

Wonderland *in* Tarot



BARBARA MOORE

Illustrated by EUGENE SMITH



TYLER MEIKE

About the Author

At a party in the early 1990s someone put a tarot deck in Barbara's hands; she's held on tightly ever since. She believes tarot provides just enough structure so that we don't get lost as we explore the mysteries, plumb our dark corners, and locate our North Stars.

Barbara has published a number of books on tarot, including *Tarot for Beginners*, *Tarot Spreads*, *The Steampunk Tarot*, *The Gilded Tarot*, *The Mystic Dreamer Tarot*, and *Tarot of the Hidden Realm*. Writing is solitary work and is relieved by teaching tarot at conferences around the world. Barbara also loves working directly with clients, helping them uncover guidance and insight in the cards.

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Eugene Smith has been a professional illustrator for the past twelve years. His work takes inspiration from comic books, films, literature, black-and-white photography, and all the odd things that can be found in life if one is willing to see them. He has created illustrations for historical comics, record covers, magazine editorials, book covers, and many young adult books.

In 2012 he embarked on the journey of creating artwork for *Llewellyn's Classic Tarot* with Barbara Moore and has become a proponent of the virtues of tarot ever since. He has also created artwork for Leeza Robertson's *Animal Totem Tarot*. Eugene lives in Chicago with his wife and two daughters and a slightly disturbed dog.

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Wonderland *in* Tarot



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BARBARA MOORE

Illustrated by EUGENE SMITH



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Black-and-white illustrations by Sir John Tenniel (1820–1914), whose work, now in the public domain, continues to delight and inspire so many.

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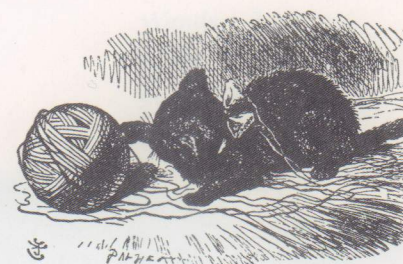
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Dedicated to Hermes.
Your hand has been in this from the beginning.

With gratitude to Martin Gardner, whose
The Annotated Alice and *More Annotated Alice*
created a Wonderland within Wonderland.





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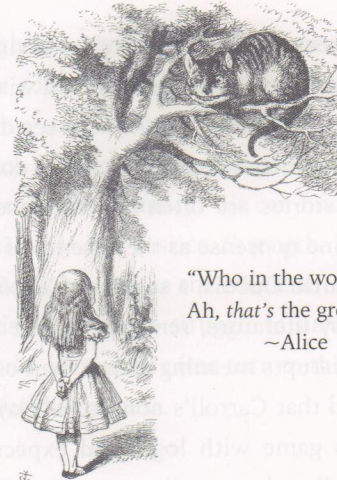
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"Who in the world am I?
Ah, that's the great puzzle!"
~Alice

INTRODUCTION



Tarot in *Wonderland* was created in the space where tarot and the Alice stories, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* by Lewis Carroll (the pen name of Charles Dodgson), meet. In this liminal place, sometimes we see familiar scenes from these well-known stories and sometimes the beloved characters have stumbled into a new world.

The images remain true to the Rider-Waite-Smith cards and, as such, will feel familiar to many readers. Blending the traditional images with another well-loved work of art, the Alice stories, gives the cards a fresh feel. They are recognizable yet very different, creating a dreamlike sensation. This sense of strange





familiarity creates a perfect state for divination. In readings, we want to find the truth and wisdom that has eluded us. To do that, we need to see differently. *Tarot in Wonderland* is a lens that helps us do that.

Carroll's stories are often called nonsense, and we often define nonsense as the absence of meaning. However, Martin Dubois, a scholar of Victorian children's fantasy literature, reminds us that nonsense literature "disrupts meaning rather than escaping it entirely" and that Carroll's nonsense "plays a more incongruous game with logic and expectation. It puzzles and disturbs as well as amuses." One of the best ways that tarot helps us is to disrupt stale thinking. As we puzzle out the meanings of a spread, we are sometimes disturbed that we have missed what seems to be, in hindsight, obvious wisdom. The cards oftentimes have a sense of humor that surprises and amuses. It is really astonishing how well tarot and the theme of Alice blend together, supporting each other's purposes.

Not only do tarot and Alice share the qualities of disrupting and amusing, they also share some common themes, such as growing up (not just from child to adult but also continuing to become more emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually mature), identity (knowing who you are and what values you hold), and the relationship between order and chaos.

Through her adventures, Alice experiences a parody of the adult world. She confronts the often silly and arbitrary rules of society, meets some pretty spectacular egos and people with bad habits, and observes plenty of rampant injustice. We can find these same themes in cards like Justice, Strength, Temperance, and the Devil, as well as the Magician or any of the court cards. Alice has to struggle to survive in a confusing world, just as we often turn to the cards when our lives feel like a mess.

Identity

While one of the most common uses of tarot is divination, which can help us navigate the often confusing maze of our lives, another important use is as a tool of self-reflection. Sometimes it is our internal lives that need sorting, not the external world. As we examine our mental, emotional, and spiritual states, we continue to learn who we are. Identity is one of the most interesting themes in Alice's adventures. At the very beginning of *Wonderland*, after Alice has fallen down the rabbit hole, she questions her own identity:

Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day!
And yesterday things went on just as
usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the



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night? Let me think: *was* I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle!

Throughout her journey, Alice is ordered by numerous creatures to identify herself or she is misidentified. The White Rabbit mistakes her for his maid Mary Ann. The Pigeon says that Alice is not a little girl but a serpent. She is forced to confess to the Caterpillar that she doesn't know who she is anymore. The Unicorn says that she is a fabulous monster. The Cheshire Cat informs her that she is mad, calling her sanity into question. Tweedledum and Tweedledee tell her that she isn't real at all, only a part of the Red King's dream. When she enters the Wood in *Looking-Glass*, she forgets her name as well as the fact that she is a human child.

Both stories end with her realizing her true power and ability, which come from having a strong sense of self and an understanding of one's core values. Her adventures helped her learn who she was and what ideals she chose to live by. Through studying and reflecting on the cards and our responses to them, we can do the same. The tarot is, after all, often called



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the Fool's Journey. Whether we travel through the cards or Wonderland, we will learn valuable wisdom that we can bring with us as we navigate our daily lives.

Searching for Wisdom

There is another way that the Alice stories mirror tarot, or at least my ideas about tarot. Depending on your belief system, tarot is a way to access not just a different but a higher quality of insight. If we wanted just different ideas about a problem, we could just ask friends. We come to tarot because there is something mysterious and magical about it.

Even if you approach the cards from a psychological point of view, there is still something mysterious about how the cards can affect the mind and inspire insights. I believe that there are lots of ways that we can access what I think of as divine guidance: tarot, scrying, psychic arts, meditation, and journeying are some examples.

