



TABI QUARTERLY

Issue #12 31st October 2004

Welcome to the Autumn 2004 edition of TABI Quarterly - which, as you can see, has had a little name change. We think the new name better reflects the nature of the publication, which is much more an e-zine than it is a newsletter.

In this issue we have reviews of the new Llewellyn Special Topics in Tarot book Tarot Tips, by Ruth Ann & Wald Amberstone, and the beautiful Gilded Tarot by Ciro Marchetti, plus an interview with the creator himself.

We have plenty of other fun features for you too, including a fascinating look at tarot and the elements, a gloriously spooky short story inspired by the Vampire Tarot, and the second part of the wonderfully funny Mickey Querent astrology series - if you're a Leo, Virgo, Libra or Scorpio reader, you might just recognise yourself...

Happy Halloween to all our readers!

With best wishes,

Shelley King

Editor

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Availability, Notification of Accuracy of TABI News

We do our best to keep the information in TABI News up to date and accurate. If anything needs updating or correcting for future reference, please let us know. We send out notification of new issues of TABI News to reach a wide and interested audience and for each issue we endeavour to ensure that all contributors are kept informed of the release date. If you should wish to be removed from our mailing list, however, please email us at newsletter@tabi.org.uk

Submissions

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

We wish to thank all of our writers and volunteers for their input and all of our members for their interest in TABI. Please note that article copyrights remain with the authors. The articles, reviews and information are offered for interest purposes and are not necessarily reflective of the views of or indicative of an endorsement by the Tarot Association of the British Isles.

Greetings from TABI

The Who, What and Where...

WHERE WE WILL BE

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

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 November 2004

WitchFest International
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday, 27 November 2004

Pagan Federation International Conference
(Event organised by The Pagan Federtaion)
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday 4 December 2004

Ghost Evening
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
City of York Pub
London

Saturday, 5 March 2005

Mediaeval Witches Ball
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday, 14 May 2005

WitchFest England
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
Fairfield Halls
Croydon

Saturday, 18 June 2005

WitchFest Wales
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
Cardiff

Saturday, 2 July 2005

WitchFest Scotland
(Event organised by Children of Artemis)
Langside Halls
Glasgow

August 2005

Herstmonceux Mediaeval Festival
(Event organised by The Malcolm Group)
Herstmonceux Castle
Hailsham
Sussex

September 2005

North East Leeds Convention
(Event organised by The Pagan Federation)
Leeds
Yorkshire

All TABI's Endorsed readers are welcome to apply to read for TABI at any of these events. Details about how to become an Endorsed Reader are set out on the TABI website.
<http://www.tabi.org.uk>

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

Membership of TABI costs £15 per year, and entitles you to the following:

- Membership Certificate
- TABI Keyring and Pen
- A free in-depth reading
- Full version of the downloadable E-Zine TABI Quarterly
- Endorsed Reader programme
- Free online beginners' training, in a mentored study group.
- Participation in fayres and festivals
- Social events and regional meetings
- Monthly online chat and discussion forums
- Discounts on TABI merchandise
- Use of TABI logo for personal website/stationery

- The chance to practice your skills and meet other like-minded people, in a fun and friendly environment

If you would like to apply, please send a blank email to: membership@tabi.org.uk

TABI SERVICES

Readings: Our Free 1-3 card reading service is still proving extremely popular. To request a reading, please visit our website: <http://www.tabi.org.uk> A longer, 7 card + reading is also available free of charge to new members. For membership queries, contact membership@tabi.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 trainingadmin@tabi.org.uk

Discussion Forum

Recently moved to a new venue, check out our lively discussion boards:
<http://p213.ezboard.com/btabi>

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

Mickey Querent: The Astrology of Tarot Readers- Pt 2

By Mick Frankel

You might remember from the last newsletter that TABI investigative reporter Sam Sword was sent to find out more about Tarot and Astrology. Here's his latest report...

I arranged to meet up with Mickey Querent a second time.

Mickey is a full-time client and he goes for as many Tarot readings as he possibly can. He's got to know Tarot readers so well that he changes his approach according to the Zodiac sign of the reader. I asked Mickey how he tends to deal with a reader whose birthday is late July or early August. The splendid sign of **Leo** the Lion.

Mickey's voice dropped to a whisper, "Listen, you don't even have to ask 'em their birthday. I can spot a Leo the second I walk in the reading room."

Really? I asked Mickey what makes them so distinctive.

"Well, for a start there's certificates everywhere. On the wall, behind the door, on a special certificates' display in the corner."

"Then there's the photos... the reader with various celebrities. You know the sort of thing... anyway, I make a point of noticing one of the photos. Tell 'em that you're sure that you've seen them on telly. That kind of thing. They'll love to tell you a few stories, drop a few names. Then you'll get a terrific reading out of 'em. Really entertaining – and accurate."

I asked Leo reader Clara Lyons what she thought of Mickey's attitude. She laughed so loudly it seemed to rock the room. "What a joker", she said with a broad smile on her round, open face, "but it's funny that he mentioned name-dropping – Uri Geller told me the same thing."

Next I asked Mickey about **Virgo** Tarot readers. Surely they're completely different to the Leo types, aren't they?

"Oh yeah. Definitely" he said with a smile. "Now if their birthday is late August early Sep, then whatever you do, make sure that you arrive on time. Not a minute late but not too early either, that'll mess 'em right up."

“If it’s a 2 o’clock reading, make sure that you arrive at 13:59 and 30 seconds. It’s tricky and it takes a lot of practice. I remember once walking around the block 5 times before going to see one of them Virgo readers.”

Yes but what about their readings? What’s it like going to see a Virgoan for a Tarot reading?

“Well, you see, they will give you a very detailed reading. Very, very detailed reading if you get what I mean. Don’t get me wrong, I like people to be precise about what they say but everybody has their limits, know what I mean?”

“Sometimes you just have to interrupt them and keep them right ‘cause once they realise that they’re in danger of over-running and maybe being late for the next client then they might start to hyper-ventilate or something.”

Is he serious? I talked quietly and calmly with my friend Claire Maiden whose birthday is in the first week of September. I showed her what Mickey had written about Virgoan tarot readers.

“Well”, she began, in a shrill, high-pitched voice, “I can see something of the nature of the indications of the sort of theoretical precision that Mickey tends to allude to. I don’t think that I’m obsessed with details really. By the way, I don’t think that there’s a hyphen in hyperventilate. Oh dear! Look at the time! I have to go now sorry.”

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I was getting more and more convinced that Mickey Querent was on to something so I asked him the sign of **Libra**; people who are born September/October time.

“Now Librans are the best readers if you’re fairly sure about which way to go in a situation but you just need someone to give you the pros and cons of both sides. Fantastic.”

“Just don’t expect a definite answer from ‘em. And remember that they’ll contradict anything anyone says on principle. Even if it’s something that they themselves said 5 minutes previously!”

“I like going to a Libran and asking them to do the old spread with two pathways, you know, sort of one path for ‘if I do this’ and one path for ‘if I don’t do this’. They’re totally brilliant at that kind of thing. Takes the pressure off them having to come down one way or the other.”

I spoke to Libran Tarot reader Clare Scales at her office near the Old Bailey in London. I asked her whether she thought that Mickey’s comments were fair.

She thought very carefully and said, “Well, yes and no. It is true that I often use a spread with two pathways. But then again I sometimes use other spreads as well.” She nodded to show that she’d convinced herself that she’d covered all the angles.

“I think that a lot of what we said was very valid although some of it didn’t really ring true for me.”

Innocently, I asked her to be more specific. “Well for example, Mickey said that I might contradict something that I’d said 5 minutes ago. I don’t think that’s true really. I think that quite a lot of what he said didn’t really ring true although some of it was valid.”

I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, made my excuses and left.

Time was running out, Mickey had a reading to get to, so I asked him to quickly summarise the **Scorpio** reader. How do you play it if the reader’s birthday is late October/early November?

He gave a hearty laugh for the first time, “Well, you gotta be prepared to talk about your sex life.”

“Don’t be surprised if you find yourself telling the Scorpio reader all sorts of stuff that you’ve never told anyone else. They’re good. Really good. But you have to get past the funny tingling feeling that you get when they give you their dramatic look.”

“Also, the lighting’s not normally that great and you’ll find yourself squinting to see the perishing cards they’ve turned up for you! You clothes will smell of incense for days afterwards as well.”

“Scorpios are great readers though. Tho’ deck normally. They come out with all sorts of really accurate stuff and you’ll have no idea how they worked it out.”

“Oh and be nice to ‘em. Especially if you plan on coming back some time. They’ll remember you alright.”

I got in touch with Clare Sharpe, better known as Mystical Syster EagleFeatherAntares.

I showed her what Mickey had said about Scorpio Tarot readers such as herself.

She seemed to go into a trance for a few seconds and I felt the temperature drop in her dimly-lit incense-filled studio. She stared at me and the little hairs stood up on the back of my neck. “This person has recently had an argument with his brother. But everything will be sorted out by Xmas. I don’t like the way he treats his girlfriend. He never buys her any presents that she likes.”

EagleFeatherAntares laughed and I joined in, a little nervously. I said thanks very much and decided that I’d had quite enough for one day. I gently made my way to the door taking great care not to knock anything over as I stumbled around in the gloom.

Now I was sure that Mickey was somehow on the right lines. I wonder what he’ll make of Tarot readers born under my own sign, Sagittarius?

Find out next issue!

The Deck is Out There: Three Simple Principles to Help You Find the Deck of Your Dreams

by *Mark McElroy*

Remember the good old days when ice cream came in two flavours? When televisions received just three networks? When Henry Ford offered customers any colour car they wanted ... as long as they wanted black?

Back then, even buying a Tarot deck was simple. At our local bookstore, Tarot decks came in just one flavour: Rider-Waite. The deck came in just one size: big. And I could have any colour box I wanted, as long as it was hot, bright yellow.

Today, we live in a world of options. Ice cream parlours offer a minimum of thirty-one flavours. My DirecTV receives more than two hundred channels in both standard and high definition. When shopping for cars, I can buy from dozens of manufacturers – from Acura to Volvo – in any of several hundred colours.

And yes, these days, even oracles come with options. As anyone even remotely interested in Tarot knows, the lonesome Rider-Waite now has ample company. Tiny bookstores in small towns frequently carry half a dozen decks. My local metaphysical shop stocks more than a dozen. Even here in the buckle of the Bible belt of the USA, I have on-demand access to more than fifty unique decks through Borders, Books-a-Million, and Barnes & Noble.

With this variety, though, comes confusion. As Tarot becomes increasingly mainstream, the question I hear most is no longer “Aren’t Tarot cards demonic?” Instead, the number one question – the favorite of bewildered first-time buyers and curious students alike – is, “What deck should I buy?”

While the number of decks has increased, the number of answers to this question has not. For years, I’ve heard Taroteers trot out the same reply: “Find a deck that speaks to you.” Frankly, especially for people just getting to know Tarot, that’s easier said than done. As a strategy for narrowing down options, “Find a deck that speaks to you” fails the practicality test. Here’s why:

1) You can’t take it literally. If a deck actually speaks to you – with a voice, I mean – you should probably be concerned. (Unless the deck is the Thoth, of course, in which case the voice you hear is probably just Uncle Al, playing a posthumous prank.)

