



Tarot Association
of the British Isles

TABI NEWS

Issue #21 21st June 2004

Welcome to the Summer 2004 edition of the TABI Newsletter.

We have an astrological theme this issue, featuring an interview with Liz Hazel and a review of her new book 'Tarot Decoded', plus a zodiac-based spread design and a light-hearted look at the astrology of tarot readers...

All our other usual fun features are here too, including the next Madame Fifie adventure, a new Short Story and lots of other reviews. Hope you enjoy!

Blessings of the Season to all our readers.

With best wishes,

Shelley King

Editor

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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. 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

Submissions

We welcome submissions, but are unable to offer payment. Please send articles, ideas or suggestions to the Editor: 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.

Sun and Moon Fayre - **31st July** (Somerset)

<http://www.wessexfayres.co.uk/Club/home.htm>

Lammas Games - **7th Aug** (Oxon)

<http://www.druidnetwork.org/events/lammas/index.html>

Herstmonceux Medieval Festival - **August Bank Holiday weekend** (Sussex)

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

London Halloween Festival (Readings) - **October 2004**

(Caduceus)

London

WitchFest International (Readings & Workshop) - **Saturday 6 November 2004**

(Children of Artemis)

Fairfield Halls

Croydon

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

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> A longer, 7 card + reading is also available free of charge to new members. For membership queries, contact membership@tabi.ork.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

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 trainingadmin@tabi.org.uk

UK Readers Listing: If you would like to promote your reading service on our site, please contact 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

Membership: membership@tabi.org.uk

Training & Endorsement: training.admin@tabi.org.uk

Confessions of a TABI Free Readings Monitor

By Clare McHale

[Crunching the numbers and grinding my teeth to bring you the latest news on TABI's Free Readings Service!]

I'm happy to report that the Free Readings service is going from strength to strength. The last few months have again shown a steady increase in requests, April had 14 more requests than March, and May continued this trend with 10 more requests than April.

This also applies to Requests from Men, in December 2003 the male of the species was a little shy and we only completed 12 readings for men, but in March and April 2004 the number of Completed Readings for men rose to 17 and continued to rise in May reaching a grand total of 21.

Steady on there boys! :)

The numbers for March/April/May are as follows:

March - 198 Requests

159 Completed Readings

39 Inactive

Of Completed March Readings:

17 were from men and

142 from women

April - 212 Requests

180 Completed Readings

32 Inactive

Of Completed April Readings:

17 were from men and

163 from women

May - 222 Requests

178 Completed Readings

44 Inactive

Of Completed May Readings:
21 were from men and
157 from women

As of the 12th of June we have a total of 46 Free Readers, 32 Active and 14 Inactive, though some of the latter do jump in and do Readings where and when possible. The lowest number of Readers we have on roster for any one day is 7 and the highest 14.

The 4th Free Readings Random Raffle had a Grand Total of 248 entries by 37 Readers.

This Raffle has beaten our 3rd draw into the dust, and stomped on it for good measure, with a huge increase of 79 entries for the three month Raffle period!

March - 79
April - 88
May - 81

The magic random number was 102, and our lovely winner **Alison**.
Congratulations Alison, we hope you enjoy you hard earned Amazon voucher!

Thank You to all our Readers, TABI really appreciates the hard work you put into making the Free Readings service such a success!

That's All Folks!

Clare [Dark Flower]
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The Astrology of Tarot Readers

By Mick Frankel

We sent TABI investigative reporter Sam Sword to find out more about Tarot and Astrology. What he discovered is quite extraordinary...

Someone told me about Mickey Querent and I thought it was a joke.

No joke.

Mickey Querent exists and I was lucky enough to be able to spend time with him. Mickey is a full-time querent. This means that he goes for a Tarot reading as often as he can. He's got to know Tarot readers and how they think. He's an expert in the psychology of Tarot readers.

I asked him how he tends to approach a Tarot reading...

"Well, basically, you see the key is Astrology. I use Astrology all the time when I go for a Tarot reading. Straight away, I always ask the reader when their birthday is and I adapt my style according to their Zodiac sign. It works really well. Dead good."

This was astonishing to hear. Mickey Querent is so skilful and experienced at going for Tarot readings that he actually changes his approach according to the reader's star sign! I pumped him for more info...

"I've been doing this for a good few years now, normally one or two readings every week or so and I've noticed that there are different types of Tarot reader. I reckon there's a definite link between the reader's Zodiac sign and they way they go about doing a reading for me. For example, supposing I find out that the reader was born March/April time. Aries. Well there's absolutely no point in going into a long explanation of why I'm there. Or even a short explanation come to think of it."

"You see, the Aries reader gets bored very quickly and I know that as soon as I start talking the reader is already thinking about their next querent. So I ask for a quick reading – let's face it you'll never get anything else from them – and I let them pile in and get on with it."

I felt that Mickey was being a little bit harsh on Aries readers, so I did some research and managed to track down Tarot reader Clara Ramsteen, who is an Aries. I showed her what Mickey had said and asked her what she thought.

She said, "Actually, some of what Mickey says does make sense although, obviously, I didn't have time to read all of it."

So maybe there is something in what Mickey says after all? I asked him about Taurus. How do you tend to approach the Taurean reader?

"Ah, well now you're talking! If the reader has an April/May birthday, then before we even talk about the reading, I just let them know that I've had to dash to get here and I haven't had the chance to have lunch yet. Not even a cup of tea. Before you know it, they'll sort you out a nice cup of tea and with any luck there'll be cake and biscuits and all."

I spoke to my friend Ms. Clara Bull, who is a Taurean Tarot reader and I told her about Mickey's food and drink angle. She was very dismissive.

"What a load of old rubbish! I've never heard such mindless piffle in me life! Hang on a sec, I'm just polishing off this sausage roll, do you fancy a cup of tea?"

My research on Gemini would take me far away from home. I asked Mickey how he deals with the May/June birthdays...

"The key thing to remember about the Gemini reader is they'll try to give you too much choice. Be ruthless with 'em. Just tell them exactly what you want. Don't allow any trace of hesitation or uncertainty to enter into your voice. Sometimes it's tricky because they'll do anything they can to pull you in two directions at once, but be very, very firm."

I was confused. I asked Mickey if he could give me an example.

"Well, I'll say something like, 'Give me a reading about my relationship'. Then they'll ask you for more details, whether I'm faced with a choice... that kind of thing. I don't even blink or miss a beat. I just say, 'No, that's fine thanks. Give me a reading about my relationship please.' After two or three times, they generally get the message."

It turned out to be trickier than I thought to find a Gemini Tarot reader but finally, I went to New Orleans to track down twin sisters Clarissa and Clairette Gémeaux.

The two women were constantly interrupting each other and it was hard to keep the thread of the conversation going but I told them about Mickey Querent and asked them what they thought of Mickey's way of dealing with Gemini readers...

"Now you don't wanna be believin' everythin' that boy says, you hear..." said Clarissa.

"But he certainly knows what he's talkin' 'bout..." interrupted Clairette.

"Gemini people don't need no second invitation to start right into givin' a Tarot reading..." Clarissa continued.

"But we always like to double-check everythin' jus' in case..." Clairette put in.

My head was starting to ache. I made my excuses and took the first plane home.

By this time, I was starting to wonder how Mickey would handle a reader with my own Sun-sign which is Sagittarius. But I thought it best to stick to the script and so I asked Mickey Querent about the June/July birthdays, the Cancerian Tarot readers.

“Well with Cancer people you have to be little bit careful”, said Mickey, his voice dropping almost to a whisper. “You see there’s every chance that the Cancerian reader is much more worried about the reading than you are. They really want to do a good job and to give you a special reading so you have to just make them feel comfortable. Even if there’s a situation that I really need to know about, I play it down and say something like – ‘just gimme a general reading, there’s nothing special that I need you to look at ‘– then as the reading develops I gradually turn the conversation around to what I really want to know about. Cancerian readers are great!”

How extraordinary! Mickey really knows how to look after a Tarot reader.

I had a chat with my friend Clare Crabbe who is a Cancerian. I showed her what Mickey had said about her star sign and she started to look a bit anxious. “Oh dear, am I really that much of a worrier? I don’t think so, not really, well maybe a bit.”

I shook my head and wondered just how Mickey handles those Leos...

Look out for the second part of Mickey's adventures next issue!

Fiction: Tarot Tales

By J.S. Chin

For this very short story, two cards were selected at random from a particular deck. The cards in question are the Three of Wands and the Knight of Wands from the Tarot of the Cat People.

There was once in the Emerald Kingdom of Twahihic a white haired woman who lived in an ornately sculpted building. One day she was seized by a wonderful idea for a trading venture specialising in selling unusual *objets d'art* from faraway places. She was so firm, determined and resolute, even her living wall cats took notice. One of them expressed definite agreement whilst the other – who was a bit higher up on the wall and sometimes haughty – stared down at its mistress in amusement.

“*Ooooh*, I’m sure you would, oh brazen mistress.” The cat muttered. “There’s one who’s all fur trim and no kni...” (The haughty cat was a keen admirer of Frankie Howerd’s sense of dramatic delivery.)

It was a great idea worthy of execution, but she realised she would require somebody to act as an agent – her eyes and ears on the road – in order to achieve this. Rather than ask the Page (who often got caught up in the swarm of new experiences) she decided a seasoned traveller with a wealth of experience would be more suitable for her objectives. So she asked the Knight.

The Knight had just returned from another of his long journeys when the offer was made. It seemed to be a worthwhile proposition.

“Only don’t expect me to bring back too much.” The Knight said. “I travel light and there’s always the danger of bandits on the road. I can bring back small items and put you in touch with the right people like other traders.”

The woman and the Knight agreed to this working arrangement. He would venture off to the farthest lands on his bobcat steed, always bringing back whatever he could and any news of delicious opportunities for the woman to take advantage of. In return she would see his bobcat was well fed during each stopover and rewarded the Knight with some of her profits, even though he preferred to be without any burdens. The wall cats were surprised at how well their mistress was faring from her enterprise. “Well,” the haughty feline concluded. “I suppose that’s what comes of putting your dream into action.”

Suggested further reading:

Tarot of the Cat People: A Traveller’s Report – Karen Kuykendall.

US Games Inc.

TAKING PART IN TABI'S ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

A view from down under – by Lyn
tarotART@xtra.co.nz

Our first International Endorsed Reader shares her experience...

For me becoming a TABI endorsed reader was probably more about the process than the end result. Living on the other side of the world naturally puts one or two restrictions on representing TABI at events around the British Isles – however – I have no doubt that I will one day get an opportunity to proudly display the TABI logo and promote myself as a TABI endorsed reader.

Tarot has been a big part of my life for a number of years now – and like many who have been bitten by the tarot bug, I am always looking for opportunities to learn and consequently expand my tarot knowledge. The TABI endorsement process provided exactly this opportunity. And, having just taken part in TABI's on-line beginners course – it seemed a natural progression.

Initially I did wonder how this was all going to work for me. The idea of sending at least 25 readings for 'review' had me curious. How was another person going to get inside my head and even come close to necessarily seeing the reading as I did? Is tarot reading not a very personal thing? I have some experience (usually in classroom situations) when more than one person has input to a reading and I have noted how, at times, initial reactions to cards can be very different from individual to individual. And, it goes without saying that on the odd occasion these reactions can even appear on the surface to be contradictory.