In shamanistic practices, journeying—similar to meditation—is probably the most common way to access wisdom. In modern American shaman traditions (that is to say, not Indigenous or First People cultures), practitioners journey to the lower world and the upper world, and sometimes to the middle



world. Although all journeys begin in the middle, the journeyer usually heads directly to either the upper or lower worlds. When practitioners journey to the lower world, they usually enter through—you guessed it—a hole in the ground of some sort, rather like a rabbit hole. When they journey to the upper world, they pass through a membrane of some sort. It is very like Alice's experience going through the mirror:

Let's pretend there's a way of getting through into it somehow, Kitty. Let's pretend the glass has got all soft like gauze, so that we can get through. Why, it's turning into a sort of mist now, I declare! It'll be easy enough to get through—

I don't think we should take the correlation too far, but it is just so interesting how these archetypal ways of accessing other worlds, other knowledge, or other wisdom can be found in such diverse places as ancient spiritual practices and Victorian children's literature. Those who are interested in pursuing more shamanic ideas in the Alice stories can reread them and think about the creatures as helping spirits or teachers and the Red King as the Dreamer of the Big Dream. Another idea that would be fun to think about in terms of the Alice stories is the myth of Demeter and Persephone.



Opposites

Tarot is filled with imagery and ideas about opposites. Many cards traditionally have a black pillar on one side and a white pillar on the other. This can be interpreted many ways, but one common idea is that we are being invited to walk a middle path between two extremes. The traditional Devil card image, through mirroring various stances or symbols, is a parody of the Magician, the Hierophant, and the Lovers, representing different aspects of the opposite meaning of those cards.

In the Alice stories there is, of course, the Looking-Glass itself. Mirrors show us reality...almost. Instead of an exact replica, we have an image that appears reversed horizontally. In the Looking-Glass world, one has to run fast to stay in one place, memories work backwards, and Alice has to run in the opposite direction to catch up with the Red Queen. Additionally, *Wonderland* takes place in the summer and *Looking-Glass* occurs in the winter.

We could continue exploring these fascinating rabbit holes of comparisons, but, like the White Rabbit, we must be mindful of the time. Luckily, our next topic is just as interesting.





Sacred Texts

Many spiritual paths have sacred texts. Christians have their Bible; Muslims, the Quran. Many pagans say that the earth is their sacred text. I do not think that a sacred text must be ordained or approved by any organization. You can have your own sacred text. Witches have their Books of Shadows, where they write all the important things that they learn as well as their spells. It is their personal sacred text. Many tarot readers consider their decks as an unbound sacred book that can be shuffled to provide wisdom about any situation. Vanessa Zoltan and Casper ter Kuile created the Harry Potter and the Sacred Text podcast in order to read a series that they love as a sacred text.

According to Zoltan and ter Kuile, one defining characteristic of a sacred text is that it is generative. What they mean is the work is not static but continually provides new and insightful information. This is one reason tarot readers love their cards. Tarot readers can use a deck for years, yet still see something new in the cards. Not only that, but consider this: we do not have a single complete existing original tarot deck, and yet throughout the centuries we continue to create more decks that show the wisdom of the cards in different ways. Even decks with simi-



lar themes are all still unique from each other. There are lots of cat-themed tarots, and they are all different. Likewise, there are multiple versions of fairy, magic, witch, animal, steampunk, and even Alice-based decks. There is room in the world for all of them because tarot is generative and each incarnation shows us something different.

The Alice stories are read by many as sacred texts, whether they know it or not. In fact, in this book we will, for brevity's sake, often refer to the Alice stories as "the text." The stories are filled with so much symbolism and playfulness and enough questions to allow space for expansion. That expansion can go in so many directions. People view the books through various lenses: psychological, mathematical, logical, political, historical, biographical, and literary, just to name a few. This is similar to tarot because different readers work with the cards from psychological, spiritual, therapeutic, or psychic approaches.

Further, if you consider all the movies, plays, spin-offs, books, and comics that are based on or inspired by Carroll's work, we have to admit that the Alice stories are certainly generative.





Helpful Hints

This book is organized like many other tarot deck companion books. The first chapter lays the groundwork for understanding the basic nature of the cards and how to read with them. The next few chapters go over each card in detail. The last chapter provides spreads that you can use with this or any deck. Before we get into the how to use tarot cards and do a reading, here are some helpful hints that will help you understand tarot talk in general and important points about *Tarot in Wonderland* specifically.

If you are new to tarot, there are a few words that might be new to you. Here is a quick glossary of terms:

Arcana: Latin for “secrets”

Court Cards: the ranked or royalty cards, namely the page, knight, queen, and king

Major Arcana: twenty-two cards with individual, unique names and numbered 0–21

Minor Arcana: fifty-six cards that are divided into four suits (Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles), each suit containing an ace through ten plus a page, knight, queen, and king



Querent: the person asking the question in a reading

Reader: the person reading or interpreting the cards

Spread: various methods of laying out the cards in order to do a reading

This book also follows tradition in the card interpretation sections. Most books include a deeper spiritual or psychological look at the card as well as a divinatory meaning. For those who just want to get right into reading with the cards, simply focus on the divinatory meaning. Because this is an exploration of Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world, we can have a little more fun with the structure. Remember the old “choose your adventure” books? You can think of this book a little like that.

If you want to focus on the divinatory meanings only, you will choose to go “Down the Rabbit Hole.” The rabbit hole takes you straight down to the nitty-gritty meaning that will help you interpret a spread as well as to a list of traditional keywords. If you are a fan of the Alice stories and either know them well or want to know them better, you might prefer to start by going “Through the Looking-Glass.” In these sections you can read all sorts of interesting things about



the parts of the text that inspired the art on the card. Of course, if you simply find that this whole tarot and Wonderland adventure is “curiouser and curiouser,” you will not be able to help yourself from reading both sections. Each card has its own Down the Rabbit Hole and Through the Looking-Glass sections.

Almost all tarot decks have symbolism; that’s one reason the cards are so powerful. This deck brings in a few new symbols that reflect another important theme in the Alice stories and in tarot. Both tarot readers and philosophers debate the roles of free will and chance in people’s lives. Another layer is whether fate or destiny controls human life. Digging deeper, people like to discuss the differences between fate and destiny. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* involves a deck of playing cards, which is often associated with games of chance (although really good card players, I understand, seldom fall victim to chance in card games).