2) What speaks to you might not be good for you. Let’s face it – some people have an unfortunate affinity for saccharine. Some of these people may think the Tarot of the Teletubbies speaks to them ... or coos to them, or yammers at them, or whatever the heck a Tarot of the Teletubbies might do. That doesn’t mean, though, that the Tarot of the Teletubbies will always be the best possible home base for their exploration of the Tarot.

3) What if every deck speaks to you? Through an online community called Comparative Tarot, I've met several folks who seem to be determined to buy every single deck that's out there. If you have a lot of cash on hand (or if you married well), buying every deck in the universe is definitely an option ... but not one that's practical for most people.

4) What if you can't find a deck that speaks to you? Confronted with hundreds of options, many people just shut down: eventually, all the boxes just become a blur. When this is the case, even the friendliest of decks will seem as tight-lipped as a two-year old resisting a spoonful of boiled beets.

The good news: finding the deck that's right for you needn't involve pressing your ear to the box and listening for a still, small voice peeping, "Buy me!" As it turns out, once you sensitise yourself to three simple principles, the process of finding The Perfect Deck becomes amazingly straightforward.

With these secrets in hand, rank beginners can identify the deck that's right for them. In fact, even experienced buyers and collectors can use these tips to evaluate whether that sweet little deck on Ebay is worth a hundred and fifty bucks ... *before* they click Buy It Now.

1. Buying a Deck on Purpose

Before you shop Llewellyn's online store ... before you rush off to read the deck previews at Tarot Passages ... before you plunk down \$65.00 for that mass-produced-but-somehow-suddenly-extremely-rare copy of the Caveat Emptor Tarot on Ebay ... spend just ten minutes thinking about your purpose for buying the deck.

In other words: how will this deck be used?

Often, people respond to this most important question with a blank stare. "I dunno," one fellow said. "I just want one, I guess."

If your purpose is, indeed, just to have a deck – and not to use it – any deck will do. Your choice will be an easy one: buy the cheapest cards you can find. (On Ebay, old decks by Miss Cleo and the Caring Psychic Family often go for pennies a pack.)

Most people, though, aren't quite this flexible ... and, as a result, they really could benefit from thinking about what they plan to do with the deck. In classes, I encourage students to finish this statement: "Primarily, I want a deck that will help me _____."

Completing this phrase forces people to think of a Tarot deck strictly in terms of its utility. Will the deck be a learning tool? A meditative tool? A magickal tool? Will they read with the deck? If so, will they read for themselves? For others? For adults? For kids?

Defining your purpose in advance of your purchase will greatly reduce the number of decks you'll have to consider. To make things even easier, the examples below pair common purposes

with readily available decks ... creating a list you could easily copy for your own shopping purposes.

Learning Decks. Not every Taroteer agrees with me, but I'm a firm believer that beginners need decks with bright, approachable art. After all, who's going to use a deck that scares them?

In addition, I also recommend that beginners adopt a deck that mirrors the Rider-Waite structure. Whether you love or hate the Rider-Waite, you have to admit that, for years, the Rider-Waite was Tarot. As a result, more books are based on the Rider-Waite images than any others. Getting to know Rider-Waite-style decks, then, provides the beginner with the broadest range of resources.

If your purpose is to begin learning Tarot basics, I recommend Lo Scarabeo's *Universal Tarots*. The deck's images are based on the most widely recognized Tarot imagery in the world. You might also consider Llewellyn's *Robin Wood Tarot*, which preserves the same structure and themes, but illustrates the concepts in a more contemporary style.

Many of my students like the traditional 78-card structure, but don't connect with the artistic style of the *Universal* or *Robin Wood* Tarot. For them, I recommend the colorful, whimsical art of the *Medieval Enchantment / Nigel Jackson Tarot* or the bold, multi-cultural art of the *World Spirit Tarot* (the perfect alternative for those who find more traditional decks to be what one student called "mighty white").

Reading for Yourself. When reading for myself, I find I have "comfort decks" – decks I return to again and again – and "study decks" with new or challenging art that forces me to see old cards in new ways.

My comfort decks include all the beginner decks, plus a couple of art decks with illustrations I really enjoy: Lo Scarabeo's *Durer Tarots* and *Tarots of the Renaissance*.

My stack of study decks changes constantly, with new titles constantly displacing older ones. Lately, I enjoy comparing familiar cards from my comfort decks with bold new cards from a wide range of new and challenging decks: Llewellyn's new *Buddha Tarot*, Lo Scarabeo's intriguing *Tarot of the New Vision*, the glitzy computer-generated imagery of the *Quest Tarot*, or the unusual Lo Scarabeo *Animal Lords Tarot*.

All of these feature evocative images on every single card ... and all of these, in addition to featuring luminous art, are extremely easy to read with.

Perhaps the ultimate study deck is Lo Scarabeo's *Comparative Tarot*. It's four decks in one, with each card depicting four card images – especially handy for comparative readings (and a lot easier than spreading out four decks!).

Reading for Others. Reading for others poses an entirely different set of challenges. The deck you'll prefer for a public reading deck will vary according to your personal reading style.

I enjoy collaborative readings, in which I ask my clients to take an active role in exploring the cards and unraveling their stories. As a result, I prefer bright, engaging decks which draw clients in with bold, approachable art.

All the beginner's decks (*Universal Tarots*, *Robin Wood Tarot*, *Medieval Enchantments / Nigel Jackson Tarot*, and the *World Spirit Tarot*) are perfect for public readings. (I frequently put out five or six decks, allowing clients to choose the one they feel most comfortable with. Given this opportunity, eighty percent of my clients choose the Nigel Jackson deck!)

I default to these decks, then, but I also allow the occasion to dictate my choice of deck. Kids get a kick out of the *Oz Tarot* ... and many respond well to the primitive art of Rachel Pollock's *Shining Tribe Tarot*. My young coffeehouse clients love the *Quest Tarot*; older adults often respond well to the dapper (and under-rated) *Tarot of the Master* or prefer the prim simplicity of the *Classical Tarots*.

Art Decks. Some of us enjoy collecting decks simply because we enjoy the art. If you're looking for functional decks with an extra measure of artistic appeal, you might consider the rich *Visconti Tarot* (available with gold foil highlights), the *Victoria Regina's* elegant collage art, the edgy *Secret Tarots*, or any number of the Lo Scarabeo decks, including the *Leonardo* and *Giotto Tarots*.

Brainstorming / Corporate Decks. As the author of *Putting the Tarot to Work*, I'm always on the lookout for decks I can use when brainstorming with corporate clients. Thanks to the special HR sensitivities in business settings, I have to be careful what decks I choose; as a result, I frequently find myself removing cards that could prove problematic in the lawsuit-happy corporate world.

Generally, this means avoiding decks with overt occult content, dark and disturbing art, or nudity. The decks that might be perfect for an adult party or a night of naughtiness (including the *Tarots of Cassanova*, the *Erotic Tarots of Milo Manara*, and the *Decameron Tarot*) are right out!

With a card or two removed, I find my friends in starched collars respond well to the *Medieval Enchantment / Nigel Jackson*, the *Durer Tarot*, the *Tarots of the Renaissance*, and the *Quest Tarot*. These will do until 2005, when Llewellyn will publish *The Bright Idea Deck*, a Tarot deck free of nudity and overt occult symbolism, specifically designed for brainstorming, business, and creative use.

2. I Don't Know Art, But I Know What I Like

With your purpose pinned down, the next step is to determine the artistic style that appeals to you the most. After all ... how often will you really work with a deck you find tacky, ugly, tepid, or frightening?

To find a deck with art that you connect with, consider these four factors:

Illustrated Pips. Almost every Tarot deck features evocative illustrations on the trump (or Major

Arcana) cards and the court cards (the Kings, Queens, Knights, and Pages of each suit). Many decks – usually decks designed and manufactured after the turn of the twentieth century – feature illustrations on the pip cards (the suit cards numbered from one to ten) as well. As a result, we say these decks feature “illustrated pips.”

Older decks – or new decks based on older ones – often feature “non-illustrated pips.” Modern playing cards feature non-illustrated pips: on the Ten of Diamonds, for example, you’ll find ten little red diamonds. In Tarot decks with non-illustrated pips, instead of a picture of a little girl buying flowers from a diminutive man, the Six of Cups in a deck with “non-illustrated pips” will feature, well, six cups.

My own reading style and emphasis on brainstorming pretty much require the use of a deck with illustrated pips. On occasion, though, I enjoy using an antique deck. When I do, I reach for the *Visconti Tarots*, the *Classical Tarot*, or the *Tarot of the Master* (which features what might be called “semi-illustrated pips” – intriguing arrangements of ornate suit symbols).

If having an illustration on every card is important to you, be sure to get a deck with illustrated pips!

Media & Colors. Most decks feature hand-drawn or hand-painted art in a variety of styles.

If you favor etched and shaded line art that evokes classical illustration, you’ll enjoy the *Durer Tarot*, the *Giotto Tarot*, the sepia-toned *Ship of Fools Tarot*, or any of several of the Lo Scarabeo decks. Like gentle watercolors? Try the *Renaissance Tarots*. Like bold lines and well-defined fields of bright color? Try the *World Spirit*, the *Buddha Tarot*, or the *Tarot of the Saints*. Like collage? Try the *Victoria Regina* (a good choice for the color-weary, too, as all the cards are in black and white). Like computer-generated art? Try the *Quest Tarot*, or the upcoming and eagerly-anticipated *Gilded Tarot*.

Style. If you lean toward the classical, you might enjoy one of the antique decks: the *Visconti*, the *Classical Tarots*, the under-appreciated *Tarot of the Master*, or any of several Lo Scarabeo decks, including the *Ancient Enlightened Tarots*.

Those with more traditional tastes might enjoy the *Victoria Regina*, the *Universal Tarots*, the *Medieval Enchantment / Nigel Jackson* deck, the *Durer*, or the *Tarots of the Renaissance*. For those who favor the contemporary, the *Robin Wood*, *World Spirit*, and *Quest* decks all put a more contemporary spin on familiar Tarot themes.

Theme. Whatever your interest, there’s a Tarot deck designed specifically to appeal to you. Trust me on this. Let’s say you have a fascination with tubers – vegetables that grow underground. Next week, Lo Scarabeo is guaranteed to have out the *Tarot of the Tubers*. (“The Queen of Carrots is considered a most auspicious card, far better than Trump XV – The Beet – or the lowly Page of Potatoes.”)

A casual glance at the Llewellyn web site reveals Tarot cards designed to appeal to lovers of animals, Buddha, Celtic lore, druids, Egyptian art and mythology, erotic art, faeries, German

painters, gold foil highlights, the Golden Dawn, Italian artists of every stripe, Leonardo da Vinci, mermaids, Native American lore, the occult, Oz, all things pagan, primitive art, Pythagoras, the Renaissance, shapeshifters, teen witches, vampires, Victoriana, wild spirits, and witches.

An affinity deck might not be the best choice for a public reading deck (after all, your clients may not share your delight in Celtic Dragons). Still, if the deck is just for you ... why not indulge yourself?

3. Our Feature Presentation

Once you narrow your choices down to decks that suit your purpose and offer art that you find appealing or engaging, the last step in finding the perfect deck is to select one with features you'll use and enjoy.