I have also had the experience, as I am sure many of you have, reading one on one, when a querent, having some tarot knowledge, adds their own interpretation and again it 'appears' (on the surface) to differ from a point you are trying to make. I was also very aware that along with 'traditional' interpretations, and depending on the deck used, I rely quite heavily on the visual aspects of the cards so many of my responses come directly from what 'I' see at the time.

However, any concerns I had as I wondered about all this were quickly laid to rest as I discovered my readings were not being 'marked' for being 'right' or 'wrong' and no one was trying to mould me to a particular style. I recognized too, my Mentor had not only been chosen to suit my own style of reading but my personality as well. It was great - I had someone right there who I could freely ask questions of and who was 'obliged' to answer them no matter how ridiculous they might have been!!!

But on a more serious note, as I had never actually read via email before and it was a whole new experience for me, I was always going to benefit greatly from the guidance of someone who had!

It became very clear that my readings were being 'reviewed' for very valid reasons. One was to ensure that they complied with TABI's Code of Ethics – which, as part of the process, I had agreed to adhere to.

There was also the issue of interpretation. I needed to be able to show that I had a reasonably sound knowledge of the 'traditional' card meanings, so if asked, I could perhaps 'justify' my response. I assumed too that the process was there to ensure that I could communicate my message clearly and I guess professionally.

In fact I think the most challenging aspect I found doing readings via email was how to get a message across (especially when dealing with extremely sensitive issues) without the benefit of gesture, facial expression, tone of voice etc. I found email could be quite a difficult medium in which to work in as much as it could so easily be misread and consequently misinterpreted. I had to really think before I 'spoke' – (a challenge for many a Sagittarian I am sure!!) as I knew I wouldn't have an immediate opportunity to clarify anything I had said.

I learned that I could smile and ooze enthusiasm all I liked as I typed my responses, but it would fall on deaf ears (so to speak) as no one was able to 'see' or 'hear' it. I had to find a way to portray these gestures or tones of voice through written words as people were going to need to 'feel' it.

I also realised, that anything I had typed, even with a smile on my face or humour in my voice, I could in fact reread 24 hours later, and get quite a different result. I could see there was an art to this type of reading and I was about to learn a lot. One thing that didn't seem to change though was the type of questions being asked. They ranged from the, dare I say 'desperate' plea of 'do they still love me' to very personal and heartfelt requests as a person tried to make sense of a troubling issue in their lives.

I found that the most challenging readings were the ones that launched head on into very sensitive issues. And, without the luxury of face to face dialogue – careful choice of words proved to be of utmost importance. However, I hasten to add, it was the more 'difficult' readings that ended up being the most rewarding.

I did find it hard at times not being able to ask questions in order to clarify any thoughts or feelings before responding. And, any cues a reader gets from a querant, due to their response to a question asked or via simple body language are, of course, also missing. There is nothing to guide you (apart from the cards themselves) – especially in the more sensitive readings – as to whether the territory you are venturing into is even open for discussion! So faith and trust in the cards becomes so important.

My faith was certainly put to the test on one or two occasions. And I must say, in one instance my 'trust' did falter somewhat. Whilst I felt I trusted the cards totally I got into a space where I doubted for a moment my interpretation of them, (due to the nature of the reading). Enter

Mentor. She read my response – noted my concerns – and, an enlightened response encouraged me to shake off any doubts and ‘tell it as it was’. I will admit that I sent that particular reading off with fingers, legs and all other bits crossed and was most relieved when a wonderfully detailed and personal response came back from the querent acknowledging the appropriateness of the reading.

In fact, I think I probably had 3 particularly personal responses – each one followed very personal readings that delved into very sensitive issues – and I was completely humbled by the information people were able to share. And, it is moments like these that make the tarot reading process for me, so worthwhile.

The time and effort that goes into this endorsement process by all involved is truly commendable. Everyone offers their time as a volunteer and although I hear a lot said about people not valuing a service unless they pay for it – I can honestly say, I value this experience so much more because I KNOW the people involved are driven by passion and not financial reward. That to me speaks volumes.

Interested in becoming a TABI Free Reader?

To join TABI's endorsement programme, send a blank email to:
reading@tabi.org.uk

An A-Z of Tarot

Our continuing journey...

G is for... Golden Dawn

By Ian Stevens

According to its own history and myth The hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn came into being in 1887 when Dr William Wescott discovered a cipher manuscript that led to the founding of an English branch of Die Goldene Dammerung in 1888. The Order attracted some of the most colourful personalities of the time including W. B. Yeats, S. L. MacGregor Mathers, Aleister Crowley and A. E. Waite.

The Order traced its spiritual ancestry back to the Rosicrucians, whose teachings were believed to have been handed down by word of mouth to a few wise men in Europe, generation upon generation. Eliphas Levi and Kenneth Mackenzie were regarded as two of the leading adepts of this succession. Going back beyond the Rosicrucians, the secret wisdom had its roots in the Qabalah from which it could be traced to Moses, traditionally the founder of the Qabalah who learned it in ancient Egypt, a culture which strongly influenced the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn also gave the Tarot an important place in its teaching and has been a major influence on subsequent attempts to interpret the cards. It based its Tarot doctrines on Levi, but significantly altered his connections between the trumps and the Hebrew letters. They constructed a single system embracing the Qabalah, the Tarot, alchemy, astrology, numerology, divination, visionary experience and magic and most of the correspondence tables that are published are based on those used by the Golden Dawn.

S L Macgregor Mathers, a founding member of the order, wrote many of its rituals and eventually became its head. He was a true eccentric and would probably have been unemployable in any field other than as head of a magical order. His overbearing attitude resulted in him being expelled from the Order in 1900 but he retained much influence and tried to get his protégé Aleister Crowley elected as leader in his place.

In 1891 A. E. Waite joined the Golden Dawn and when he published his Tarot deck in 1910 he incorporated in the symbolism elements of all the different strands of the GD doctrine. The actual Golden Dawn deck, although based on earlier designs by Mathers, was not published until some time later. Waite was a Christian and when he took control of the Orders London temple in 1903 he rewrote the rituals, of which there were many, involving lots of props and much dressing up, in order to play down the magic and insert a Christian spirit. This attracted little support however and his version of the GD closed down in 1914.

The Golden Dawn concerned itself with 'high' as opposed to 'low' magic, regarding the Tarot as a key to the mysteries rather than a divinatory tool although letters and instructions on Tarot divination were published. Waite was equally scathing about using Tarot for this purpose and in his book 'The Key to the Tarot' he described his own divinatory meanings for the cards as 'arbitrary' and the product of 'uninstructed intuition'. He also associates such use with 'witchcraft and the black sabbath'. You can't but think he would turn in his grave if he knew the way his deck is most commonly used today.

If A. E. Waite was on a mission to Christianise the Golden Dawn then Aleister Crowley, another tarot-associated member, certainly wasn't. Crowley joined the Golden Dawn in 1898. He was at first a devoted pupil of Mathers but later fell out with him in a big way and summoned the great Beelzebub and forty-nine demons in order to deal with him. Mathers duly died shortly afterwards in 1918 which enhanced Crowley's reputation as an occult master in the eyes of many. Crowley believed that he was a reincarnation of Eliphas Levi amongst others and this influenced his views and treatment of the Tarot. He thought that Levi had deliberately concealed the correct attribution of the trumps to Hebrew letters because he was a member of an occult order which had sworn him to secrecy. Accordingly Crowley's allocation on the Thoth deck differs slightly again from both Levis and the Golden Dawn versions. Not surprisingly Crowley didn't like Waite, calling him a pompous pedant and a humbug. In his 'Book of Thoth' he doubtless had the Waite deck in mind when he called other rectified modern versions 'gross, senseless and pitifully grotesque'.

The third member of the Order who published his own deck was Paul Foster Case. He claimed to be head of the Golden Dawn in the United States and founded an organization called 'The Builders of the Adytum' (BOTA) and designed a deck of the same name. The Majors were based on Waite's deck and the Minors were pip cards. Perhaps for this reason and the fact that the deck was published in black and white, intending for the owner to add the colours, it has never gained the popularity of Waite's and Crowley's decks. Case also published a book 'The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages' which is considered to be the most comprehensive of the Golden Dawn related books on Tarot.

With so many competing giant egos at work it is not surprising that during the early part of the last century the Golden Dawn fragmented and currently consists of a number of loosely connected orders based largely in the United States. The original Order was very much a product of Victorian Britain providing an opportunity for wealthy types to indulge their interest in the occult while spending lots of money on Temples and regalia. Nevertheless it performed a great service to the occult world by collating and refining the various strands of the ancient mysteries in the Western Tradition. It has certainly been very influential, some say even providing the foundation of the "occult revival" of recent years and being a source of resource material for Wicca, the Neo – Pagan movement and a variety of other magical groups.

Bibliography:

The Tarot – Richard Cavendish

The Key to the Tarot – A. E. Waite

The Golden Dawn – Israel Regardie

Book of Formation (Sepher Yetzirah) – Akiba ben Joseph

Featured Spread: The Astrology Wheel

By Mick Frankel

This spread works well as a birthday present for someone, especially if they're interested in astrology. The aim of the spread is to give the querent some insight into different areas of their life in the year to come.

The 12 cards represent the Astrological Houses and are laid out in the form of a clock face, with card 1 in the '9' position - the rest follow anti-clockwise, so card 2 takes the '8' position, card 3 the '7' and so on.. The 13th card is placed in the middle and summarises the spread, with general guidance for the year ahead. Pay special attention to cards 1, 4, 7, 10 and 13

The positional meanings are as follows: -

- 1) How you relate to the world, what the world sees
- 2) Your possessions, tangible things that you own.
- 3) How you communicate; your brothers and sisters; daily travel
- 4) Your home; nurturing influences, especially your mother
- 5) Your creativity; children; special projects of your own
- 6) Health; your job, and how you apply yourself to your work
- 7) Close one-to-one relationships and partnerships
- 8) Sex; shared money; taxes
- 9) Learning, especially philosophy; long-distance travel
- 10) Your career, business
- 11) Your friends; clubs and organisations that you belong to; original ideas
- 12) Your inner world, especially dreams
- 13) An overall card for the year

Here's an example of the Astrology spread. This is a reading I did for a friend of mine - the reading lasted about an hour and it gave us an excellent framework for discussing what was going on in the querent's life. When you look for card meanings, it's often useful to look at the card that's in the opposite House. This can give an axis of meaning for example, the sixth House and twelfth House in this reading.

- 1) Page of Swords - How you relate to the world; what the world sees

This seemed to mean a year where communication would be vitally important to the querent.

- 2) Eight of Swords - Your possessions, tangible things that you own

It would be a year where things would be tight and the querent would be feeling the pinch.

- 3) The Fool - How you communicate; your brothers and sisters; daily travel

This linked back to the Page of Swords in the first House and emphasised the need for the querent to look for new, unique and individual ways to communicate.

4) The Magician - Your home; nurturing influences especially your mother
There was tremendous potential in the fourth House, possibly suggesting moving to a new home.

5) Ten of Swords - Your creativity; children; special projects of your own
Time to complete any special projects, bring a cycle of creativity to an end in order to move on to the next level.

6) Five of Coins - Your job and how you apply yourself to your work; health
This was the toughest card in the spread for the querent. It pointed to a difficult year maybe struggling to find fulfilment in their working life. It meant that they would have to look after their health and not overdo things.

