slightly as he rises. "I will trouble you no further... lady. Thank you." He leaves, but you feel that the reading is unfinished; you reach for your deck and turn a single card over.

It is the King of Swords - LWB: 'Self-control, rigor, compliance and order' and 'Perseverance, certainty and swift decision with little feeling involved.' For a moment you think that it represents the Uncle, the new king, but then you realise that it is the young Dane's need for self-control and logic during this dangerous and emotional time.

You hesitate, should you run after him? You head for the tent flap and peer out into the starless night, no one is in sight. Curses, would it have made a difference? You have already warned him that he needs to think more clearly; still, you can not shake the ominous feeling that this final card has left you with and it's seeming duality.

You sigh and decide to pack up for the night, perhaps he will return. It is in the hand of fate now.

*And now – the Adventure continues...*

*Scenario by Ania*

Aware of a sudden draught, you turn to see the door of your tent flapping as if someone had entered. You glance around sensing a presence, but there is no one there, so you cross over to the door and poke your head outside. The sun is shining and heat haze is already beginning to rise from the fields. You look across to the main fair, which still lies silent and unremarkable, devoid of the lights and movement, laughter and excitement that will fill it in a just few short hours' time. But only bees buzz idly by, looking for flowers to plunder of their pollen, otherwise there is no sign of life. Though there does seem to be a broom leaning against your tent that you are almost certain wasn't there earlier.

Breathing deeply of the warm, sweet, summer scent of the field, you duck back into the cool shade of your tent and are startled to see a teenage boy standing there. He has black hair and his green eyes peer at you through his round spectacles. His clothes are rather scruffy and much too large and a somewhat incongruous cloak lies at his feet.

"Hello", he says sheepishly.

"Hello", you reply, calmly. You are starting to get used to your clients sneaking up on you. "What can I do for you?"

"Er...well...er...I'd like a reading, please...", he says and delving into his pocket, fishes out a handful of gold coins and tentatively offers them to you. "...I can pay..."

"I'm not sure I can help you." He looks crestfallen. "I don't read for minors", you explain.

"Oh", he says. "It's just that...well, I'm nearly of age...and it's not for me...I need some advice for my friends..."

"Ah", you interject. "I don't do third party readings either"

"Oh...well...sorry to bother you then", he says and picking up his cloak, turns to leave. He looks as if he is carrying the weight of the world is on his skinny, young shoulders and you feel a pang of sympathy for his troubles.

"Wait...I may be able to do something for you." He smiles and reaches into his pocket for the coins. You shake you head, "No - I couldn't accept payment...think of it as help from a friend." You smile and gesture at the chair by your little reading table, "Now, come and sit down and tell me what is troubling you..."

He sits down and clearing his throat slightly begins. "Well, quite a lot actually, but I'm dealing with most of that alright. It's my friends that I don't know what to do with...they fight and bicker all the time, but I think they really like one another...well, I don't know really...I'm not really very good at this sort of thing...relationships, I mean."

He pauses, frowning and his hand goes up to rub the scar on his forehead. "I have rather a lot on my mind and I need my friends to be there to support me and not fight all the time. I think that maybe they are bickering because they like each other more than they realise...maybe love each other...but I'm not sure. What do you think? What should I do? And pleeease...don't tell me I'm going to die horribly in the near future - I hear that all the time - I don't want to know about me, just about them!", he pleads.

"Very well", you say and reach for your cards, "I'll see what I can do, but you must understand that I don't predict what will happen - only what you can do to help the situation."

"Oh, I know", he says brightly, "that's why I came to you. I'm fed up of prophecies and predictions - mainly of my gruesome death at the hands of V... You-Know-Who"

You shuffle the cards and offer them to him to cut, then lay out three cards on the table...

So - who is the boy, who are his friends and what advice do you give him?