Text on the Cards. Beginners may jump at a deck with keywords ... but should also consider whether the keywords will prevent them from building additional (and often valuable) associations with each card.

Some people adore titles and keywords. (If you do, you'll love Lo Scarabeo decks, which frequently have text, titles, and keywords in four languages printed on the borders of each and every card!) Some people – usually those who prefer an intuitive approach to reading the cards – think any text at all is distracting.

One reason I like the *Nigel Jackson* and *World Spirit* decks? The text is contained in the card borders. After a borderectomy (Snip! Snip! Snip! Snip!) I'm left with nothing but the eloquent art. (Can you tell I'm not much for keywords and titles?)

Structure. While many decks stick with a 78-card structure, variations are out there. One of the most common variations is the “Strength-Justice” swap – in some decks, Strength is Trump 8 and Justice is Trump 11, while in other decks, these two cards are reversed.

Another variation in structure involves adding entirely new cards. The Quest Tarot, for example, adds an additional trump: the Multiverse. Other decks, instead of adding new cards, give familiar cards new names: substituting the word Sage for King, for example, as in the *World Spirit Tarot*, or Elemental for Page, as in the *Pagan Tarot*.

Ultimately, you have to decide whether the order of the cards, the additional cards, or the renamed cards work for you.

Companion Books. I love a great Tarot deck ... but I love a detailed companion book even more! For me, the availability of a detailed companion book often makes or breaks my buying decision.

If you enjoy companion books, seek out these decks, all of which offer companion books of amazing depth: *the Buddha Tarot*, *the Egypt Tarot Kit*, *the Pythagorean Tarot*, *the Quest Tarot*, *the Robin Wood Tarot*, *the Tarot of the Saints*, *the Sacred Circle*, *the Shining Tribe Tarot*, *the*

Ship of Fools Tarot, the Victoria Regina Tarot, the Visconti Tarot, and the Waking the Wild Spirit Tarot.

The Deck is Out There!

Focusing on your purpose for the deck, identifying artistic styles that appeal to you, and concentrating on the features you find useful will take the mystery and confusion out of deck purchases. Pair this practical approach with a quick glance at reviews and previews available at Tarot Passages (www.TarotPassages.com) or Aeclectic Tarot (www.aeclectic.net/Tarot), and you'll greatly increase your odds of finding and buying a deck you'll use for years to come.

Mark McElroy

After purchasing his first Tarot deck in 1973, Mark McElroy began terrorizing other neighborhood nine-year-olds with dire and dramatic predictions. In 1997, Mark's fascination with the I Ching and other forms of Eastern divination prompted a more serious study of Tarot. While interested in the divinatory and meditative applications of Tarot, Mark favors a more practical, less mystical approach to the cards with "no focus on hocus pocus." Today, he calls Tarot "the ultimate visual brainstorming tool," and shares techniques designed to help others ask better questions, see more options, and achieve their goals. Mark holds a B.A. and M.A. in creative writing and composition from the Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi. He has more than two decades of experience as a public speaker and corporate trainer. He has written, produced, and hosted classroom, video, and online training for some of America's biggest companies, including SkyTel, MCI, Office Depot, Staples, and many others. Today, he works as a writer, voice actor, and creativity consultant; samples of his work are available at www.hiremark.com and www.tarottools.com. Mark lives and writes in Mississippi, where he shares a home with his partner, Clyde, and two cats, Tiger and Lilly.

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An A-Z of Tarot

Our continuing journey...

By Ian Stevens

H is for... Frieda Harris

Frieda Harris was the artist who helped Aleister Crowley produce his Thoth tarot deck. She was born Marguerit Frieda Bloxam in 1877 and became Lady Frieda Harris by marrying Sir Percy Harris, Chief Whip to the Liberal Party.

They were on the face of it an ill matched couple. Frieda was vivacious, fun loving, outgoing, and a party animal, whereas Sir Percy was a typical nineteenth and early twentieth century politician, perhaps she looked on it as an opportunity to move into more elevated circles. There were, not surprisingly, suggestions of affairs, but nobody has suggested there was anything but a platonic relationship between Frieda and Crowley, although apparently Crowley did not hit it off with her husband.



Frieda was a member of Co-Masonry, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society where women had equal status, unlike traditional Freemasonry. She was already using her artistic talents in esoteric work and wrote verse under the pseudonym Jesus Chutney. She was a strong character which must have helped her in her dealings with someone like Crowley, and a definite individual, dying her hair bright red at the age of 61.

She met Aleister Crowley in 1937; he subsequently initiated her into his own Order and she studied the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. She was no stranger to ritual through her membership of Co-Masonry, but her knowledge of the occult was lacking. As well as reading books by Crowley, her studies of Anthroposophy, the mystical teachings of Rudolf Steiner, were to be a critical aspect in the creation of the Tarot. It is quite possible that her studies of Steiner were suggested by Crowley himself.

At the time Crowley was on the lookout for a talented artist for what was intended to be a three month Tarot project but which eventually extended to five years. His headhunter was Clifford Bax, playwright, author, and co-editor between 1922-24 of an art & literature magazine entitled *The Golden Hind*, founded by Austin Osman-Spare. At a meeting arranged in June 1937 Bax had intended to introduce the artists Meum Stewart and Leslie Blanche to Crowley, but they do not seem to have turned up, so he invited Frieda instead. Bax may have known her through Masonic links.

Sometime in 1937 Frieda Harris had started taking lessons from Olive Whicher and George

Adams in Projective Synthetic Geometry based upon the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and Goethe. She was a keen student, and informed Whicher that she was incorporating some geometric designs into the Thoth tarot deck she was working on. It is quite probable that she had already been seeking an occult outlet for her artistic talents. Frieda took private lessons from Whicher, and it seems that Whicher visited her at her studio near Regents Park to view ongoing designs for the Thoth Tarot. Despite Olive Whicher's distaste for all things Crowleyan she actively encouraged Frieda in her endeavours.

In May 1938, Frieda officially became Crowley's disciple and Crowley began to teach her the finer points of divination - evidently she had a choice of discipline, and she opted for the I Ching, his favourite form of divination."

She threw herself into her work and lived the construction and design of the Thoth deck to the point that events in her life mirrored the cards she was working on. For example, while she was working on the Eight and Nine of Swords, she experienced all sorts of accidents and delays. All the time she was sending Crowley a regular stipend to support the project and was also using her society contacts to find financial backers for the exhibition of the paintings, the catalogues, and for the publication of the Tarot. The mental, emotional and spiritual pressures took its toll on Frieda, and she became somewhat erratic. Crowley was sufficiently concerned to call in the lawyers to protect his 66% investment in the project. Despite this he gave Frieda fulsome praise in the Introduction to the Book of Thoth - this from a man who spent much of his life creating enemies, writing in typical Crowley style:

"She devoted her genius to the Work. With incredible rapidity she picked up the rhythm, and with inexhaustible patience submitted to the correction of the fanatical slave-driver that she had invoked, often painting the same card as many as eight times until it measured up to his Vanadium Steel yardstick!"

Throughout the project she insisted on her own anonymity, but she reveled in working for such a notorious man.

After Crowley's death Harris considered selling the original artwork, but it was not to be and in the end she bequeathed them to Gerald Yorke. He placed them with the Warburg Institute in London where they are still on display, although in need of restoration as the materials she used were of poor quality due to the scarcities during World War 2. However, Yorke retained for himself several alternative versions of cards that were not included in the pack and some preliminary studies**.

Although the Book of Thoth was published in a 200 limited edition, neither Crowley nor Frieda lived to see the deck printed which did not happen until 1969.

On his death Crowley cursed her with the task of being executor of his will and succession together with Louis Wilkinson, another acolyte of Crowley, who had connections to the New Forest coven into which Gerald Gardner had been initiated and gained much of the material for his book "Witchcraft Today". While she was a talented artist and interpreter of his Thoth Tarot, Crowley must have known she would be totally out of her depth when it came to dealing with the

vultures who had already been circling for some time, his wicked sense of humour reaching beyond the grave.

Poor Frieda was unable to control all the big egos that were jostling for position, Gardner included, and the argument over the succession of Crowley and the O.T.O*** continues to this day. Once his book was published shortly after the repeal of the Witchcraft act Gardner emerged to inherit the mantle of the best known occultist/witch in the land and much of the lore and ritual of modern Wicca can be traced back to its roots with Crowley, Gardner and their associates. It is possible to see some Wiccan symbolism in the Thoth Tarot, particularly on the Fool (Green Man, Dionysus, Cernunnos) and the Priestess (Artemis/Diana) if you look for it; and it's probable that this was intentional, some point to the statement by Crowley that the Book of Thoth contains new magic for the millennium as an indication that this was the case.

Lady Frieda Harris died in Srinagar, India on 11th May 1962.

Acknowledgments

Much of the information and some of the text has been plagiarized from an essay by Paul Hughes Barlow which can be found on

<http://www.supertarot.co.uk/adept/fharris.htm>

Other sources of inspiration were

<http://www.lupec.org/events/2003/tarot/fharris.html>

<http://www.redflame93.com/Harris.html>

** These are currently up for sale together with other Frieda Harris memorabilia if you have some cash to spare

<http://www.occultartgallery.com/occultartgallery/harris/harris.html>

*** Ordo Templi Orientis is an occult organization which owns the publishing rights to the Thoth Tarot

Reflections of a TABI Student

By Sezo

A personal look at what it means to learn tarot with TABI

My tarot journey began when my mother would let me play with her Tarot cards. I remember looking at her decks on the floor, admiring the pretty pictures. I was only about 5 at the time, but its one of my fondest memories. I did not see the Tarot as a tool, more like pretty pictures my mum would have, something that she did and always hoped I'd be let into the secrets of them.

My interest in Tarot increased as I grew up and she bought me a cheap deck and set. She would drag me along shopping and sometimes we would go into the tarot shop and she'd nearly always come out with a deck. I stood, listened and looked at the decks without really understanding them, only knowing they were special, and my mother and the shopkeeper were part of a tarot gang. One day, we went in and I got to pick my first proper deck, the Mythic!

Though, natural teenage things like boys and hormones got in the way, tarot still hung in the background. I would shuffle them, read the books and started a sort of journal. I have often asked my mum to teach me, but said that it's a journey I would have to walk myself, to learn my own meanings and my own relationship with tarot. When she first said this to me at 9, I was upset to say the least! She had introduced me to this strange world, but was not going to guide me. She said the opportunity would come to me and I will know when the time was right.

In January this year the door to that journey opened with a message on UKTarotTalk. Amanda was drafting in students for the beginners course and I knew this was the time. I had barely finished reading the post when I replied to her post and soon I was a member of the training group.

As I had had some tarot experience so I did think I would fly through the course, but I was pleasantly surprised! The first exercise on working out my tarot belief percentage was a tough one. I knew this was going to be a journey with lots of hurdles. The first couple of weeks I was on top of things, but made me think about tarot in ways I had never had before. Perhaps due to my own child-like wonder of the cards I didn't think about the Tarot being so flexible as to be used to represent stories, or the meanings being so flexible to show different influences in a situation.