7) Ace of Wands - Close one-to-one relationships and partnerships
This meant a year of putting ideas into practice and getting on with things. There was definitely the promise of a steamy relationship in the year ahead.

8) Seven of Cups - Sex; shared money; taxes
This seemed to flow on nicely from the Ace of Wands with the promise of passion and pleasure. It also seemed to point to making an emotional choice.

9) Ace of Swords - Learning, especially philosophy; long-distance travel
Along with Magician and the Ace of Wands, the Ace of Swords seemed to be saying that the year would be full of potential. The possibility of a year of real advances in learning.

10) Four of Wands - Your career, business
This seemed to mean a year of firmly establishing a business that was already up and running. Consolidating rather than starting something new.

11) Knight of Wands - Your friends; clubs and organisations that you belong to; original ideas
This was a very positive card to appear in the eleventh House. Time to go out into the world and find like-minded people with a practical attitude.

12) The Tower - Your inner world, especially dreams
Directly opposite the Five of Coins in the sixth House, this is the most difficult axis in the spread. It pointed to the dramatic psychological changes that the querent would continue to go through and that might be the root cause of physical symptoms. A dramatic year for the querent's inner life.

13) Ten of Coins - An overall card for the year
This seemed to emphasise the Ten of Swords in the fifth House and the Four of Wands in the tenth and point to a year of completion, hard-work and success.

My final comment was that it wouldn't be a straightforward year and at times there would be tears in the year ahead. But there was tremendous potential and everything would be moving in a very positive direction with the promise of success after the hard times.

An Introduction to Tarot Spells

By Caroline Wood

First of all, a little about spellwork. I assume most readers will have at least some knowledge of the tarot, but not necessarily any kind of magick. This is one of those areas that is very subjective and open to interpretation. The details that work for me may not necessarily work for you, but the bare bones should give you enough to get started. I am what is commonly labelled as an “eclectic”, meaning that I don’t belong to any particular path, tradition or religion. So the elements of my workings are gleaned from many different sources after plenty of research! Whether you work within a specific tradition or none at all, you should be able to get a good idea from this article of what goes into tarot spellwork. Janina Renee’s “Tarot Spells” is an excellent resource for further study.

Spellwork is a very creative process, so for tarotists, it’s a somewhat shorter step than an absolute beginner. Tarotists tend to be quite flexible, constantly designing new spreads, decks and interpretations, so even if you’ve never done any kind of magick before you should find it relatively simple. We’re also good at working with and making personal connections with symbols and mythologies.

The theory that I use as the basis for my spellwork is that all things in the Universe have a purpose. Therefore, all things seek out what they need along their path of existence. This applies equally to people, animals, buildings, objects, even nations. You don’t necessarily have to believe this, but that’s the “mystic” framework it’s built on. So for me – on the esoteric level - a “spell” is the equivalent of putting a carefully crafted wanted ad in the paper.

Humans seek things out consciously most of the time, although we do also send out signals unconsciously. Unconscious signals are often negative and are created by the way we feel and beliefs we have. For example, if you go for an interview and aren’t confident in yourself, you send out cues and ideas to people in your body language and patterns of speech. Notice how hugely confident people seem to get everything they need - the unconscious signals *they* send out are “I deserve this”, whether they do or not!

We can tap into the “system” by deliberately setting up a positive “call”. On a mystical level, you can talk about “tweaking the strands of the Web of Wyrð in your direction”. On a completely practical, down-to-earth level, you can be said to be programming your subconscious. What you’re doing is planting a suggestion in your mind that encourages you to be more receptive to noticing things and being open to what you need. It’s a subtle influence, but it does work. As readers, we often help people to see opportunities they may not have spotted; this kind of spellwork is the same idea.

In general, you don’t do a spell for a specific item (and especially not for a specific person, since that would compromise their free will). This is because you never have all the information about that thing in advance. If you did a spell to get a particular job for example, you might get it, but

you wouldn't have known beforehand that you'd have to work with somebody horrible! So the trick is to just send out your request for the best thing for your "Higher Good". However, if you did get the job with the horrible person, it might bring you a useful experience in how to sack someone...:)

An example spell

There are always more ways than one to skin a cat, and so it is with spellwork. I like to use tarot spells, because the symbols mean a lot to me and I use the cards every day. Other people like to use candle or herb magick and so on; the real key to this style of magick is to work out what symbols mean the most to you and go with that. It's easy enough to mix and match in whatever's useful to the bare bones of the working. This is a very fluid way of working, which may seem intimidating at first, but it's rather like choosing a deck. With a little practice, you come to know what sort of symbols, artwork and approach suit you best, and so it is with finding the best way of working for you.

The following directions were designed for a friend of mine who is looking for a new house; her current home is too small and she has started to dislike it because of the noisy neighbours. The elements we wanted to bring to the working are as follows:

- 1) End of cycle/gateway to the next
- 2) Fertility of idea/hearth & home
- 3) Completion/joy

I am using the Rider-Waite here, but if you want to use another deck, do examine the symbolism carefully so that you get the required elements. Part of the power of using tarot cards is the very visual nature of the images, so you need to make sure you're getting what you need. Don't feel you have to restrict yourself to three cards, either, but take care not to overwhelm yourself. Before you read our selections, take a minute to think about what cards you could choose to represent these ideas. You may disagree with our choices – that's fine, as long as it means something to you!

We chose the Ten of Pentacles, The Empress and the Four of Wands to represent these themes (if you were building a home, you might choose the Three of Pentacles and any of the work-related cards as substitutes or in addition to the Four). The Ten is a sign of perfection, and has the symbolism of gates both on the mundane and spiritual levels. The Empress stands for hearth & home, family, fertility (of projects as well as people). The Four stands for liberation, safe haven, celebration, joy in the home, and completion.

Now, on to the spell itself!

The first thing to do is make yourself a space to do the work. Ideally this should be a clean, clear area big enough to support whatever symbols you'll be using, including flowers, candles, incense or whatever you feel necessary. You should also be able to cast a circle (just imagine a circle around you, then turn it into a sphere. It's just to delineate the space you're working in and help you concentrate, rather than to keep out demons!).

Cast your circle and lay out the Ten of Pentacles. Visualise the card, or concentrate on it, looking at the gate. Now imagine yourself stepping out of your current home and through a gate. Imagine yourself feeling optimistic, bright, awake and open to suggestions and ideas. Begin to construct your ideal home in your mind's eye - not a specific place you've seen already, but think of things like "I'd like to have two bedrooms and a cosy kitchen, with a garden just big enough for me to handle and sit in", for example. It's ok to imagine how it would look ideally though - a garden full of red geraniums is one I use to represent a safe, happy home, although I'm not very good at growing them! Don't go nuts unless you can afford it, but don't do yourself down either. There's no point in doing work like this if you negate it by thinking "oh, but I don't really deserve that much space". Say to yourself "I am open to finding a new home. I am open to passing through the gate from old to new, in accordance with my Higher Good."

When you feel you've got a nice idea of what you're looking for, lay out the Empress. See yourself seated in your ideal home just as She's seated on her throne - calm, confident and very much at home. Enjoy that feeling for as long as you like; the more you can feel it with every sense, the stronger the impression will be. Imagine the things that make a home to you - hear a cat purring, feel the cosiness of the fire in winter, smell fresh coffee or polish, taste the home-grown peas from your own vegetable plot. Say to yourself "I see myself in my new home, comfortable and happy".

Finally, lay out the Four of Wands. This is a celebration card, so imagine yourself sending out "new home" cards, or organising a housewarming, or welcoming friends and family over your threshold. Again, see and feel as much as you can; the scent of champagne and fresh flowers, hear the voices of your friends congratulating you on a good choice. Make it as real as possible. When you're ready, finally see yourself saying goodnight to your visitors and following your evening routine - make a drink, put the cat out, and settle down in bed, with a big smile. Say to yourself "My new home is mine to celebrate and to relax in". Don't make the mistake of saying "will be mine" - with this sort of phrasing you put the event permanently in the future!

When you're done with these, leave the cards somewhere you can see them, and put out the candles if you've used them. Some people like to relight the candle and meditate on these ideas daily or weekly; you're not "reinforcing the spell" with this, just keeping yourself mindful of the opportunity you're working on. Finally, get looking for your house on the physical plane; it's a very rare occasion when one will drop into your lap out of the blue. But you may just find it under an estate agent's listing that you wouldn't normally look at, or they may just "remember" a place that's not gone into the window yet, that sort of thing.

To return to the theory, you've now made yourself open to seeing opportunities where you may not have seen them before. You've put the call out "on the astral", as it were, and the right home for your Higher Good will intersect with that at some point. It doesn't always work fast, but it will get there. It may actually not be the next home you get, but perhaps the one after that!

Featured Reader Interview: Jens Larsen

Real Name/Reading Name:

Jens Larsen, reading under: MysticReading

Area:

I live in Watford, Hertfordshire

Age:

39 .. erm, actually turning 40 this Summer

Non-tarot occupation:

I work as a management consultant, so I do a lot of project work. Currently managing a project of up to 30 people within the Finance Area, where we have 1 year to get everything in place from the system to training people and making sure that everyone understands and agrees with the new procedures this will entail. In this respect, I am used to dealing with people who are nervous about change, as well as seeing the different reactions this can result in. Not that I still get surprised about the politics involved with these types of activities. In this way, my involvement with Tarot provides a welcome break from the challenges of daily life.

Spiritual leanings:

This is a difficult one. On one hand, I do believe that there is someone, be it a God, looking out for us, but on the other hand I believe in every individuals right to practice spirituality as they see fit. For me, this means practicing in private in my own time. I also believe that we all have spirit guides - I have certainly had the odd nudge here and there to indicate that is is the right time to do something.

Astrological aspects and how you think this affects your tarot approach:

I was born in late June, and therefore am Cancerian. Cancerians are usually very sensitive and I am no exception there. I do not consciously use astrology when reading the Tarot, but believe that the sensitivity of my star-sign does help approach readings in a balanced manner.

How long involved in tarot?

I have been seriously involved in Tarot for a little under a year, where I bought my first deck and found that I could read the cards intuitively. This may not be a very long time, but to use the example of learning to read a book; once you have learned it, you can only expand your vocabulary but not forget how to read.

What drew you to it?

This is an interesting question, and an example of the apparent coincidences that have appeared in my recent life. In December 2001, I had an experience very similar to bereavement which affected me up very strongly up until the Summer of 2002, where I found myself doing some work in the US. Up until then, I had the strong belief that 'everything can be explained'. For one reason or another, I visited a psychic there. Whilst you can always question the motives of psychics, including this one, it nevertheless started a path of meditation, chakra balancing and study of crystals - which also helped me get to terms with what had happened. By then my view

that 'everything can be explained' had changed towards 'there are some things you should just not even try to explain - they are nevertheless'. As a result of doing the meditation, I felt that something else had to happen - and started exploring different meditation techniques. These did not really strike a cord, but through this, I started Psychic Awareness training at a local Esoteric shop/training centre. This got me into all sorts of things, including the use of Pendulums and Aura-watching, and at the end, I bought my first Tarot deck and started studying the symbols etc. Actually, I bought 2 decks before finally buying the Rider-Waite deck and finding that I could read the cards intuitively. So, the route to tarot has been a bit by chance, like most other things in my life :)

Do you read for yourself?