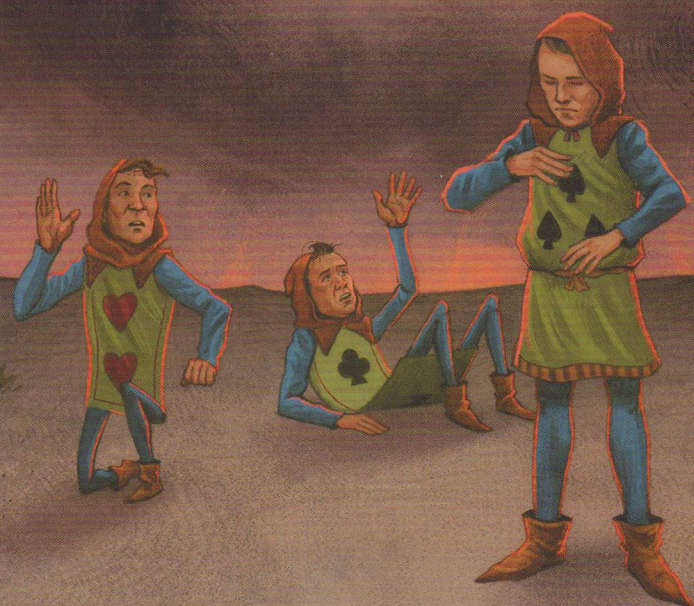
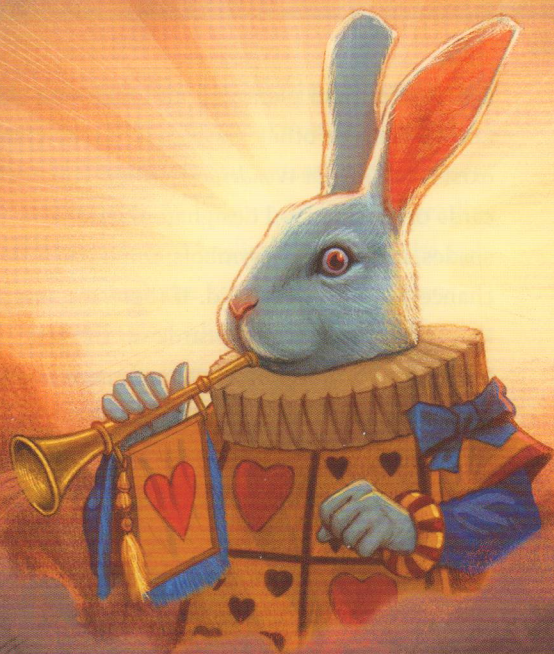
Through the Looking-Glass is, among other things, a live-action game of chess. Chess, more so than card games, is a game of



deliberation and planning, although one can never know what the other player will do, so chance still exists. In *Tarot in Wonderland*, when you see playing cards or playing card designators (hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs) as symbols, think about the role of chance or luck in the card. If there are several cards in a spread with playing cards on them, it could be that the situation will be shaped more by luck than by conscious decisions. Contrariwise (as Tweedledee would say), the appearance of a chessboard pattern or stylized chess pieces invites you to think about free will and deliberate choices. Again, if there are several cards with this motif, then perhaps you have more control over the situation than you first thought.

One final word about general symbolism in this deck before we move into learning how to do a reading. In the original Tenniel illustrations, Alice wears delicate Mary Jane-style shoes. In *Tarot in Wonderland*, while she resembles Tenniel’s vision of her in many ways, she wears sturdy lace-up shoes. They are a conscious, symbolic choice and a practical contrast compared to her pretty bows and ruffles. Alice is always trying to stay grounded in the real world as she understands it. This grounding gives her confidence that sometimes serves her well and sometimes does not.

With that, we will start to give *you* a firm grounding in how to do a reading with confidence.



CHAPTER 1

How to Read the Cards

Once you start seeing the world through the lens of tarot, you may very well feel like Alice does in this quote:

She ate a little bit, and said anxiously to herself, "Which way? Which way?" holding her hand on the top of her head to feel which way it was growing, and she was quite surprised to find that she remained the same size; to be sure, this is what generally happens when one eats cake, but Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way.

You will lay down the cards and expect insight and revelation. If you have laid out a spread and not seen



absolutely anything revelatory, know that this generally happens when one lays down playing cards (which, by the way, was tarot's first and original use). But once you learn about the tarot cards, you expect out-of-the-way things. To look at images and see nothing magical or mysterious will feel quite dull and stupid.

One thing you would notice if you were, for example, using a pack of regular playing cards to play a game of solitaire is the presence of patterns. You look for colors and number sequences because you place the cards in alternating red and black colors, with numbers going either up or down, depending on which part of the board you are playing. That skill will be really useful in doing tarot readings. Tarot cards, after all, have number and suit designators just like playing cards, and those symbols have roles in a reading. The images are really important, but don't make the mistake that some do by making the images all-important while ignoring the suits, numbers, and ranks.

Strong Beginnings

Before beginning your reading, whether for yourself or someone else, make sure you are calm. Some people think of this as centering and grounding. You can use whatever terminology makes sense to you.



Being distracted or upset will make reading the cards more difficult. It would be better to take a walk, do some exercise, take a nap, or eat a light snack. If so inclined, you may decide to begin your reading with a prayer, an honoring of any spirits you work with, or a short moment of silent meditation.

Asking a Question

One of my history professors always told us that if we want the right answers, then we have to ask the right questions. This is true, but don't let that idea tie you in knots. Every word doesn't have to be perfect for a reading to "work." Some readers even say that if someone asks the "wrong" question, the cards will just ignore it and answer the question that should have been asked. That isn't my experience, but that doesn't mean it's not true. As a reader, though, whether for myself or someone else, I put a lot of thought into the question. I encourage the querent to really unpack their concerns because sometimes the initial question is masking a deeper, more important question that either they couldn't see or were too afraid to admit.

Another good bit of question-asking advice is this: don't ask if you don't want to know. Think carefully about what you are asking. Think about possible





answers that could come up. Think particularly about the ones you *don't* want to come up. Imagine that one of your dreaded answers is what the cards show. How are you going to feel about it? More importantly, how are you going to use that information in your life?

As for what kinds of questions to ask, that depends on your personal ethics and comfort zone. For example, sometimes people want to know what their ex is up to. Many readers won't read about that because it is like spying on someone, and they consider it unethical to read about someone without their permission. Some people won't read about health or legal issues because they are not a doctor or lawyer. However, those same people are fine with reading about romantic relationships or career questions even though they are neither therapists nor career counselors.

Some readers won't answer yes-or-no questions because they believe that nothing is set in stone and nothing is black and white—that any future can be changed. If that is your belief, then you, too, will avoid yes-or-no questions. However, I find yes-or-no readings a great way to start a reading session if you have the right spread. In fact, there is a yes-or-no spread included in this book. It works well with my belief system, which is that the future is not set in



stone but that things are always in motion and moving toward something, much like a weather system. It can be tricky, though, because we all know that while the next day's weather forecast has a good chance of being accurate (if the system isn't too unstable), the fourteen-day forecast isn't as reliable.

Crafting a good question doesn't have to be hard, as long as you know your beliefs and boundaries as a reader.