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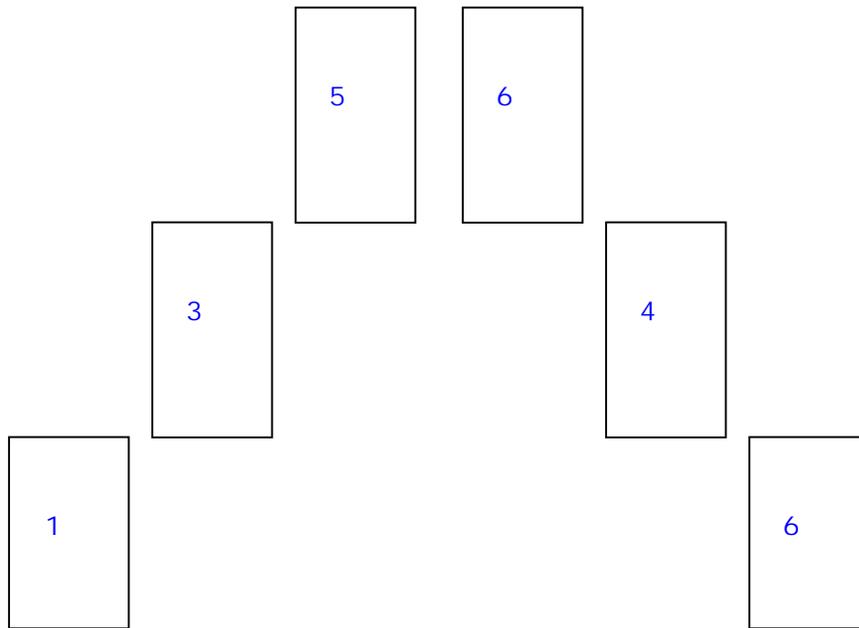
*Can you guess the identity of Madame Fife's mystery querent? Will you read for him? Send your readings to [newsletter@tabi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@tabi.org.uk) and we'll update the Adventure next issue...*

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## Featured Spread: Grief Layout

*By Vivianne Kacal*

I created and use this spread to try to help someone come more to terms with the loss of a loved one .



- Card 1 : What to remember about the loved one
- Card 2 : What to forget about the loved one
- Card 3 : Why they loved you
- Card 4 : Why you loved them
- Card 5 : The gift of their life
- Card 6 : What will help you at this time

I have found that this spread can help the bereaved person to honestly acknowledge negative aspects of the deceased without showing disrespect or disloyalty as it also indicates their good points. I have found it can be important but difficult for the bereaved person to accept that they were as needed, loved or wanted by the deceased as the bereaved person needed, loved or wanted the deceased, hence card 3 . Clarifying cards can be laid as desired for more detail. This spread may be used as soon as the querent feels it is appropriate after the death of their loved one, and I also use it for annual memorial readings, when requested.

*Copyright Vivianne Kacal 2001 .*

## Book Review: The Tarot Court Cards

Written by Kate Warwick-Smith

*Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis*

Publisher: Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont - web-site: [www.InnerTraditions.com](http://www.InnerTraditions.com)  
RRP in the UK £14.99, from all good book shops or direct from:  
Deep Books - e-mail: [sales@deep-books.co.uk](mailto:sales@deep-books.co.uk), Tel: 020 8693 0234.

It is very good to see new books emerging on an aspect of tarot work and understanding which is so much in need of support and development. Here is an area that both novice and experienced tarot readers struggle with and here is a book with a comprehensive outlook and a new approach to the area of Court cards or "Face" cards in the tarot.

The Courts of the deck are the cards which new readers can so often find especially perplexing and taxing to deal with. Why are these cards there? Do they simply depict people and if so to whom is it that they refer? If they can tell us about the querent or the people in the querent's life, why do we need them when other tarot cards could perhaps tell us about them anyway? Just what is the real significance of these cards?

It seems there are more questions than answers with the Courts! But Kate Warwick-Smith has certainly come up with some original ways of looking at these minor tarot cards. And there are answers to the questions above - some which may surprise you and, I am sure, some that will inspire you.

It probably doesn't take long for any reader to realise that the modern tarot approach seems to be asking for more than just the traditional "blonde haired, stern woman, probably a widow" reading of, for example the Queen of Swords. Here you will certainly find a lot more than that.

It is of course possible to find meaning in relation to a Court card in a reading from the spread position it appears in. But how about if we simply want to derive meaning from the card itself? Here is some good news: The Tarot Court Cards offers you both options - and a lot more!