I do try to read for myself. I keep a tarot diary based on 3 daily cards (body, mind, spirit), which I regularly check back on to see patterns develop. The reason for this is mostly to get a feel for different interpretations of the cards. I have also done larger spreads for myself, which sometimes works and sometimes not. In fact, when many changes are going on, it is difficult to see it objectively, but since I keep a journal of the readings I do, there is benefit by looking over the readings after the fact as well.

First deck?

My first deck was the Cagliostro Tarot deck, which I bought because I liked the artwork. As it goes, I hardly ever use it for readings since the minor Arcana is similar to a normal deck of cards, and I read best based on images.

How many decks now?

I have 7 decks - still looking for new ones, though

Fave deck(s)? Why?

In terms of art-work and expression, I think the Ancestral Path Tarot is a definite favourite, as it blends elements of Eastern, Egyptian/African, Native American and European cultures. I find this deck very good for path readings; career, spiritual. I also use the Spiral Tarot and Rider-Waite quite a lot - Spiral Tarot generally for relationship readings due to the softer artwork, and Rider-Waite because it is a classic. I do appreciate the direct, sometimes almost brutal messages that Rider-Waite comes up with in readings.

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

Probably Rider-Waite, but I do give Querents to option to choose one of the above three. That in itself helps focus the readings.

Fave book and/or author?

78 degrees of wisdom by Rachel Pollack

Fave/most used spread?

My personal favourite is the horse-shoe spread as it is empowering. The most used one is a 3-card spread used on-line, but I also use the Celtic Cross or variants thereof quite a bit for face to face readings.

Do you use reversals or other system ie Elemental Dignities?

I try to avoid reversals by not consciously reversing cards in my decks. However, sometimes a card does turn up reversed and then I just have to interpret it. In doing this, I generally use the opposite interpretation to the upright meaning, depending on the situation of course.

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

I have studied the symbolism of Tarot quite a bit, as I tend to respond to images best. I also use numerology in the readings and have recently started to study the Quabalah in some detail, just to get a little more background knowledge.

Do you add psychic impressions to your readings?

I am not psychic in the sense that I get visions or anything like that. I do from time to time get intuitive insights either through sudden thoughts or through the aura, which I incorporate in the reading. I do not read the cards psychically, however, but tend to follow the meaning of the cards, as this provides consistency. Psychic insights are therefore more helpful in 'tuning into' a particular aspect of a card.

Do you rephrase? Why?

I very often rephrase. Mostly this is done to avoid some of the common pitfalls of people asking for Predictions, Third-party readings or other. Usually, Querents respond well to this, when the reason is explained.

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

Unethical questions, such as third-party readings and readings where the intention is not pure or honest.

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

One of the books, I have, is the 'Hands of Light' by Barbara Ann-Brennan, which mainly explains about aspects of the Aura and the fact that we are all connected through our energies. Building on this, I see tarot as being one of several ways in which certain individuals can 'tune into' the energies of others. After all, why would internet Tarot readings and long-distance healing be possible ?

How would you describe your reading style?

Intuitive and Sensitive with an aim to empower the querent

Do you read professionally? How long for? What format? (email/phone etc)

I do read professionally, more like a paid hobby actually. I have conducted paid readings face-to-face, over E-mail and by Telephone. Methods of payment by cash, cheque or paypal. Currently, I am working on Sundays at a local Crystal shop to perform Tarot readings.

How can querents contact you for a reading?

Preferred by E-Mail; Mysticreading@BTInternet.com

Visit Jens' website at www.art-of-tarot.net

Queen of the Cards

By Maggie Hyde

Guest Article

The following article appears with kind permission from Maggie Hyde, Director of the Company of Astrologers. Although this article was written for an astrological audience, the details about the way that Pamela Coleman Smith worked are fascinating and will no doubt be of interest to all tarot readers who have ever seen a Rider-Waite deck! The article first appeared in the Company's Bulletin, a fortnightly newsletter for astrologers and individuals interested in divination; please see the end notes for further information.

QUEEN OF THE CARDS

Pamela Colman Smith & the Rider-Waite Tarot

by Maggie Hyde *(from a seminar at the Company of Astrologers on 4 February 2004)*

Pamela Colman Smith is the illustrator of the Rider-Waite Tarot pack, and until recently she has been the unsung heroine of the Tarot world. The pack was named after the publishers (Rider) and a leading figure in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, A.E. Waite. Waite's comments on the divinatory meanings of the cards were published with the pack, and in book form, and whilst much has been written on his work, little has been published on Pamela Colman Smith. However, last year, Stuart Kaplan published Volume III of his *Encyclopaedia of Tarot* in which he discusses all that is so far known about her life and work.

Born in 1878 into an American family with connections in New York, London and Jamaica, Pixie Smith, as she was known to her friends, travelled between the three countries. Her mother died when Pixie was young and she went to live with the actress Ellen Terry, travelling with her touring company and working as a set and costume designer. After studying art in New York, she finally settled in London where she found free-lance work as an illustrator, and for some years, mainly between 1901 and 1911, she became involved with w.B. Yeats, Waite and the Golden Dawn. Waite commissioned her to produce the Tarot illustrations, under his guidance, but hermetic orders were not quite her cup of tea. She soon afterwards became a Roman Catholic and went to live in Cornwall, apparently disillusioned with London society and her inability to make a decent living as an artist. She set up a holiday home for Catholic priests in Bude, Cornwall, and died in poverty and debt. She was paid poorly for her tarot illustrations - "I just finished a big job for very little cash" - quite a sadness, considering her cards continue to be the best-selling pack world-wide, and her designs have given rise to well over twenty other packs.

It is often thought that Pamela Colman Smith was the first artist to put pictures onto the minor arcana cards, but as Kaplan's work shows, some of the images on the pip cards were taken from a fifteenth century Italian pack, the Sola-Busca Tarot. Photographs of this pack had been sent to

the British Museum, although the whereabouts of the original pack are unknown, presumed lost in Milan during the second world war. Whatever the historical influences, and despite Waite's attempts to make the cards carry cabalistic and mystical meanings, Pixie Smith made the cards her own. Her unique style is best exemplified by her Aquarian Sun, in partile opposition and mutual reception with her Uranus in Leo. This opposition smacks of 'the Golden Dawn', but her synastry with Waite and her first meetings with him time astrologically not to her Sun but to her natal Saturn in Pisces. Waite's Neptune is on her Saturn, and as is so often the case in synastry, the two individuals play out their inter-aspect contacts in reverse, so he is Saturn to her, and she is Neptune to him. They met when her Sun progressed to Saturn as she finds spiritual guidance from an older man, a master of mystical traditions and occult hierarchy. For him, she carries his mystical Neptune in Pisces, giving it form and sealing it for posterity through her Saturn.

One of the most remarkable issues about Pixie Smith is that she had synaesthesia, a rare condition which means the senses are transposed, so that the individual experiences one sense through another, **feeling** colours through the fingers, and so on. Pixie Smith **saw** music, and sketched the spirits who came to her as she did so. It is said that the first time she heard Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, she drew a faun, without knowing the title of the work. She was also thought to be extremely psychic, and after a visit to Ireland, she was able to see the fairy folk. This type of vision and second sight is indicated in her chart by an unusual line-up of Mercury, Venus and Neptune. Although Mercury-Neptune form the square, Venus comes in on a sextile and mutual reception to Neptune, all on the same degree. This is like her ability to swap around the senses, with visionary, artistic consequences. However, the cards themselves, published on 1st December 1909, are shown by the slow-forming progression of Saturn to the sextile of Pluto, and it is this which appears to have given her a place in the archives of art and occultism.

**** CHART DATA ****

For astrologers interested in looking at the relevant charts, here is the relevant data:

- Pamela Colman Smith, time unknown, 16 February 1878.
- A.E. Waite, 5pm36 (GMT) 2 October 1857, New York, 40N43 74W00.

The Company of Astrologers Bulletin is available fortnightly in both online and printed format. The Company runs a variety of courses in the arts of divination, specialising in Astrology but also including Tarot and other areas. A range of levels is catered for, from beginners to advanced, including an ongoing series of foundation courses in Astrology. To find out about the courses currently running and/or subscribe to the Company Bulletin, please contact them on the following details:

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The TABI Interview: Elizabeth Hazel

by Mick Frankel

Elizabeth Hazel is a professional astrologer and Tarot reader. She lectures throughout the USA and writes for various astrological and Tarot journals including the American Tarot Association newsletter. Her book "Tarot Decoded" has just been published.

I was delighted to have the chance to talk to Liz for the TABI quarterly.

Liz, you're a Tarot reader and an astrologer, which came first for you?

I got my first tarot deck as a pre-teen, and spent several years memorising the meanings and reading every book available, which - back in those days - was not too much. I found the meanings in books a little dry, so started a Tarot journal, writing down the cards and meanings, and then going back to compare the readings to what had actually happened. I also had a notebook with a page for each card, and wrote down my expanded understanding of each card. I kept adding to this notebook for over ten years.

What was your first deck?

My first deck was the Aquarian Tarot by David Palladini. Quickly realizing it was pretty but simplistic, I went back 2 weeks later and got a copy of the Crowley-Harris Thoth deck.

Eventually, I came across a copy of "Book of Thoth." It was evident that astrology was pertinent to the Tarot. Crowley (although a degenerate sort of person) was a cracker-jack astrologer. I was extremely lucky to find Dr. Rilma Buckman as an astrology teacher, and I took lessons from her for three years. The book is dedicated to her.

Since I had started out by learning Tarot on my own, I'd learned all sorts of intuitive tricks for reading the cards before ever seriously pursuing astrology. On the whole, astrologers don't particularly care for intuitive tricks! But I found that by combining intuitive techniques with knowledge of the placement and timing of planetary cycles, the scope and accuracy of my readings was greatly enhanced.

I think that many Tarot readers – and some astrologers- blend knowledge and intuition. Is it possible for you to say more about any of your intuitive tricks?

Different clients evoke different skills as needed for their reading. I call this my "bag of tricks": clairvoyance, clairaudience, gut instincts, intuition, messages or pictures in the client's aura. Sometimes I get smells, too, but I'm not sure there's a name for that trick (whiffoyance?!). I also have empathic body reactions to people in pain - so if their knees hurt, mine do, too.

Both the client and the cards evoke reactions. When a client sits across from me, I try to become an empty vessel and allow impressions from the client to fill me. But I never know which ability is going to manifest in a reading.

Whiffyance – I love it. Sort of like “second smell”? Did you have a target audience in mind when you wrote your book?

As a member of various internet Tarot groups, it was obvious that many beginners struggle to understand the concept of dignities. Dignities are techniques that allow a reader to get past the one-card-at-a-time style of reading, and move into merging card meanings by blending them with their neighbouring cards. To my knowledge, there aren't any books dedicated to providing a systematic overview of dignity techniques and their uses.

So this book is written for tarot readers who have learned the meanings of the cards, and are ready learn how to make their readings more sophisticated and integrated. Some dignity methods are fairly simple to understand and use, while others may take years to master. The book begins with the easier methods and moves to cover the more difficult ones - people can go at their own pace.

I think your book achieves what you set out to do. Are you planning a follow-up book that goes even deeper?

"Tarot Decoded" is dedicated to the wide range dignity methods available for readers, and one of those methods is blending Tarot and astrology. The next book on the drawing board is focused specifically on methods for merging Tarot with astrology. These two forecasting systems are so complementary, there are endless ways in which they can be creatively combined.

