



Tarot Association
of the British Isles

TABI NEWS

Issue #10 22nd December 2003

Welcome to the Yule 2003 edition of the TABI Newsletter.

We hope you enjoy this issue, which features a review of James Ricklef's new book *Tarot Tells the Tale*, and an interview with the author, plus more tarot fiction and poetry, and some new spreads for you to try.

Blessings of the Season to all our readers.

With best wishes,

Shelley King

Editor

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How to get the most from the newsletter

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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. TABI News currently appears as a PDF file on the TABI website and on the databases of TABI’s e-mail discussion lists. We send out notification of new issues of TABI News to reach a wide and interested audience and for each issue we endeavour to ensure that all contributors are kept informed of the release date. If you should wish to be removed from our mailing list, however, please email us at newsletter@tabi.org.uk

Submissions

We welcome submissions, but as a non-profit organisation 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.

7 February 2004

Mediaeval Witches Ball (R & W)
(Children of Artemis)
Arnhem Gallery
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday 8 May 2004

WitchFest England (R & W)
(Children of Artemis)
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday 30 & Sunday 31 May 2004

Beltane Bash (R)
(Caduceus)
Conway Hall
Red LionSquare
London

Friday 4, Saturday 5 & Sunday June 2004

The Wessex Gathering (R & W)
(Green Man)
Isle of Purbeck
Dorset

Saturday 12 June 2004

Witchfest Wales (R & W)
(Children of Artemis)
Cardiff International Arena
Cardiff
Wales

Saturday 3 July 2004

WitchFest Scotland (R)
(Children of Artemis)
Langside Halls
Glasgow
Scotland

Saturday 7 August 2004

The Lammas Games (R)
(The Druid Network & Children of Artemis)
Braziers Park
Wallingford
Oxfordshire

August 2004

Herstmonceux Mediaeval Festival (R)
(GA Group)
Herstmonceux Castle
Hailsham
East Sussex

October 2004

London Halloween Festival (R)
(Caduceus)
London

Saturday 6 November 2004

WitchFest International (R & W)
(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> If you would like a longer, in-depth reading, we are pleased to confirm that these are now available in return for a donation to TABI. For further details or to request a reading, please send an email to admin.ian@tabi.org.uk

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 admin.shelley@tabi.org.uk

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

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

Mixing the Majors: Movies, Cocktails and Tarot -

Pt 2

By Clare McHale

Shakers and little umbrellas at the ready for the second part of our feature, from Strength to Temperance! Part 3 next issue...

8 Strength

A characteristic of Strength is energy, and there's plenty of that flying around in 'To Have and Have Not' (1944). The attraction between Bogart and Bacall on screen as Harry 'Steve' Morgan and Marie 'Slim' Browning, (and off screen as their own romance blossomed), the frenetic pace of the French resistance as they embroil the reluctant couple in their plans, and the machinations of the Nazi party as they plot and scheme on the island of Martinique.

Courage, confidence, zeal and the determination to live despite the odds are all characteristics of the film and the card, which means that the **Daiquiri** is the drink of choice for Strength.

Daiquiri Ingredients: 50 ml light or golden rum, 20ml fresh lime juice, 2½ teaspoons of sugar syrup. Shake all the ingredients up in a cocktail shaker filled with ice, and strain into a frosted Martini glass.

See note at end of article for Sugar Syrup recipe.

Other cocktails that could be a match for Strength are:

Booster [2 oz brandy, 2 dashes curacao, 1 egg white]

Fireman's Lift [2 oz rum, 1 oz fresh lime, 4 dashes grenadine, sprinkle of sugar]

9 The Hermit

There's something about the wisdom, self-control, reliability and discretion of the Hermit that lends itself well to the characteristics of the Hollywood detective, which leaves the field wide open, so with the solitary and inquisitive nature of the Hermit in mind, the detective thriller 'Laura' (1944) seemed to fit like a latex glove, well okay, it's a bit of a stretch. No? You're a tough room!

Detective McPherson, as played by Dana Andrews, is sent to investigate a murder in a New York apartment. Everyone assumes that the victim is the owner Laura Hunt who is played by Gene Tierney, and McPherson becomes intrigued by the woman and her life. Only Laura turns up alive and well, and with Vincent Price lurking around as one of the murder suspects, you just know that our Hermit has his work cut out, especially when his curiosity turns to love.

One of this cards animal associations is the dog, so perhaps at this stage we should be looking for a hangover cure rather than a stiff '**Gin and It**', but our hero's going to need something to keep him going if he's to work out who the murdered woman is, and if Laura is as wonderful as she seems.

Gin and It Ingredients: 30 ml gin, 30 ml sweet red vermouth.

Use an ice filled mixing glass to stir gin and vermouth together and strain into frosted Martini glass.

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

Whisper [1 oz dry vermouth, 1 oz sweet vermouth, 1 oz whisky]

Self Starter [2 oz dry gin, 1 oz Lillet, teaspoon apricot brandy, dash pastis]

10 Wheel of Fortune

When I read the plot to the film 'Remember?' (1939), in the book of 'Hollywood Cocktails' it fitted in well with the cycles of the Wheel of Fortune, and so the movies cocktail of choice, the '**Imperial**', is the drink for this card.

A chemist introduces his fiancée to a friend and inevitably, they fall in love; have a stormy marriage, and then divorce. In the meantime, the chemist who's still in love with Greer Garson's character Linda Bronson, decides to give the couple a drug that causes amnesia, in the hope that once they forget the painful past, Linda will turn to him instead. Only of course, it doesn't work out that way. The cycle starts again and the couple seem doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.

There can be an element of manipulation to the Wheel of Fortune as there is to the plot of this movie.

The 'Imperial' cocktail also has a bit of history behind it, apparently William of Orange (1689-1702) made the drink popular, and the medieval image for the Wheel of Fortune used to include 4 kings to illustrate the cycles of life.

Gin itself was supposedly developed for medicinal purposes in the late 1600, but we've all heard that one before!

Imperial Ingredients: 30ml Gin, 30ml dry Vermouth, Dash of Angostura Bitters, dash of Maraschino juice, and 1 green olive.

Add all ingredients to mixing glass with lots of ice, mix, strain into frosted Martini glass, garnish with cocktail olive.

Other cocktails that could be a match for the Wheel of Fortune are:

Good Fortune [2.96 cl Irish Cream Liqueur, 2.96 cl Ginger liqueur]
<http://www.bolscocktails.com>

Which Way [1 oz pastis, 1 oz Anisette, 1 oz brandy]

11 Justice

A **Bourbon Highball** is a straightforward drink for a straightforward card, but then again, this is Tarot and there's often a twist in the tale, and in this card's chosen movie, 'DOA' (Dead On Arrival) (1949), the twist starts the tale!

Frank Bigelow, as played by Edmond O'Brien, is club hopping during a trip to Los Angeles, he knows no one and thinks no one knows him, but after feeling terribly ill he's forced to visit a doctor and finds out that someone in the big bad city has spiked his drink with a deadly poison. Bigelow has been murdered, and with only 3 days to solve a crime where he is the victim, he must pierce the darkness of a killer's convoluted mind to find justice for himself and the woman he will leave behind.

This character runs the gauntlet, from bewilderment at the unfairness of it all, righteous anger, and false accusations, even saving a life towards the end before finally making sure the wrong doer gets their just rewards.

There was a remake of 'DOA' starring Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan. Quaid took the lead role of the murder victim, who this time is a college professor who has to deal with an on going divorce, the death of a student, and his own murder, not to mention Ryan in a Freudian Slip!

Bourbon Highball Ingredients: 50 ml Bourbon, Ginger Ale, twist of lemon.

Pour Bourbon into highball glass over ice, fill up with ginger ale, add twist of lemon to garnish.

Other cocktails that could be a match for Justice are:

The Cooler [1 ½ oz dry gin, 1 ½ oz apricot brandy, 2 dashes grenadine, soda, some sprigs of mint]

Perfect Lady [2 oz dry gin, 1 oz peach brandy, 1 oz lemon juice, teaspoon egg white]

12 The Hanged Man

Bette Davis' performance of courage, acceptance and finally sacrifice as the brain tumour stricken heiress Judith Traherne, whose world is turned upside down, in 'Dark Victory' (1939), makes a great mix for a '**Pink Gin**' and The Hanged Man.

Of course, Judith Traherne isn't all acceptance and calm to begin with, and even has an almost fling with stable hand Humphrey Bogart, but she soon settles down to married bliss with the doctor who diagnosed her condition, as played by George Brent. Unfortunately, the gin, pink or otherwise can't help our ailing heroine, and Judith turns to her best friend played by Geraldine Fitzgerald, to hide her worsening condition as blindness comes on just as her devoted husband is going to an important medical conference.

Determined not to let him know the end is nigh, she accepts her fate, puts her own needs aside, and calmly fools him into thinking she's fine, then sets about planning the layout for the flower bed. Personally I'd be opting for a few Pink Gins, strictly for medicinal...

Now your getting the idea!

In real life Davis might have won an Oscar for this role, if 'Gone With the Wind' (See the Tower), hadn't majestically swept the board, so is it any wonder she was hitting the cocktail bar for a medicinal gin, pink or otherwise?

Pink Gin Ingredients: 50ml gin, Angostura bitters.

Roll around a few drops of Angostura bitters in a martini glass and empty out, add gin and ice (optional) to serve.

Other cocktails that could be a match for The Hanged Man are:

Fruit Bat [1 oz cider brandy, 1 oz dry vermouth, 1 oz dry sherry]

Downside House [1 oz vodka, 1 oz green crème de menthe, 1 oz fresh lime juice]

13 Death

'Angels Over Broadway' (1940) seems like a good match for this card. A man who has being caught embezzling decides to drink himself to death. His appearance at the Aladdin Café brings him into contact with a con man who mistakes him for a millionaire, and a chorus girl, played by the lovely Rita Hayworth, who sees him as a means of furthering her career. But when the grifters find out the man's real reason for being in the bar, they come up with a plan to save his life, aided and abetted by a cocktail known as the '**Rob Roy**'.

You've got to admit, it's going to be a transition and a half if these characters manage to turn over a new leaf and save a life into the bargain.

Rob Roy Ingredients: 50ml Scotch whisky, 40ml sweet Vermouth, 4 drops Angostura Bitters, orange zest and a maraschino cherry.

Pour whiskey, vermouth, bitters into mixing glass filled with ice, stir until chilled, strain into frosted Martini glass, garnish with Maraschino cherry and strip orange zest.