So, what else might these cards signify if they are not just about individuals, the way they look and the way they think and act? Or to put it another way, if we do have all of that information from the card, how can we use it constructively? What this author does is put all of the possible information about the person that the Court card signifies into the wider context of relationship. And in particular she is interested in the support dynamic going on in our various relationships in life. As so many people come to the tarot with questions and issues about their relationships, this book seems like a real gift. What is inside these covers can be applied to any area of relationship concern - love life, family affairs, business relationships - you name it and you can work with Kate Warwick-Smith's techniques and card meanings to understand what is really going in your connections with other people.

No reader should be led astray by the traditional and familiar front cover pictures of the King and Queen of Pentacles in their Rider-Waite garb. This book is bang up to date and, once inside the cover, it is obvious we are in for a treat! Chapter headings include the following: "The Royal Family", "Two Hundred Years of Court Card Interpretation" and "A Qabalistic Equation". The book is well researched and therefore includes a chapter explaining an interesting, possible line of development for tarot reading from arrow divination and a game of "Deputies", plus chapters on the use of the Court cards for meditation and pathworking.

The author has a background in counselling and centres much of her thinking on Jungian concepts such as the shadow and projection. But it is really the main thrust of the book that is fascinating and it seems to have been the author's counselling work that has inspired her to develop her ideas further. Kate Warwick-Smith talks about seeing the Court cards in the tarot as indicative of the support network in our life at any given moment and in any context. Within this framework she takes into account the "positive" and "negative" interpretations of each card to show us how we may appreciate how other people help us in our life - sometimes in unexpected ways.

The basic outlook offered is very positive. And this looks to be a very helpful book for anyone focussing on inner work, for example if they wish clarify or heal their past. Or indeed for anyone hoping to appreciate the real meaning behind their current experience of relationships. Although the author appears to have been spurred on with her ideas about the use of tarot from working closely with clients as a therapeutic counsellor, there is more! She takes matters further than merely considering the dynamics of mundane relationships; the focus she offers can also encompass our spiritual lessons and helpers in life.

The therapy focus and the possibility of understanding the roles of angels, spirit guides etc, will appeal to some readers and not to others but I would emphasise that this is no airy-fairy book at any level. It is grounded in some solid research. And although a few theories or ideas can not be easily proved you are likely to find it just as useful to work through the spreads, meditations and pathworking exercises anyway!

The book is not laid out in a formal workbook way. There is a lot here and I would suggest you could dip into it and find some interesting and different contents on many different occasions. This is something of a Pandora's box of delights! Kate Warwick-Smith has striven to locate tarot Courts in history, which appears to have been no mean task, covering an understanding of Asian, Arabic and European origins. As well as offering a strong theoretical understanding of the Cards, she also works through a very practical set of applications with them.

From a small section detailing how best to use the book it becomes obvious that you do not have to be a tarot history buff to benefit from the book's contents. You can, if you wish, dive straight in and "have a go" with using the Court cards and learning more about them through some practical exercises. I particularly liked the selection of spreads offered, which can help you to

analyse the state of a relationship or its general meaning for you, as well as considering your role, how others see you, how you can best support others, how they support you and so on. The author suggests approaches rather than dictates but her methods do appear to be tried and tested. I was very pleased with the insights I gained into a relationship with a friend, after using one of the three card spreads! There really is a choice here - from a simple one card approach to an astrological wheel spread via a Tree of Life layout (for which you need know no Qabalah!).

You also have the option to go straight into looking up various Court card meanings. These are offered at a number of different levels and which, I am certain, will stretch your knowledge and feel for the Court cards no matter how much of a novice or old hand you are! Warwick-Smith asks us to consider each card in light of the following headings: Supporter, Detractor, Resource, Challenge. And, in specific exercises, to spot which people in our lives fall into some of these categories. When we look at "resources" we are looking at qualities already within ourselves. The "challenges" come through unsatisfactory situations or states of being which. Her use of the cards means that we can understand all of these things so much better.