One thing I definitely did not expect from the TABI course was to bring me so much insight and depth into my own religious path. I've been a practicing pagan since I was about 13 (rather than just reading books and websites) and thought I knew all the basics rather well. Surprising, the lessons on the suits overall, and the aces brought a lot more depth to how I view the elements and the forces they represent. No longer were the cards some grand secret between the shopkeeper and my mother, but I was discovering their secrets, their whisperings myself! They were helping me develop on so many levels and in some many ways.

A few times in the course, I read the exercises and thought what the hell I can't do this, I'm going to drop this course. I was in the last few months of my A-Level courses, with lots of coursework, revision and work. I was adding all these commitments to my time and I couldn't see me doing a half-decent job on any of them! What got me through these times were the tutors. The responses to my exercises gave me the confidence and enthusiasm to keep going. Amanda, Caroline, Ian and Lyn, the tutors of my group, all deserve a medal! Without their input and advice and their own dedication to getting the whole group through the course was enough for me, personally, to keep trying.

The exercises I thought I'd dread were the creative ones. Applying the cards to stories, making up stories from the court cards, making a story from a spread – I would leave this exercises to the last minute, but I found these were the ones I'd enjoy most! I got a lot from these lessons, and let my own creativity have a release.

During my exam time, this was a gratefully received release (though I wouldn't have admitted that at the time!) and helped brought tarot to my life a lot more. Meditating and pondering on the cards started to make me think about things in my life a lot more. The exams were using all the suits, not just the Swords. I needed to use all the qualities of the suits to make revision, relationships and my recurrent tonsillitis enjoyable!

I've been through a lot in the past 6 months, and rather than being an extra worry, the course has been the thing that has kept me going, everything for a reason, this course showed up at this time for a reason. The course has given me the confidence to trust my instincts and my intuition. I've had 'prophetic' dreams and people are coming to me for some helpful advice Mystic Sezo can give them and they actually listen! It's brought my mother and I closer together. She has been keeping her eye on me during the course and she is so pleased that I have started to make my own journey and relationship with the cards. I've even had the confidence in reading for other people over the internet and hope to keep this going with the Free Readers course.

How to survive the course.

Firstly, I think one of the things that is vital for this course is a thirst for tarot knowledge and an open mind. Some of the exercises ask you to use all sides of your psyche to further your

development. You could feel ‘what’s the point in this exercise?’ but you will reap the benefits at the end. Another piece of advice is to try and keep up to date. Simple, but necessary. Especially when you to complete 4 exercises one week, then 3 the next and 4 the week after that. If you don’t keep up to date you have a very scary backlog. The backlog could put you off the course. Have a set time in the evening or one day a week you can devote to the exercises.

Most importantly of all, HAVE FUN! This is a very fun course (though you might not feel it at times). The support is there through the tutors and other students. Do not be afraid to ask for help and keep checking the group as often as you can and actually READ other peoples posts. Your fellow students have a wealth of information with other experiences and points of view to draw from, showing how flexible and reflective the tarot can be for you and others.

What has the course given me?

Confidence, a deep relationship with the cards that I think I would never had had otherwise on my own. Its even given me an appreciation for that dreaded Celtic Cross Spread. More importantly, it has given me some tarot friends and has introduced me to TABI. Now that I’ve completed the course, I’ve become a member and I can remember the little girl barely able to look over the tarot counter, and think, you knew the tarot would be special to you, and now you know all the jargon and can feel in the tarot gang.

I went into the shop I bought my first deck a week ago and the lady remembered me and the deck I bought with my mother nearly 10 years ago! I explained how I was finishing the TABI course and she was so glad I knew about the organisation because she was just about to recommend it to me for the free readers course. The return to the shop reminded me of how far I’ve come, alone and with the course ,and I so excited to have tarot in my life and the opportunities and guidance it will give me in the years to come.

It’s a difficult but managable course, but there is a lot of help and support and friends to me made! If there is anyone reading this article who is wondering whether or not to join the course I say DO IT! I 100% recommend it. You’ll love the experience and you’ll never look back as Tarot and TABI will become your life-long friends.

For more information about joining the FREE beginner's course with TABI, contact trainingadmin@tabi.org.uk

Spiritual Action: An Instrument in the Service of Society

By *Gina Rabbin*

Tarot and politics aren't usually subjects that go together - here US reader Gina Rabbin shows how it can work

The upcoming U. S. presidential election affects not only American citizens, but citizens of all countries. Who we elect will determine whether we continue in the direction we have been heading or whether we begin the global healing process. There are many people in the spiritual community who still have difficulty with the concept of merging Spirituality and Action. As a Tarot reader for almost 2 decades, I find that tarot adds another dimension of clarity and understanding to complex questions, and I certainly feel this issue of Spiritual Action is a complex question!

It is interesting to note how, at certain times, the issues confronting people are so similar, with the common thread weaving them all together seeming to reflect the greater societal events of the moment. I am finding this to be especially true at what I believe to be the most critical juncture in the recent history of our country.

On November 2, we have the power to alter the course this country is currently embarked upon. By exercising our right to vote, we can express the values that, as spiritual seekers, we have sought within our own selves and now have the opportunity to take into the world. In this way, we can, and will, effect global transformation.

And yet in the past several months I have heard many people within the spiritual community say that "politics and spirituality don't mix." Politics seems to be a dirty word, and not compatible with the "purity" and "truth" of spirituality. I find this extremely puzzling and greatly disturbing. The Dalai Lama himself has said that politics "in itself is not wrong. It is an instrument to serve human society. With good motivation—sincerity and honesty—politics becomes an instrument in the service of society."

Why is it, then, that so many people on a spiritual path find it difficult to become involved in politics? Why is it they feel the need to stay separate from this most basic foundation of human interaction and social relations? What is at the core of their resistance to participating in the political process that will not only affect the world but will ultimately affect their lives on every imaginable level?

For almost 20 years, I have used the Tarot as a tool of truth-seeking on my journey to wisdom. When faced with questions as important and complex as these, I turn to the Tarot to seek answers. Through the cards, I am able to gain a depth of clarity and awareness that has time and time again proven to be instrumental in shaping my core beliefs and values, as well as bringing

me closer to my own inner truths. I use Tarot not only for my own personal growth, but to assist my clients in their search for self-knowledge so they may create a more fulfilling and meaningful life, one that merges both passion and purpose.

As is my practice, I first ask the question and then pull as many cards as I am directed to. Holding the cards, sitting in silence, allowing the energy to slowly build and swirl within and around me, I form the questions, "Why is it that people on their spiritual path hold back from the full active expression of their spirituality in the world? What is at the root of this chasm between spirituality and action?"

I sense that two cards need to be pulled. The first is **Initiation**, a major arcana card of the Tarot de Paris deck. This card confirms that in reality there is no division between spirituality and political participation -- that one cannot exist in its entirety without the other. Initiation depicts that precise moment in time when creation and action merge to birth the whole. To be a spiritual being and hide it within oneself, or to be active in the world without awareness, is to be only a part of the whole being we actually are. Initiation represents the union of heaven and earth, body and spirit, action and awareness.

The second card helps to understand why spiritual seekers have difficulty embracing the union of spirituality and political action. This card is the **Seven of Water**, the representation of the desire for safety, security, and serenity. As spiritual seekers, we have discovered that with hard work and a relentless self-quest for inner truth, we can achieve that sense of safety and peace and security that the world outside, especially the world of politics, does not always offer us. To risk losing that through involvement in the political process brings up all the fears and insecurities we've worked so hard to put to rest.

And yet, if we fear losing what we have attained, have we really attained anything? If we are afraid to actively use our spirituality in the world, to accept the responsibility of creating change in the world, then are we not holding ourselves separate and apart from the whole? Isn't it better to share our spirituality, to use it as an instrument in the service of society, and become initiators of transformation in the world? Can there possibly be a better time than this moment to heal that breach between spirituality and action, and emerge as a Spiritual Activist?

Gina Rabbin is a life-long intuitive and tarot card reader, acting as a catalyst for those who wish to deepen their self-knowledge in order to create a more fulfilling and meaningful life. Sessions with Gina are conducted at her San Francisco location or by telephone. She also offers readings every Wednesday and Thursday at Crystal Way Metaphysical Healing Center in San Francisco. For more information, please visit <http://www.ginarabbin.com>.

Tarot Tale: A Gothic Romance

By J. S. Chin

*For this season's short story, three cards have been selected from Nathalie Hertz's Vampire Tarot deck. The cards are the **Knight of Cups**, **The Lovers** and **The Tower**.*

A Gothic Romance

It is a delightfully macabre night on Gothos.

Endless night for the vampyres.

Tomi Della Notte sits in introspective thought on the moors, accompanied by his dappled horse. Gaunt and pallid features shrouded beneath a wispy mane of straw coloured hair, he wonders whether Eloise will come to him tonight. The other knights of the minor houses consider Tomi to be unusually kind hearted and thoughtful for a vampyre, even to the peculiar choice of name for his steed. Dobbin isn't the sort of name that would strike terror into the mortal souls of their victims, but Tomi is the type of creature who prefers to sit under the velvet skies and converse with the bats rather than hunt with them. He lacks the bloodthirsty determination of Emrys, wand holding knight of the house of Mawdryn.

He waits for Eloise, the love of his infinite life, to make an appearance. He would like to share with her his blood-filled cup and the poetry of his undead soul beneath the gloomy skies. Dobbin looks forward to receiving an apple to eat from Eloise as his customary treat and her fingers ruffling his mane.

Meanwhile Eloise finds herself an unwilling prisoner in the tower. The tower is the family home of the House of Schreck, one of the oldest vampyre families on Gothos. Unlike the bewitching House of Bathory or the tragic House of Nosferatu, the House of Schreck lives up to its name as the embodiment of terror. Ernst Schreck gains great pleasure from preying upon his victims of neighbouring lands, being Meister of the House. On one blood-soaked hunt he chanced across Eloise, and instead of immediately sinking his fangs into her flesh, he decided to court her as a suitor. Eloise's parents were horrified. Nobody could escape the lust of a Schreck. She had no choice but to allow this cruel and handsome beau into her life.

In her heart, she would prefer to be with Tomi on the moors. Peering out of the tower window, all Eloise can see are the Schreck bats fluttering menacingly and the eternal lightning illuminating the landscape. The tower itself is lavishly furnished, mostly with the spoils of hunts from the neighbours of Gothos. For all its elegance and comfort, Eloise feels uneasy. She knows she cannot keep up the pretence for much longer.

Ernst Schreck is keenly aware of his rival. He tosses his feral mane of hair back and laughs. What chance does a lowly knight have against one of the oldest vampyres on Gothos?

“Why settle for a mere stripling when I have cut my teeth on the finest, flesh of my flesh?” he sneers at Eloise. “Consider yourself fortunate I had spared you when we first met. But soon you will take your place as my bride and no lovesick youth from the house of Notte can touch you. Isn’t that a delightful prospect to behold, flesh of my flesh?”

Eloise shivers. Her friendship with Tomi – forged long before the terrible Schreck entered her life – is to be cut short with one bite. No more poetry on the moors, no more conversations with the wild and free bats, no more Dobbin. She will never see King Reyleone, Queen Guinivir or young Gianni either once Ernst’s murderous teeth grace her neck.

One decision to be made, something that will topple Ernst’s tower of enslavement and set me free.

For Eloise the choice was clear.