Other cocktails that could be a match for Death are:

Merry Widow [1 ½ oz Dubonnet, 1 ½ oz French vermouth]

Scorpion [2oz light, golden or Barbadian rum, 1oz inexpensive brandy, ½ oz orgeat syrup, 2oz orange juice, 1 ½ oz lemon juice]

See note at end of article for Sugar Syrup recipe.

14 Temperance

A large part of Temperance is learning to accept and face up to your feelings, and what better film to exemplify this than the steamy southern drama 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof' (1958). Originally by Tennessee Williams, the film version stars a brooding Paul Newman as Brick, and the sultry Elizabeth Taylor as his wife, Maggie the Cat, who is desperately trying to save their marriage, seemingly in trouble due to the mysterious death of Brick's best friend.

And if that's not enough, Brick has an uneasy relationship with his dictatorial father, Big Daddy, who just loves to interfere, and his brother's jealous grasping wife is determined that her husband should have the number one spot in the family dynasty, no matter who she slanders in the process!

Things come to a head when Big Daddy discovers he's dying and has to face a few home truths, along with Brick who is forced to face up to, and resolve, his feelings for his father and Maggie.

And the drink? A **Hot Toddy** of course, what else would do to soothe our frazzled nerves after all that sizzling friction!

Hot Toddy Ingredients: 50 ml Scotch Whiskey, fresh lemon juice, 1 lemon, 1 tablespoon honey, ground cinnamon, cinnamon stick, 5 cloves, boiling water.

Add honey and whiskey to heatproof glass, half fill with boiling water, stir well. Spear 5 cloves into the peel of a slice of lemon, add it to the glass, add some cinnamon, dash of lemon juice, stir and garnish with cinnamon stick.

Other cocktails that could be a match for Temperance are:

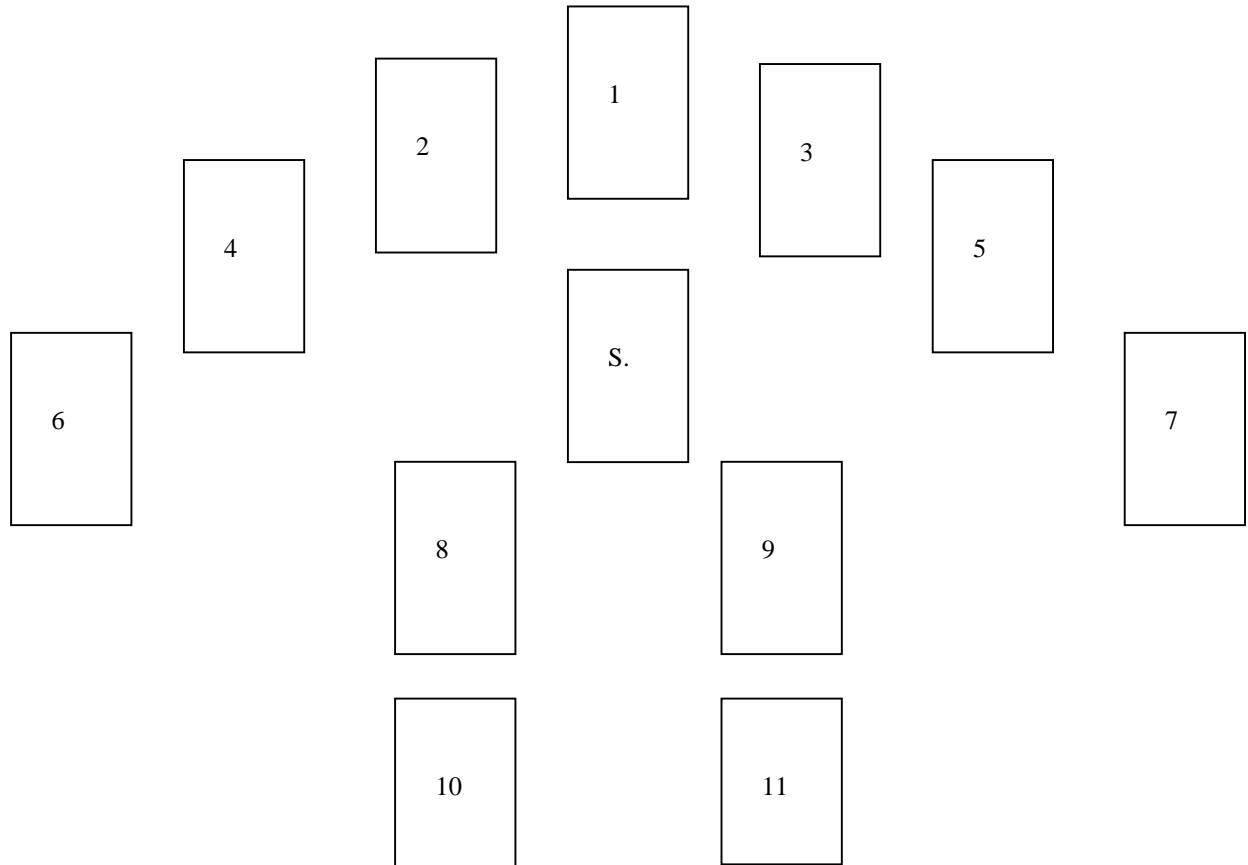
Doctor [1oz Swedish punsch, 1oz vodka, 1oz orange juice, 1oz lemon juice]

The Ambassador [2oz tequila, fresh orange juice, 1 teaspoon sugar syrup, slice orange]

NB: Sugar Syrup – 1kg sugar dissolved in 500ml hot water = 1.1 litre of sugar syrup from <http://www.bolscocktails.com/>

Divorce Spread

By Vivianne Kacal



S : significator (optional)

Card 1 : root cause

Card 2 : what the querent gave to the marriage

Card 3 : what the querent's partner gave to the marriage

Card 4 : what the querent took from the marriage

Card 5 : what the querent's partner took from the marriage

Card 6 : what the querent contributed to the breakdown

Card 7 : what the querent's partner contributed to the breakdown

Card 8 : what the querent can learn from the marriage

Card 9 : what the querent can learn from the breakdown

Card 10 : what to repeat in a new relationship

Card 11 : what not to repeat in a new relationship

I designed and use this spread to help analyze the reasons for a marital breakdown; the aim is to give insights that may help avoid repetition in a new relationship (if so desired) of attitudes and patterns of behaviors that contributed to the original relationship's demise . It might be considered that there are ethical issues over including aspects in the spread / reading that apply to the ex-partner ; however , I included them in order to have balance and fairness – the querent might have to face that they bear some of the responsibility , but neither would it help them to lay claim to it all .

This spread may touch on some very raw areas for the querent – the greater the time and emotional distance from the breakdown might make it slightly easier ; therefore the reader should know at least an approximate date in order to gauge the style of reading delivery , although I have found that it demands a great deal of tact from the reader ; as well as a willingness on the querent's part to be unflinchingly honest with themselves – and the reader . There is no benefit to the querent , particularly with this spread , if either they or the reader are not able to be honest and truthful .

If dates of birth are supplied , astrological aspects could be used to add extra levels of interpretation to the reading . A significator may be used for extra focus , if wished . I think this spread is very challenging to use for oneself , and if one does use it , it might be valuable to have objective feedback from another reader .

Sample Reading and Querent's Feedback

Reading for : Mr.X

Date : 6:11:03

Spread : Divorce Spread

Deck : Spiral Tarot

Hi , Mr.X , and thank you for requesting a reading with my new spread . I have approached the topic , divorce , aiming to achieve increased self-knowledge and education through the insights of the cards and therefore to help avoid repetition . In order to maximize the potential benefits of this reading , you must be prepared to be honest with yourself and about your marriage . This spread may be easier to read the longer ago the split was .

Card 1 : root cause : 4 of Cups

This card indicates that the marriage had reached its natural peak and could proceed no further ; this meant that it became dull and unstimulating , leading to apathy and a passive acceptance of the situation , while possibly musing on imagined alternatives , no action was taken one way or the other .

Well yes, it had gone stale some time ago. No action? Well I must admit I took solace elsewhere. But there was more involved than “going stale” (see below)

Card 2 : what you gave to the marriage : 10 of Pentacles

You made and gave a solid , established foundation for the family , particularly financially – a safe , secure and comfortable environment . You were vital for the sense of consistency and continuity – a bedrock of reliability . The fact that you had this ability and were successful was emotionally satisfying for you .

Yes I had a good income and was reckoned to be a solid foundation – good old reliable Mr.X – and yes it was emotionally satisfying until it all went stale, then I felt trapped by my own dependability I suppose.

But I turned out not to be so reliable in the end, and everyone was shocked when I upped sticks and left.

Card 3 : what your partner gave to the marriage : 7 of Cups

This card suggests that your partner contributed several things , some of them quite subtle , that may not have been noticed at the time or now . It also implies that they provided emotional shelter or comfort . They were imaginative , but this was never transferred into reality , no practical steps were taken to express this .

If she was imaginative it didn't show – unless you mean in a negative sense. But yes she was a good wife and mother, worked hard to keep us all together, brought up two lovely daughters.

Card 4 : what you took from the marriage : I The Magician

This suggests that the marriage provided you with the basis with which to go and do your thing – it gave you the energy and inspiration to be practically creative ; self-confidence was emphasized . It also was a catalyst for personal change/transformation – which may have been one of the things leading to the situation of Card 1 .

Yes it did all that, except be the catalyst for transformation. I think the catalyst was finding someone else – not that I wanted to go live with them,(in fact that's all over now anyway) but it showed me that there were alternatives, and gave me the courage (?) to do something out of (previous) character. (I suppose you could say that the marriage was the catalyst to find someone else.....)

Card 5 : what your partner took from the marriage : Ace of Swords

Ideas and mental clarity : although they did not reveal their thoughts . The marriage allowed them the scope and opportunity to think things through thoroughly – they were able to analyze issues quickly and able to cut to the heart of issues easily , although their motivation and reasoning process were often unclear .

Seldom revealed her thoughts. (see 7) and certainly yes to the last part!

Card 6 : what you contributed to the breakdown : 8 of Cups

The romance was gone. Through disappointment or disillusion , you decided to leave behind all that had been built and had been satisfying , for the hope of a new beginning elsewhere . You are not proud of the fact that you may not have been totally open about these feelings and that you had made a decision that it was over already .

Spot on. “Disappointment or disillusion” – see 7. Must admit that I was not a good communicator either. The last time I tried to communicate was the last straw (see 7)

Card 7 : what your partner contributed to the breakdown : 9 of Wands

It seems that they were stubborn , perhaps refusing to accept your decision , which confirmed it for you . They could be selfish and possessive , and will fight to keep what you jointly created and planted . They may have felt that they were guarding something valuable and therefore were unwilling to let go .