Here we have a very focussed treatment of interpretation. Therefore, you will not find too much by way of physical description of the people in the court cards or abstract suggestions, apart from in the sections designed to demonstrate what has gone before in the history of tarot Court cards. In the chapter entitled "Two Hundred Years of Court Card Interpretation", there is a keen survey of how Court cards have been treated over time and the examples bring together names that every well versed tarotist will recognise, such as Eteilla, Aleister Crowley, Paul Foster-Case and Mary Greer.

What you will find a great deal of, in the major sections of the book, is information on personality types and psychology. Models of the family and royalty are used referentially to explain how the Court card symbols can be understood in the context of a support network. The concept is then brought strongly up to date when the author talks about modern support relationships, such as those that we may develop with a therapist, a personal trainer or consultant.

There is a strong personal/spiritual growth focus here and so there is also an emphasis on the sort of support available from involvements that are apparently negative; here we need to recognise how difficult situations can bring out the best in us or prompt us in a better direction. The author urges us to explore the idea that those who challenges us and provide obstacles to be overcome may really be doing us a favour. Part of Warwick-Smith's argument is that since all is connected we need to understand our relationship to others and vice versa as a continuum, rather than looking at any one facet or person in isolation.

Sometimes with an author's work it is easy to see if he or she adheres to a particular belief system. Here the author seems to be encompassing a number of approaches, most specifically focussing on psychotherapy and the Western Mystery tradition. The support network idea extends to strong, inner spiritual support as well as that found typically in family, community,

the church etc. This path helps to make us as readers more aware of our places as people in history. In modern life we are increasingly experiencing a move away from traditional support networks of family, royalty, community etc and options such as group therapy, AA and so on may have a much more important role to play in the lives of many modern folk.

The Tarot Court Cards also includes useful charts and tables (one is a pull-out, pocket guide version), that act as easy references and make the book easy to use. Using these together with the main divinatory sections of the text, you can quickly work out who are your supporters in your support system in life! And it does not take too long to see how your "Detractors" may help you to develop certain attributes, defences etc – along the lines of the idea popular in therapy and spiritual growth circles that all in life is sent to help you in some way.

Although the main contents and illustrations of the book are all in black and white you will find examples of a range of decks here, not only the Rider Waite cards. So you can see Court card images from a range of decks, both traditional, modern and somewhere in between, such as the Tarot de Marseilles, Spiral, Motherpeace, Alchemical, Thoth, Oswald Wirth, Northern Shadows; the list goes on!

I did smile at the synchronicity when I was offered this book to review, since it arrived soon after I had taken part in a TABI workshop piloting weekend in the UK, where I was presenting on - you guessed it - the tarot Court cards! There are certainly ideas here that I was struggling to put into a workable format for a workshop on that day, but there is a lot else besides and I feel that this author offers a fresh, distinctly unique approach to working with the tarot Courts.

In her "after word" section she says: "I hope that this knowledge may increase the reader's confidence to reach out for support and to call on inner reservoirs of strength." This is something I have yet to test out, as so many people often say when dealing with the tarot, only time will tell!

However, Kate Warwick-Smith also says: "Given the extent to which most of us are embroiled in a wide variety of relationships that often define our life, it has become apparent to me that the court cards may be the most useful of the deck. They give us information that can immediately and readily improve our daily living and emotional well-being..... My aim in writing this book has been to give the "people cards" fresh meaning and provide a practical method of interpretation that improves lives and relationships. These may seem like high aspirations but, in trying out her methods, I personally do not feel that the author has been over-ambitious. And, in the cause of furthering tarot usage, her approach moves tarot's Court cards from possible denigration or confusion as "superfluous" adjuncts to the other cards, on to high profile, major players in the deck. Thank you, Kate for such an inspiring piece of work!

## Deck Review: Gothic Tarot

*Created/illustrated by: - Joseph Vargo, with background images on the Aces by Charles Klimach*

*Reviewed by Caroline Wood*

Publisher - Monolith Graphics, [www.monolithgraphics.com](http://www.monolithgraphics.com) c2002

Purchased from - [www.cards4magic.co.uk](http://www.cards4magic.co.uk), Romney, Kent

Style: Dark. Intermediate difficulty. Assumes knowledge of Rider-Waite.

