

12 Month Spread

By Tim Brooks

This spread was taught to me by Mark Woolmer, a very experienced reader in my local area. It uses 34 cards in total, which although it sounds a lot is actually a very elegant spread using all the Major Arcana cards and 12 of the Minor Arcana. Once you are familiar with this spread you will be able to conduct it in 20 minutes and as such is ideal in the “Fayre” environment.

Proceed as follows:

Divide a RWS deck into separate Major and Minor Arcana. I use reverse cards, but feel that most of the Major Arcana cards should be upright for this spread, so I check that the 22 Master cards are all upright and then shuffle them and turn just a few, maybe 2–4 cards. If the client turns more then it isn't a problem.

Give the 22 Major cards to the client and ask them to shuffle them, they don't need to have specific questions in their mind as all they are doing is putting their feel on the cards for you to be able to read for them.

When they return the cards to you, give them the minor cards to shuffle in the same way.

Whilst they are doing that, lay out from left to right the top 6 Major cards two feet away from you toward the client (you need space for 4 rows of cards in total). Then lay out another row 6-8 inches below that with another 6 Major cards left to right again. This gives you the 12 months of the year starting at top left with where you are now (or if it's close to the end of the month, then the beginning of the next month). One point is that if the first 2 or 3 cards are coming out reversed, then leave them as they are, but reverse the deck in your hand so that most of the rest come out upright (A handy hint here is that as you start to lay them out glance at the bottom card or two and make sure it is the right way up).

Then take the minor cards back from the client and ask them if there are any specific things or general areas they would like you to focus on for the next 12 months.

Having received this input, proceed to lay out the top 12 minor cards left to right, under each of the major cards that you have just laid (if you are short of room then overlap the Major and Minor pairs a little). This gives you a pair of cards for each month of the year ahead. Again if the first few are coming out reversed, then turn the deck around in your hand....any spread with nearly all reverse cards is hard to read.

Study the spread for a moment and give the client preliminary feedback on what you are seeing/feeling with specific regard to whether their questions are being answered and when during the year.

You now proceed by reading the first month (top left pair of cards), bearing in mind the next couple of months (so the influence of the block of 6 cards). You are searching for patterns with both the Major cards and the combination of the Major and

Minor pairs. Typically the patterns will spread over several months and you will be able to see the start, middle and conclusion of several patterns within the year. Note that some multiple patterns will overlap. You will be able to see high and low energy/health trends, where the holidays are (usually a double yellow background combination to me.....for instance Chariot + 4 Wands might indicate a 7 day holiday), any house moves, job changes, relationship changes and that sort of thing easily.

Move onto the next pair and the one after that, so that you will have completed a 3 month quarter of the year/spread. Now lay out a further Major card above those 6 cards. This card summarises the energy of the quarter and can usually add weight to whatever you have just talked about.

Carry on with the rest of the spread interpreting month by month and then adding a further Major card to summarise the quarter. As you proceed look at the cards before and after the month you are dealing with. Look at where the figures are facing/ pointing, example is that the 2 of Wands is looking back at the previous Minor card, is there a connection...probably! Also pay attention to diagonals. For instance, a Knight of Pentacles with the next Major card being The Chariot would indicate to me a cheap holiday, probably in the country near a city at the crossover point of the two months of 1 week duration (double yellow card, Knight is a low energy money card in this instance coupled with countryside and the Chariot is the number 7 for a one week holiday and is just outside a city).

Having completed all 12 months you now have 6 Major cards left. Lay 3 of them left to right on top of the cards in the centre of your spread. Interpret these as summarising the whole first 6 month and relate back to what you saw there.....trust me, it will be appropriate. Then lay the final three cards left to right just below the other three and summarise the latter 6 months. Note that the final Major card also provides the influence going out into the future beyond the 12 month reading.

Now ask you client whether they have any more questions or concerns with what you have said. You may need to remove some of the top summarising cards so that you can discuss the 12 Major/Minor pairs more.

When you have finished remember to keep the Major and minor cards separate as you clear away the spread.

With practice I can promise you that this can be all done in 20 minutes and my experience on the Fayre circuits is that clients actually like this large spread and feel they are getting value for money.

If you are using this reading for remote clients the only change is to lay out all the cards before doing the interpretation. The cards that cover the 4 quarters can be laid above the top two quarters and below the bottom two. I then usually lay out the last 6 Major cards to the right of the spread in two rows of 3 cards.

(a photo of a laid out complete spread is on my website
www.apricotsunset.com/private.htm)

Major Who?

Supplied by Clare McHale

Below are descriptions of Major Arcana cards, can you guess which ones they are?

1. I will make your temperature rise with skill and dexterity. I am clever and in control, focused on my goal. Who am I?
2. I am power and ambition, a leader of men, sometimes harsh, but always protective. Who am I?
3. I am a master of self-discipline, but also a mask shown to the world, I am forceful and driven, confident of overcoming any challenge. Who am I?
4. I view life from a different perspective, sometimes avoiding problems, sometimes waiting, sometimes isolated. Who am I?
5. I understand. I am fruitful, wise and whole, creative and joyful. I wish you good health. Who am I?