I was pleased to see that you mention the 17th Century English astrologer William Lilly in the bibliography, has Lilly's work influenced you at all?

Lilly provided tables derived from Ptolemy, and the planet-sign combinations used in the Golden Dawn attribution system for the pip cards are from Ptolemy's "face" rulers of the sign. Decan, face, and term are all sign divisions used in western medieval astrology. Some of medieval astrology techniques survived into modern usage, but many have not. I enjoy comparing the differences between modern western astrology, Vedic astrology (Jyotish), western Medieval/Renaissance techniques, and Arabic astrology.

Lilly was one of several medieval/renaissance writers who catalogued contemporary techniques. Although I've found his work interesting, I actually prefer Ficino or Bonati as representatives of that time period. Bonati worked with Arabic techniques, particularly with the writings of Albumassar (who, as I recall, was a 9th or 10th century Arabic astrologer).

Bonati's description of the construction and use of Arabic parts is fascinating. Apparently, although the use of astrology was periodically in and out of favour with church authorities, the use of Arabic parts eventually was frowned upon, as they were used for extensive commodities

speculation. I found this extremely amusing, as it so closely parallels the fall of junk bonds in our own time. People will try anything to make a buck.

Very true. Have you ever tried to use your knowledge of astrology to speculate on the stock market?

I'm not a speculator - I'm an investor, and therefore not too keen on taking risks. I use transits to determine when to move funds into different areas of the market, and did quite well last year because of this. My investment choices were due to plain old market research - only the timing was determined with astrology.

I do read articles by astrologers who are market experts, though. The crash of the dot-com stocks was a no-brainer with the Millennial Alignment being squared by Uranus in May of 2000. My dad made the same prediction, only he came to that conclusion from 50 years of financial experience. He got a big kick out of discussing it with me - we both came to the same conclusion, but from completely different thought processes! (And neither of us had much pity for people who ignored our advice.) Critical planetary activity is quite accurate for forecasting the areas of the stock market that will be doing well, and others that will be shaky.

Would you be willing to read for a client who asked for financial advice?

Clients do ask for financial advice. I'm happy to indicate when their chart is most positively aspected for making investments, and can offer a "big picture" view of what types of investments are going to do well during a particular time period, but clients are on their own in making investment choices. I have brokers and no-load fund companies that I give as referrals. The same goes for legal and medical problems - I encourage clients to seek professional advice, and to look into alternative opinions from experts if their current advisors don't seem to be doing their jobs.

Your biography says that your hobbies include perfumery. Could you tell us a bit more about this? Can we look forward to Hazelle Number 5?

I've been interested in perfumery for many years now, and have an extensive line of perfumes and incenses. I suppose I could have focused on aromatherapy products, but then perfumery would have lost its magical allure for me. My particular interest is in creating scents for a purpose, and in affinity fragrances. In order to do this, I choose specific times to blend the ingredients - astrological elections, in other words. So, for instance, when I make up a batch of Jupiter oil, Jupiter is well placed by sign, house and aspect; and all of the essential oils used in the blend have an affinity with Jupiter.

However, my favourite rule in my perfumery business is: there are no rules. This is why I'm still interested in it after all these years! Sometimes I make things that just smell good, sometimes they are made for a specific purpose. Perfumery integrates all of the things that I love: astrology, botany and gardening, art work (for packaging), experimenting with secret potions and keeping log books, magic, and beautiful fragrances. Plus I get to have an outlet for my "mad scientist-chemist" side, rattling around in the laboratory in the middle of the night because that's when the planets are just so. What's not to love?

But the best part of mystic perfumery is when strange things happen. Sometimes strange things happen when I make fragrances, sometimes strange things happen when someone wears or burns the stuff. Magically-made perfumes and incenses attract unusual events like a magnet. What tickles me most about this is that it flies in the face of empirical "just the facts, ma'am" science. Magic doesn't so much bend the rules, as it relies on a higher set of rules.

Sounds wonderful. Do you have a shop that sells your perfumes?

My "shop" is in what was formerly my living room. I also enjoy doing street fairs a few times each year. I've got a nice blue pop-up tent and call my set-up The Booth of Truth. Meeting new customers is great fun.

“The Booth of Truth” – that’s perfect. Have you ever thought of designing your own deck?

I have! It is called "The Vala Tarot" and some images from it can be found at Tarot Passages in my "Portraits of Pips" series (www.tarotpassages.com). I've been dedicated to writing and getting this book finished for the past few years, so have not been sending the deck out to publishers for a while. Maybe it is time to get busy with that again.

Maybe. Your book uses the Golden Dawn system of astrological correspondences for the Trumps, Court Cards and pip cards. What would you say to an experienced Tarot reader who asks, “What’s the benefit to me of learning all these astrological correspondences?”

As I say in the foreword (forewarned!) of the book - some people may find astrological correspondences very helpful in their readings, while others may find they don't like them. In my view, astrology is the Mother Ship of forecasting techniques - it has a substantial and well-documented history, and a well-ordered set of conventions that support Tarot use. If a reader uses astrology as a dignity method, the cards point out (or confirm) particular planetary cycles that will have some kind of influence on the client, so provides an exact idea of "when."

Astrology, like dignities, can give tarotists an intellectual support system, an underlying mental framework that is a superb foundation for free-flying intuitive techniques. Some tarotists, like Art Rosengarten, use formal training in psychology as a foundation. History, medicine, and organisational dynamics are other types of multi-disciplinary studies that compliment tarot. The point is, if a tarotist can bring a broad knowledge base to the table, the clients are the direct beneficiaries of diverse wisdom. And the greater a tarotist's knowledge, the greater is their potential for service to others.

Liz, thank you so much for sparing the time for this interview.

See page for Mick's review of Tarot Decoded

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...

Your querent was a young lady who'd fallen desperately in love with her mysterious and volatile employer...

Readings for **Jane Eyre** -

By Troy Stephens ...

Before I hand over the cards I explain to the querent that the Minor Arcana is divided into four suits and that each suit corresponds to one of the four elements. So, Coins = Earth, Cups = Water, Wands = Fire and Swords = Air. I tell her that my psychic powers lead me to believe that the suit of Swords will feature significantly in her reading. She obviously agrees with me as I hear her repeat the words, 'Air, Air' to herself several times.

My familiar, Raymond the Tarot Badger (temporarily on loan to me) lights the incense and after a minor, but necessary, skirmish with a fire bucket, the querent shuffles the cards.

The first two cards relate to the past, the third to the present and the final cards to the future.

5 and 7 of Wands. I explain that these cards show that the past has not been easy for her and that there have been many different types of difficulty that she has had to face in recent years. She might sometimes have felt that she was overwhelmed by problems, that no-one wanted the same things from life that she wanted and, more importantly, that no-one was truly on her side.

3 of Swords. This card indicates that she is feeling very unhappy at present and that she is so unhappy that her health may be starting to deteriorate. Depression is becoming part of her life and she may not realise that things sometimes get worse before they get better. Because of this she is in danger of only concentrating on the bad things that have been happening and so she may have overlooked the good things that might be on the horizon. I reassure her that 'every cloud has a silver lining!'

The next card is **The Hierophant** and she immediately cheers up as she remembers being told that by a gypsy that The Hierophant prophecies marriage. I reluctantly explain to her that the Tarot is more use as a tool of self-knowledge and personal empowerment, rather than a 'Fortune Telling' system. However, I do confirm that The Hierophant was indeed once regarded as a 'marriage card'.

At this point **The Tower** falls out of the pack and I inform her that an unexpected and sudden disaster might befall her in the near future. This will end any immediate marriage plans that might be on the cards and I warn her to prepare herself for some sudden changes to her life. She seems to know that more unhappiness is just around the corner and she accepts Raymond's loan of his fire bucket with an expression of blind resignation.

As I tidy up the cards, **The Tower** again falls out of the pack, this time accompanied by **Death** and the **9 of Swords**. The poor woman bursts into inconsolable floods of tears and Raymond hides under the table before frantically starting to dig a hole to hide in.

"How may I help my poor Master cope with the calumny which is about to befall him?", she asks with a voice trembling with emotion. With a steady hand she draws **The Hermit** from the deck. I tell her that her Master will soon find himself isolated in many different ways and that her role will be to guide him through the difficult times ahead. "So" she says, "I must help and guide him through the impending darkness and pain!" She continues, "My one objective in life is to serve my master in whatever way I can, to minister to his most trivial of needs and I welcome and embrace these events in order that I might shine the light of my love upon my Master's solitude and misery."

To conclude the reading she draws two final cards; the **2 and 10 of Cups**. She relaxes a little on seeing these pleasant images of love and loving. I confirm that these two cards do indeed indicate that she will have a happy and loving relationship with her Master and that their long-delayed union may be blessed with children.

Somewhat heartened, she picks up Raymond's fire bucket, cradles it in her arms and leaves my tent with a weary smile playing upon her lips.

"Goodbye Jane Eyre", I call after her as she disappears into the night.

By Jaenor...

"It certainly sounds like a curious situation that you find yourself in- let us see if the cards can provide you with any insights as to a solution", you say to the quiet young woman as you hand her the cards, "What is your name, my dear?"

"Jane", she replies as she carefully and methodically shuffles the cards, "Jane Eyre."

"Eire?" you think as you take the cards back from her, "She doesn't sound Irish", and you draw three cards from the deck, leaving them face down.

"The first card indicates your recent past, the second your current situation, and the third a possible outcome as a result of the previous two."

You turn over the first and observe her surprised expression with amusement.

“**The Fool!** Dear me, I do hope that’s not true.” The young woman draws her threadbare shawl about her thin shoulders, and arches an inquisitive eyebrow at the card, and you hasten to enlighten her.

“No, of course not- it certainly does not mean that you are foolish- it just means that you have recently taken a risk or done something daring; perhaps this is completely out of character for you.”

She sighs and sits back in her chair. “How astute the cards are! It is true- for someone of my situation, to fall in love with my master is not only daring, but is also VERY foolish...not only out of fear for my position, but for my heart as well. It is rather the equivalent of leaping off a cliff top- rather like that poor young man is about to do.”

She reaches out and touches the tip of a finger to the card, and you perceive a slight tremor in her voice. Again, you note the emotion she is trying to conceal.

You turn over the second card- **the Hermit...reversed**. She studies the card thoughtfully, then raises her sad eyes to your face.

“The Hermit, yes- that is exactly how I feel. Isolated, and so alone in the world.”

“You are perhaps being too harsh towards yourself” you say gently, “and is perhaps your sense of isolation is to some extent self-imposed? Is there no one you could turn to for advice; or even companionship? A relative, or even a friend who might be sympathetic to your plight?”

She shakes her head with a sad little smile. “I had a very dear friend once”...she blinks back tears, and struggles a little to carry on; “but that was oh! such a very long time ago that it almost seems like a different lifetime. I still miss her very much; and as to family”...here she seems to give a little shudder- “sadly, I am an orphan, and my childhood guardians could never be thought of as being sympathetic towards me!”

“I am so sorry to hear that. This card then does represent your present situation unfortunately well- for one of its attributes is loneliness and lack of society- or even desertion by those who should have cared for you.”

She sighs deeply, “Yes, that is certainly the case; in fact the term desertion is putting it rather mildly!”