Based on: Rider-Waite

LWB by: Christine Filipak

Back of card: Non-reversible. Black with red detail.

Joseph Vargo is based in Cleveland, Ohio, and is a graphic artist who illustrates and writes horror and gothic novels along with his own range of prints and clothing at Monolith Graphics. Christine Filipak, who wrote the LWB for this deck, is the art director at Monolith.

Visually, this is a stunning deck whether you're into Goth or not. It's clearly based on the classic Rider-Waite, with Strength at VIII and Justice at XI; and some of the pip cards are close clones (e.g. the Three of Swords), albeit well-executed and in keeping with the overall deck. But this is a world of vampires, angels, demons and demi-gods drawn from the whole range of human fear, which combine surprisingly well into a coherent world. Think an old-fashioned Anne Rice, but without quite as much ham-acting.

You will need to think around corners somewhat to appreciate how the artist connects some of his images with standard Rider-Waite meaning. Meditation time with each card will be well repaid. An acquaintance with magickal systems will help you get more out of the cards (e.g. if you can read Latin, recognise Hieroglyphics and other magickal alphabets), but is not necessary.

Vargo draws on several different mythologies and genres to create the full deck. The High Priestess, for example, is clearly Egyptian but this is an Egypt at night under a cold moon. There's a clear sensation of icy tombs and maybe even a whiff of necromancy about the card, which we find more strongly in cards such as The High Priest (replacing The Hierophant) and in The Hermit in his bell tower. But The World is pure Middle Ages and Dante's Inferno, with its stone-carved representation of Jehovah, Satan, imps and angels.

Some of the images are full scenes in the style of Victorian graveyard horror; black skies, gray mist, and ethereal figures of angels and damned wraiths floating around tombstones and menacing mansions. Gargoyles feature heavily, particularly as the Knaves, and one card featuring these demonstrates just how much you may need to think about the images. The Nine of Swords features a stone gargoyle atop a wall, with nine swords underneath. This gargoyle is a solid, unmoving creature, while a wildly alive imp is poised, grinning, on his back. This contrast of utter stillness and a creature who almost leaps out of the card at you is hard to

understand at first, and the meaning is not at all obvious. However, recall the Rider-Waite card – the figure sitting up in bed, grieving and agonising, with the swords behind, implying the cause is outside the person. We can see the idea of being "ridden" by worry suddenly comes into focus in the figure of the imp oppressing the gargoyle into paralysis.

The cult of the vampire spans many centuries and yet seems always the same. The tall, dark, handsome man. The harpies. The sacrificial virgin. The Queen of the Damned. Beauty and death and everlasting love, from the legends of Transylvania to the penny dreadfuls of the 19th Century, to our modern-day romantic vampires of Coppola and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. We see all of these archetypes in the deck (no slayers, though!). Gary Oldman's Dracula himself makes an appearance as The Emperor, surrounded by the three Brides. Several cards also draw on the angelic/higher being ideas expressed in the later Buffy and Angel series.

Again, an example of how Vargo can make you think is shown in the Ten of Cups. This depicts a beautiful, bat-winged woman leaning over a lifeless-looking young man on a bier. The Ten of Cups is a card we would normally associate with completion and joy. This card is dark, and at first seems frightening. But twist your mind around to contemplate the idea of joy in the vampiric mythos, and you come to the possibility that perhaps this young man is not dead, simply waiting to wake up to a life of blood and become the endless lover of his dark mistress. The gift of this deck is to allow you to make your own stories from often ambiguous pictures just as the Rider-Waite does, but many more modern decks have failed to.

We also see a mediaeval theme in many of the cards, which is unfortunately a bit of a caricature. Those not familiar with role-playing or graphic novels may find this off-putting - given the overall dark mistiness of the deck, these particular cards don't fit as well because they are more highly coloured, and I'm afraid to say, a tad cheesy for my taste. The Magician in particular could easily have been taken from the cover of a Dungeons & Dragons manual or from the Magic: The Gathering card game, and doesn't give a lot of scope for the imagination immediately. However, as both a role-player and a fan of graphic novels, I can forgive Vargo's little quirks here for my own use of the deck, and thankfully there aren't too many of these. It does lose marks for this overall. The horror of the V of Swords almost makes up for it, though - a leering black-and-white jester, covered in blood, sits on the throne with the king's head on a pole; five skulls pierced by swords surround him. Disgrace, dishonour and empty victory just scream out of this image. What is a Fool without his King and patron?