Yes was very possessive and in shock when I left, and fought to keep it for a while.

Also contributory: All through the years she would (occasionally) withdraw into herself. I seldom found out the reasons (usual thing – “you should know...”) and in the end I gave up trying to find out. I’d just wait until she came out of it, but each time it got more difficult for me. The last straw was when our (unmarried) daughter announced she was pregnant. Sue went into herself again and wouldn’t talk to daughter, who needed her desperately, for several weeks. I said to her “Look, when this baby arrives we’ll love it to bits, so why not start now? Daughter needs your help, share and enjoy” Got my head snapped off for that, and never spoke of it again. Had to wait for her to come out of it herself. It hurt me that she was cutting daughter out, and I never got over that. Its all ok with them now of course, and we have a lovely grandchild. We carried on with the marriage for a while, and I even gave her a good 25th anniversary do, but I realised then that I couldn’t face another 25 years, and left five months later.

Card 8 : what you can learn from the marriage : 3 of Swords

When something is over , don’t prolong it , make a clean break so that some positive feeling will remain . When what you seek is elsewhere , be honest enough to say so , and go and find it ; in the longterm , this is more beneficial to all concerned , as it allows healing to begin sooner rather than later .

Yes that is a valuable lesson I have learned.

Card 9 : what you can learn from the breakdown : King of Wands

Your passion and energy for life is undimmed by this experience , you see this as an opportunity for growth and expansion ; the situation has given you discipline – you are less foolhardy and rash in your actions . It also shows that you can take charge and direct affairs , there is no need to be passive .

Don't know about being less foolhardy, but yes I have learned that I can change and direct affairs, and move forwards.

Card 10 : what to repeat in the next relationship : VI The Lovers

Do not lose your romantic ideals – offer the best of yourself , which makes it more likely that this is what you will receive in return . Aim for a complete union , which is more likely if you share yourself without reserve , rather than a more superficial connection .

Yes I am now in a new relationship, much more than a superficial connection. Keeping up the romance, doing my best, and yes receiving a good feeling here.

Card 11 : what not to repeat in the next relationship : Ace of Cups

Don't try to extinguish or ignore your emotions – this builds up pressure until something had to give , and the results may be quite traumatic for everyone , especially if they are not used to fireworks from you . The key might be learning how to express the full range that you feel , even the negative ones .

Yes I try to be open and honest here, speak my mind, not let anything get me down. She's not the easiest person for a long term relationship, but stands no nonsense and we both give as good as we get.

I hope this reading proves useful to you , Mr.X ; there might be some difficult challenges to face – certainly , I found it so in the reading I did for myself . It is difficult to be impartial in analysis when one is involved oneself . I would be very grateful for your feedback on any aspect of the reading , which is not a substitute for counselling or professional advice .

It's good to be made to stop and think sometimes. I found it very hard to be tough, first of all to leave then not to give in to pressure to return. I could see what she was going through, and it was hard not to offer comfort. I did almost give in, and agreed to "lets be friends and start again, see where it leads...." But never followed it up, and was once again proved to be the heartless beast. I hear that she is now getting out and about more – she has some good friends – and making a life for herself. It's got to be for the best in the end – we were both depressed in the marriage. Now trying to sort out the finances, my solicitor has told me off for being too soft. I know I must be fairly tough here, to give us both a more secure future.

The Wedding Day - A Kabbalistic Tarot Journey

By TemplumKat

© 1988 Frater F.P.

This working was designed to evoke the archetypes of the twenty-two major Arcana of the Tarot deck within a guided visualization exercise. It followed a series of intense workings of a similar nature by a new Age Discussion group in Geneva in 1988. Having worked through the Sephirah and Paths of the Tree of Life, it was requested that a working be composed to briefly summarise the respective energies and characters of the major Arcana. This piece was the result. It was worked only once with a full group of thirteen people, but has since been followed by numerous individuals.

Ideally, it is best worked by having a partner read the working to you slowly, whilst you relax with closed eyes and visualize the images. Allow for a small hand signal if you wish to request a pause in the working to allow further exploration of a particular event or character as described in the working. I would not recommend spending more than one hour in a particular session due to the strain this may place on you, it would be far better to end the working at a convenient place and return to it after a day or more.

Another way of performing the working is to record it to tape with pauses at particular moments, and then play it to yourself when you are ready to commence the meditation.

It can also be effective if read a few times before sleep, and allowing dreams to communicate the response to the many images and archetypes evoked within the working. If you have any questions about this type of work or this particular piece, do not hesitate to contact me at tarot@templum.demon.co.uk

I have listed the various sources and inspirations I used, at the foot of the working below.

The Wedding Day.

Closing your eyes now, you feel yourself standing in a simple room, clearly lit, with a plain black floor, looking out through your own eyes as you relax in the room around you. Ahead of you is a single door upon which is depicted the Tarot card of the Universe.

The air smells dry and stale, the walls of the room are cool to the touch, and the room is utterly silent aside from the sound of your deepening breathing as you allow yourself to relax and allow the detail of the room to build around you. And as the details of the Universe card become clearer ahead of you, the door opens and the strangely garbed figure of the Fool enters the room. He gives you a stick and a bag, and asks if you would like to accompany him on his journey. Almost without giving you time to answer, he turns and dances out through the door.

Choosing to follow him, you step through the door and find yourself in a rainbow coloured room, in the centre of which is a complicated clockwork machine, in constant movement and making a dinning cacophony of sounds and noises. The Fool tells you that this is a vision of the machinery of the Universe, and as you examine the contraption more closely, you see that it is powered by motes of light, seemingly flashing in and out of existence – randomly - within the confines of the machine.

On the other side of the machinery is a single door, this one upon which is painted the Last Judgement card. The Fool takes your hand and leads you through this door, into a long chamber full of fire, but as you pass through it seems that the fire passes through you and within you, purifying you, burning away all the unwanted thoughts and emotions that restricted you in the past, leaving you feeling sharp and pure and focused. The Fool laughs as the sound of a Trumpet urges you forward. At last you reach the end of the chamber where a large arched gateway is decorated with the card of the Sun.

“Onwards!” laughs the Fool as you enter through the gateway into a sunlit meadow. Feeling the sun high above you, glowing warmly down on your skin, you pass across the meadow until you come to a great wall, engraved with the signs of the Zodiac. The Fool shows you how to climb this wall, but you find that you have to leave your shoes behind to get a grip upon the wall with your bare feet.

On the other side of the wall you drop into a twilight garden, where pale moonlight filters through the passing clouds above. As you walk the garden path, the Fool pauses by a pool, and looking at his reflection jokes, “Mirror, Mirror on the floor, who is the most foolish of us all?”. You cross the garden and begin to leave it further behind as you make your way up steeper wilder slopes, towards a very bright Star in the sky ahead.

“Onwards!” yells the Fool as you reach the top of the slopes and lightning begins to play around you in the night sky. Further up the path you see a Tower struck by lightning, and avoid the toppling masonry that falls around you. You get the impression that the tower is often rebuilt only to suffer the same fate time and time again. Your path now leads into the mountains and you arrive at a cave entrance. “Down we go!” cries the Fool, as you descend into the dark underworld through a long tunnel.

The tunnel is suddenly blocked by the hulking figure of the Devil, who glares down at you with malice and anger. “Give him the food,” whispers the Fool, and you reach into your sack, having perhaps forgotten it was there, to find some food which you can offer the Devil. This you do, and the Devil lets you pass after ensuring that your bag is now completely empty. “That always fools Him,” says the Fool in a conspiratorial whisper, “He can never know where we’re going, so he always thinks he’s in charge and getting the best deal. Little does He know!” Going further down now, following the Fool down carved steps into the dark, you come to a flooded cave where you have to cross a narrow bridge, with one foot in water which runs down one side of the bridge, and one foot on the dry side of the bridge. A deep gorge opens both sides as you make your way carefully forwards. The Fool suggests that you use your stick to balance, like a tightrope walker. “You see,” he says, “couldn’t have done that with a full sack on just one end, could you?”

The bridge enters into a low tunnel from which the water flows. The Fool tells you to take off any jewelry you might be wearing, or otherwise you will drown at this point. Once you have done so, you can enter the flooded tunnel and begin to swim up the stream, finally coming out the open air and sunshine again.

“Onwards!” smiles the Fool. You walk through a beautiful landscape in which everything is as perfect as you could possibly imagine a place to be. “Just like a Vision of Beauty,” adds the Fool. A moment later, you come across a crowd of people, surrounding a man hanging by his feet from a noose tied from a tree. A judge sits in front of the figure, and the crowd are silent, awaiting his verdict. But the hanging figure looks at you and you see a strange peace and understanding in his eyes, which he shares with you. The Judge spins a roulette wheel on a table in front of him, and the ball falls into number twenty-three. The crowd cheer, but the Fool takes your hand and leads you away before you can see what the result means.

You continue to walk through the idyllic landscape, until you begin to rise up into hills and mountains again. A bright light appears on the path high above you. “That guy again,” says the Fool, “you can never see him, because he’s always ahead leading the way. I guess he’s more interested in people getting to where they need to go, not just following to find him.”

“Onwards!” continues the Fool. Passing through the mountains safely, you enter a rough terrain with wild plains surrounding you. Suddenly, after a moment of walking you are surprised and trapped by lions. They snarl and roar, but the Fool just grins inanely at them. He seems to have gone through all this before. As you stand, a beautiful woman approaches and smiles at the Fool, and at you, and then reaches down and quiets the lions. She points out some directions to the Fool, then walks away, the lions following her, purring like kittens. “She has that effect on me, sometimes,” the Fool muses, but then, “Onwards! Onwards! Mustn’t stop, even for Her!” With this, he takes you a little further across the plains until you reach a Chariot, where an armoured knight sits waiting, two sphinxes reined ahead of him, waiting for you to step up with the Fool onto the chariot. As soon as you do, the Chariot races ahead, across the plains towards a great walled city in the distance.

“Soon be there!” shouts the Fool. You enter the city, and pass through streets lined with celebrating people – there appears to be a royal wedding taking place today. “To the Inner Court,” the Fool yells excitedly, “I’m expected and so are you!” The Chariot brings you to the front of a great palace, and you dismount to press your way through throngs of celebrating people, perhaps recognizing a face here and there from your past, and then front your present, and even seeing faces that you have yet to meet. You realize that the city is composed of everyone that has had some bearing on your life, and that here in this place they all have a part they play, small and large. The Fool says, “Yes, but the best thing is that the city is dancing!”