It is with some trepidation that you turn over the third card, and you have to stifle a groan. **The Moon- Reversed!**

The first meaning which unfortunately conveys itself to you is...oh, dear! - insanity. The poor girl sitting opposite certainly appears to be rational, even though she is clearly under a great emotional strain, and has suffered from some sort of trauma in her childhood. You sense the card is warning of danger to Jane; and you feel slightly annoyed with her master- is he the source of the threat which the card is jangling your intuitive alarm bells about?

Jane sits quietly while intently studying your face, so you keep your expression neutral while reminding yourself of that oh-so-important Tarot Reading Rule: "Don't frighten the whatsits out of the Querent". You take a sip of your now cold tea while you try to think of a way to put the question to her tactfully.

"Does your master suffer with any kind of, ahem, mental frailty? Delusions, perhaps?" Or is there someone else in the household who shows such symptoms?" She stares at you, startled.

"Heavens, no! Does this card indicate madness of some sort?" She is clearly worried and you try to reassure her. Despite the unease you feel about the meaning of the card, you hurry to provide a more positive solution.

"It can signify hidden secrets- and since this card is the indicator for a possible outcome it might mean that all the mysteries regarding your master and his circumstances will soon be revealed, and hidden things could be made clear. Perhaps, even though the truths you discover might be difficult for you, this could still enable you to know how best to help your master in the way you desire."

A smile illuminates Jane's face at your words as she rises to her feet to go. "Thank you so much- that is just what I hope to do. And also thank you for your kindness in reading the cards for me at this late hour- I know that you are tired." Seeing your concerned expression she speaks reassuringly, "Please do not be worried for me- I shall be patient and wait to see what answers shall be revealed, as the Moon card has foretold!"

She is out the door and away before you can correct her rather simplistic interpretation of the reading; and this time a groan escapes you as you rest your head in your hands.

"What a spread!" You can't shake the uneasy feeling that Jane has certainly got a few surprises ahead of her; all you can do is hope that her common sense will see her through it all. Love! It certainly seems to cause more problems than it's worth sometimes! You sigh, and take a hearty sip of cold tea.

By Fairyhedgehog...

"I'm using the Old English deck," I told the querent. "I have a feeling that its quaint, archaic feel is just right for you." My querent looked at me steadily.

"Right, what have we here? The **Eight of Cups** in the Heart of the Matter position." I looked at her. "You're asking the cards about your Master but I have a feeling they are talking to you. You love this man, I can see that, and I have the feeling that he loves you too, despite the other woman. But there are complications that I don't think you know about yet. He may offer you his heart but you are not going to be able to accept it, not at first anyway. I see you fleeing from him in the search for a more spiritual solution to your problems. I don't see you together just yet."

Jane looked downcast then mastered her expression. "It is his welfare I care for, not my own," she said, "can you not tell me what will befall him?"

"Well, the underlying issue is the **Ace of Coins**," I replied. "That is a propitious card but again I have the sense it is for you that the card has appeared. There is a seed of new life working even now that will not come to fruition for some time. There is the chance for great prosperity and happiness ahead of you but much depends on the next few months."

Clearly this was not what Jane wanted to hear. She wrung her hands but waited for the final card to appear.

"The **Queen of Coins** as advice. Well, Jane, this is definitely for you. You are being advised to open up more to your motherly side, to enjoy the earth and all its gifts. Maybe you need to be a bit less cerebral, a bit less focussed on justice and more on mercy and love ... "

Jane looked down and then away. "Thank you," she said politely.

"You can have your money back, dear," I said, "I know this isn't what you came to hear."

"No, no, you've been most kind," she said and gave me a distant smile. Quietly she gathered her scant belongings together and left as unobtrusively as she had entered.

*****Thank you to all our Madame Fifie's! Which was your favourite reading? A £10 Amazon voucher is available to the winner! Send your vote to newsletter@tabi.org.uk *****

And now - the Adventure continues...

Scenario by Clare McHale

The buzzing in the bookstore's small back room is annoying, not to mention distracting. It's been droning on forever and you can't find the damn insect anywhere. Each reading you've done has started with a frivolous question and lots of giggling, and ended with you and the Seeker flapping your arms about your heads as if you were trying to fly! These are really not the best conditions to be working in, sighing you try to shut out the noise and prepare yourself.

A small slightly bent middle-aged man enters the room; he shuffles towards the spare chair while his eyes dart about at a manic speed.

'Welcome good sir, what do you wish to know?' You put on the air of an exotic Gypsy fortuneteller to suit the costume the shopkeeper has insisted you wear.

The man's head seems to be constantly lopsided, leaning to one side or the other with alarming intensity. You are about to speak again when the buzzing of the damn insect distracts you.

'Life.' He whispers in a raspy voice, startling you out of your preoccupation.

‘Excuse me?’

‘Life, it is all around us, from the smallest ...’

You look at him expectantly, but he falls silent, and his head tilts back and to the side again. He looks as if he can hear something that damn insect again.

‘Sir, how may I be of service to you?’

‘Ah, service, my Master is coming.’

‘What, to the shop?’ You ask, bewildered.

‘My Master is coming, he has promised me...’ He gives a sly laugh, looking at you from the corner of his eye, ‘Tell me child, will he keep his promise? How can I make him keep his promise?’

‘I, er, hmm...’ As you hum and har nervously you hear a commotion in the shop, ‘What on earth?’

You jump as the man grabs your arm, he is far stronger than you would have supposed, ‘Unhand me sir!’ You try to sound forceful, but your voice trembles, the commotion from the shop seems to be heading towards your little back room, but all your attention is focused on the man holding you.

His other hand comes up to touch your hair gently, almost reverently, ‘Please, please, sweet lady draw the cards for me, I must know! I must’

And with those words he pushes a small piece of paper into your hand and rushes through the door into the commotion beyond.

‘Well I never.’ You slump down in your chair, clutching the paper to your bosom feeling rather breathless. ‘What a strange man!’

The noise outside has quieted and you realise you that you don’t even know your visitors name, his details must be on the piece of paper you reason. As you start to unfold it you are once again distracted, at first you can’t make out what the problem is, then, ‘Oh, that damn insect’s gone! It must have flown out the door with...’ Your words taper off as you look at the details on the paper you’ve unconsciously finished unfolding, ‘Oh my! Well, it serves me right for wanting a less frivolous reading! Shall I draw the cards for him?’

Can you guess the identity of Madame Fifie’s mystery querent? Will you read for him? Send your readings to newsletter@tabi.org.uk and we’ll update the Adventure next issue...

Book Review: Understanding the Tarot Court

Written by Mary Greer & Tom Little

Reviewed by Clare Mchale

<http://taintedtarot.co.uk>

Foreword by Rachel Pollack

ISBN: 0-7387-0286-2

Published by: Llewellyn, 2004

URL: <http://www.llewellyn.com/>

£7.59

Llewellyn have brought out the big guns for the latest in their range of 'Special Topics in Tarot', Mary K Greer is one of the first authors I came across and bought when I started to look into Tarot, and Tom Little's name is often bandied about the internet as a Tarot expert, though he is less well know to me than Greer.

The blurb on the back of the attractive purple book invites you to '[g]et to know the royalty of the Tarot deck in this groundbreaking book from noted Tarot experts'. And if Greer's 'Tarot for Yourself' is any indication by the time you've finished 'Understanding the Tarot Court' you'll have done just that with getting to know you exercises galore.

Rachel Pollock has kept her Foreword short, though it still feels a little cumbersome to read, but as a noted author and teacher of Tarot, we can take it she's not just blowing hot air in her praise of Greer and Little, their treatment of the Court Cards, or the need for a comprehensive book on this subject.

There is the obligatory page and a half of acknowledgements from the authors, then four pages giving us an overview of the standard Tarot deck and Court cards.

'Court cards are generally considered the most difficult part of a Tarot deck to read and interpret.' [p. 2]

Yet it still manages to fit in an encouraging paragraph on keeping a Tarot journal and give us our first Court card exercise, 'Your First Significator'.

'One of the most familiar uses of the court cards in divination is the Significator. The Significator is a card that represents the querent-the person who is asking the question and about whom the reading is being done.' [p. 3]

'Now is the opportunity for you to pick out a significator intuitively-without all the reasons that will be presented later.' [p. 3]

I gave it a go and finally settled on the Queen of Pentacles from the Robin Wood Tarot and it'll be interesting to see how this pans out as I work my way through the book.

We are also urged to pick the court card least like us, the one who has the most characteristics we don't, our 'nemesis'. I was torn between two Knights, Swords and Wands. I finally settled on the fiery Knight of Wands.

'These "first impressions" will become more interesting and take on greater significance as you explore the court cards in depth.' [p. 4]

Writing in your Tarot journal is a consistent theme throughout the book, so if you're not interested in doing exercises and noting down your thoughts and impression to refer back to, then 'Understanding the Tarot Court' may not be the book for you, as the authors seem to want it to be an interactive learning experience.

But on saying that there's plenty of interesting and useful information, so you could skip the exercises and still learn something.

'The purpose of this book is to make the court cards come alive, and to give you a deep familiarity with the cards and the human possibilities they represent.' [p. 4]

The book runs to nine chapters, 'The Many Faces of the Tarot Court' taking the number one spot, 'Court Card Relationships' at five, and the handy 'Chapter Nine: Court Card Interpretations', before moving onto several Appendices.

A is a 'Court Card Comparison Chart'; B a 'Myers-Briggs Court Card Comparison Chart'; C is 'Golden Dawn Court Card Correspondences'; and D an alphabetical list of 'Important Terms'.

'ARCHETYPE-Archaic remnants of instinctual patterns of meaning in the human psyche that crop up in myth, fairy tales, dreams, fantasies, and art, and influence our psychology. These collective thought patterns are innate and inherited.' [p. 245]

The book ends with the 'Bibliography' and 'Index'.

Meanwhile, back at 'Chapter One The Many Faces of the Tarot Court'...

'There are many different ways to interpret the court cards. Determining which perspective is applicable in any given situation is part of the art of reading the cards.' [p. 5]

Amen to that!

"This book will use the most common system, in which wands are fire and swords are air, as its default, without intending for it to be seen as the only or best system. Feel free to use whatever elemental system you prefer." [p. 7]

Thanks, but I'm happy to go along with wands/fire, swords/air, cups/water, pentacles/earth and of course king, queen, knight and page for the court cards.

After giving us an overview of the suits and rank of the court cards chapter one invites us to a 'Court Card Beach Party' [p. 11].

"Imagine you are walking on a beach... Feel the grains of sand under your feet... You hear the noise of a party... and soon come upon a group of people... They are the court cards... you were invited to this party." [p. 11]

But I'll leave that for you to enjoy if you buy the book.

An interesting book overall with something for everyone, especially those of us who have trouble with the court cards. It's easy to read and the authors have worked well together.

There are illustrations, diagrams, and tables of correspondence throughout, including some spreads and sample readings, and even a chapter called 'Build Your Own Court', [p. 157], which discusses making your own deck.

If you're looking for a book to help you understand the court cards, or further your knowledge of this aspect of Tarot, you could do a lot worse than 'Understanding the Tarot Court'.