When in doubt, a good approach is:

What do I need to know about _____?

If you don't like the "will my ex come back" question, you could ask the querent why they want their ex to come back. Further, I would ask (before doing the reading), "What if the cards say your ex will come back? Would you just sit around and wait? Wouldn't it be better to heal from this experience so that if they do come back, you will not be a wounded mess but someone who is in good working order?" Perhaps try something like "How can I heal from this experience?"

If you are uncomfortable with predicting for someone about "Will I get a job soon?" or "Will I get the job I just applied for?" you could suggest "How can I increase my chances of getting a job?" Before that, you can ask the querent to imagine that the cards say





“no, you won’t get a job soon” and consider how that will affect their future actions. Even if the cards say that they will be offered that job, what if during the interview the querent realizes it isn’t a good match for them? Better to spread your net wide and have as many options as possible.

Spending a little time investigating what the querent really wants to know and why can make the reading go more smoothly and be more useful in the long run.

Picking a Spread

For many people, picking the spread is one of the most fun parts aside from the actual reading of the cards. They collect spreads and like to try out new ones. Other readers dislike thinking about spreads at all and have one or two that they use or adapt for any circumstance. The most important thing is to select a spread that you feel will answer the question in a way that provides all the information necessary for the querent to make their decision.

It takes a little experimenting for readers to discover what kinds of spreads they like. Some prefer as few cards as possible. Others do a reading by asking a series of questions and pulling just one card for each answer. While spreads with many cards can

overwhelm some readers, others prefer it. If you are a new reader, play with all different kinds to see what works well for you. As you gain experience, don’t get set in your ways. Maybe three cards seem perfect to you now, but in a year you may find that your tastes and skills have changed and that more cards would be better. You won’t know if you don’t check in every so often.

Shuffling, Reversals, and Selecting the Cards

Shuffling

If you believe that life is a combination of free will and chance, then you might like to bring that idea into your tarot readings. Besides, as mentioned above, the themes of chaos and deliberation run through the Alice stories as well as through the tarot cards themselves.

An important part of doing a reading is mixing the cards, which is usually done by shuffling in whatever way you like. Some people prefer an overhand shuffle. Others like the mud pie approach, which involves spreading the cards all over the table and smearing them around. Many people like the bridge and riffle shuffle, although some worry that this bends their



cards and is hard on the deck. I rather like it when a deck looks a little used and battered, so I allow myself the fun of bridging and riffing. Truly, it does not matter how you do it. Shuffling is a way of bringing randomness into the reading and recognizing chaos's role in our lives.

After shuffling, you can cut the cards into several piles and select one of the piles from which to deal the cards for the reading. This is a way of acknowledging that you have choices and free will. As to the number of piles to cut the cards into, three is a traditional choice. However, since we are working with symbols anyhow, four would also be a good choice, as this number represents stability, a concept that pairs well with self-determination and is the opposite of chaos.

Reversals

Depending on how careful you are or aren't with your shuffling, some cards may turn up reversed in the reading. That is, the top of the card is at the bottom, relative to you, so that the image appears upside down. Traditionally, readers assigned different meanings to these cards. In the oldest books there was often no rhyme or reason for the reversed meaning, with many of them having no apparent connection to



the number, suit, upright meaning, or image. Today, if readers opt for using reversed cards, instead of incorporating arbitrary meanings, they apply a rule to *all* reversed cards. This gives coherence to their system of reversals. Here are some common examples:

- all reversed cards mean the opposite of their upright meaning
- all reversed cards are blocked energy
- all reversed cards are signs to pay extra attention to that card
- all upright cards are externalized energy and all reversed cards are internalized energy

I suggest that beginners don't worry about reversed meanings right away. Focus on the upright meanings; after you feel confident, you can explore incorporating reversed cards. In the meantime, if a card shows up reversed, simply flip it right-side up.

Selecting

Whether or not you use reversals, you have to get the cards from the deck into the spread. There are two different common methods to select the cards that will fill each position. Dealing off the top of the deck is easy and feels natural to many readers. Others





fan the deck out and ask the querent to select the necessary number of cards. The reader then takes them in the order selected and lays them in the spread or shuffles the selected cards like a micro deck and then deals off the top.

Laying Out the Cards

Most spreads have the positions numbered, so it is a simple thing to lay the cards out following the sequence provided. If a spread does not have numbered positions or instructions regarding the order, then put them out in whatever order makes sense to you. Starting from the top left and moving to the bottom right makes sense for a lot of readers because it follows the way we read a page of text. Other readers will determine what they consider the most important position and start there, following the common belief that the first card laid down is the most important.

As you lay the cards down, you can have them faceup or facedown. In the older fortunetelling traditions, the cards were laid facedown in order to maximize the drama and mystery created as each card was turned over one by one. Readers who lay the cards facedown these days probably still enjoy the mystery



but also say that it helps them to focus on one card at a time and not get distracted by other cards.

Laying the cards faceup, however, allows for a more coherent reading style and provides more information. A reading is more than the sum of its parts, and a card's divinatory meaning is only part of what it can mean in a reading. As a teacher, I've had many students tell me that they know all the card interpretations but that their readings feel disjointed, making it hard for them to deliver any kind of unified, detailed message. Laying the cards faceup allows the reader to make use of the deck's structure to glean information about the situation being asked about in the reading. It also makes it easier to see how the cards relate to each other. Cards do have core meanings, but when they interact with other cards in a reading, the focus of that meaning or the expression of it will be different than if the card is just sitting there by itself.

The Overview of the Reading

If you are opting to lay your cards facedown and flip them over one by one, you can skip this section. If you are laying your cards faceup, try using these techniques for a while. It may feel clunky at first, but after you know what to look for, it will become





second nature. Remember that comment about watching for patterns when you play solitaire with a playing card deck? This is very similar. So, basically, if you can play solitaire, you can do this because most of what you will do is look for patterns. The patterns that can come up are listed below (and please note that not all patterns will appear in all spreads...but the absence of patterns is also meaningful, as you will see). You don't have to look for them in any particular order, but as you begin you may want to follow the same process each time just to get used to things. Eventually it will become second nature.

Looking for patterns means things like multiples of numbers, ranks, or suits. It can also include visual or symbolic patterns like a repetition of pillars, flags, crowns, colors, a certain animal, etc. Due to the structure of the deck, there are certain inherent ratios that are useful. The Major Arcana make up roughly one third of the deck. The court cards are about one quarter. Each suit is about a fifth. Knowing these basic ratios means you can easily notice if a reading has a much larger or smaller number of each category. Any extreme, either more or less than would be considered usual, provides information about the situation.