To her surprise, Ernst had allowed her to come and go as she pleased from the tower. If she conceded to becoming his bride she will no longer have this privilege. Tonight the Meister of the House has gone hunting; when she becomes his bride she will be expected to hunt with him, bringing death and terror to all she knew and loved. Plans take shape within Eloise’s thoughts while she gathers her meagre possessions. She could escape to the furthest lands with Dobbin’s help, but Tomi would not be able to follow her. Perhaps she could rally together all the minor houses against the House of Schreck; the house of Notte would certainly offer her protection. The knot she ties around the bundle is for luck. Ernst would kill her if he discovered her betrayal.

Schreck’s bats glide around the tower like vultures hovering over dying prey. Eloise takes great care to avoid being spotted by their sanguine eyes. They will try to stop her from leaving the tower and then alert the Meister. She creeps amongst the shadows, nervous as a rabbit in the presence of a hawk. The shadows will protect her until she arrives on the main path to the moorland.

Tomi will be waiting for her on the moors.

There can be no return to what has been.

Further Reading:

The Vampire Tarot (accompanying booklet) – Nathalie Hertz
US Games Systems Inc.

The Elements and the Tarot

By *Craig Morrow*

An in-depth analysis of the elemental properties

When one thinks of the concept of the elements one tends to think of science and molecules. Those of the philosophical nature would often think of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Even to go as far as the processes of Alchemy and so forth.

In relation to these it is my aim to explain the basic synopsis of what these four elements are and how they relate to the Tarot. To begin with we need to define what we mean when we refer to the four elements. According to the ancients there are three key elements that of Fire, Water, and Air. It wasn't until much later that the element of Earth was brought into the list. Earth was only brought into relation, when the practitioners of magick in the early days began to realize that the planet Earth the point of origin of the practitioner was relevant.

Yet how was Earth relevant? To begin with when the western scientific world started to acknowledge that the Earth was not the centre but a mere part of a greater whole, also when they started to realise that the Earth rotated around Sol and not the other way around. It was at this point the ancients began to see that when working with any form of element or energy. At all stages we always came back to home Earth the material world, the only conceptual way to leave Earth and not return was to physically separate the conscious from the body; something that is not necessarily possible while alive, given the exception of the figures in Biblical lore, Enoch (and in the Catholic Faith the Virgin Mary) whom were taken to heaven by the Cherubim and the Hosts while still alive. Thus we can see that Earth finally made it's main stay within the constraints of the ancients. When we come to the element of Earth we shall explore if further.

Before we start into the individual four elements it is worth noting that there is also that fifth element Akasha the astral light of Spirit. Now many say that this is a state of never ceasing energy of the purest divine stages. Yet it guides and aids those whom ask and open them selves to it. Seen as the Ether of all things that pervade all elements and unites within one yet simultaneously keeps them this separate. This is one of the many divine paradoxes that permeate the macrocosm.

The four elements were seen by the ancients as:

Fire (Heat and Dryness)
Water (Cold and Moisture)
Air (Heat and Moisture)
Earth (Cold and Dryness)

So let's have a look at these and what they actually are.

FIRE

Fire that primordial element or divine spark. The instigator of the cosmic growth and birth. Fire was the element of Heat and Dryness seen as the cleansing aspect of divine creation. It was through this destruction of one and re-birth of another similar to the myth of the Phoenix bird to live it must die. The idea that Fire cleansed the soul was seen through the Eye of RA the Solar Egyptian god. As the God of the Egyptians Ra was the sun rose every day at dawn in the East travelled the heavens and finally set at dusk in the West. It was then that he travelled through the underworld only to be re-born at next Dawn in the East. Again the Resurrection. Cosmic Father.

So we could say that Fire is creative force, an energy that brings things into manifestation. Sol our sun is a great gaseous ball of Fire in a state of constant fusion. Always moving and growing. Thus always alive with energy. Without the sun many things including ourselves would suffer and potentially die off.

Fire is also a masculine energy (Masculine meaning positive energy) thus it is seen as the cosmic life bringer. It is through the inception of the Masculine sperm that the Egg is nurtured within the womb. This idea of the initial spark of life gives us a context to see why the ancients thought that Fire was the spark that brought all into existence, yet it was not alone in this journey it was in harmony with Water and that divine spark which pervades everything.

Keywords for Fire

- Active, energising, vitality, aggression, purification, masculine, initiating, fast, purity, destruction

(these keywords are only to place an idea of what Fire is, one must go out an experience the essence of Fire to build an understanding of what it truly is)

WATER

The birthing pool of existence, the source of life itself. It is from water that we come, 70% of the human body is water generated by the Divine spark of Fire, given the ability to understand through Air, and held together with Earth. Here we have a very simplistic way of looking at the elements on the body. Yet water seems to hold most sway.

Water the cosmic mother is a very maternal idea. It is only with the union of Fire that creates the cosmic child. When considering water one should try to appreciate there feminine selves and emotional instincts. As water is feminine (negative, but not negative as in Bad) it would be more inclined to an emotional aspect of the self. Where as the Fire would be more logical. This can be related to the human brain. Left being our emotional and more impulsive aspect of the self predominantly associated with the female. Right housing the aspects of reason and logic, often associated with the male.

So we have the attribution to our emotions and responses based on deeper impulses. However there is another side to water the strength and ingenuity. Pour a glass of water over floor and it will find somewhere to run off to or seep through the floorboards. This offers an elusive aspect, where one is unable to tie the element down. Also when you pour water on a stone nothing appears to happen however it can corrode an element away, creating a destructive quality within the element of Water. Obviously this would be a very tenuous aspect to hold to yet it would be worth thinking on over a grandeur period of time.

Keywords for Water

- Nurturing, intuitive, emotional, responsive, adaptable, corrosive, purifying, fluctuating, easily influenced.

(these keywords are only to place an idea of what Water is, one must go out an experience the essence of Water to build an understanding of what it truly is)

AIR

The higher aspects of creation the source of ones higher conscious states of relation. Air the child to Fire and water. Seen as the region of creative ideas, it is here that the mind is given birth. Air is symbolic of the generation of the idea of a thought. That point within the point where things manifest.

When looking at the element Air it is always worth contemplating that by merely thinking of Air that you are using the concept of Air to understand or experience Air. Air as a force within the natural world could be seen as the winds. This offers the idea of an ability of change and idle movement. Things always changing never staying stationary. So we have given rise to the idea that air can also symbolise folly, through lack of commitment and relation. Where one turns around and actually works off an impulsive idea. Although it governs logic and communication it doesn't mean that these things are in any way stable. As a force of nature Air can be very destructively forceful. Again the concept of cleansing, by blowing away all that is unwanted allowing the growth of something new.

As it is our highest aspect of yourself you could suggest that it is the closest to the point of formulation of the above and below. It is a state of flux and continual change. These archetypal ideas should place an intuitive perspective within the psyche of the notion of Air.

Keywords for Air

- Intelligence, logic, change, adaptability, force, daydreaming, care free, thoughtful, open to suggestion

(these keywords are only to place an idea of what Air is, one must go out an experience the essence of Air to build an understanding of what it truly is)

Earth

The deeper recesses of the human psyche. As the base point for understanding it could be seen as the progenosis of Air the final compound of the first three. Yet is that all Earth is a material realization of all that is above and below. Well depending which tradition one comes to approach there understanding of what Earth is will depend on what way the element approaches them. To some it is the mother Earth and the source of all life. To others it is the son bonum of fall of Eden.

What ever way one looks at it. Earth is still the foundation point whether one wants to look at the higher and heavenly bodies or if one wishes to regress and discover the deeper aspects of the inner world. Both approaches give the same psycho-somatic effect of opening the door to out INNER aspects of us.

Per example in touching the higher realms of the whole of creation we have gained the knowledge of our higher self. With an aim to unite it with our lower selves. Yet what good is it to have procured the higher realms if you are oblivious to the lower states within the individual psyche.

So when considering Earth it is worth thinking of the idea of the foundational stage of any given task. The one part that is reliable and stable within our lives. No matter what happens at the moment (excluding a meteor destroying the world, or an extraterrestrial arrival, or 3rd world war) the Earth is a constant fixture within our lives. This gives us a state of rational and practicality.

Keywords of Earth

- Practical, Dependable, Stable, Rational, Secure, forceful, stern, solid.

(these keywords are only to place an idea of what Earth is, one must go out an experience the essence of Earth to build an understanding of what it truly is)

Now that we have a common understanding from which to look at the elements lets start to look at them in relation to the Tarot cards them selves. To begin with how do the cards equate to the Elements.

Court Cards

Kings	=	Fire
Queens	=	Water
Princess	=	Air
Princesses	=	Earth

Minor Arcana

Wands = Fire
Cups = Water
Swords = Air
Pentacles = Earth

Major Arcana

Card	Correlation	Element
The fool	Air	Air
The Magician	Mercury	Air
The High Priestess	Luna	Water
The Empress	Venus	Water
The Emperor	Aries	Fire
The Hierophant	Taurus	Earth
The Lovers	Gemini	Air
The Chariot	Cancer	Water
Strength	Leo	Fire
The Hermit	Virgo	Earth
Wheel of Fortune	Jupiter	Air
Justice	Libra	Air
Hanged Man	Water	Water
Death	Scorpio	Water
Temperance	Sagittarius	Air
Devil	Capricorn	Earth
Tower	Mars	Fire
The Star	Aquarius	Air
The Moon	Pisces	Water
The Sun	Sol	Fire
Judgement	Fire	Fire
The Universe	Saturn	Earth

Now looking at the elements we know that Fire and water are opposed, Air and Earth are opposed, Air and water are neutral, Fire and Earth are complimentary, Fire and Air are complimentary, Water and Earth are complimentary. So how does this all relate within the cards. Well lets see.

When one is looking at a spread you can see that as you interperate the cards each card is read depending how it is aspected to the cards around it. Now looking at the elemental qualities previously mentioned. They will not give you the meaning but they will help to build up a pattern between the cards in the divination. What one can see is that assume the card being read

is surrounded by say 2 fire cards and the card in question is a water card. One could surmise that whatever is happening is a strong build up of emotional reaction to a given situation with the force and heat of fire the situation is growing explosive and being pushed on thought. It would be from this state due to the lack of air that we could see an inability to let it show rationally, thus a good potential to offer hurt to someone or something. You could also mention the lack of Earth which could signify the lack restraint and that this out burst that is building could potential spiral out of control. As due to the disagreement between Water and Fire the emotion is not going to be allowed to express itself in a way that it should be. Causing a destructive release of the given emotions.

This is only one way of looking at the elemental correlation within the divination. Lets assume that the reader starts with the usual YHVH break down off the cards. So we have already based our spread upon one of the four elements. From this we then read, yet what would you suggest we see if I am reading a spread based on the element of Fire the beginning of something within the querant or individual, yet when I read them it is all cups and disks. Here we have Water and Earth of Fire. So we have immediately brought the concept of the reading into an aspect of ourselves or the querant that is not what may have been originally seeked.

So looking at ones spread we can see that there is a worthwhile view to being aware of the relation of the element within the Tarot as it is this that gives the story a structure. This structure could be envisioned as a pictorial realization of the Alchemical state of the elements where in all things the elements are co-existent it is through the process of Alchemy that one can separate these to form the philosophic stone. So we could say that through the understanding of the subtle energies of the elemental influences we could be granted a vision of the philosophic stone of the wise through the cards themselves.