At last you come to the gate of a great inner palace, built on a carved mountain in the very centre of the city. You are stopped by a High Priest, but the Fool engages him in jesting conversation, and as he is distracted, you sneak past him. A moment later, the Fool rejoins you. “Good man,” he says, “but takes things too seriously and can miss the action sometimes, but he has a lot to say when you’re ready to listen.”

“Oh!” continued the Fool, “but it’s almost time!” as you enter the inner courtroom of the palace. Nobles and Merchants line the courtroom, forming a long corridor through which you proceed. As you walk down the line, you see ahead of you the Emperor and Empress of All Things, sat on thrones, radiating intense power and love. Behind them you sense the even more powerful energy of the Magician, and the more lovely mystery of the High Priestess, but they appear content at this time to remain less visible.

The Fool approaches the royal couple and speaks clearly, “Congratulations on your Wedding, and the harmony you bring to the Universe!” He continues, “and for my gift, on this day of unity and joy, I have brought you,” and with this he pauses, turns and winks at you, “I have brought ... my SELF!”

The Fool, with this word, gives you a final smile, and claps his hands sharply, once, together. For a moment, you sense the entire scene expand outwards, encompassing the thrones, the palace, the city, the mountains, plains, caves and chambers, all the way to the door of the Universe through which you first began, and then the entire vision is drawn backwards to a single point that is at once everywhere within you and outside you ... and nowhere now ...

... that you slowly become aware of your body in a time that is now, and return comfortably in your own time to open your eyes bringing all that you have learnt with you ...

TemplumKat Kabbalah, Magick and Ritual Site:

<http://www.templum.com>

<http://www.kabbalahcourse.com>

Primary Influences:

Crowley, A. “The Wake World.” (published in Konx Om Pax) Good version with original key at <http://www.hermetic.com/crowley/libers/lib95.html>

Ashcroft-Nowicki, D. “The Shining Paths.”

Anon. “Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz.” (see particularly “Commentary on the Chymical Wedding” by Gareth Knight and Adam Mclean.

Also, version at <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/chymwed1.html>

Campanella, T. “The City of the Sun.”

Version at <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/citysun.html>

Visit TemplumKat’s website for more Kabbalah information and training:

<http://www.templum.com>

Tarot Short Story

The Journey

By Clare McHale © 2003

She looked at the silver pen, twisting it between her fingers to watch the sparks of light flare and die. It amazed her how deadly such a beautiful object could be, how it could tear into someone without ever touching flesh. No wonder red ink was so popular; it probably reminded the hacks of fresh blood, supple and flowing.

Who was she to talk about hacks? The magazine had wanted something special for Christmas, not the usual fluff they said, a meaty exposé, with a clever headline pun draped in tinsel. It was hard to resist the chance to finally have a by-line, so she hadn't even tried, ruthlessly trampling any doubts.

Absently she picked up the Tarot deck on the desk by her computer and started to shuffle, her thoughts racing like the cards as they concealed and revealed themselves over and over in her hands.

If I don't hand the article in I'm finished, if I do I – she couldn't finish the thought, her boss was already drooling over the outline, much the way he'd drooled over her, her first day on the job. She considered herself lucky not to have been caught and chained to his desk like some Princess Leia reject, the very idea made her sick, in fact, this whole situation made her nauseous.

Damn it! She jerked, startled by the sudden fluttering of the cards as they flew from her hands, scattering in all directions. Glad of the distraction, but unwilling to admit it, she mumbled under her breath as she crawled around on the floor trying to retrieve the escapees.

She paused for a moment frowning, turning one of the cards she held backwards and forwards; they were all face down, as she'd picked them up, they were all face down. Surely some of them should've fallen right side up? Wasn't there a law of averages or something?

What am I doing? Scrabbling about on the floor wondering why Tarot cards aren't falling picture side up, I must be insane! Throwing the remainder of the cards down in disgust she pulled herself up, and froze.

Stuck to the computer screen, right in the middle, was a single Tarot card, the 6 of Swords. Slowly she reached out her hand, and then suddenly lunged at the screen, desperate to grab the card and throw it on the floor with the rest of the deck.

Her hand made a dull thudding sound as it hit the glass and her fingers prickled with static, but she couldn't reach the card. She swiped her hand up and down the screen, then reached down and savagely jerked the computer plug from the socket.

The sudden blackness of the screen surrounded the card, emphasising its muted colours. She reached out again to touch the monitor in wonder; the damn thing was behind the glass!

She'd seen it done on television of course, but there were no streetwise magicians in her house urging her to pick a card, any card. The thought made her nervous and she looked round quickly, mentally kicking herself for giving in to the impulse.

As she turned back to glare impotently at the card entombed behind the computer screen, one of the books she'd been using for research caught her attention and she picked it up.

What could it hurt? If the damn card was so keen to be seen, why shouldn't she look? She rifled the pages, almost crying at the desperate sound they made in the silent room, she really was going insane!

The illustration in the book was different to the card – *her* card, but she'd come to realise that the image was subjective; the basic meaning could be the same for any number of decks, but it was the person seeking answers, and the reader who provided the flavour.

She sat down in triumph as she found the right page and began to read. The first word held no meaning for her, beyond the obvious, the second phrase, 'deserved success' caused a bitter laugh to escape her tense lips, she certainly deserved everything she got, but not in the way the phrase meant it!

The words and phrases seemed to tumble over themselves to be understood, at first nothing had made sense, but as she read on, '*explanation*', she owed a few of those to people she cared about and to herself.

'*Change in the way of thinking*'? Yes, wasn't that the basis of her whole dilemma? A need to challenge what she'd been told, led to believe, instead of blindly following the well-worn, cynical track of conscienceless ambition?

The last phrase, '*a trip or journey*' tugged at her heart – yes, she had to go back, and find the courage to explain, to try again. The idea scared her, but as she took a deep breath she realised the shadows were beginning to lift, she could finally see a way through, and as her gaze was drawn once more to the trapped Tarot card, she smiled as it fell free from the shadowed screen.

--End--

6 of Swords drawn from the Leonardo da Vinci deck when I asked for a card for the story, once I got to the bit about the computer screen ☺

Phrases from the Cosmic Tarot book by Jean Huets. ISBN: 0-88079-699-5

An A-Z of Tarot

Our continuing journey...

E is for... Elements

By Ian Stevens

The four elements are common to holistic and earth based philosophies, and religions from Eastern to Western European and New World traditions. Although there is some variation - for example, in Indian tradition there is an additional element, Ether, which broadly corresponds to the top 'spirit' element of the Wiccan Pentagram, and in Chinese medicine there are also five, Earth, Metal, Water, Wood and Fire - that such a common premise should have occurred independently among diverse and distant cultures is difficult to explain away as coincidence. Nor is it easily dismissed as an obvious focus for 'superstition' such as flying. (The theory goes that any God or supernatural being would have super attributes such as the ability to fly so it's hardly surprising that so many ancient religions and beliefs involved things coming down from the sky, eat your heart out Von Daniken etc). The only logical explanation for the adoption of the four elements, plus or minus one or two, as a basis for understanding how things work is that since prehistoric times man has recognized them as the basic energies that together maintain the structure and balance of the universe.

Looking around us it is easy to see these energies manifesting themselves on a physical level but it is not so obvious why at unrelated times and places a variety of cultures have extended their qualities to more abstract areas such as health and temperament. Two ancient Eastern traditions and healing systems, still in use today, Ayurvedic and Chinese, are based on the elemental principle and there was an early move to translate this approach into Western medicine using the four humours. Additionally much of the original mysticism and religion of the West and the Middle East includes the four directions or elements as part of its ritual and symbolism and extends the qualities to describe both human and deific nature. In fact another common component of ancient belief systems is to view the human body as a microcosm of the universe.

This resulted in common images and beliefs across continents and around the world, to the extent that modern archeologists are often hard pressed to 'rationalise' these 'coincidences' purely on the basis of trade and population movement. The old pagan religion was truly global and happened without the benefit of world wide travel which allowed the more recent monotheistic and hierarchical doctrines to spread so effectively.

It is interesting to note that like so much of the older Pagan belief and symbolism the four elements were incorporated into Christianity as the four corners of the cross and the four holy creatures, Lion (fire) Man (air) Eagle (water) and Bull (earth) as depicted on the Rider Waite version of the World card.

Without the missionary effect it is difficult to argue against the idea that the reason why these beliefs became universally accepted is because they are based on universal truths, either externally as observable effects or as Carl Jung suggested, internally as part of a collective unconscious. Effectively the two are connected as what is inside creates or at least colours what is outside.

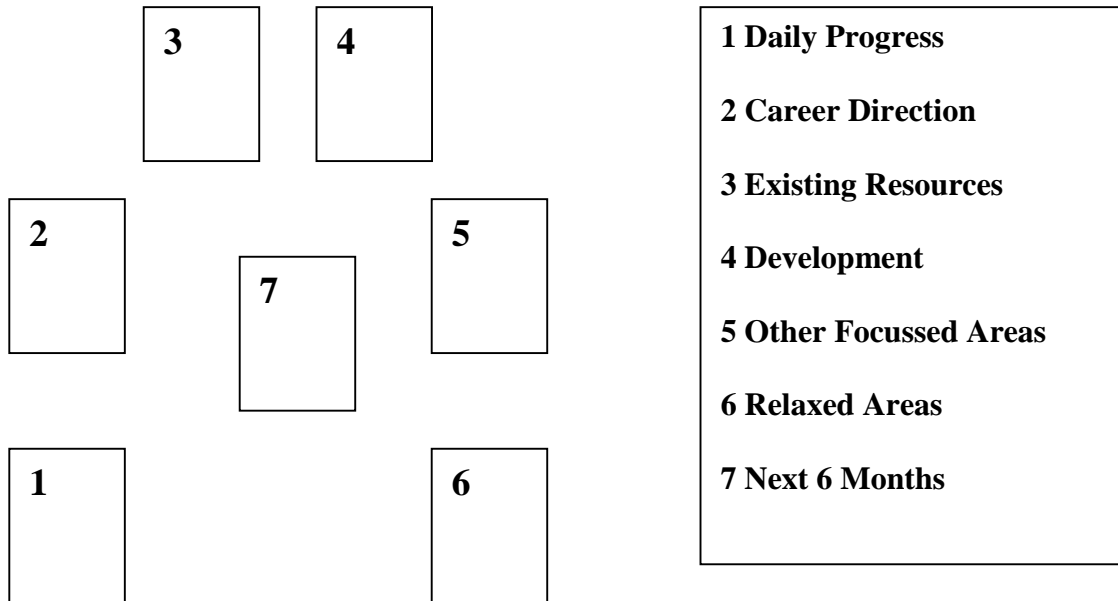
Within a Tarot deck the four elements are the foundation of the Minor Arcana, each suit representing an element and each individual card of the Major Arcana is also assigned an element. These associations form the basic link with Astrology where the signs and planets also have elemental assignments and then outwards and back through time through the numerous belief systems of the world to the original truths and archetypes of the collective unconscious.