As you assess the patterns, you will not be interpreting individual cards. You will only look at the



specific items. For example, if you count three fives in your spread, it doesn't matter what suit they are from, only that the multiples of the fives are present. This seems to be the hardest part for people new to this method. We are so used to interpreting cards one by one that it takes a little practice to get used to working with the structural parts. Practice makes perfect, and the results are worth it. You will gather more information, and your readings will be more unified. This is because you are forming a structure, like a skeleton, that gives shape to the reading.

Another important element of this technique is that it engages the analytical side of your brain, which, when ignored, tends to get in the way, hampering your intuition. Engage both sides of your brain and you will notice that both shine brighter, work together well, and create a better reading experience.

Majors

Start with the Major Arcana. Remembering that the majors make up about one third of the deck, determine if your reading has about that number or more or less. It does not matter what majors there are at this point. Just the presence of Major Arcana energy means something. Major cards represent influences that are beyond your control, at least





to some extent. If there are more than you would expect, that means that in this situation there is a lot going on outside the querent's sphere of influence. It also means that the querent is facing not only the apparent aspect of this situation but a deeper life lesson or soul question.

On the other hand, if the querent is very emotional or worked up about the question and there are fewer than normal majors present, it means that they could be making a mountain out of a molehill and that their solution is within their grasp. If you and the querent are willing to dig deeper, you could try to discover what it is about the situation that alarms them so deeply. You may help them uncover a wound or trigger that they can heal so that they are no longer controlled by old stories.

Suits

The suits represent the various classic elements: Wands=fire, Cups=water, Swords=air, and Pentacles=earth. Everyone knows the characteristics of these elements simply by virtue of being alive in our physical world. These associations help us to easily understand and remember what each suit represents. For example, fire is associated with passion, drive, and will. Water is associated with emotions, dreami-



ness, and the soul. Air is connected to ideas of communication, understanding, and truth. Earth is the practical aspects of the physical world. Knowing that each suit is about one fifth of the deck, calculate if there are any extreme percentages of any of the suits. Again, it does not matter which cards from the suit are present; you are only noticing the presence of extreme fire, water, air, or earth. That tells you the nature of the energy present. Lots of Cups would mean the situation is extremely emotional, for example. An earth-heavy reading can indicate an emphasis on practicality and material resources. Air indicates a focus on logic and analysis or perhaps an obsession with the truth or form of truth. Wands, of course, lets us know that there is plenty of lively passion and engaged will.

The absence of a suit is noteworthy, too. For example, in a reading about a romantic relationship, you would expect some Cups, indicating emotional intimacy. However, if there are no or very few Cups but lots of Wands, then the relationship might be strictly or mostly sexual, lacking in emotional commitment. Excessive Pentacles could mean that one or both involved are more focused on stability and resources rather than connection. Reading for someone about a possible new job and discovering there are many





Cups or Wands but few Pentacles could mean that they will find connection, community, fulfillment, or even opportunities for career advancement but not necessarily a lot of financial compensation.

Another way to use the suits is through understanding the nature of the elements. Water and earth are passive energy, while air and fire are active energy. A reading with many Cups and/or Pentacles means that the situation is slower moving and perhaps even stagnant, meaning that the querent will have to inject a lot of energy to get things headed in a different direction if they desire. A spread showing a preponderance of Wands or Swords indicates that there is a lot of fast-moving energy. Any sudden moves in such a situation could cause chaos. However, because things are moving quickly, the querent will have to move fast and skillfully in order to affect any changes they want.

A note to more experienced readers: if you use astrological associations for the majors, you can count their elemental energy along with the suits. If you are not familiar with astrological associations, don't worry about them. Not everyone uses them, and there are several different systems. Like incorporating reversals, novices are advised to hone their basic reading skills before adding new layers. It is



perfectly possible to be an excellent reader without using reversals or astrology.

Numbers

Just as the elements have specific characteristic energy, so do numbers. The Minor Arcana cards are numbered ace (which is one) through ten. The majors also have numbers on them, so you can count those as well. If you have multiples of any numbers, the following energy is playing a role in the reading:

Aces: beginnings, opportunities, gifts

Twos: decisions, choices, partnership

Threes: active energy, creativity, growth,
teamwork

Fours: stability, structure, stagnation

Fives: conflict, loss, chaos

Sixes: communication, problem solving,
unequal relationships

Sevens: reflection and assessment

Eights: power, speed, movement

Nines: completion, solitude

Tens: endings and resolution

There is another important way to incorporate numbers. When we do a reading, we seek to do two





things: get an accurate picture of the situation and help the querent achieve their goals. Situations are organic and have a natural lifespan; they have beginnings, middles, and ends. Some may take years to play out, and some go through their cycle faster. When a situation is in the early phases, it is easier to change direction. The closer something is to resolution, the harder it is to change. This is helpful for the querent to know so they can be realistic about what they are able to accomplish.

For example, if you go on a few dates with someone, the relationship (if it is even classified as such) is easy to end. Most people can part ways easily since there hasn't been much investment. If someone cannot easily end an acquaintance after only a few dates, that indicates another problem, such as lack of emotional maturity. After you've been involved with someone a while and have perhaps planned some trips together or bought season tickets to a theater, it becomes more complicated on several levels to end the relationship. Things become even more entangled if you move in with someone and perhaps have mingled your finances, become involved with each other's families, or shared visions for a long-term future. It will take a lot more emotional fortitude and mental determination to end a relationship at this point.



The night before the wedding, it will be really hard to extricate yourself (but, of course, not impossible). Once the wedding has happened, then the relationship has, in a way, become something new, and so the process starts over but at a higher level.

To see where a situation is in its natural life cycle, look for these patterns:

Aces, twos, and threes: the beginning

Fours, fives, and sixes: the middle

Sevens, eights, and nines: the near end

Tens: the situation is all but resolved

Court Cards

Multiples of court cards indicate energy in the same way that numbers and suits do. Multiple pages show that the querent has allies or helpers, such as friends who can provide moral support. Several knights indicate that others are involved whose wills are as strong (or perhaps stronger) than the querent's. These can be adversaries or competitors. Like the active suits, they also indicate fast-moving energy. More than one queen lets the querent know that they have resources in the form of people with experience and authority who can help them. These might be teachers, mentors, or bosses who care





about the querent. Kings are similar to the majors; they represent a person or people with authority or power who might be outside the querent's sphere of influence. These could be people at work who make decisions that affects one's job, at a bank where one is trying to get a loan, or at a college where one is trying to gain admittance. For example, the CEO or group that makes decisions at the company you work for may decide to cut jobs. Their decision can affect you directly, but it will be hard to exert any influence to change the situation—hard, but not always impossible. In a reading it is important to strike the balance between realistic expectations and finding ways to empower the querent in the situation.



Visual Patterns

Looking at visual patterns begins to blur the line between logic and intuition. Logic is still used to recognize the existence of patterns and to tap into your existing knowledge of symbols. Intuition comes into play when noticing things like colors or shapes that aren't necessarily symbols on their own but become symbolic or noteworthy in the context of a reading. It can be helpful to squint your eyes and try to look at the reading as a whole like an impressionistic painting. What emerges, and what does it say to you?