Understanding the Tarot Court is available from Amazon - click the link to buy through TABI's affiliate scheme:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0738702862/026-8343352-6354059/tabi-21>

Book Review: Tarot Decoded

Written by Elizabeth Hazel

Reviewed by Mick Frankel

Liz Hazel is a very experienced Tarot reader and astrologer. In her book “Tarot Decoded”, Liz explains the use of dignities. Liz writes clearly and in plain English about how you can use correspondences with the elements, the planets and the signs of the zodiac in your Tarot readings.

Liz also describes how important it is to pick up on numerical combinations and sequences in a Tarot reading.

This is a terrific book for anyone who’s interested in Tarot and astrology. The theory is very patiently explained and the book is full of practical advice, presented in clearly written worked examples. I’d recommend it for any Tarot readers who want to get to know more about astrology.

It would also make an excellent introduction to Tarot for people who already know the basics of astrology. But if you’re a beginner to both fields, then this is probably not the book for you.

On every page, you can hear the voice of the author speaking to you with knowledge and authority. You really feel that Liz wants you to become a better Tarot reader. She’s trying to get us to deepen our understanding of the way that the elements interact with each other. This is a really superb reference book to go back to again and again.

I’d always thought that using dignities was quite complicated and advanced. After reading this book, I realise that we all use dignities all the time in our Tarot readings. For example, if the Four of Wands and the Four of Swords both appear in a 3-card reading, I think that we’d all pick up on the fact that there’s a pair of Fours.

Well, this is a basic example of using numeric dignities.

Some TABI members know that I try to use astrological correspondences in my readings and so this book is definitely my kind of thing. But let me put my review in context by quoting some of the things that other reviewers have written:

“I predict that this book will make tarotists who have previously only dabbled in astrology want to learn more, in order to continue to combine the systems for increased depth and detail in their readings.” Valerie Sim-Behi, author of *Tarot Outside The Box*

“Elizabeth Hazel’s *Tarot Decoded* is an amazing accomplishment... I plan to use it as a required text for my intermediate and advanced tarot students.” Nina Lee Braden, author of *Tarot for Self Discovery*

“Reading *Tarot Decoded* is like attending a series of graduate seminars with the dean of the Tarot Astrology Academy.” Sandra A. Thomson, President of the American Tarot Association

This really is a special book.

Liz has tremendous knowledge of classic mythology but she seems equally at home using images from popular culture that everyone can relate to. For example, her section on the Air element contains these two references:

“The ancients imagined Aeolus as the king of the winds, with four minions for each compass direction.”

“On *Sesame Street*, a Muppet in a trench coat, dark glasses, and a fedora sold a jar of air to the Cookie Monster for five cents.”

I find this conversational style to be very refreshing. Nothing is there for show and nothing is wasted in Liz’s writing. Every image is well chosen and straightforward.

However, that’s not to say that the material is easy. It’s taken me well over a year to gain some level of confidence in using astrological correspondences in my Tarot readings.

As Liz says in her conclusion, “The astrologically derived dignities may take years to master, but are well worth the effort for the information they provide about interconnections between the cards and spread positions.”

In this book, Liz starts with a superb description of the four elements – Fire, Water, Air and Earth – giving special emphasis to the interaction between the elements. She says, “Elements are constantly trying to influence one another, to blend in new and meaningful ways.”

This deceptively simple idea is actually very subtle. So often, the elements are described in isolation – Fire is action, Water is feeling and so on. Throughout the book, especially in the sample readings, Liz continually homes in on the interaction between the elements.

There’s a wealth of information in this book but it will take work to get to grips with it. For example, all the sample readings use the astrological glyphs for the planets and signs. If you’re a complete newcomer to astrology, you’ll have to give yourself some time to get to know the glyphs. In my experience, this is time well spent.

Liz’s emphasis is always on the practical. I love this quote from the section of the book on Synthesis, “Ultimately, the various analytical methods of interpretation – attributions and correspondences – are only useful to the extent that the reader can harvest them while scanning in order to verbalize their meaning to the client.”

Well, that definitely strikes a chord for me. Liz continues, “For example, if the reader says to the client, “*You have the Empress (Venus) in good dignity, but she’s hindered by the Nine of Swords (Mars in Gemini) in a detrimental location,*” the client will be bewildered. The dignities of the attributions must be conveyed in a meaningful way.”

And Liz goes on to give an excellent, straightforward interpretation of what these astrological correspondences might mean in practice.

Liz uses the Golden Dawn correspondences and although she’s not dogmatic about using this system rather than any other, she does say that the Golden Dawn attributions represent, “a good starting point”.

The book is all about attributions so there’s no discussion of reversals. All the cards are shown as upright in the example readings.

The appendices contain tables of Major Arcana, Court Card and pip card attributions and throughout the book there are wonderful diagrams such as the horoscope diagram of Court Card attributions showing the Zodiac signs with their associated pip cards and Court Cards by decan.

“Tarot Decoded” is published by Weiser Books and priced at \$18.95 which presumably will mean that it will go on sale over here for about £12.99.

Tarot Decoded is available from Amazon - click the link to buy through TABI's affiliate scheme:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1578633028/026-8343352-6354059/tabi-21>

Book Review: Goddess Signs - Which One Are You?

Written by Angelica Danton

Reviewed by Clare Mchale

<http://taintedtarot.co.uk>

ISBN: 0-7387-0469-5

Published by: Llewellyn, 2004

URL: <http://www.llewellyn.com/>

£7.59

The first thing I thought when I saw this book was, 'Oh that looks like fun.' And then I skipped ahead to find the Chinese astrology/Goddess sign relevant to me, as you do, and was confronted with a chapter entitled, 'Pig Woman' [p. 101], and let me tell you it's not something you need to be confronted with at eight o' clock in the morning when you're on a diet!

Shock value and unnatural insight aside, Goddess Signs is the kind of book just about anyone can enjoy. If you like reading your western star sign, enjoy finding out what your Chinese animal sign and characteristics are, want to look more closely at yourself and your attitudes to life and those around you, or just want to have some fun, you can gain something from this book.

The author has included rituals/magick designed around each of the 5 categories of Goddesses: Moon; Sun; Earth; Warrior and Dark Goddess Women, as well as insights into the personality traits, good and bad of each group, as well as assigning each a goddess or three from mythology.

Running to a healthy 265 pages, including 2 indexes, one of goddesses and one of famous people mentioned in the book, each of the 5 goddess categories are divided into their Chinese animal signs for a closer look.

For example, 'Part 1: Moon Goddess Women' is split into 3 signs, 'Goat Woman: The Natural Nymph'; 'Dog Woman: The Natural High Priestess' and 'Cat Woman: The Natural Enchantress'.

Each sign is then broken down into 7 parts that cover love, health, finances, childhood, career, the twenty-first century, spirituality and ritual work and the author also gives us a page of 'Charms and Symbols', that includes the signs Tarot card, moon phase, colours, magickal symbols and even a theme song!

Mine's 'The Power of Love' by Celine Dion, I would've preferred the Jennifer Rush version, but still...

And as if that's not enough, there's a little on numerology and if you're in a relationship you can look up your partners sign and see how compatible you are.

I get 4 hearts for compatibility between a pig and a dog, and I mean the latter literally. My Miniature Dachshund Murphy was so relived to find out we're compatible he actually opened an eye while I was typing this!

The boys also get a look in; Danton includes a brief overview of the various god signs and their traits, [p. 235].

Goddess Signs is an easy book to read and as I feel a special connection with the Australian author, [when I was taking German way back when at school, my name in class was Angelica], I feel I can safely say that the writing of this book was approached in an informative yet light hearted way that would appeal to the masses.

The cover art is nice and friendly, the size of the book larger than your average paperback, but not too hefty, and apart from the occasional stumbling over the repeated use of the word goddess, it's easy to get into and enjoy, whether you take astrology and goddesses seriously or not.

Goddess Signs is available from Amazon - click the link to buy through TABI's affiliate scheme:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1578633028/026-8343352-6354059/tabi-21>

Deck Review: Egyptian Scarabeo

Created/illustrated by: Silvana Alasia

Reviewed by Brian Stevenson

Description: 78 cards with 14-page booklet

Card Dimensions: 66 x 120mm

This late-20th Century deck combines unrelated Egyptian images with the traditional elements of the Tarot.

Many of the pictures are reminiscent of the hand-painted papyrus paintings specifically made for present-day tourists to buy when visiting Egypt. They depict a view of ancient Egypt that has perhaps been adapted to Western tastes. None-the-less, the images are very colourful as well as being attractive and striking. The printing process used in producing the pack is high and it is clear that the original paintings were made on papyrus. This gives the whole pack an 'authentic Egyptian' feel.

All the Major Arcana are based very loosely on well-established Tarot designs that could have been taken from any traditional deck such as the Rider-Waite or even the Tarot of Marseilles. There are some interesting touches on some of the cards. For example, the Knave (Page) of Swords is depicted as a Scribe in the process of writing something onto a tablet. Instead of a sword he is therefore shown holding a pen or brush. So, is there a hidden message here that 'the pen is mightier than the sword'?

Some of the Minor Arcana cards in this deck bear a slight resemblance in basic layout to the Minor Arcana in the Crowley-Thoth Tarot. However, they do not have the complexity and subtlety of the Crowley-Thoth Tarot.

Overall, this deck gives a fresh and unique slant on the Tarot. It is probably best suited to experienced readers who would like an additional pack of cards to give them a different view of Tarot.

Deck Review: Runic Tarot

Created/illustrated by: Caroline Smith & John Astrop

Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis

Deck/Book Publisher: Connections Publishing Availability: good book stores RRP £14.99; also available direct, online at £11.25 + p&p from <http://www.connections-publishing.com>.

I was fascinated by the idea of a tarot deck that links with Runes - I certainly know some tarot readers who love to combine their tarot reading work with Runes.

On first sight I immediately noticed that the deck/book set was quite compact looking, compared with a lot of sets that I had seen before. Similar in design to some extent to the Beginner's Guide to Tarot by Juliet Sharman-Burke, from the same publisher, The Runic Tarot folder opens up to reveal a deck in two sections on the left hand side of the box-cum-book cover and a book on the right. The book has a soft cover, the deck does not have a separate box and but the outer cover is much more sturdy than the Beginner's deck, featuring a thick, hard cover with the imagery for the Rad rune card, on a gentle pink background.

The next thing I noticed was the art; it seemed very familiar and reminded me of the art in the Elemental Tarot set, which has been in my collection since the late Nineties. Sure enough, on taking the old deck off the shelf to have a second look, the author and artist are indeed the same husband-and-wife team. Anyone who enjoys using The Moon Oracle and Oracle of the Radiant Sun will also be familiar with their work.

The Major Arcana in this deck consists of 24 runes in a zodiac wheel with traditional Norse significance. The Minor Arcana consists of four suits, each reflecting one of the seasons. John Astrop is an astrologer and the rhythm of the natural year is incorporated into the ideas behind these cards, with an awareness of the relationship of the Sun, Moon and Earth. The seasons are marked by Celtic/Pagan festivals, each one associated with a specific element. So for the Spring quarter we have Imbolc/Fire, Summer corresponds with Beltane/Water, Autumn with Lughnasadh/Earth and Winter with Samhain/Air. The cards in each suit/seasonal quarter are numbered 1 to 12 with an extra card per suit for the solstices and equinoxes. So this is not a normal tarot deck set up of 22 Major and 56 minor cards; instead there are 24 Majors and 52 minors; it clearly has its own internal logic.