Experienced readers will probably ignore the little white book right from the word go. It's not really of any great value, being mostly keywords that don't really connect well with the cards. It gives the impression of being an afterthought and is too generic. However, there's an interesting spread in the back of the book which I hadn't come across before, so do check this one out before you throw it away.

Overall, I would give this deck an eight of ten for sheer attractiveness, but it also gets a lot of brownie points for being a thoughtful interpretation of tarot in the context of the creator's work. It is less accessible than many of the decks on the market and can be much harder to put an empowering, positive spin on readings, but if you have a particular interest in any of the mythology, or in Goth, you will probably love this deck to death. And beyond.

## Deck Review: Ramses Tarot of Eternity

*Reviewed by Diana McMahon -Collis*

Publisher: Lo Scarabeo, Torino, Italy - UK RRP £10.99 from good tarot deck stockists or direct from:

Deep Books Ltd, Tel:0208 693 0234 E-Mail: sales@deepbooks.co.uk

I have an admission to make. In spite of being attracted to the look of some of the Egyptian tarot decks I had never felt sufficiently drawn to take the leap of actually trying to acquire one and work with it. Odd you may think, given that I quite like Egyptian art (maybe that comes from being sent to a Tutankhamun exhibition on a school trip at a vulnerable age?). What is the reason, then? Well the truth is that, although I enjoy certain kinds of tarot art and do occasionally use tarot cards to meditate, those are not usually my driving motives for wanting to add a deck to my collection. I want the cards because I want to work with them - and work, to me, usually means divination, whether reading for myself or reading for clients.

The furthest I have ever got with an Egyptian tarot deck is to drool at the catalogue images (some of them are rather lush!) and think "Could I? Could I really do a reading with these?" - that is until now. It has finally happened; I have found an Egyptian style deck that I am sufficiently comfortable with to have leaped in and done some divination work with it! It is Ramses Tarot of Eternity deck from the well known Italian publisher, Lo Scarabeo, for whom Deep Books is a major distributor in the UK (please see details above).

Ramses Tarot of Eternity is a very long name so I think, for ease of writing and reading, I will refer to it as the Ramses deck from now on. But I certainly have no doubt that it is the first Egyptian style deck I have felt really drawn to. It was undoubtedly the artistic style that drew me in. But it did not become obvious to me what it was about the designs that made me warm to them so much until I read the details in the Little White Book that came with the deck.

The author of the introduction in the LWB, Giordano Berti, says that some of the previous decks that have included images from Egyptian art have been "without soul". Or they had no "coherent design". This deck possesses "both artistic and philosophical coherence". Well I would certainly go along with all of that. This is a really beautiful looking deck, with cards that feature rich colours and plenty of fine detail in the designs. The artwork is by Severino Baraldi and the deck comes from Lo Scarabeo's Art Tarot collection, which is edited by Pietro Alligo (who has the original idea for the deck, apparently). I am not sure what exactly inspired the idea

for the title of the deck, but perhaps the idea of "Eternity" refers to the powerful Egyptian beliefs surrounding the soul after death - hence all the careful rituals, embalming, tombs, pyramids etc.

What I also cannot tell you is how the artwork has been constructed, but these look like drawings which have been very carefully painted - perhaps with oils. Whatever the medium is, it allows for a lot of bright detail and the effect is striking. So, when you look at the costumes that the characters in these cards are wearing, you often get a lot of intricate patterning. It is quite a contrast to decks where the idea is to get the scene across. Not that this detracts from what is being portrayed in each card's "story", mind you.