Now if we can draw a direct line from a set of 78 paper images to the meaning of life, the universe and everything in one sentence it makes you think doesn't it? Of course it's not the cards themselves that have any particular significance, otherwise how could the hundreds of different decks all be equally effective in the right hands. It's the power and meaning invested in them by the reader that is important. The reader hooks into the element he or she associates with the card and uses it as a conduit to access the collective unconscious, universal energy or whatever. Again the words used are not important. The images and symbolism on the card can aid this process, but some decks only have pips on the pip cards and some readers can use an ordinary pack of playing cards to just as good effect.

So the elements are what bind the cards of a Tarot deck into a coherent whole, they are also an integral part of every major religion and belief system of which we are aware, the foundation stones of the human psyche and they can give us access to realms of ancient knowledge and understanding that will enhance our lives and allow us to evolve beyond our current material based state of evolution. Wow.

Pathway Spread

By Diana McMahon-Collis



Purpose & Deck Choices

I created this spread partly in response to receiving an increase in requests for readings on career and life path from clients and also as a way to address my own questions about these matters. I chose to use the Herbal Tarot for my initial reading since I view this as a healing deck and when the question arose within me regarding wanting guidance on my pathway I felt "under the weather". When I read for myself, I sometimes like to use something in addition to my own, inner reference of card meanings due to the possible problem of lacking objectivity on my own issues. I happen to have a copy of the book that goes with the Herbal Tarot deck (The Spirit of Herbs by Michael Tierra & Candis Cantin) which gives details about the herbs and a healing reading for each card. So I was able to read the cards on two levels, using intuitive and traditional meanings and also the readings that the book has to offer. I have also used the Ramses Tarot deck successfully with this reading, as the images are quite unlike the traditional RWS ones that are lodged in my mind! You can of course use whatever deck you prefer at the time for a Pathway Spread reading.

Use of Flower Remedies

I decided to boost the focus of the reading by taking a few drops of the Bach Flower Remedy Wild Oat under the tongue, before I shuffled the cards. This remedy is especially meant to help in finding one's correct path in life; the focus is on countering uncertainty and being able to make important decisions, such as choosing an appropriate career. It is ideal for anyone who has reached a crossroads and feels totally undecided as to what to do. This remedy is noted as being different from Scleranthus, which is apt for example when there is a choice to make between two clear options.

Pathway Spread - Position Meanings

This is a spread designed for helping to find steps forward along one's life path. It is designed to provide detailed guidance and is ideal for anyone who is feeling uncertain of the right course of action for their career, to help fulfil a spiritual path, or indeed to help find more happiness and meaning in life. Use your usual method to select the cards for the spread; I like to fan the deck face down and draw the ones that I am intuitively attracted to. If you feel the need for more information as you go by all means add a card or two to any position, to help clarify the answer.

Card 1 - Daily Progress - This is for guidance to help oneself (or the querent) in gaining clarity and strength to help deal with the main current issue in question. When people come for a reading about their life path or career they are often confused, worn down or simply frustrated. This card helps to focus the reading and indicate what will help for addressing the overall issue day by day in the present and near future.

Card 2 - Career Direction - This is specifically about career matters and/or life path issues, bearing in mind that not all individuals seek a "career" as in a paid job involvement. But many people have - or are seeking - an interest which is meaningful to them and may feel like an area where they can make a contribution that matters.

Card 3 - Existing Resources - This helps to home in on anything the querent already possesses, or has access to, which can help in the situation they are dealing with, or to make progress along the life path.

Card 4 - Development - Ideas on how to take matters forward, especially with a view to seeing where new help can come from. Or looking at a deeper development of the direction seen in Card 2.

Card 5 - Other Focussed Areas - There may be other issues in the querent's life that are very important at this time. Or issues to consider that ought to be taken into account when working out the life path and/or career direction. These should show up here.

Card 6 - Relaxed Areas - This is an indication of a part/parts of the querent's life where there is no need to worry. The querent can afford to take it easy in this department or with regard to this issue or mode of behaviour. This is the area of calm in the spread!

Card 7 - Next 6 Months - This should provide an overview of the flavour of this period, or how best to guide and develop matters during this time span. This is one of the main advice areas of the spread.

Featured Reader Interview: Caroline Wood

Meeting TABI 's Free Readers...

Real Name/Reading Name:

Caroline Wood, sometimes known as Mirath or mirath_andromeda (Mirath is one spelling of the Arabic name for a star in the constellation of Andromeda. It's a screen name I've had for about ten years now).

Area:

Near Manchester.

Age:

27

Non-tarot occupation:

Local government - I'm just about to move departments to a Regeneration project in a deprived area. I also have a very small sideline in jewellery-making, and sell through my own website and eBay.

Spiritual leanings:

I am a very odd mix of Kitchenwitch, Discordian and Buddhist, in about that order. I can highly recommend Discordianism to keep your outlook on life nice and kooky!

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

I don't really work with astrology much - it's a bit too pre-destination for my taste is all. The symbol set can be useful in magick or tarot though, just as I find runes/Hebrew/numerology/etc can be useful at times. I'm an early Gemini - about the only trait I really show of that is a desperate love of communications technology and I'm easily bored and always flitting from one new thing to another.

How long have you been involved in tarot?

I've been reading about six or seven years now.

What drew you to it?

Paganism. All the beginner's pagan books recommend that you take up a form of divination to open your intuition and get you working with symbols. I started with runes and tarot at the same time, and whilst I have an interest in both the tarot has been easier to learn, particularly since I got involved with TABI.

Do you read for yourself?

For sure. Not often - I have some good friends who are talented readers in tarot and in other oracles, so we trade and discuss readings between us. I find that easier, but I will read for myself when I feel the need.

What was your first deck? Why did you choose it?

The Haindl. I fell in love with it's dreamy images across the Internet - hadn't even handled the deck when I bought it. I think it was very helpful to have Rachael Pollack's books with the deck because they're very thoughtful and really taught me a lot very quickly - it resonated very much with what I was studying magickally at the time.

How many decks do you have now?

Um...ten, I think. They come and go - I'm forever buying new ones and selling on. I'm a bit of a collector but I only keep my favourites. I also own a number of Oracles.

What is your favourite deck(s)? Why?

Very hard to decide. For pure beauty and spirituality, the Roots of Asia. For utility and depth the Rider-Waite. For an introduction to different mythologies and systems, the Haindl. I'm in awe of the Thoth - have owned one for about two years now but still haven't worked with it; I don't feel quite ready to plunge into it. I also like Vargo's Gothic, which is a recent acquisition - it's a lot of fun and very pretty.

What is your most used deck for public readings, if different? Why?

Rider-Waite. It's the one most people are familiar with and my two favourite books are designed for it. I have an Original which I use for public reading, and a Tiny Universal which I have with me all the time. I'm very fond of it, thought it's not the most practical thing in the world!

Fave tarot book and/or author?

Rachel Pollack's 78 Degrees of Wisdom and Mary Greer's Tarot Reversals. I can't live without them!

Fave/most used spread?

For TABI readings I most often do a three-card "here you are", "here's your problem", "here's a way out". I always make it clear that the final card is A way out and not THE way out. I have two favourite spreads I made myself - a Pyramid, which looks at problems and things that are helpful, and how to make the best of them; and a Mind/Body/Spirit spread which you read as "vectors" - it's shaped like a triangle and you have to look at the combined influences of eg Mind and Body on Spirit, or Spirit and Mind on Body.

Do you use reversals or other system ie Elemental Dignities?

I use reversals a lot. I see the upright as being the still-point of a pendulum. When you reverse the card, you get the two extremes of the pendulum swinging.

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

Bits of, yes - I have an awareness of all sorts of disciplines and mythologies and I try to bring in whatever's appropriate.

Do you add psychic impressions to your readings?

I'm about as psychic as a brick! I never, ever say I'm reading psychically, but if pressed I would say I read "psychologically" - I try to analyse the question, the way it's been phrased, and use that

as a starting point. I suppose I get a lot of "impressions" that way. But I often find myself typing interpretations I never would have thought of if I was face-to-face with someone, and they're generally close to the mark - I much prefer online or written readings, they give me more time to think.

Do you rephrase? Why?

If necessary. Generally if I feel the question is unethical, eg a third person; or if it's a yes/no answer - I'd rather give the querent something to get hold of and enable them to take part in their own lives more.

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

I'm uneasy about health. Coming from both scientific and complementary health backgrounds, I feel I have a responsibility to encourage the person to a) see their GP and b) try complementary therapy as an adjunct. I just don't resonate with the health definitions some authors have tried to pin on the cards (eg Mary Greer). I would also pass on a reading if I didn't feel I could give an unbiased or honest answer because of something I already knew.

What is your favourite theory for how tarot works?

Tarot is an advanced Rohrschach Blot. Advanced because it uses dozens of symbols and archetypes which resonate with the Western mindset rather than splodges, and a Blot because it allows us to project our hopes and fears into the arrangement of the symbols. The reader is able to make an interpretation in the same way a psychologist would interpret the reaction to a Rohrschach Blot. Basically it's all in the mind - although I don't deny the very very odd coincidences and seeming synchronicities, I would certainly encourage people to study statistics as well as symbolism!

How would you describe your reading style?

Empowering, psychological, compassionate. Down to earth and knowledgeable.

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

Just started! I now have my own website and I read for clients by email or post. I've been a Free Reader for TABI for over a year now too. I've done some face-to-face work but I really do prefer my typing fingers to do the talking, rather than my mouth!

How can querents contact you for a reading?

You can request a reading at my website: <http://www.tarot.carolinewood.co.uk>

Tarot Poem

By Chris Joliffe

*Four edges have I;
Two faces,
No eyes,
One voice.*

*You see;
though I am blind
I show you the way.
I have no hearts, but within is my wisdom.*

*You may feel
Two faces, but many faces have I,
Read and listen
Read and see
Read and laugh
Read and weep.*

Do you have a tarot-inspired short story or poem, that you'd like to see featured in TABI News?

Contact newsletter@tabi.org.uk

The TABI Interview : James Ricklef

By Shelley King

When did you first get involved in tarot, and what drew you to it?