The TABI Interview: Ciro Marchetti

- *TABI Events Co-Ordinator **Brian Stevenson** talks to **Ciro Marchetti**, creator of *The Gilded Tarot**

Ciro Marchetti's professional career has included working in England, where he graduated from Croydon College of Art and Design. In South America he co-founded a design studio and for several years he instructed at The Instituto Nacional de Diseno in Venezuela. Since 1992 he has been based in Florida, where he opened the USA subsidiary of his design studio, Graform International. He also lectures in digital technology and illustration at Fort Lauderdale Art Institute.

I was delighted that **Ciro** agreed to answer some questions about *The Gilded Tarot*.

What inspired you to create *The Gilded Tarot*?

It wasn't so much an inspiration as a suggestion, from Llewellyn, who had seen samples of my work and felt that there was something there that would lend itself to such a project. So they proposed the idea to me.

All the cards are finely drawn and full of detail. Does using digital techniques make it easier to do this type of finely detailed work and does it encourage you to include as much detail as possible?

My approach is quite traditional despite the use a of a digital medium. But its nevertheless undeniably easier, if only because of the convenience of trying multiple variations of a colour, position, and other variables before deciding the best option.



Can you say how long it took to create each card?

Approximately 20 hours each, some obviously longer than others. i.e. the knights and other characters involving chain mail, were quite labour intensive.

The cards are very influenced by the traditional Rider-Waite designs. Did you decide to do this to make the cards as accessible as possible?

Absolutely, since I was the new kid on the block I didn't want to stray too far of the familiar path. Having said that I didn't want to end up with just another Rider-Waite clone either. Hopefully I achieved an acceptable balance of familiarity so that the deck is easy to read with, but also establishes its own character.

Every new Tarot deck is effectively 78 miniature works of art. Do you have any plans to create any more Tarot decks?

Most certainly, I started a follow up project some months ago in fact. I'm about half way through the Major Arcana and while its going well, there still a long way to go. This is an ambitious project that incorporates a interactive CD which will include additional features such as animated cards, and an optional set of none-illustrated pips. The project is called the Tarot of Dreams, and sample images can be seen on my web site. (<http://www.ciromarchetti.com>)

Thank you.

Go to page 43 for reviews of Ciro Marchetti's deck The Gilded Tarot

Book Review: Tarot Reader 2005: Your Annual Guide to News, Reviews, Tips & Techniques

Featuring: Mary K Greer, Ruth Ann and Wald Amberstone, Valerie Sim, Diane Wilkes, Christine Jette, Janina Renee...

Reviewed by Clare McHale

ISBN: 0-7387-0538-1

Publisher: Llewellyn, Paperback, 2004, 288 pp

The Tarot Reader 2005 is an eclectic mix of Tarot articles, reviews and a 2005 almanac listing phases of the moon, interspersed with snapshots of various decks on pages entitled 'A Closer Look At'. These snapshots contain 5 small graphics to illustrate the decks and are really just adverts; they list in brief details of the deck and its associations.

The book is further illustrated with attractive black and white line drawings reminiscent of art nouveau, and includes more greyscale card graphics to further complement the interesting mix of articles and reviews. It also includes a couple of pages at the beginning to showcase the contributors, each of whom get a paragraph to their name.

Tarot Reader 2005 is a glossy paperback, nicely sized for ease of reading and packed full of well know Tarot experts giving us the benefit of their years of experience. There are six sections to browse and the first is 'The Fool: Tools for the Journey' which contains articles by Mary K Greer 'The Birth of the Tarot', an article on 'Those Darned Court Cards' by Thalassa and 'Test the Tarot' by Mark McElroy on how to enlist and possibly convert your sceptic friends to the benefits of Tarot study, to name but a few.

'The Rider-Waite deck has apparently become the de facto standard deck for tarot readers, at least in North America. Most tarotists have a basic knowledge of it, and the vast majority of books in English on the subject of tarot are written with this deck in mind.' ~ 'Rider-Waite and Company' by Joan Cole, p. 56.

The second section is called, 'The Magician: Practical Applications' and contains various advice and information on putting your skills to use. There's an interesting article by Corrine Kenner that will appeal to a lot of Readers on how to 'Spice Up Your Romance Readings'

'If you feel weepy at the prospect of another romance reading, it's time to find a few new ways to put the spark back in your reading routine' ~ 'Spice Up Your Romance Readings' by Corrine Kenner, p. 77.

And Janina Renee gives hints and tips on 'Reading For Children', while Christine Jette talks about 'Tarot and Astrology'.

‘Perhaps the first step to becoming a good tarot reader is to have a solid knowledge of tarot. However, knowing tarot is not enough to make you a good tarot reader.’ ~ ‘Finding Your Voice’ by Nina Lee Braden, p. 72

The third section is ‘The Wheel of Fortune: 2005 Almanac’, each page contains 7 days and runs from Sunday to Saturday. There’s not a lot of room to write notes, but there is enough to write down your card of the day if you draw one, and there are a few blank pages for notes in the back of the book. The format runs:

‘6 Thursday
Moon in Scorpio
Moon enters Sagittarius 10:44 pm’

The Almanac is American and contains reminders for things like ‘All Saints’ Day’, ‘Veterans Day’ and ‘Election Day’ etc.

The fourth section is, ‘The Hermit: For Further Study’ and includes articles on ‘Tarot and Dreams’ by Diane Wilkes, ‘Comparative Tarot’ by Bonnie Cehovet and ‘Business Cards’ by Mark McElroy.

‘What if I told you that, with tarot cards, you can generate twenty-two practical ideas for making more money, working more efficiently, or advancing your career?’ ~ ‘Business Cards’ by Mark McElroy, p. 219.

McElroy’s article also includes a list of ‘*Keywords and Possibilities*’ for the Major Arcana:

‘2-Priestess
Reflection, Reception, Secrecy, Analysis
...an analyst...
...a psychic...
...a wise woman...
...someone “behind the scenes”...
...someone with a hidden agenda...’

~ ‘Business Cards’ by Mark Mc Elroy, p. 221.

The fifth section is aptly named, ‘Judgement: Deck Reviews’ and contains five reviews that on the whole run to 4 sides. The Fey Tarot; Tarot of Prague; Winged Spirit Tarot; Victoria Regina and the Medieval Enchantment: The Nigel Jackson Tarot.

These are reviewed by Diane Wilkes, Errol McLendon and Elizabeth Hazel. McLendon and Wilkes do two reviews each.

‘Aghem, a renowned anime artist, brings her skills to bear on creating tarot denizens who are foolish and wise, saucy and shy, peaceful and spiteful, good and wicked. They’re no angels, and they don’t want to be, either.’ ~ ‘The Fey Tarot’ reviewed by Diane Wilkes, p243.

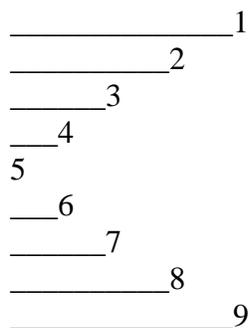
‘The court cards are particularly easy to understand. Though the interpretation of these cards differs some what from my personal viewpoint, there is no questioning what these people are like when you look at the variety of characters depicted in the ‘Tarot of Prague.’ ~ ‘The Tarot of Prague’ reviewed by Errol McLendon, p.251.

The reviews are interesting and illustrated with small greyscale images from each deck.

The final section is, ‘The World: Spreads’, it contains 15 spreads including the standard Celtic Cross, but also ‘The Snapshot’ spread, *‘a handy two-card spread for when you need focus or guidance’* ~ p. 271; ‘Pyramid of Consciousness Spread’; ‘The Fork in the Road Spread’; and even an ‘Internet Romance Spread’, *‘Online dating has recently become a popular topic for tarot readers.’* ~ p. 280.

The one I find most intriguing at the moment is the ‘Dark Goddess Spread. *‘When looking for guidance about your place in life and your future directions, try this spread which invokes the energy of the dark Moon.’* ~ p. 273

The spread has 9 cards in the shape of the letter C, or rather a half moon. Card 1 is at the top as you would write the letter C, so roughly:



1. What needs protection
2. What needs patience
3. What needs acceptance
4. What needs release
5. An unconscious insight
6. A new perspective
7. What needs healing
8. Advice
9. Transformation/Outcome

- From Tarot For All Seasons by Christine Jette

Llewellyn has put together an interesting mix of articles that will interest beginners to the expert. Their sources are varied, so you may have read an article or two somewhere before, but it’s still an interesting and useful book to read from cover to cover, or dip in to as the mood takes you.

Book Review: Tarot Tips

Written by Ruth Ann Amberstone and Wald Amberstone

Reviewed by Alison Cross

**(Special Topics in Tarot Series), Llewellyn, pp183
ISBN 0 7387 0216 1**

One of the advantages of being a Tarot newbie is that you are prepared to devour ANY Tarot book that you can get your hands on. The flipside to this is that you can sometimes end up with a nasty case of indigestion and feeling a tad disgruntled.

So, how did Tarot Tips by Ruth-Ann and Wald Amberstone shape up? Was I left smacking my lips for more or reaching for the tummy-calms?

Well, the authors, The Amberstones, are co-founders of the New York-based Tarot School which they set up in 1995. From the résumé of their work provided in the book, they are certainly proactive on the world Taroting stage and have more than enough experience to write a shelf-load of books on Tarot.

This book, Tarot Tips, evolved from a column in the weekly e-newsletter issued by the Amberstones to their Tarot School students. This Tarot Tip could be in response to a student's query or just a little Tarot something that the Amberstones thought might prove useful. Tarot Tips then, is the 78 most useful tips provided.

The book is divided into sections: Decks, Cards and Card Handling; Interpretation and meaning; Reading techniques, spreads; Other things that you can do with Tarot; Ethics and a final section covering their Tarot School journey (again, generously sprinkled with tips for would-be Taroting entrepreneurs).

Decks, Cards and Card Handling – I would have to say that this section really applies to newbies; that said there were a couple of novel suggestions (namely what to do with the couple of spare cards that come with a new deck....use'em as book marks). Also covers cleansing your deck, protecting it, what to do with damaged cards and gentle shuffling methods. 14 Tips in this section

Interpretation and meaning – I found this section quite empowering as the Amberstones are all about helping students find their own truth, not spouting a particular methodology. Tips here covered my own personal bug-bear, the Courts (which I found useful), reversed cards and astrological links. Also covers how to handle difficult cards, stage cards, health readings and finding secret paths. 15 tips.

Reading techniques – This section is especially useful if you are thinking about doing some face to face work – covering everything from how to form questions (including one tip

containing 10 practical questions to ask the Tarot); what to do if your querent is very quiet; how to estimate timescales in a reading; making use of astrology in readings. Very insightful section. 23 tips

Spreads – I'm not brilliant at making up spreads and it is nice to have some tried and trusted hints and tips. This 10 tip section covers – one-card readings; yes/no spread; reading spreads without assigned positions; double edged sword spread; relationship spreads; New Year's spread; Year long spread; Yule reading; spread sources (websites and books); and designing your own spread.

Other things that you can do with tarot – This section includes meditation exercises, creative writing, determining your birth cards and making story circles. I was less impressed with this section but it only contains eight tips.