Answers at the end of the taster section

DECK AND BOOK SET REVIEW - 1: Da Vinci Enigma Tarot

by Caitlin Matthews

Publisher – Connections Book Publishing

Reviewed by Ian Stevens



you over time"

This is a just published Tarot deck available in a presentation box with book. Visually the box, in silver grey with plain maroon lettering and an card sized illustration of a pen and ink version of the Mona Lisa ('Enigma' or the High Priestess in the Major Arcana), is understated. Understated is the word which also describes the initial impact of the deck itself and is quite in keeping with the title and entirely what the author intended as she explains in her introduction: "*The Da Vinci Enigma Tarot will reveal itself to*

The deck is a conventional 78-card deck with 22 cards in the Major Arcana and 56 in the Minor Arcana. The suits of the Minor Arcana dispense with symbols and become Air, Fire, Water and Earth, the cards themselves continuing the plain, almost minimalist theme. Each card has a plain white background upon which is printed a Leonardo Da Vinci cartoon. These are in a variety of grey and sepia monotonous; below them in simple black type is the title of the card e.g. "Six of Fire" and a keyword e.g. "Victory". The keywords are not particularly enigmatic and in most cases, as above, it is fairly easy to make a connection with the traditional meaning. The court cards are Lord, Lady, Knight and Page. The Majors follow the same pattern as the Minors although twelve of them have been given different titles; Judgement becomes Renewal for example. Again in most cases there is an obvious connection with the traditional.

There is a nice touch in the design of the backs of the cards. These have silver geometric shapes on a maroon background and are designed so that individually they are unique, but when all 78 cards are laid down and put together in a block they form a symmetrical pattern. There is an additional card that illustrates this and another that shows the face of the cards in a grid. Thus, while the back of each card has its own design and may not have an obvious connection with another, together they form a structured whole in the same way as the Tarot deck itself.

When I first took a look at the cards I admit that some of the images seemed to have been selected almost at random in relation to the card on which they appeared. With hindsight I think this was because I was unconsciously looking for familiar symbols. There are certain features, particularly in the major Arcana, that are normally present even on non Rider Waite based decks. Because the pictures on this deck were not designed to be used in a Tarot deck this familiarity is often totally absent. However the more that you study them, the more it becomes apparent how careful Caitlin Matthews has been in her choice for each card. You begin to pick out relevant details, her choice of keyword frequently acting as a prompt.

All this without opening the book. The first chapter is a bio of Leonardo and where he fitted into Renaissance Italy. The second goes into the structure and rationale behind the deck, including further description of the significance of the backs of the cards and how they can be used in interpretation using the “Destiny Spread”. This is described along with other spreads and example readings at the back of the book.

The rest of the book is conventionally a description of the cards, the Macrocosm (Majors) first, followed by the Microcosm (Minors). This will have a familiar look about it, starting with the title and background of the cartoon. Followed by:

The soul-code: - The meaning that the card holds for a person and their destiny.

The upright and reversed meanings: - The more mundane message of the card.

The disconnected meaning: - This refers mainly to the Destiny spread, but can also be used to enhance readings with conventional spreads.

There is another entry called the **Dimmi**. This translates as ‘Tell me’ and was scribbled by Leonardo in the margins of his notebooks whenever he was trying out a new pen. Caitlin uses the word here to suggest questions posed by the card, for example the Fool has: *Dimmi – What is calling you to follow this new departure? How does instinct empower you?*

This is a very useful prompt when looking at the cards and can allow more input both from the reader or the person receiving the reading than the given explanations.

The spreads chapter at the end starts with some simple two, three and four card spreads, progresses to a couple of more in depth ten card spreads and ends with the Destiny spread which is where the deck really comes into its own.

This is one of those decks that requires you to read the book in order to appreciate it. I didn’t find it an instantly attractive deck; while the cartoons are superb they are rather

too small on the cards to be seen to their best effect, some of the detail being inevitably lost.

But that isn't what it is all about. It is well worth persevering and as the clues and subtleties that Caitlin Matthews have included become apparent, it is possible to get some very original insight. This is particularly the case when using the Destiny Spread, starting with the cards face down and grouping them by matching the pattern on the backs can add an extra dimension to a reading.

Although it may lack the visual impact of some decks the more you study it the more you find, and this can be a rewarding process. As Caitlin Matthews says, it reveals itself to you over time.

Deck Review **TAROT OF METHAMORPHOSIS**

Massimiliano Filadoro Artwork by Luigi Di Giammarino
Published by Lo Scarabeo

Review by: Di Sandland



I am not the same person I was a year ago. It was this simple observation that drew me to this deck, if only for the name. I waited on tenterhooks for it to arrive and, when it did, I ripped open the padded envelope like a child on Christmas morning. My first impression – disenchantment. The illustrations on the box looked insipid and sketchy and, for somebody who is fond of jewel-like colours and renaissance art, the auspices were not good. I took a desultory tour of the deck and, although one or two of the

illustrations caused me to stop for a second, I was still disappointed. In the normal run of things, that would have been that; the deck would have been consigned to the shelf with a stack of others that had been bought, looked at once and then abandoned. I do tend to take the path of least resistance. However, as I had obtained this deck from Alison on the understanding that I would write a review for the ezine, I had to persevere – you cannot learn a deck by turning it over in your mind! This is a deck that will repay you in spade loads for a little effort, exploration and research.