Although I have been interested in divination for a long time (I used the I Ching many years ago), I did not pursue the Tarot until one day, while thinking about a fantasy short story I wanted to write, I started to research the subject. Wow! All those pretty pictures gave the Tarot something that the I Ching didn't have, and I instantly fell in love with it. Seriously, "falling in love" is the best way to describe the experience. It really felt like that. I could not learn enough about it fast enough. I gulped it all down. I think it was the fact that the Tarot is art, philosophy, metaphysics, story telling, and divination all rolled into one. Whatever the case, I consumed it all as fast as I could.

Incidentally, I never got around to writing that fantasy tale, and for quite a while now, my writing career has turned to writing about the Tarot instead of fiction, although I still want to get back to writing fiction again sometime.

How did you learn to read the cards?

From any source I could find! I have learned from books, from Internet sites and discussion groups, from workshops, and, of course, from practice. And when I found out about the American Tarot Association's mentoring program, I joined that organization and got hooked up with a wonderful teacher named Judi Lethebridge, with whom I studied via correspondence. And by the way, I am still learning. Aren't we all?

What/who was the biggest influence on your tarot practice?

I can't narrow it down to only one influence, but I would say that my studies with Judi (my Tarot mentor from the ATA), and books by Mary Greer and Rachel Pollack -- as well as workshops with those two wonderful Tarot experts -- rank up there at the top.

What was the first deck you used?

The Aquarian Tarot. I bought it because I loved the artwork! I still use that deck now and then, but over the years I have moved on to other decks that speak to me with a stronger voice.

What is your favourite or most-used deck, and why?

That changes from time to time, but right now I think my favorite is probably the World Spirit Tarot. The artwork in that deck is bold and vibrant and the imagery is rich with symbolism. I love its voice and its sense of presence, and currently it is the deck I generally use for my own meditations and readings. When I read for other people, I usually use either the Robin Wood

Tarot -- which is another deck with beautiful artwork -- or the Universal Waite, although I also like the Sacred Rose Tarot and the Alchemical Tarot. For teaching, I always use a Rider-Waite-Smith deck because most books use it and most students have it.

Who are your favourite tarot author(s)?

Definitely Mary Greer and Rachel Pollack. When I give book recommendations to beginning Tarot students in my classes, I always include Greer's Tarot For Your Self and Pollack's 78 Degrees of Wisdom. I also highly recommend Joan Bunning's Learning the Tarot to beginners.

What was your latest tarot-related purchase?

Do crystals to put in my Tarot bags count? Actually my most recent Tarot acquisition was not a purchase. Joan Bunning just sent me a copy of her new book, Learning Tarot Reversals, which I plan to review on my website as soon as I finish reading it. (In case you're wondering, it looks very good so far.)

What drew you into teaching?

For one thing, I wanted to give something back to the Tarot community as a whole. Also I enjoy explaining something that I love as much as Tarot cards, so it seemed a natural development that I would enjoy teaching them. And I get a lot out of it; I learn a great deal in the process. You really have to think hard about a subject -- often in ways you never thought about before -- in order to explain it to someone else. You also learn a great deal by fielding questions from students, and their comments, which often are unclouded by preconceived notions, can be very enlightening. As an example, once while explaining the Hanged Man (Major Arcana card number 12), I mentioned its association with winning through a willing surrender to a higher power. One of my students said, "Oh, yeah! It's number 12 ... as in a 12-step program!" Wow! I had never made that connection before, but now I've added that one to my set of meanings for that card.

What is your preferred theory for 'how it all works'?

That's a tough question. Honestly, I really don't have a preferred theory. I think that reading Tarot cards is a sort of conversation with the Divine (hence the term "divination"), but to explain how that works requires that we impose a mechanistic framework on a spiritual and holistic process, and I don't like the restrictions that implies. It seems to diminish the experience. I understand how that sort of conceptualization can provide a convenient handle on the process, but any such explanation is limiting, so I prefer to avoid expressing one. What's going on when you read the cards is beyond any rational explanation, so my preferred explanation is just: "Yes, it does all work."

What is the best tip you could give a beginner?

Find your own path. By that, I mean, find your own meanings for the cards and find your own way of reading them. As you read Tarot books or take classes in this subject, you inevitably will

find disagreement as to interpretations of the cards or instructions about how to do a Tarot reading. But any book you read, any class you take, or any mentor you learn from can only give you their opinion of what works for them. Of course you should consider their advice, but at some point, you must take all that you have been taught and all that you have read, and use it to synthesize your own understanding of the cards and your own way of reading them. So any authority you listen to, and any book you read (even mine) is merely a guide to finding the truths that you will discover inside your own heart while studying and working with the cards themselves.

Do you incorporate other systems, such as astrology or numerology?

Mostly numerology and alchemical philosophy. A detailed explanation of what I mean by this can be found in the section on “Numerological and Elemental Associations” in the first chapter of my book, *Tarot Tells the Tale*. To give you a summarization, let me quote from the opening paragraph of that section:

“A most basic feature of the Tarot cards is that each is defined by its number and suit. For example, the Ten of Cups is both a Ten and a Cups card. In addition, each suit can be associated with one of the basic elements -- earth, air, water, and fire -- while the Major Arcana cards are related to the quintessential fifth element, spirit. Thus, an examination of a card’s numerological and elemental associations is a powerful way to explore its meaning more deeply.”

Do you currently read professionally? What is your preferred format – face to face, email, telephone etc?

I do read professionally, and I prefer face-to-face readings, because I like a lot of interaction with the querent. I try to get the querent to participate in the reading in order to make it more of a conversation than a monologue because I find that people get more out of it that way.

Do you still do any KnightHawk readings?

Yes. My next book uses KnightHawk Tarot readings to illustrate the use of a variety of Tarot spreads. I also use them now and then when I am teaching classes and conducting workshops.

What was the main thing you would say you learned from the KnightHawk readings?

I learned that you can do a reading for anything. The Tarot cards will talk to you about any subject and answer any question you can think of. I also learned how much of a sense of humor the cards can have. Take, for example, the reading for Cain and Abel. I had been hesitant to do a reading for a biblical character, wondering if that might open a can of worms that I did not want opened. You know -- should I use the Tarot in a domain where it is called the work of the Devil? I decided to try it anyway, though. Well, guess what? The Devil card came up in the middle of that one, which seemed like the Tarot taking a humorous jab at my concerns. Incidentally, though, the answers provided by this card were spot on, kidding or no kidding.

You're not afraid to use humour in your tarot work [the 'anti-affirmations' piece on your website is hilarious!] – do you think there should be more light-heartedness in tarot?

First of all, thanks -- I'm glad you enjoyed the humor section on my website. As for your question, I don't know if I would say there SHOULD be more humor or light-heartedness in Tarot. Instead, I would say that people should not be afraid of it or offended by it. After all, taking yourself too seriously is a lot more detrimental than having a sense of humor. So although I do take the Tarot seriously, I try not to take myself (or life) too seriously, and I hope that comes through in my work. I tried to make my book entertaining as well as educational because I think that people learn best when you grab their attention. And humor is a good way to keep someone's attention.

Have you ever thought about creating your own deck?

Actually, I have created my own 22-card Majors-only deck, and a few of those cards are featured on my website. Some day I may get up the courage (or masochistic streak) to tackle the remaining 56 cards, but so far I haven't had the time.

What were the best and worst things about writing 'Tarot Tells the Tale'?

The best thing has been hearing from people that they learned something from my book and that they enjoyed it. The worst thing? Hmm. I can't think of any bad things about writing it. I really enjoyed both the process and the results. Well ... ok. Maybe the editing process. That can get rather tedious.

How long did it take you to complete?

Somewhere between half a year and one year.

What kind of person do you think the book will be most suited to, and what do you hope they will get from it?

Although I originally wrote my book with beginners in mind, I have found that it appeals to Tarot enthusiasts from a broad range of backgrounds. I have heard from experienced Tarot readers -- other Tarot teachers and writers even -- that they have enjoyed my book and learned something from it. It seems that that regardless of their level of Tarot expertise, people enjoy seeing what the cards may reveal about someone like Joan of Arc, Hamlet, or the Ugly Duckling. They also like to compare how I interpreted these readings with how they might have. So it seems that people who are already pretty good at reading the cards enjoy my book mainly because it is entertaining, but I think they get some tips and insights along the way too. At least, I hope they do.

As for beginners, I wanted Tarot Tells the Tale to be accessible for them. With that in mind, I began the book with a long chapter about the art of reading Tarot cards, and after each reading I provided comments about the challenges it presented, some interesting observations about it, and things I learned in the process of doing it. Also, the appendix includes meanings for each of the

78 Tarot cards. So what do I hope beginners will get out of my book? I think it shows them how to do a Tarot reading by telling them how to do it and then giving them sample readings that they can relate to and understand.

What's next for you – are there plans for another book or other projects?

As a matter of fact, I recently finished writing a book about creating and using a wide variety of Tarot spreads, and that book is due out around the end of 2004. The spreads described in that book are useful in addressing issues such as finding or healing a relationship, solving problems, and transforming your life. It also demonstrates ways to create your own Tarot spreads. And again, I use fictional readings in this new book to illustrate the use of the spreads.

I also have a couple other books percolating on the backburner. For example, I am thinking about writing one that uses Tarot readings to explore various love stories like Romeo and Juliet, Cupid and Psyche, and Beauty and the Beast. This book would also demonstrate how to do Tarot readings for romance questions, which are probably the most common questions that people bring to a Tarot reader.

Finally, as I mentioned at the beginning of this interview, although my writing career has focused on writing about the Tarot, I still want to write fiction too. I don't want to give anything away at this point, though, so let me just say that I have an idea for a novel that I am excited about. We'll see where that takes me.

James Riclef is a Los Angeles based Tarot reader, teacher, and freelance writer. His new book, "Tarot Tells the Tale," features sample readings for well-known historical, mythical, and fictional characters. For more information about his work, see his website:

<http://home.att.net/~jwriclef>

See page 37 for a review of 'Tarot Tells the Tale'

The Adventures of Madame Fifie

Scenario by Ania

Roving tarot reader Madame Fifie will be familiar to members of our discussion group UKTarotTalk and regular newsletter readers, who usually vie to be the first to work out who her mystery querents are. Though, clearly you are an ethical lot as nobody was prepared to do a third party reading for the underage Harry Potter, who featured in the last edition, in spite of the £10 Amazon voucher on offer for the best submission.

And now back to Madame Fifie's tent...

The brazier crackles and spits as you toss in another log, sending a shower of sparks alarmingly high in the confines of your small tent. But, the warmth it generates is welcome protection against the chill.