What you will quickly notice if you work with these cards is that they are "people-heavy". The scenes depicted focus on individuals or groups, dead, alive, mortal or immortal. There is a little bit of nudity here and there. Nothing too major. We are not talking Stevee Postman and the Cosmic Tribe style nudity here. But if you are squeamish about upper body nakedness on your tarot cards beware, for there are cards that depict exposed breasts.

For the most part what I am sure you will notice is the usual Egyptian head-dress range, with Cleopatra style hair and adornments for the women and various head covers for the men. My Egyptian history knowledge is very weak, to be perfectly honest (the shyness in approaching these sorts of decks before is becoming all too clear!). So perhaps the different head-dresses indicates different levels of rank.

I suppose it is this very lack of knowledge that makes me wish that the LWB was something more than it is. Or that there may be a book to accompany the deck. Perhaps in time there will be. On the plus side, none of this has prevented me from working with this deck. Undoubtedly ancient Egypt aficionados will get more out of it. But I am happy enough with what is here to enjoy reading with it, as it is.

Apart from the lovely colours of each detailed image, I should add that the backs and borders are attractive. Colour wise we have a nice beige and coffee brown for a change. And presumably it is the figure of Ramses that appears on the back of each card - or so it would seem as this is a variation of the image that is depicted on the Emperor card in this deck, which is associated with Ramses. This is in mirror image format, so that you cannot tell whether the cards are upright or reversed from this side. As always, this is a great boon for tarot readers who like to read additional meaning into reversed cards.

There is a real range of imagery. Sometimes there is quite a lot of blood and gore! For example the 10 of Swords shows a veritable post-battle scene, complete with vultures ready to swoop in on the dying folk on the ground. There are certain kinds of symbolism used interestingly, for instance on the Ace of Wands the face of the man holding the wands is covered with a huge

beetle (Scarab?). Again my lack of Egyptology lets me down here but I shall be brushing up on my insect and animal symbology in the near future at least! (\* See note 1 below).

Quite why the old man in the 6 of Swords is the way he is I do not know. Anyone familiar with the typical Rider and post-Rider images of this card will easily recall the boat with the three figures and the message of sailing away from trouble and worries. In this image the man is obviously very old since he has white hair and not many teeth. He may also be a hermit since he has very long hair and fingernails. He has a lot of tattoos on his arms - the symbols, again must be important, including an eye and a serpent. Again, I wish I had some sort of obvious reference to check these things against. But this old man sitting with a monkey next to him and the man looking at a grid into which has been inserted a knife and on which lay some markers still "speaks" to the reader. The image looks like someone working out a puzzle or trying to map out something. So maybe it is not so very different from that RWS image after all! The chap may be trying to navigate a route out from wherever he is. In the LWB the text says "Revealed secrets. Suspiciousness. Justified fears. Bad presentiments, recurring nightmares.

Getting back to basics, we have we have the sort of Major arcana that you will be used to seeing in the majority of mainstream decks with titles such as the Magician, Hierophant, Empress etc. What is different is that there is clearly some association with Egyptian nobility, Gods, Goddesses etc. For example the Empress is Nefertari, The Emperor is Ramses II. The Magician is Sethi I but the Lovers are just the Lovers and some of the Egyptian words associated with other cards may be conceptual rather than relating to people. For example the World is Shen; The Tower is Ramesseum; Strength is Bent-Anat. Here I am well out of my depth!

With regard to the Minor cards, there is an interesting situation whereby you seem to have to play hunt the symbol. I found it was easy to confuse the Wands with the Swords on some of the cards, without knowing the deck well. The Ace of Swords is a case in point where, presumably, the weapon held high by a charioteer in the background is the Sword and the baton held by a cat-like creature to kill a snake in the foreground is not the Sword we are looking for.

Another slightly confusing aspect is that Pentacles are not necessarily shown as coins. They are often shown as a lot of other things, which is rather fascinating! For instance, we have eight flat brads about to be baked in the oven on the 8 of Pentacles. We have five bottles of potion for the medic to choose from to treat an ill patient on the 5 of Pentacles. On the 10 of Pentacles I cannot seem to see ten of anything, but this is one of the cards where upper body nudity is present. We appear to have four women - three of them hand-maidens attending to the fourth. The depth of her neck adornment and weightiness of her head-dress may well indicate her rank. Perhaps the jewellery as a symbol of great wealth is the main message here. With the Cups cards there are various containers or vessels - urns, chalices and so on. In the 3 of Cups there is a mother

feeding her baby, a mortar containing a pestle and a child drinking out of a cup. Presumably the mother's breast is the third container of fluid sustenance.