There is a brief but clear explanation of the basic structure of the Runes system in the accompanying book, including how the Runes are divided into three sections or aetts. Apparently these are recognisable in the numbering of the cards. The book is nicely laid out, including a selection of layouts that can successfully be used with the cards. The authors also point to selected further reading, for those interested in learning more about the Runes and Celtic mythology and practices.

This will be a fun deck for anyone interested in cross-divination referencing in their work. Not only can you bring Runes and tarot together with these cards, but you will also find plenty of astrological context in the card meaning sections in the book. There are also introductions to the

seasons, with a contextual feel for each new part of the year. This could be an especially user-friendly set, therefore, for anyone who likes to work with natural magic and seasonal rituals.

An interesting coincidence - considering that this deck is being reviewed by someone who has recently had an article published featuring a tarot calendar - is that each card in the minor arcana is linked with a specific week of the year. So here is a deck that you can use for timing events, as well!

Caroline Smith and her husband like to encourage diviners to engage fully with symbolism and on these cards there is plenty of it - not just in the main imagery but also around the edges of the cards. So, on the /minor cards there is a date section (underneath which is also a key word), to the left there are the relevant zodiac symbols and to right there is the symbol of the season. This consists of a flower for summer/Beltane; a brown, fallen leaf for Autumn, a snowflake for Winter and a green, growing plant for Spring.

In the book there are useful diagrams and tables laid out for reference so that you can fine your way around the Celtic year and the astrological and other symbols. I also really like the way that interpretations are offered not just for upright cards but for reversals as well. Because the cards are filled with plenty of symbolism and the book gives specific readings for each card the deck/set is accessible for beginners. However, it does combine a lot and provides plenty of scope for the advanced reader.

In terms of the artistry, Caroline Smith's art has a very distinctive style. In my opinion the use of colour is really lovely in this deck. There are lots of vibrant elements in each scene, Celtic designs skilfully incorporated and the Runic symbols, of course, neatly included on the Major cards. Underneath there are key words and zodiac signs. And each card has the relevant Rune name and number at the top.

Because of the Celtic nature of the deck and Catherine Smith's specific art style, there is quite an abstract quality to some of the images. These are not cards that are desperately keen to portray realism in scenes of everyday life. But there is a lot that can be picked up in the imagery. For example card number 6 of the Imbolc suit, representing the 2nd week of March, has the keyword "Cleansing" and depicts a woman with the six, appropriately coloured chakras of her body clearly visible. The associated zodiac signs featuring in the card symbols are Pisces and Virgo. It is easy to instantly gain some ideas about natural processes according to the time of the year, honouring the spiritual self, detoxing the body and so on.

If you have a strong Pagan, Celtic, Norse or Runic background of knowledge then I am sure that this can be helpfully brought to bear in readings with these cards, adding extra meanings or bringing out more in the cards. Card number four in the Major section is Os and the keywords are God, Odin and Language. The image shows a bearded man with a halo or strong aura around his head. The book explanation talks about invocation of assistance from the gods, spiritual and creative inspiration and the gift of language. If you know a lot about Odin perhaps you will understand more than this or find this interpretation especially easy to grasp.

By the way, the backs of the cards are designed so that you cannot tell if the card images on the other side are upright or not - which is always a blessing for anyone who wants to incorporate random reversals in their readings! There is a silver Celtic knot design on a dark green background, which looks very elegant. I do have the usual slight reservation here about the packaging of books and decks together. It is a personal thing but I prefer to have my deck in a separable format, i.e. in its own box. The Elemental Tarot deck/book set that I mentioned earlier - which is by the same authors - seems to maintain that logic of presentation whilst still managing to be a boxed set. That aside, I still feel this will be an interesting deck to work with. I do not want to finish without having tested it out in some way, so below is a small reading in that vein.

How can the Runic Tarot deck can be of most use to me as a reading deck?

Main message 11 Lughnasadh
Additional message 12 Samhain

The keyword on the first card is freedom, which seems rather apt! Here is a deck that gives me the freedom to use it in a variety of ways. The image shows a man riding on the back of a bird/fish; the bird gives him "wings". I suspect that I can "travel" to some interesting places with this deck! The zodiac symbols Libra and Aquarius appear on the card. The book speaks of non-conformity and rebellion, campaigning to change something well established. Well I have always enjoyed combining different divinatory forms. Maybe this is about my wish that deck/book sets could be designed to allow the deck and book to be more individually portable! At the same time the Libran sensitivity means I would not want to upset anyone who has put a lot of work into creating and making available such an interesting deck!

The second card has the keyword Temptation and shows a scene of an angelic man and woman who are well dressed and standing by a tree, around which is entwined a snake. This is a bit like the biblical Adam and Eve, though I am not sure why there is a Christian reference - the exception anyway is that they are not naked and the authors do mention that they are "worldly" here and not "innocent". Here, the text says, "all the possibilities of fantasy and experimentation are explored uninhibitedly and with great abandon". Well this seems to reinforce the ideas of the other card quite nicely!

At the base of the deck after shuffling sits Haegl , Rune 9 - "a sudden challenge". Well the opportunity to review this deck did come somewhat out of the blue and I decided to rise to the challenge of reviewing an oracle deck, whereas I am generally more used to working with tarot decks.

In summary, I like this deck and am looking forward to trying some more readings with it. The art is very attractive and I will be curious to see how the imagery works with my intuition. Whilst my knowledge of Runes and the Celtic, Pagan and Norse traditions is limited, this is a deck that could have an appeal to a wide range of card readers, including those who like to work with astrology in their readings.

Deck Review: Pagan Tarot

Creator: Gina M Pace; illustrated by Luca Raimondo and Cristiano Spadoni

Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis

This is a new tarot decks from the Italian publisher Lo Scarabeo, distributed by Deep Books - for direct purchases contact Email sales@deep-books.co.uk or Tel: 0208 693 0234 - please mention that you are from TABI! The deck is also available from the usual tarot deck sellers on the high street and internet.

Pagan Tarot ISBN: 8883953495 (EX 77) RRP £11.99 incl. VAT. Size 2 1/4" x 4 1/4", 78 full colour cards and instruction booklet.

You may already know Gina Pace, or Rev. G M Pace, a "Priestess of the Pagan Religion and one of the most renowned world Tarot experts" in the guise of "Wicce", from WiccesTarotNewsletter@yahoo.com. You can also visit here website at www.wicce.com. For images of this deck please also see the review by my respected colleague Arielle Smith, of www.AllThingsSpiritual.org at <http://tarotpassages.so/pagan-as.htm>.

Imagery

Predominantly gentle, muted colours. Soft blues, greens, browns, greys, black, blue and red. Some striking splashes of pink, violet and lilac. I do not know if any colour coding by suit was intended, but the Pentacles cards do have a lot of wood in the images and plenty of brown as the colour of Earth. Quite a few of the Swords cards have a grey theme, connecting them with Winter. Chalices have a lot of blue and green - watery colours. With the Wands several cards have various items of cloth and clothing picked out in red, pink, purple and rust - the colours of fire.

Unique Factors

Many of the scenes are very modern. We have a woman sitting at a desk in front of her PC in the 3 of Wands. The 4 of Pentacles shows a woman shopping in a store, with trolley close by as she pauses at an aisle to examine some pottery items. The 9 of Pentacles shows a woman in shorts, trendy top, trainers and socks, sitting on her patio sipping a drink. The 2 of Wands features a back-packer working out her way ahead on her journey. The couple featured on the 9 of Wands are wearing some very cool "shades". The Hermit is a sexy "babe" with topknot and cleavage, sitting in her study, writing away by candlelight. These are hip-looking "chicks" and cool looking "dudes"! So, in many ways this will be a refreshing deck, especially for tarot readers who are repelled by some of the whimsical imagery often found on tarot decks.

It may come as a surprise, then, to find other cards, such as the 4, 5 and 6 of Wands, where we have figures in hooded cloaks, some apparently going through various ceremonies. But maybe not so strange when you remember that this is a Pagan themed deck. So perhaps that ceremony

in the 4 of Wands is a hand fasting and it would be appropriate for the individuals concerned to be wearing hooded robes. I would suggest though that those of us who are not Pagans are going to have to do some homework when it comes to relating to the themes in these kinds of cards in the deck. These little deviations would seem to put this deck in the "advanced" category. However, you will almost certainly recognise many of the ideas within the imagery from the typical Rider decks. Basically they have been updated with characters that you may well recognise from America TV if not modern everyday life!

Challenges

The Major cards are heavy on Pagan themes, as far as I can tell. Readers who are not Pagans might find the Hierophant to be anti-religious or anti-Christian. At least, the image conjured up for me bible burning. But maybe it was intended to refer back to another historical "burning". Cards such as the Tower are a long way from the images most readers will be used to seeing. Here we have a scene that looks like a bit like a midnight orgy in a graveyard, but with a robed priestess looking somewhat distressed. This might be a pagan ritual of sky clad couples celebrating a seasonal change or working with the phases of the Moon. And perhaps the elder in the foreground is simply carrying out her natural work. I do not like to sound so ignorant of the situation! However, this is probably a good example of how far the majors can differ from images that we are used to seeing in many typical tarot decks.

Court Card Grouping

Wands, Swords, Pentacles and Chalices (Cups) are all familiar enough in the Minor Arcana. However, the Court card ranks are quite unusual and, quite rightly, very much on the Pagan slant. Fortunately the LWB gives a clear explanation. Here we have the Elemental (Page equivalent), Novice (Knight), Initiate (Queen) and Elder (King). For the uninitiated (excuse the pun) this is likely to take some getting used to. But I did a reading recently for a friend using this deck and found the definitions from the LWB for the court cards that came up gave a useful slant on the querent's concerns. Image-wise, these characters look more traditional because of the ceremonial style robes they are wearing as members of a coven.

Summary

An attractive deck offering up to date images of everyday life together with imagery relating to the life within a coven. Certain cards stand out as highly beautiful - e.g. the Elemental of Swords, who is almost like a sprite or fairy princess dancing in the clouds. The star spangled aura around her somehow reminds me of the Star of the Major arcana in more traditional decks. Speaking of reminders of other decks, the image on the 8 of Swords remind me somewhat of the 8 and 2 of Swords in the Beginner's guide to Tarot by Juliet Sharman-Burke. In fact this deck has a strange quality in that although it is quite unusual in many ways, I keep looking at it feeling as though I've seen it before. Maybe I will think of it as the Déjà vu deck! One possibility, of course, is that the illustrators have created other decks that are around on the tarot circuit, but which I cannot currently recall. I feel it's a deck that I will work with quite a bit in the future, but also sense that I need to know more about Wicca or Pagan themes in general, to get the most out of using it.

Places to Go, Things to Do

Fayres/Festivals/Conferences

Sun and Moon Fayre - **31st July** (Somerset)

<http://www.wessexfayres.co.uk/Club/home.htm>

Lammas Games - **7th Aug** (Oxon)

<http://www.druidnetwork.org/events/lammas/index.html>

Herstmonceux Medieval Festival - **August Bank Holiday weekend** (Sussex)

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

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

Links of Interest

Tarot Insights

<http://www.illuminationtarot.com/insights/>

The above is a great site, has sections on Tarot sightings on TV and in films as well as articles and a Tarot FAQ and reviews.

Gilded Tarot artist's home page

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

Home page for Kat Black, creator of the gorgeous Golden Tarot

<http://goldentarot.com/welcome.htm>

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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