After you've assessed the overall spread, you should have a framework that will help bring the individual card interpretations into focus. To me, it feels like creating a kaleidoscope. Suddenly things fall into place, and the image as a whole makes sense.

For example, let's say we are doing a reading for a woman who is on a committee with a project that is not progressing well. A scan of the reading reveals that the situation has a normal number of majors and is, therefore, well within the querent's control. Let's say there are lots of Wands and Cups, so energy is moving quickly, lots of egos are involved, and plenty of emotions are flying around. The querent may wish to balance this situation with stability and control, and we may advise her to be very clear on her own goal and to use reason to understand the motivations



of others involved and to cut through the drama. This overview process helps focus all the cards in a reading, as we will see in the next section.

Individual Cards

After scanning the spread as described above, begin interpreting each card. Keep in mind the question asked, the position of the spread, and the framework established in the initial overview. For example, using the reading example from the previous section, if the Five of Wands is in a position called “challenges” and that the reading is about a committee that the querent is on that is having trouble getting anything done. The deadline is fast approaching (as we learned in the overview...energy is moving quickly). There are not only emotions but also egos, all expressing their own stories and getting in the way of working together.

Let’s say the Three of Pentacles is in a position called “advice.” If we had not done the scan, we would say something like “this project has so much potential as long as you all work together.” That’s still true, but knowing what is stopping people from working together (emotions and egos), the querent can be advised to try to get the committee to separate into subcommittees where people can focus on tasks



suited to their skills or specialties. In dividing, the group finds unity.

Wrapping Up

It is nice to have a clear ending to the reading. There is usually a lot said during a reading, and it can be hard for a querent to remember everything. I make sure they have a sheet of paper and pen to take notes. At the end of the reading, sum up the key points of the reading and the advice (if any) in a clear manner, allowing the querent to write it down if they wish.

And that is all there is to it! If that feels like too much to start with or if you are one of those people who don’t like to follow instruction manuals (but still manage to put together a bookcase or whatever), then ignore all of this, shuffle your cards, lay some out, and simply read them. Read them the way a child might read a book by interpreting the pictures and not reading the words. Many people who feel they are highly intuitive start this way and, in fact, read this way their whole lives, never feeling the need to learn symbols or systems. This is the cool thing about tarot; it is a tool, and you can decide how to use it to achieve your divination goals.





Keys to Becoming a Confident and Skilled Reader

There are many different ways to read the cards. The system described here is my method that was developed over many years of reading. It is based on my beliefs about how the world works, how the tarot mirrors the world and those beliefs, and experience. This doesn't mean my way is the best way for you or anyone else, although many students through the years have found value in it. It is simply the best way for me. It can serve as a starting place for you. As you work with it, you discover what makes sense for you and what doesn't. Trying something that doesn't work is never a waste of time because you gain knowledge from the experience. Learning what doesn't work takes you closer to figuring out what does.

Beyond sharing my method, I have three important keys to share with you. They will help you to discover your own authentic voice and style, which leads to being confident.

Key 1: Know Yourself

Tarot is a tool, not a religion, although many people act like it is when they say there is only one proper way to use the cards. To use this tool effec-



tively, you have to know what you want to do with it and what you think it is capable of. Can the tarot predict the future? That depends on what you believe about the nature of the future and whether it can be predicted. Does the tarot work? That depends on what you mean by "work." What are you expecting it to do? Where do the answers come from? Are they messages from divine beings, reflections of our own thoughts, random ideas meant to inspire? If you don't have a fairly good idea of what you believe, what you mean to accomplish, and how that is possible, it won't matter how many books you read or classes you take. With tarot, don't take anyone's word as absolute truth. Their words may be truth to them, but that doesn't mean they are your truth.

Key 2: More than Card Interpretations

Signs are things that mean one thing. They are valued for their clarity. A stop sign means to stop. There is no interpretation, no layered nuances. Symbols, on the other hand, are extremely complex, with many facets of possible meaning. They speak to our souls as much as to our minds.

Tarot cards are symbols, not signs. This is why some of us study the cards our whole lives without becoming bored. It is also why no one book will teach



you everything there is to know about the cards. Even this book provides only partial glimpses of the wide breadth of possible meanings for each card. I cannot imagine any single book that could contain all the wisdom and potential meaning of all the cards. The book would be huge and probably overwhelming and hard to understand. The cards are keys that unlock entire worlds of meaning. You will notice in the interpretations and keywords given here that there are sometimes contradictory meanings. This is not a mistake or a plan to make things confusing. It is a reflection of reality, which can be confusing, complicated, and annoying.

As you explore the cards, remember that they are vast. There is no one interpretation. There are no easy complete answers. You will continue to build on your understanding the more you work with the cards. But what the cards mean individually is only one part of the puzzle.

Unless you are doing a one-card reading, there will be other cards on the table. The cards do not exist in isolation. The stories that they tell come from how they interact with each other. Paying attention to the relationships between the cards is just as important as the individual meanings. The Six of Wands is often a card of victory and accomplishment. If it shares



space with, say, the Ace of Cups and Eight of Pentacles, it can mean a victory that is based on a heartfelt ideal and hard work. If the Six of Wands comes up with, say, the Devil and Four of Cups, it could mean an addiction to achievement that leaves the person perpetually dissatisfied.

You can practice seeing how surrounding cards affect a specific card's meaning. Take a card and place two cards on either side. What is the story? How are they affecting each other? Now place two new cards on either side. What is their story? How has the "meaning" of the center card changed? Likewise, you can lay out two cards with space between them. Place a card between them and read that story. How does the card in the middle feel in that space? Put a different card in the middle. Seeing how different cards react in the same space will help you develop good reading skills.

Key 3: Practice

It seems like almost all the tarot lovers I've met (and there have been quite a few!) are always good students who love learning. We tarot enthusiasts buy books and take classes as often as we can. Reading, studying, making lists, and learning from teachers is wonderful, but it will only take you so far. The real key to becoming a good reader is to practice.





So many people I've met have seemed afraid to start reading the cards until they feel like they've learned enough. You will never learn enough. You will make mistakes. You will get things wrong. This is normal and true of learning any new skill. It is part of the learning process. You cannot avoid it if you hope to be a confident reader.

This is the most important thing I can tell you: practice as much as you can. You may not want to read for strangers at first, and that's wise. You don't need that pressure or responsibility (because being a reader comes with plenty of responsibility). Instead, read for yourself. Read for friends and family. Read for characters on your favorite weekly TV show. Read for characters in a movie before you go see the movie.

Read for celebrities. Read for current events. Read for everything you can. Keep good notes. Pay attention to what works and what doesn't. Try new things. Experiment.