Ethics – an important section because we are (quite rightly) big on ethics at TABI. This covers bad news; the Death Card; asking about others; reading for children; predicting life span and the challenges of going professional.

The book's final tip is in a brief **Afterword** chapter where the Amberstones stress the importance of not becoming dependent on Tarot and ceasing to be confident in one's own judgement. They suggest that if you find yourself consulting the cards about lots of issues to let them go for a while, trust to your own judgement and then return.

Appendix 1 contains a list of recommended books – thankfully not all Llewellyn publications!

Appendix II relates the highs and lows of setting up the Tarot School – again tips are given freely on how to avoid the pitfalls that they frequently found themselves in.

So – delicious morsel or inducer of wind? The book is written in a warm, friendly and flowing style which is remarkably bereft of airy-fairyism and therefore very easy to digest. I class this as a Toilet Book because the short explanations of the tips lend themselves to being read whilst enjoying a brief period of tranquillity in the havoc of a normal day.

With a foreword written by Mary Greer, herself a much respected Tarotist, I approached this book with high expectations. I wasn't disappointed – in this instance – but please be wary of authors from the same publishing stable bumming up each other's work. Ah, what a suspicious mind I have!

While I believe that this book is best suited to beginners, experienced Tarotists will glean some little gems from Tarot Tips. For the compulsive Tarot book-buyer I would say..... you probably own books that cover most of these 78 tips already. For the keen newbie I would say..... this would make a perfect gift for you, persuade someone to buy it for you!

Book Review: Darkside Zodiac

Written by Stella Hyde
Reviewed by Mick Frankel

Here's a sentence from the introduction to this enjoyable book, "... you are going to be reading some wince-making stuff about yourselves. There are no jolly Brightside platitudes, because there is quite enough of that kind of thing in the world, and every silver lining has to have a cloud... you have been warned..."

If that made you give a wry smile, then there's every chance that you'll like this book.

Stella Hyde goes through all twelve Sun signs and gives us a nicely jaded, wordly-wise view of fairly familiar astrological territory.

Here's an example from the section on the personality of Leo,

"Your lackeys will have told you that, as a Leo, you are proud, loyal, courageous, generous, magnanimous, dignified, enthusiastic, splendid, bedazzling – all in all, a class act, Your Brightside Maj... Inside the hollow crown you (and I) know that you are an arrogant, intolerant, patronising, pompous, self-centred bully; oh, and a snob and a drama queen too."

And here's something for us Sagittarians,

"Your zodiac animal is the centaur, a mythical beast, half human, half horse... So, on the one hand, you are a human with an uncontrollable urge to gallop and frisk, and kick things over; on the other, you are a horse trying to do up its buttons without the benefit of opposable thumbs. And on the Darkside, you are the worst half of both."

I think that from these two extracts, you'll know if this book is for you or not. Maybe you'll know someone with a wicked sense of humour who might like this for Xmas or for their birthday?

For each Sun sign, amongst other things, there are sections on personality, sex, relationships, work, crimes and misdemeanours (what sort of criminal would you be), your home, playtime and infamous people who share your sign. For example, my fellow Sagittarians are Billy the Kid, Ty Cobb, Lucky Luciano and Jim Morrison.

The text is full of groovy graphics and funky photos which manage not to be too distracting. Each sign is printed in a different colour with a modern glyph in the top corner of each page, so that it's fairly easy to find the thirty-odd page section for each sign. It's well put-together and has a lot of style.

I just wish that the publishers had thought about colour-blind people like me. The black print on the red pages is hard for me to read and gives me a headache.

But what I really like is that for each sign, Stella Hyde also has a page on the sign ruler and although she mentions that traditional rulers, she prefers modern rulerships. So for example, for Scorpio, she writes, “Mars never really fitted Scorpio (far too obvious, although it does explain the aggression, determination, iron will, cruelty, etc.)... if you have pulled the wings off so many flies that the flypaper industry has complained of falling sales, you know who to blame (because it’s not your fault, nothing is your fault, ever): Pluto.”

I think you get an idea of the style.

Then there’s a short paragraph for each combination of the Sun sign with all twelve Moon signs, with all twelve possible Rising signs, with all twelve possible Mars signs and with the five possible Venus signs. (Venus can either be in the same sign as the Sun or, at most, two signs either side.)

There are lots of other sections including your “Fave Deadly Sin” and your opposite sign.

Sometimes, the Rising signs page features an extended metaphor that more or less works. Here’s an extract from the Sun sign Pisces:

“Sagittarius rising – Like the noble salmon, you leap obstacles and fight against the current to reach your goal, but can’t remember why. Capricorn rising – You lurk at the bottom of wishing wells to catch the pennies of the gullible. Aquarius rising – Brain sturgeon.”

You get the hang.

But underneath all the glib humour, there’s a lot of genuine astrological knowledge and experience in this book and it could be a great way-in to Astrology for the young and young at heart.

Although the sex isn’t explicit and there’s no nudity in any of the photos, this book might not be suitable for children under 16.

The further information section contains a really good recommended book list that includes Jan Spiller, Robert Hand and Sue Tompkins. There’s also a list of excellent websites.

However, it’s nearly 400 pages long and weighs over a pound and a half so I wonder if it might just be too big to be a stocking-filler at Xmas.

Darkside Zodiac is published by Weiser Books and is priced at \$19.95 which means that it’ll probably cost about £12.00 in the UK.

Book Review: Candle Magic for Beginners: The Easiest Magic You Can Do

By Richard Webster

Reviewed by Clare McHale

ISBN: 0-7387-0535-7

Publisher: Llewellyn, Paperback, 2004, 244 pp

'Just as performing your magic on the right day, at the right time, increases its effectiveness, so does using the correct planetary perfumes.' [p. 86].

This healthy 244-page paperback is an easy read and starts well with an insight into how Richard Webster first became acquainted with candle magic.

The author has written several books aimed at the beginner, but this is the first one I've read and the casual introduction is enough to give you confidence that he knows his subject well.

Chapter 'One', 'What is Candle Magic?' [p. 1], briefly talks about the definition of magic in general and goes on to state, 'Candle magic has a huge advantage over virtually all other forms of magic as it is straightforward and uncomplicated.' [p. 2].

Webster then gives us a 6 bullet pointed list of the advantages of candle magic [p.5], and goes on to list a few 'must do's', one of which makes me a little uncomfortable as I'm coming at the subject from a non-religious perspective.

Things like, 'You must have an aim' [p. 5] and, 'You must burn the candle' [p. 5] are obvious, otherwise what's the point? But saying 'You must consecrate the candle' [p. 5] put me off a bit at first and made me wonder if candle magic can work without evoking a religion, which is what the word suggests to me.

This is a minor niggle about an informative book with a healthy vein of common sense running through it, 'you can not expect the candle ritual to do everything for you; you need to do whatever else is required to make your desire a reality' [p. 6]

But it was still good to have the niggle put to rest, from a beginners point of view, when in chapter 'Five' Webster says of consecrating the candle, 'This stage is optional. However, I generally do it as anything that gives additional power to the ritual is worthwhile.' [p. 58].

Chapter 'Two' tells us about 'Candles and Other Implements... One of the most successful experiences I have had with candle magic used a candle in the shape of a popular cartoon character.' [p. 7], and gives a brief overview of the variety of candles available for various special purposes, 'Astral Candles' [p. 9], 'Cross Candles' [p. 10], 'Protection Candles' [p. 14]

etc... and there are several paragraphs covering '*Candle Maintenance*' [p. 14], '*Candle Holders*' [p. 15] and even '*Candle Snuffers*' [p. 16].

Chapter '*Three*' is about colour, '*Color is a form of vibrational energy*' [p. 23] and give associations for red, orange, yellow, green, and on to silver and gold.

There are 3 lists of star sign associations, Golden Dawn - '*Aries: Scarlet... Cancer: Amber... Scorpio: Green-Blue*' [p. 34-35], '*a more traditional list of zodiac colors*', and '*yet another popular list of associations*', if you prefer to use them.

Chapter '*Four*' brings us to the use of single candles in magic utilising colour to ease us in to candle magic... '*Numerous experiments have demonstrated how people are affected emotionally by different colors... This information is used all the time in color healing, and also plays a major role in emotional healing using a single candle.*' [p. 37].

Chapter '*Five*' is, '*How to Prepare Your Candles*', '*The most important part of this process is to dress or anoint your candles with oil.*' [p. 55]. It gives a list of some of the oils available and the author reassuringly tells us, '*most of the time I use baby oil... this works well for most purposes, and means I don't need to store a large variety of different oils.*' [p. 56].

It's useful to know that expensive specialised oils are not absolutely necessary, baby oil is easy to find and a lot of us already have it in the house.

Chapter '*Six*' is '*Timing*' [p. 63]; '*Seven*' is '*Fragrance*' [p. 83]; '*Eight... Numerology and Candles*' [p. 91]; '*Nine... The Five Elements*' [p. 111]; '*Ten... Magical Alphabets*' [p. 123]; '*Eleven... Magic Squares*' [p. 129]; '*Twelve... Healing with Candles*' [p. 143]; '*Thirteen... Candle Divination*' [p. 165]; '*Fourteen... Candle Rituals*' [p. 173] and '*Fifteen... How to Make Your Own Candles*' [p. 205].

To finish we have the '*Conclusion*' [p. 215], 3 Appendices covering '*Elements and Signs for the Years 1900-2008*', '*Magical Alphabets*' and '*Planetary Hours*'.

It's reassuring to know that magic doesn't have to be elaborate, elitist or expensive and '*Candle Magic for Beginners*' touches on a good range of subjects to help you decide if this branch of magic is something you'd like to explore further.

Deck Review: The Gilded Tarot

Created/illustrated by: *Ciro Marchetti*

Review by Galadriel

This review is based on the Limited Edition of 200 available direct from *Ciro* himself.

When I first saw this deck online I fell in love. This images in *Ciro's* website looked incredible.

I had my cards sent from the US where *Ciro* now lives, to the UK, where I live. The cards were really well packed and my parcel arrived within days of sending and in great condition.

The anticipation of opening the package was terrifying, would I love it as much as hoped? This limited edition version was not cheap, would I be disappointed?

I didn't even know what box it would come in, as *Ciro* uses all sorts of different and pretty boxes to house these lovely cards. I have heard of wooden boxes, tapestry boxes, leather boxes and woven boxes. So even that is a surprise !

Mine came in a wonderful wooden treasure chest styled box. It has engraved metal clasps to lock the box and a handle on it's curved lid. Really beautiful, beats the cardboard boxes we are used to any day ! I opened the lid to find the cards wrapped in gold foil, a lot of thought has been put into the presentation of this set of cards.

Okay, this was the real heart-stopper, looking at the cards ! All I can say it that they are breathtaking. The images on *Ciro's* site do not do these amazing cards justice. The colours are alive and vibrant, the images clean and sharp. These cards have to be seen to be believed. I loved them on the site and I love them even more now I have them.

Ciro has put a lot of thought into the images of these cards. This deck is based on the now familiar Rider-Waite system. This makes it instantly readable to a huge number of tarot enthusiasts. Although they are similar in symbolism to the RW cards, they are all stamped with *Ciro's* mark. He has used computer graphics for this deck, a media he is famous for. These cards are full of life and have a very spiritual energy. There are also many little animals strewn throughout the deck, it is fun to see them as you look through the cards.