The majors seem to be based upon natural and elemental energies. For instance, The Lovers shows a man rooted in the earth deciding on whether or not to break those bonds in order to reach his lover, who is a creature of water; The Hanged Man portrays a man uprooted from a fertile earth, but, despite this uprooting the upper part of his body is sprouting fruit-laden branches. All of the characters portrayed in these cards are undergoing a major life change, finding a new way of being. The Fool is, I think, the best portrayal of the energies surrounding this card I have yet seen; we see that a marionette, which has a human heart and the power of thought, has broken free of his strings. He stands on the nose of a wolf; poised for take-off into the precipice of a brave new world full of feelings, adventure. The possibility of success or failure lies before him. Think Pinocchio.

The minors, according to the LWB, illustrate the metamorphosis of myth (chalices), posthumous metamorphosis (pentacles), the metamorphosis of nature (wands) and the metamorphosis of thought (swords).

The first thing that struck me about the suite of chalices was the lack of water to express the emotions. Instead we have allusions to ancient mythologies; to the stories of Zeus, Apollo and Pygmalion. Each of the cards explains a spiritual tension by applying one of these centuries-old allegories. I particularly like the five of chalices, illustrated by the myth of Sisyphus. In case your recall of the old mythologies is tenuous, this was the chap who was condemned to an eternity of rolling a boulder uphill, only to

watch it tumble to the bottom again. The torture of futile and helpless labour, with his nose to the grindstone he neither sees nor hears what is going on around him.

I have difficulties with the pentacles, the illustrations of which are all based on industry and technology. The majority of the cards in this suite display a blend of flesh and metal and I have to work hard to interpret these, falling back on the RWS archetypes in my mind. The four of pentacles shows us a powerful and evil looking steam train. On the back of the train, standing on burning coals, is the engineer shovelling coal for all his worth. The message here is quite clear – the poor man is so intent on keeping his train going that he is missing out on life – however, for me, this is the only ‘easy’ card in the suite.

Wands are a suite of primordial energy – we see stampeding elephants, lush forests and erupting volcanoes. It feels very strange to be interpreting watery looking cards from this usually fiery suite but you soon get used to it. Nine of wands shows us an underwater scene with bubbles suspended from the surface and weighted down so that they can’t float upwards. Each bubble is inhabited by a foetus, which cannot be born until the bubble has broken free from the weight. For me, this adds depth to the ‘standard’ RWS type interpretation of perseverance and not taking no for an answer. These bubbles will need to expend an enormous amount of energy to break free from their moorings, but they *will* break free.

I’ve left my favourite suite, swords, until last. In the normal course of events this is, in fact, my least favourite suite but in Metamorphosis it is illustrated using art and literature and the small jolt of triumph I get when recognising an allusion is great. We see Titania and Bottom representing the four, Harlequin representing the King and Dorian Gray as the nine. I suppose that all great literature and art could be described as allegorical, a fact that is used to good effect in this deck. Not all of the stories or art depicted are well known so some research is needed to get the full meaning behind each card.

The LWB, like most of the species I have come across, is not really very helpful but I believe there is a ‘book of the deck’ planned for the spring of next year. My experience with this deck sans book, however, made me wonder if ‘books of the deck’ make us lazy – if I had access to an explanatory book there would have been no need for research yet it is the research that has helped me build a rapport with these cards.

So, is there anything I really dislike about this deck? Yes, there are two piffling little things and I really feel quite petty mentioning them. The first of these is the spelling – there seems to be an aberrant ‘h’ in metamorphosis that really offends my sensibilities. I have tried to find out if this is an accepted alternative spelling of the word or, in fact, a spelling mistake. Certainly my spellchecker function underlines it in red but it also takes offence to quite legal spellings, so that is nothing to go by. I think, though, that even if I find out that this is an accepted alternative spelling it will still make my toes curl.

The other complaint? Well, there is a yellow ‘flash’ one each side of each card that, when the deck is stacked, forms a dirty looking yellow stripe down each side. I’m not sure if this is symbolic in anyway or just a design feature. Whatever the reason, it does not add to the deck and, to my mind, is completely superfluous.

I suppose the basis of this review is whether or not I would recommend this deck. The fact that I have had to work hard to understand it has caused me to grow quite attached to it. I think that those of you who prefer more intuitive decks would find it hard going but the Thothites amongst you and those who enjoy a bit of research should find it a very satisfying and intriguing deck to own.

Quiz Answers:

1. The Magician
2. The Emperor
3. The Chariot
4. The Hanged Man
5. The Sun