If you want to get better at reading the cards, then *read the cards*.



But you can also keep reading this book. Practice is the most important thing, but learning from others isn't a bad thing either. To learn more about the traditional meanings of the cards and my observations about how the cards in this deck relate to the Alice stories, read on!





CHAPTER 2

The Major Arcana

The Major Arcana cards are numbered 0–21 and represent archetypal energy as it moves through our lives. These cards form a template for a spiritual journey and therefore also represent life lessons and important milestones in our lives.





0 • The Fool

Through the Looking-Glass

Let's set the scene. Alice is sitting on the bank of a river and feeling hot, lazy, and stupid. Her sister's book doesn't interest her because there are no pictures or dialogue in it. This state of being lulled into a stupor, with no real human interaction (via dialog) and no connection with soul (via images), is common for people just before a big leap into adventure. In fact, Alice's torpor is so heavy that she doesn't find the energy to be surprised when she hears the Rabbit actually say, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" Alice's experience is archetypal. When we hear the call to adventure, it has to work through the dense, comfortable normalcy of our lives.

Luckily, the Rabbit's watch and waistcoat finally catch her attention, and "burning with curiosity," she gives chase just in time to see him drop down a rabbit hole:

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

This is, quite literally, the action of the Fool. Something rouses us from a state of sedation and captures our curiosity, which in this case is stronger





and more important than courage and causes us to seek without worrying about returning to normal life.

The text doesn't mention Dinah, Alice's cat. In this scene and throughout the stories she is an ambiguous character, staying firmly rooted in the waking world, although her kittens, Kitty and Snow-drop, become part of the dreaming world.



Similarly, the meaning of the dog that is often found in various images of the Fool is vague. Is he trying to warn the Fool? Is he the Fool's intuition, spurring him on to adventure? In *Secrets of the Waite-Smith Tarot*, Katz and Goodwin say that the dog represents faith, a quality that follows

us through our journey as guard, tormentor, and companion. Oddly enough, it is faith that leads us toward connection with the Divine, but it is also the last thing that must be sacrificed before leaping into the unknown territory of divine union.

Dinah is not even mentioned as being on the bank with Alice and her sister. However, Dinah is the first being that Alice thinks about during her fall with any



real emotion: "Dinah, my dear! I wish you were down here with me!"

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Fool is that moment when the fear of relinquishing normal life gives way to curiosity and to experience connection with the Divine. Connection with the Divine takes many forms and can also be called discovering one's true self and purpose. The journey of life is simple: to rediscover the Divine that has been within you all along and express it in the world.

The hard part, as we learned from Alice's experience, is that what we ironically call waking life, reality, or normalcy has a pretty vested interest in keeping us rooted here. Despite this world's attempts to keep us sedated, we have faith, this thing that tells us there is something more. We have to release all that we've known and relied on, even the knowledge of what we seek, in order to find our true selves.

keywords

BEGINNINGS, INNOCENCE, FREEDOM,
SPONTANEITY, ADVENTURE,
YOUTH, IDEALISM, FAITH, PURITY,
FEARLESSNESS, CARELESSNESS,
ECCENTRICITY, APPARENT FOOLISHNESS





I • The Magician



Through the Looking-Glass

Like all fabulous archetypes, symbols, and the best fictional characters, the Caterpillar is complex and could convincingly be many of the tarot cards, from the High Priestess (with his insistence that Alice know herself) to the Hierophant (with constant questions forcing Alice to communicate clearly). But here he is the Magician, the master manifester and the one who understands how the elements of the world can be used to achieve one's goals. The hookah is an excellent symbol for working with the elements. While we do not see the inner workings of a hookah here, traditionally they use tobacco and honey, which represent earth; burning charcoal, which represents fire; water, which represents water; and of course the smoke represents air.





Another important aspect of the Magician is the focus on the self, the ego, and one's own identity. In his dialogue with Alice, the Caterpillar is constantly referencing the divide between his experience and Alice's experience. When Alice complains that she "doesn't like changing [sizes] so often, you know," he replies, "I *don't* know." The Magician marks the point in the human experience when we realize that we are separate from other people and, in some ways, from the Divine (this, of course, is not the whole truth, as we will see with the High Priestess). In biological terms, some think that this happens at the moment of birth, when a baby is literally separated from its mother. It happens at various points throughout our lives as well and is part of the continuing dichotomy of the human experience: the pull between separation and unity.

One of the reasons understanding our separateness is important is because until we realize we are a complete, unique being, we cannot understand that, as such, we have our own will. It is our will that gives us the power and autonomy to create what we want in the world. This is the definition of magic; without the key understanding of individuality and will, we cannot understand what we are capable of. There is much more to magic and manifestation, though,



and the Caterpillar knows that. His mushroom and hookah (which are not expounded upon in the text) very subtly hint at imagination and opening the mind to things beyond normal perception. Knowing what one wants is also important. The Caterpillar asks Alice what she wants and then argues with her a bit to help her clarify whether or not she is certain of her will. When he is convinced that she knows her own mind, he tells Alice that one side of the mushroom will make her taller and another side, smaller. In doing so, he shows his understanding of how the subtle differences in matter or energy can create very different effects.

In this image, the Caterpillar has opened his mind to imagine a sword, wand, cup, and pentacle, which we see in the smoke he exhales. Once he has formed these ideas, as if by magic he manifests them as real items.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Magician reminds us that before we can effectively manifest or wield our magic with precision, we must be clear on several key points. First, we must recognize that we are unique beings with free will, and with that will comes power and responsibility. Second, we must understand ourselves