It should of course not be understated how much a tarotist who likes to work with pictorial symbolism enjoys seeing a deck like this, where all of the Minor cards have detailed scenery to read from. In comparison with other, more conventional, strongly pictorial decks, though, the imagery of some of the cards is quite surprising. For example, the scene of the Seven of Pentacles seems more like what you would expect to see on the traditional Six of Pentacles in a Rider style deck. In the Ramses deck 7 of Pentacles a woman with a dog at her feet is offering a street beggar some bread from the basket she is carrying.

So, despite the emphasis in the LWB author's introduction on artistic and philosophical coherence, there is something of a lack of uniformity in some of the central tarot symbolism. I am not sure how much it matters, all told, but it probably does mean that this is a deck for advanced readers first and foremost. Maybe most tarot readers will feel that way towards it anyway, on first glance, unless they have a particular fondness for Egyptology.

On a purely practical level, a great plus factor is that these cards are quite easy to hold. Most people who infrequently handle tarot decks do not necessarily find any tarot cards very easy to hold. But these are just that little bit longer than playing cards and probably no wider. So for the tarot reader who is used to handling cards all the time they will probably seem quite manageable.

All in all this deck presents quite a few challenges but I still value it for the very attractive, vibrant imagery and for the basic change of scenery from other decks that I am used to. It is a bit like eating out at good restaurants - the jaded palette wants something different and impressive and that just about sums up the Ramses Tarot of Eternity.

\* (1) In an attempt to be a little more thorough, for the purposes of this review, *Brewer's Book of Myth & Legend* tells us that the Scarab is/was "a trinket in the form of a dung-beetle. It originated in ancient Egypt as an Amulet, being made of polished or glazed stone, metal or glazed faience, and was perforated lengthwise for suspension. By the XIIIth Dynasty, scarabs became used as seals, worn as pendants, or mounted on signet rings. The inset was supposed to conceal in itself the secret of eternal life, since the scarab was believed to be only of the male sex, hence their use as amulets. They are still the most popular of Egyptian souvenirs." That could explain something about the title of the deck then, in the use of the word Eternity. I think this deck will continue to prompt further mythological research!

## Places to Go, Things to Do

*The latest offerings from the esoteric community...*

### Fayres/Festivals/Conferences

#### *Halloween Festival*

Saturday/Sunday 18/19<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1

<http://www.paganfestivals.fsnet.co.uk/paganfestivals.fsnet.co.uk/serv03.htm>

### Regular Meetings

*Nottingham - Astrology Group* meets monthly every 2nd or 3rd Wednesday for talks and practical work. Further details from Gill on 0115 970 3051

*Manchester - Turn of the Cards* - a Tarot discussion group on the third Thursday of every month, hosted by Madame Estelle in New Aeon Books upstairs meeting room. Starts 7pm and the cost is £2.50 (£1.50 concessions). Phone 0161 232 0934

### Resources

<http://www.angelfire.com/celeb/Crowley/>

Book of Thoth online

### Theme/special interest/fun decks

<http://www.notsoswift.com/amindandacard/80starot/>

*The Eighties Tarot*

### Shopping

[www.cards4magic.co.uk](http://www.cards4magic.co.uk)

**TABI's Own Links**

***The Tarot Association of the British Isles Web Site***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk>

***Past issues of the Newsletter:***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk/page.php?page=newsletter>

***To request a Free Reading:***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk/freereading/freeread.php>

***Discussion forums:***

<http://www.tabi.org.uk/forums/>

***UK Tarot Talk - our General Discussion List on Tarot, for readers of all levels, hosted on Yahoogroups.***

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/UKTarotTalk/>

Our lists for volunteers and students are available from the site and/or when you sign up for volunteering, reading or learning the tarot. See the TABI web-site for details.

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