Ciro makes each deck personalised. There is a 79th card which you can have a picture or verse put on, along with the number of your special deck. This makes your deck unique from the other 200 which will be made.

I won't reveal what is on mine, that is between myself, Ciro and the very special person who bought this as a gift for me. You also get a beautifully colourful certificate bearing your name and the deck number you own.

Another fun aspect to the L/E deck is that Ciro changes the colouring on some of the cards of each deck he makes. Just 6-8 cards will have subtle changes to the ones on the site. On some there will be a change to something in the background, on others the colours of clothing will be different. This makes your deck unique to you, no other person will have the same changes to the same cards. This also makes for great fun as you sit in front of your PC with your Gilded cards on your desk and Ciro's website on the screen. You get a lot of pleasure just checking your deck against the one on the site to see what is different in yours! Really makes them feel special.

The cards themselves are of an extremely high quality, printed using archive quality inks on thicker than usual cards stock, finally the cards are laminated with a matt finish. They are not easily to shuffle in a standard way due to the thicker card, but most people will break the deck into a few piles then restack a few times to shuffle.

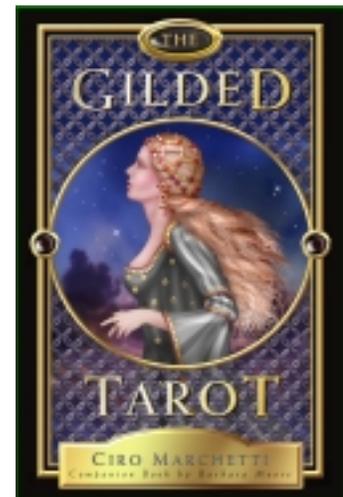
All in all this is one incredible tarot deck. A fresh view of tarot and I feel deserves a place right up there with the Rider-Waite in history. Those who can't afford, or are not willing to spend that much on a deck, don't fret. The Gilded Tarot is available as a deck and book set by Llewellyn, from September 2004. Now we can all enjoy this amazing deck !

You can see the deck for yourself at Ciro's website, where you can purchase the deck plus prints of his artwork.

*Review by **Brian Stevenson***

Review based on the Llewellyn set, with companion book by Barbara Moore

This is probably one of the most eagerly awaited Tarot decks for some time. Previously only available in a special limited edition direct from the artist, this deck has now been published by Llewellyn. In presentation terms, Llewellyn have done the deck proud. The sturdy outer box is as beautifully designed as the deck. Inside is contained the actual deck (printed on high quality laminated card), a wonderful Companion Book by Barbara Moore, a plain white box for you to decorate yourself and a diaphanous black organdy bag.



Artistically speaking, this deck has no rival. Ciro Marchetti is an internationally recognized artist with multiple awards in digital graphics. He has a fantastical imagination coupled with a high level of technical accomplishment. His work shows all the benefits of working digitally but has none of the synthetic qualities apparent in the work of other computer artists. There is a natural spontaneous quality, particularly in the human figures which makes you feel that they really do live and breathe.

The deck pays homage to the Rider-Waite format. However, there are so many unique and beautiful ideas in the cards which ensure that the deck is much more than just another Rider-Waite clone. Each card is fresh and original and there are many innovative touches. The artist uses a rich palette of colors, tints and hues. Each card is framed with a gold rectangular border, suggesting a painting that might be hung in an art gallery. Gemstones are illustrated on the frame of each card: black onyx for the Major Arcana, and, for the Minor Arcana, ruby for the suit of wands, carnelian for the cups, sapphire for the suit of swords and emerald for the pentacles. On the reverse side of each card the artist depicts a gold sun medallion motif.

The Gilded Tarot overflows with shimmering, classic Tarot imagery in a cornucopia of archetypal symbolism. Motifs occur and recur in fascinating kaleidoscopic array. Colourful and intriguing medieval characters abound in both the Major and Minor Arcana and the artist's fascination with astrology is clear. Complex machine-like astrological devices or intriguing clock mechanisms also appear prominently in many cards, including The Wheel of Fortune, The Star, The Moon and The High Priestess.

Many of the Major Arcana show innovative versions of the cards. For example, in most traditional decks the lion in Strength usually represents the baser aspects of one's self which must be overcome by force. However, in The Gilded Tarot, what is illustrated is not only the defeat of the baser aspects of the self, but the taming of the baser aspects, symbolized by the Lion on a leash which the lady has taken out for a stroll. This transforms the lion almost into a harmless and lovable pet! The Lovers conveys the idea of perfection in physical love as represented by the God of War, Mars, and the Goddess of Love, Venus. Even the Devil suggests nobility and the idea that one may immerse oneself in raw passions, cravings and desires and still retain control over them.

The Minor Arcana are fully illustrated and are as imaginatively detailed and beautiful as the Major Arcana. Small animals such as cats, rabbits and rodents feature in many of these cards and I particularly liked the smiling rodent which looks straight out of the card in the 10 of Pentacles.

Barbara Moore is Tarot Specialist for Llewellyn. She has studied with Mary K Greer and Rachel Pollack and worked with some of the most creative artists in the Tarot community. Her 153-page Companion Book contains detailed descriptions of all the cards, accompanied by the elementary principles of Tarot, including several spreads. There are blank journal pages included in the Major Arcana section for your own observations and notes. Muted black and white illustrations taken from the cards are sprinkled throughout the book.

To sum up, this is not just a beautiful deck; it is a highly detailed and a well thought out reworking of the Rider-Waite format. Although I have a personal collection of Tarot cards, I only use two or three decks for readings. I am definitely now going to use The Gilded Tarot for giving readings. I've no doubt it will become a classic and justifiably so. It should have a place in any serious collection of Tarot.

Gilded Tarot L/E of 200 available from www.ciomarchetti.com
Standard release published by Llewellyn: <http://tarot.llewellyn.com/>

Deck Review: Leonardo da Vinci Tarot

Created/illustrated by: A. Atanassov & I. Ghiuselev

Reviewed by **Brian Stevenson**

published by Lo Scarabeo.

The authors of this pack point out that in 1482 Leonardo da Vinci visited the court of Ludovico Sforza and they speculate that da Vinci may well have seen people at court using one of the earliest known packs of Tarot cards; The Visconti-Sforza. This pack is a wonderful tribute to both Tarot and to the art of Leonardo da Vinci. All the images are painted in a pale sepia, with some muted greens and blues. The overall effect is that of delicately hand-tinted prints or etchings.

All the people depicted are based on figures shown in da Vinci's drawings and paintings. Some of these images, such as the Mona Lisa, are very well-known. The cards blend together these well-known images with various pieces of medieval symbolism. Almost all of these blends work well, except perhaps for The High Priestess, where the Mona Lisa is shown wearing a large Bishop's mitre. This surreal mix reminds me of the cartoons that used to feature in Monty Python's Flying Circus! However, with that one exception, all the cards successfully illuminate the meanings of both the Major and Minor Arcana.

The cards are full of tiny details and the authors obviously spent a lot of time working these out. For example, all the Major Arcana feature some writing in their backgrounds. This writing is unreadable until you realise that it is back-to-front and that you have to read the words by looking at them in a mirror. A mirror also features in Justice, where the figure of Justice is seen holding a small hand mirror up at an angle. Closer inspection shows that the face of Leonardo himself appears in the mirror.

All the Minor Arcana are fully illustrated, although the meanings may not be immediately apparent to readers who are used to Rider-Waite type decks.

This pack is not really suitable for absolute beginners. However, I can heartedly recommend it to anyone interested in da Vinci's art to to anyone who wants an authentically influenced medieval Tarot.

Brian J Stevenson
Professional Tarot Card Consultant

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Imagies of the Leonardo da Vinci tarot can be seen here:
<http://www.aeclectic.net/tarot/cards/leonardo-da-vinci/>

Places to Go, Things to Do

Study & Training

Astrology & Palmistry Education

There are lots of places to study astrology these days and far fewer where you can study palmistry. But in either case how can you know ahead if the school involved will have friendly and professional tutors? Well if you are interested in education or further study in other esoteric disciplines, you may like to call for a prospectus or take a look at the website of the London School of Astrology - Tel. 0700 233 4455 or visit www.londonschoolofastrology.co.uk. The tutors are esteemed professionals but they are a nice bunch, too! There is an emphasis on learning for pleasure at the LSA and although you can sit formal examinations if you wish to, nobody will put any pressure on you here to do so.

The LSA is a London based school offering evening classes, residential courses and Saturday seminars, some of which focus on Palmistry and the majority of which are in Astrology including both Foundation and Diploma courses - with or without exam content. Tutors are well established and highly experienced, coming from consultancy and writing backgrounds. Established astrologers will likely recognise names such as Darby Costello, Dennis Elwell, Melanie Reinhart and Bernadette Brady who are just a few of the tutors/guests involved.

Courses are open to all with no previous knowledge required for the astrology foundation course. Classes are held at Friends House, 173 Euston Road beginning 5 October 2004 and a new three-term foundation course is also available in Bromley on Saturdays from 23 October 2004.

Saturday Seminars in London - the fee is £45 on the door, £40 in advance:

27th November "Everything you ought to know about Saturn, Lord of Boundaries" with Darby Costello

11th December "Behaviour and the Four Elements" with Adrian Duncan (former Editor of the Astrological Journal)

Also on offer is an 8 week Palmistry Course with practising palmist and astrologer Frank Clifford on Thursdays from 28 October. The course fee is £165 including palm printing equipment and so represents exceptional value. Frank is the author of *Palmistry 4 Today*, which was reviewed in an earlier issue of *TABI News* and is currently in the process of writing a follow up book. The LSA can also supply a range of key astrological texts to anyone interested.

For further information on the school, its courses and seminars, contact:

London School of Astrology, BCM Planets, London WC1 3XX, Tel: 0700 233 4455, email: admin@londonschoolofastrology.co.uk or visit the website at

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

Regular Meetings

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

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

Links of Interest

Shopping

We are pleased to announce that the following businesses are generously offering a discount to all TABI members:

Enchantment and Akashic New Age Shop

23 New Street, Margate, Kent, CT9 1EG

Tel: 01843 229990

Website: <http://www.akashic.co.uk>

Email: kim@akashic.co.uk

10% discount on Tarot decks & books - when ordering, please put 'TABI Member' in the special request box and your discount will be worked out when your order is processed.

Life of Enchantment

Website: <http://www.lifeofenchantment.co.uk>

10% discount on all items. To claim the discount, go to the store, create an account and then email the shop at tabimember@lifeofenchantment.co.uk and ask for the discount.

Templum One-Year Online Kabbalah Course

Website: <http://www.templum.com>

Half Price Offer: The Kabbalah Course is designed for beginners, is one year in duration and is carried out entirely online. This includes the lessons and exercises, a discussion group, and chats. For more details of the course and sample material, please go to <http://www.kabbalahcourse.com>. The usual course fee is £60 for the year. For TABI Members the discounted fee will be £30 for the year. This includes ongoing access to the course area after the year.

NB. TABI cannot be held responsible for the content or quality of any items or services offered to our members. If you leave TABI you are no longer entitled to any of the discounts offered. Please bear this in mind as the businesses reserve the right to check your eligibility.

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://p213.ezboard.com/btabi>

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:
newsletter@tabi.org.uk

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