Outside, a thick carpet of snow mutes everyday life and brings an eerie silence to the land. But, here inside the tent, your toes are comfortably warmed by the fire and your belly by the Krupnik. You take another sip, watching the flames splutter and flare in their mesmerising dance and musing at the curious collection of people you have seen over the past year...rich and poor, young and old, they all come through here.

Sensing a presence outside your tent, you down the rest of your honey vodka, pop the bottle under the table for later and turn back to your cards. The flap of your tent opens and a gust of icy air sweeps in, stoking the flames and making the interior glow brightly. Following closely behind a young woman slips in, glancing furtively back to make sure she has not been seen. Relaxing a little, she comes over and sits down, leaning forward intently.

"I can't pay you", she whispers nervously. "Could you trade for a few vegetables?", she asks, pulling back the cover of her basket. You glance in at the slightly nibbled squash and comment, "Well, that's been around the block a few times".

"Oh, please", she begs.

You look at her shabby clothes and feel sorry for the girl. It has been quite a good day's business and you haven't a moment to shop for your supper. A nice pie, perhaps... "Oh, go on then, but don't tell anyone, or they'll all be wanting trade prices!"

"Well, it's like this", she begins. "Last night, I snuck out and gate crashed a party." Your eyebrow arches involuntarily.

Oh, I didn't go like this," she says hastily, pointing to her tatty dress, "and it was kind of an open event, so I suppose that I didn't really gatecrash. I managed to borrow some clothes and things, you see. From my f...friend.

"And...And...I don't get to go out much", she adds plaintively, almost in tears.

She gulps and regaining her composure, continues, "Well, I had to rush off from the party early to return the gear; and get back before the rest of them noticed I was missing. They'd gone out too, you see.

"Anyway, I met this boy there." She flushes and a little smile flicks across her face. "And I just have this funny feeling... that we were made for each other. We danced together all night. And you know how hard it is to get boys on the dance floor usually!" She squirms excitedly on her seat. Then the smile vanishes and she looks crestfallen, close to tears again.

"But, the thing is," she sniffs, "I was in such a rush, I didn't have time to tell him where I live or anything. To be honest, I'm not sure I want him to see me like this anyway. But, I'm afraid so I may never see him again. Oh, what should I do?"

The tears are welling up again and she dabs at her eyes with a tattered hanky.

"Come on now, dear, it can't be that bad", you say kindly.

"Oh yes, it is!", she weeps.

"Oh no, it...well, let's see what the cards have to say". You shuffle the cards and offering her the pack to cut, you lay 3 cards on the table...

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

Once again a £10 Amazon voucher is up for grabs for the best submission.

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Consecrating Your Cards, Bag or Box

By Templumkat

The act of consecration is a ritual act which dedicates your tools to the purpose you have decided upon. By performing the consecration, you set your cards, box or bag, and other paraphernalia, apart from anything else, and thereby make them sacred. It is no coincidence that many words of magical significance derive from meanings of "separation," for example 'temple'. However, before consecrating your cards, there is a preliminary step of purification, an act of cleansing. This removes all unwanted forces and influences, all prior psychological attachments, from the items, prior to their consecration.

In order to perform a consecration, you must first, in effect, consecrate yourself, by preparing a separate place of working in which the ritual takes place. This can be as elaborate as casting a full witchcraft circle, or building a ritual temple, to as simple an act as taking yourself to a favourite quiet outdoor location which feels sacred or special to you.

The five basic steps of a ritual are as follows:

1. Banish
2. Purify
3. Consecrate
4. Invoke
5. Banish

You can go for a full three hour Golden Dawn ritual, if you have enough people wearing Egyptian Headresses (ahem), but don't get me started on how long it takes to prepare a Lotus Wand ... or ... how about ... a kitchen version -

1. Banishing (use your finger to draw a circle clockwise around you, sprinkle inside of circle with salt and water, saying "I banish unwanted influences and make myself a space of working")

2. Purification (using water, sprinkle on bag, saying "I purify this bag, so that all associations and forces are removed from it")

3. Consecration (holding up bag, visualise it strongly as an item charged and radiating protective influences, saying "I now consecrate this bag to the sole purpose of protecting my sacred cards of art")

4. Invocation (Make a statement to a Higher Force to bless the consecrated item, for example, "May the Powers of Light radiate within and without and bless these sacred cards with the power of Truth."). Spend a moment meditating on this blessing.

5. Banishing (sprinkle salt and water within your circle one last time, saying "I banish all residual forces from this space of working," and draw your circle anti-clockwise, saying "I close this place of working")

Any act done with intention is a magical act, so leaving your bag in sunlight (or moonlight) for a day (or night) will also have the desired effect so long as your intention is focused and the ritual activity follows the sequence above. It is no point, for example, consecrating an item without purifying it first. This is like trying to make a vegetarian salad on a work surface on which the remains of Sunday Roast still resides!

You'll also notice this is a non-denominational (or non-demon-inational?!) ritual - if you want to involve a specific deity, for example, Circe, Athena, Hecate, Thoth, Hermes, etc., then use an appropriate invocation. So, once you have consecrated your object, you can now invoke Thoth, for example, by saying "Thoth, God of Wisdom and the Word, may your Wisdom guide my hand as I use these consecrated cards of art, to obtain true knowledge of hidden things, to the glory of thine ineffable name." Then, do the final banishing after a brief meditation or communion with the invoked deity.

This ritual template will work for any item and any consecration, and is about the most pared down I can get an effective ritual (aside from a method involving two cups of water which a Shaman once taught me ...)

<http://www.templum.com>

Book Review: Tarot Tells The Tale

Written by James Ricklef

Reviewed by Shelley King

Description: 266 page softback
ISBN: 0-7387-0272-2

Publisher: Llewellyn: <http://www.llewellyn.com>

This is an informative and tremendously useful book for beginners and experienced tarot users alike, but over and above that is the fact that it is also *fun*. The main bulk of the book is devoted to the readings, which are based on the author's Ask Knighthawk columns and are set out in a question and answer format - like a tarot version of an agony aunt. The querents are all famous names from mythology, history and literature, and bring their Issues to the tarot table. There are 22 three-card readings, illustrated with different decks such as the Robin Wood, Hanson Roberts and Sacred Rose, as well as the RWS, for seekers such as King Midas, the Ugly Duckling and Thomas Jefferson.

Analysing other people's readings is a wonderful way of expanding your tarot skills, and this book certainly provides the opportunity to do just that. As the querents and situations are familiar to start with, it makes it easy to get a good feeling for the reading, and it is fascinating to see such a range of unusual questions - doubly so when you see just how appropriate the cards drawn invariably are. The readings are given in the format of a written response to the querent, and are all personalised - the requests are given 'naturally' - just as you could imagine them coming in, as opposed to being put in a tarot-friendly way, and seeing how he approaches this can be just as enlightening as the actual card interpretations. The rephrasing, where necessary, is gentle and diplomatically done. For example, here is the start of a response to Lady Macbeth:

'My dear Lady,

Thank you for requesting my help. You have asked several questions here, but the one best suited to a Tarot reading is the one that seems to be the central issue with which you are concerned: what can you do to help your husband become king?'

Another really useful part of this section is the commentary provided by Ricklef on the readings. Here he gives some background and opinion on the subject, and talks us through his thoughts on the cards, the themes and tones of the reading and on the conclusions he reached. This is a fascinating insight into the mind of a reader - it's a glimpse under the hood, a view of the processes that produce the reading, which is something that you never normally see. The comparison between cards of different decks is also interesting, and you can see how the reading has been influenced by the choice of deck.

I loved the fact that the majority of the readings are done with three cards, as it shows the amazing versatility that the short spreads can have - at no point do you ever feel short-changed by the responses. We see many different issues addressed - there are general spreads such as the old favourite 'past, present, future', situational spreads such as 'situation, what you need to know, what you can do about it' and specific option spreads, such as that given to George Bailey from the film 'It's a Wonderful Life' -

Possible outcome if you stay in Beford Falls
A compromise alternative
Probable outcome if you leave

Besides the actual readings, there are also straight information sections - an appendix giving Ricklef's own interpretations and keywords for the cards, plus chapters at the start of the book on subjects such as numerology, elemental associations court cards, reversals and ethics - so for the novice, there is sufficient background material, presented accessibly, to use this book as a launching pad for tarot study. Starting with the numerological and elemental information, for example, gives the beginner a basis for starting the interpretation - even if it's the first time you've turned over a card and have no keyword or concept ready, it gives you a place to start. I also really liked how these aspects were used to help bring out the less-obvious side of the card - the positive side of the Three of Swords, for example, or the shadow to the Ten of Cups:

This card, which depicts a family rejoicing under a rainbow overlaid with ten cups, generally is seen in a positive light. It is commonly interpreted as being an indication of a happy family or as the realisation of your hopes and dreams. However, besides relating to love and relationships, the suit of Cups also can deal with our subconscious and our imagination, while the Tens can mean overkill. Thus, the card may be saying that what seems like a happy home is actually an illusion wrought from wishful thinking.

The section on reversals is one of the best I've seen outside of a book actually devoted to the subject. Ricklef gets across a lot of information, including a mnemonic and diagram, in a short space of time, all the while getting across the fundamental concept in easy to understand terms. It was also good to see rephrasing addressed, with examples, as this is an area that a lot of beginners struggle with.

Overall, this is a book which will appeal to tarotists of all levels - raw beginners will find this an excellent starting point, those already familiar with the cards will be able to learn a lot from the readings, and experienced readers will be entertained and amused. This is a worthy addition to anyone's shelf - or Christmas list!

Book Review: Astrology for Today

Written by Joanna Watters

Reviewed by Diana McMahon-Collis

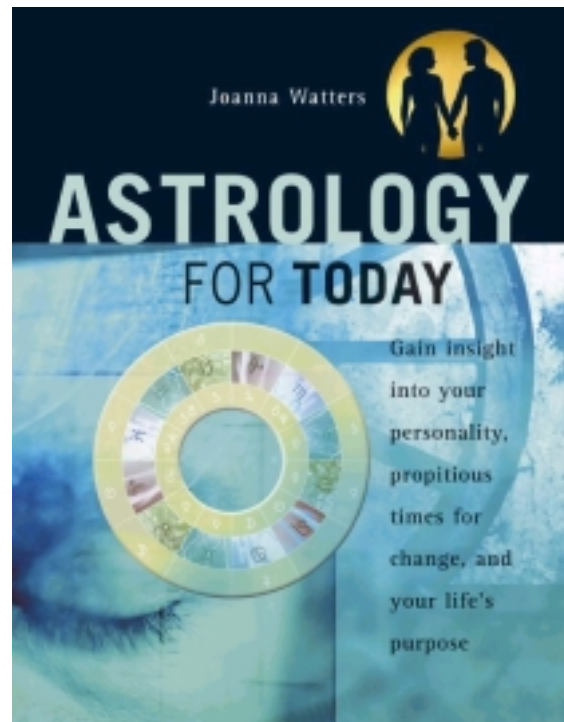
Publisher: Carroll & Brown, London, October 2003 - Tel: 020 7372 0900 Fax: 020 7372 0460

Email: ellen.parton@carrollandbrown.co.uk

RRP: £12.99 from Amazon and high street retailers

This is no ordinary astrology book; it is likely to become a very important reference work for astrological students, with relevance for beginners and advanced astrologers alike. One of the main reasons is that its author, Joanna Watters, addresses so well the fundamental issue of what the practice of astrology really consists of and involves.

There are many misconceptions about astrology and, as with her previous book on tarot, the author sets out to put the record straight. Joanna has a very strong grounding in astrology; she turned from star pupil to one of the central tutors for the Company of Astrologers and is also an independent, practising astrologer and tarotist in her own right. Her premise - like that of the school where she has honed her craft is that astrology is a symbol system, pure and simple.



The apparently objective data of the birth chart is not to be later confused with the nuts and bolts of a scientific methodology, when it comes to looking at what the birth chart can tell us through translation of the language of its symbols. As Joanna points out, without an astrologer to read the meaning of the chart's symbolism the chart is a meaningless phenomenon. Astrology and astrological charts create nothing on their own and planets do not have a causal function or role in our lives and, in the active practice of reading for others, it is always helpful to be aware of one's own involvement in the chart.

For anyone who is not aware of the Company of Astrologers' approach, this is a somewhat unusual school, teaching an awareness of the history and development of astrology as well as offering many tested tools for effective practice. There is an engagement with both modern approaches from the world of psychology and the learning of the past, in the form of the traditions of horary astrology, katarche and related areas (elections, contest astrology and so on have been taught at the Company). More importantly there is an emphasis on a strong engagement with symbolism and the craft of astrology, rather than allowing the student to get blinded by too many individual techniques. The company's curriculum includes vital areas such as synastry (relationship astrology; chart comparison). And, indeed, addressing the whole issue of how to work with clients who have questions about relationship matters is a strong component of Joanna's own work. As an experienced reader she is well aware that many of the questions and problems that clients bring to her are relationship connected. In *Astrology for Today* you will find a whole chapter devoted to this sphere of life, including pinpointing the key areas for information concerning love and romance in the horoscope chart.

To be fair, some of the basic ideas presented in this book may present issues for those who are used to carrying out spiritual readings without a client being physically present, since this is a practice that the author - and the school that she has honed her skills within - does not generally subscribe to. However, for anyone who is interested in a clear introduction to astrological symbolism and practice, *Astrology for Today* has to be a very good source. Not only can the reader learn about the significance of planetary and other horoscope symbolism, but he or she can also go through the steps to construct a chart "from scratch" and go all the way to working through timing measures that will allow the pinpointing of specific events.

What is also extremely refreshing in this book is its modern, colourful approach. The layout is very fresh and inviting and reflects Joanna's own, straightforward and accessible writing style. Although the author is a highly articulate and learned graduate, she does not use lengthy, complicated terms when she can use something simpler, which will convey her point more clearly. It is obvious that her first task is to get the message across.

For anyone who has any astrological knowledge already, there will be many familiar terms here - there is discussion of the houses, signs, planets, aspects, angles, transits and progressions for example. There is also a strong emphasis on an area often neglected in modern astrology but vital to the methodology offered here for picking out the vital aspects of a chart - the rulership of planets and how their location in the chart offers important information, which can help in a reading.

Within these spheres the author covers some of the easiest and most complex areas of astrology, alike. But the real strength of the book, in my opinion, is in conveying the concept of the Location of Significance in a birth chart so effectively. This is a Company of Astrologers approach and Joanna rightly credits it in that way. However, it is also an approach that has not necessarily had broad scale exposure as a valid practice within the astrological community - let

alone beyond it. And it is to the author's credit that she is able to articulate the use of this approach so effectively. Having personally benefited from the same initial source of learning and gone on to use Locating Significance in my own practice I can safely say that it is a very useful focussing tool for any practising astrologer!

Importantly, Joanna Watters offers in this book a step-by-step approach to using this particular guideline, to go through the chart, noting the most important points - which can then become the starting points for discussion in any astrological consultation. For anyone unfamiliar with the developments in astrology in the past century, this is strongly counter to the style that was so popular in Seventies astrological literature, of "synthesising" the chart or attempting to take every facet of the horoscope's contents and effectively stir it around to hopefully evolve a core meaning.

Astrology has since moved on and, in certain respects, has rediscovered more of its roots - Horary astrology and Citrate being some of them. In fact therein lies the real gift of the Company of Astrologers' approach and the practice of astrology by all those astrologers who have learned there and respected the value of this unique style. The author of this book is not trying to lay claim to having originated the idea of Locating Significance; it is clear from various quotations and references that she never forgets her teachers. But she does an extremely good job of showing how it can and should be done!

As with Joanna Watters' other book, Tarot for Today, this volume is also packed with real life examples of chart work, from her readings for clients and personal associates. There are also some examples of how to work with astrology through the charts of certain public figures, such as Bill Gates, Jennifer Anniston and Catherine Seta-Jones. Part of the real value of the examples that Joanna shares from her personal client base is that they show just how useful a positive and informed a practice of astrology can be; the emphasis is always on the therapeutic angle. The astrologer is not there to show how much he or she knows or can "see", but to approach the horoscope from an investigative angle, with a view to drawing out the client's issues and verifying their experiences or pinpointing possible answers.

Astrologers do not always want to be associated with making predictions, perhaps for fear of being branded as fortune tellers. But prediction is a fundamental area of astrological craft and there is no shying away from it in this book. There is in fact a particularly useful and delicate handling of the issue here. Joanna emphasises that we do not live out our whole horoscope all of the time. The chart shows how some factors may be more or less in focus at different points and this should help to make more sense of how the process of prediction is made to some degree possible.

Joanna's grounding in the teaching of the Company of Astrologers is also in evidence in important details such as the differentiation between "universal" and "particular" astrological

symbolism. Her way of working in this area is very clear and these are factors that can help any new or developing astrologer improve at reading horoscope symbolism and defining issues accurately.

Just how much we are dealing with a symbol system in approaching astrology becomes very clear when the author talks about symbolic progressions, transparently a constructed, but nonetheless fundamental and useful, timing measure. Other important details covered include clarification of the significance of the speed of movement of the planets in the chart, retrograde and forward motion of planets and the degree of exactitude that is apt when studying and assessing major planetary connections.

I particularly liked Joanna's handling of the locating of progressions - a timing technique that many learning astrologers stumble over and get very frustrated with! Here there is some careful detail not always covered in other books - emphasising for example that the day starting at exactly the same time of birth is seen to correspond to the beginning of each year of a person's life.

Astrology for Today is a book which, whilst having the outer appearance of something light and entertaining, quickly shows in its text that it does not allow for sloppiness of technique. The whole focus is on how best to approach the practice of astrology and the book shows a way to go about reading a horoscope chart that makes it almost instantly accessible - perhaps even to a complete beginner. Yet in spite of the author's rigorous approach to practice, what is also emphasised is the intuitive flair that can help a chart reading along. The magic, the strange twists and turns of astrological practice and the way that the Mercurial language of astrology plays tricks with the astrologer, are not blotted out. Such a combination in the author's style is a rare thing.

If I may be so bold as to make a personal prediction, it is that this is a book that will become a major textbook for astrology students, which includes tarot readers who are interested in learning more about astrology. Many people who are fascinated by this subject ask, from time to time, for advice of "a good book" to buy, so that they can learn a little more about astrology. I think I know which one I will be recommending from now on!

***** Reader offer - readers of TABI News are entitled to order a copy of this book direct from the publishers at a special price of £10.99 including p&p. Please contact Ellen Parton via the details above *****

Deck Review: Tarot of the Witches

Created/illustrated by: Fergus Hall

Reviewed by Troy Stephens

Description: 78 cards with small booklet

Card dimensions: 110 x 70mm

This pack was commissioned from the painter Fergus Hall by the makers of the 1973 James Bond film *Live and let Die*, starring Roger Moore as James Bond. In this film Solitaire (played by Jane Seymour) read the cards for the villain Dr Kananga (played by Yaphet Kotto). Interestingly, the copyright in the cards is still held by Aon Productions, the makers of all the James Bond Films.

The curious images used in the cards have a dreamlike quality that is obviously influenced by the surrealist movement. However, the designs also have a strong element of caricature about them.

All the cards use rich jewel-like colours and although at a casual glance the designs of the Major Arcana might seem to be fairly basic, closer inspection shows that they contain a considerable amount of symbolism. For example, although The Wheel of Fortune might look like a simple disc suspended in the branches of a dead tree, a second look shows that the disc is decorated around its edge with symbols representing the four suits, plus a sun, a moon and two rainbows. Several of the cards feature a wild-eyed ginger tomcat in various positions and students of Tarot might enjoy finding the link between these 'tomcat' cards.

Most of the Major Arcana contain references to the sun and the moon and a surprising number of them have little touches of wry humour. The Hierophant is a chubby middle-aged man with a long black beard in which a bird has made a nest and laid three eggs. The smiling Hanged Man is reading a book held in his right hand and a butterfly net in his left hand. If you look very closely you will see that there are four tiny butterflies flying around his bound feet.

As the Minor Arcana do not have individual illustrations, this is a deck that would probably not suit most beginners. However, if you are looking for an unusual deck that is not influenced by the Rider-Waite, then The Tarot of the Witches could be just the deck for you

Places to Go, Things to Do

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Fayres/Festivals/Conferences

Regular Meetings

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

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

Resources

<http://www.mary-el.com/archive.asp>

The journal of Marie White, creator of the Mary-el Tarot. See the creative process in action.

Theme/special interest/fun decks

<http://www.littlereview.com/meg/trektaro.htm>

Star Trek Tarot

Tarot Deck Images/Reviews

<http://www.web-divination.net/tarot/reviews.html>

Decks and books

Shopping

Eternia - the new age shop

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

UK Online shop for mystic and spiritual items. Buy Crystals, candles, essential oils, jewellery and many other perfect mind, body and spirit gifts. Includes a tarot reading service.

Automated Reading Sites

<http://pages.ivillage.com/amethystki/id11.html>

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.

We hope you have enjoyed reading TABI News. Please address all enquiries to the Editor

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