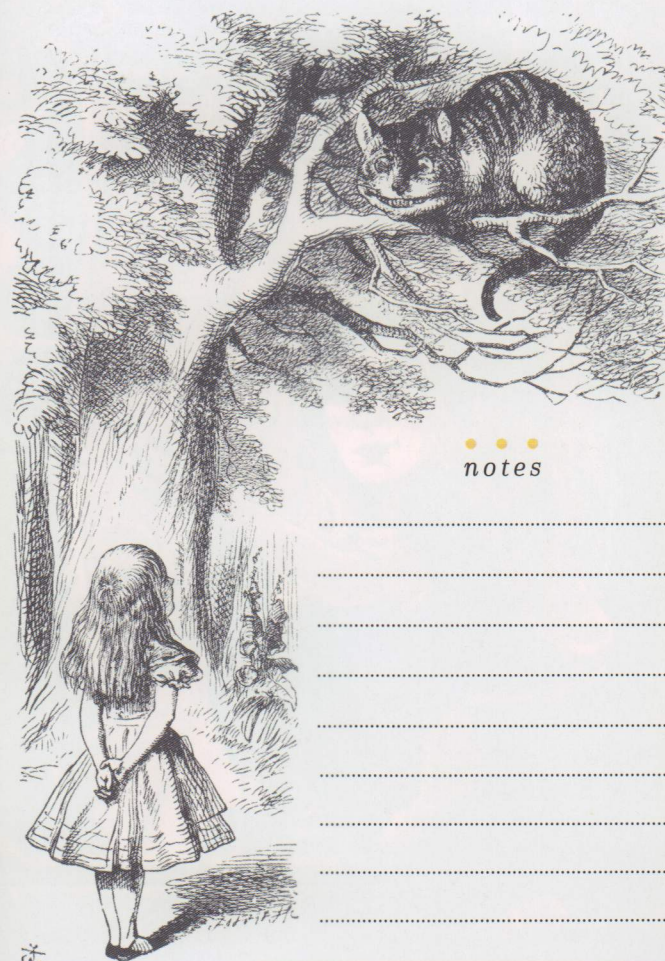




and know what we actually want. Without that clarity, everything we do will be a confused mess. Debate and discussion with those who oppose us or are willing to play devil's advocate help us to achieve clarity, sometimes more than conversation with those who agree with or support us. Finally, we must understand the fundamental ways of elemental energy. The physical world, for all its appearance of solidness, is made of energy. Yes, we can often do what we wish, but only if we know the potential and possibilities of the materials at hand.

keywords

WILL, TALENT, SKILL, CREATIVITY,
MANIFESTATION, COMMUNICATION,
MAGIC, ACTION, AWARENESS,
POWER, RESOURCEFULNESS,
CONCENTRATION, ELOQUENCE



notes





II • The High Priestess

Through the Looking-Glass

In the opening scene of *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice's nimble mind moves from the mundane and measurable rationality of daily life to the mysteries of nature. In doing so, she moves from the separation of self we see in the Magician to the story of unity the High Priestess tells. Alice speaks to her companions (Dinah and Dinah's kittens, Kitty and Snowdrop) about manners, rules, and the repercussions of breaking those rules as well as about the beauty of the snow falling outside:

How nice and soft it sounds! I wonder if the snow *loves* the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently?

She continues musing about the feelings, experiences, and life of the natural world. As she moves





from the rules and compartmentalization of the rational world (symbolized in the image by the chess-board background and the chess pieces on the mantel) to the natural world, she is inspired to explore other worlds.

Much like a shamanic journey to the upper world, the mirror over the fireplace separating Alice from the Looking-Glass world turns “into a sort of mist,” and she declares that “it’ll be easy enough to get through.” The idea of moving from one world to another is highlighted by the pomegranates on the curtain. They also allude to the costs associated with such a journey, something it seems Alice has not really taken into account. Pomegranates not only represent Persephone and her journey to the underworld, but also, in Christian terms, they are associated with Jesus’s mother, Mary, and represent his sacrifice and rebirth; for many, Jesus is also a shamanic figure. Before going through the mirror, at least in this image, Alice sees not exactly her future self, although we discover that in the Looking-Glass world the past and the future both exist in the present, but her higher self. This is the part of her that is at home in the Looking-Glass world and understands that all things have life and are connected by that animating force. She observes:



[T]he pictures on the wall next [to] the fire seemed to be all alive, and the very clock... had got the face of a little old man and grinned at her.

Alice finds that she is able to interact with the beings in the Looking-Glass world. She can move things and her actions have consequences (she moves the Queen and causes the King to write words of her choosing), yet she is invisible, unable to be seen or heard by the others in the room. Going through the mirror is just the first step in her initiation, in her ability to connect more personally with this new world. It is only through experiencing many trials and tests that she begins to move toward her ideal, authentic self. At least in the beginning she has a vision, a vague idea that there is something more, to herself and to the world, and that fuels her curiosity. Perhaps it is a good thing that she didn’t fully understand the meaning of the pomegranates and the sacrifices that would be required of her.

Down the Rabbit Hole

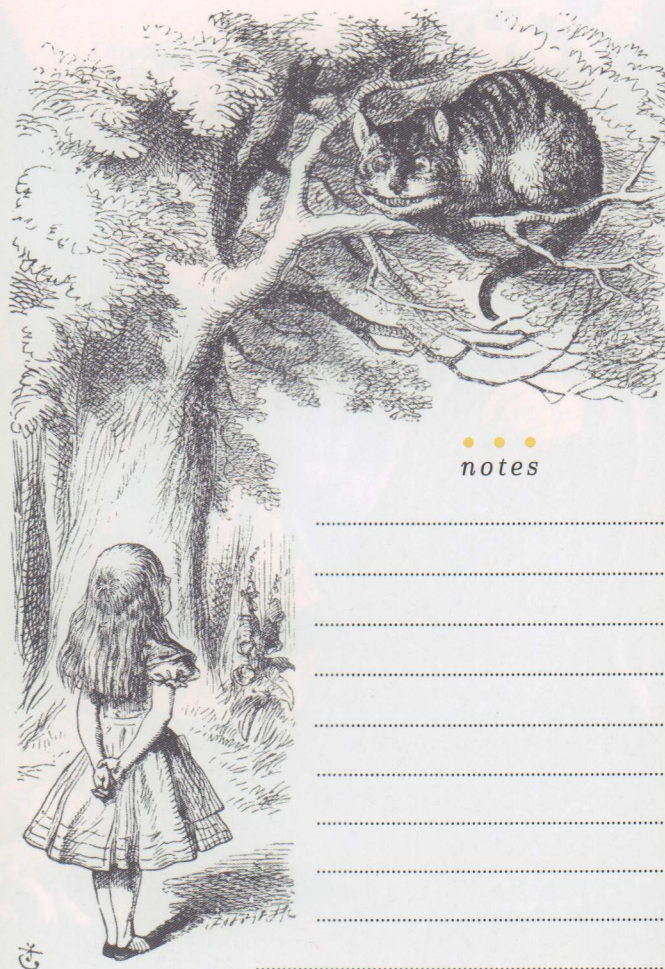
In a reading, the idea of not knowing what lies ahead is an important part of the card’s message. The High Priestess marks that moment of realizing that there is something more, something beyond rational understanding and separation. The desire to connect



While you have a glimpse—which in the end may prove imperfect—of what the outcome might be, you do not get to know what it will take to get there. You are about to dive into a mystery, and everything about the experience will be mysterious. At every step you will have to decide what parts of you will remain and what you will shed. The environment around you will be responsive to your seeking, like the landscapes in the best myths, and you can find clues and advice, but in the end it is *your* actions and decisions that will determine the outcome.

● ● ● ● ●
keywords

SECRETS, INITIATION, MYSTERY,
SILENCE, WISDOM, UNDERSTANDING,
INTUITION, INSIGHT, SUBCONSCIOUS,
UNREVEALED FUTURE



notes

[illegible]



III • The Empress



Through the Looking-Glass

In *Through the Looking-Glass* Alice believes that Snowdrop—the white kitten who was being groomed by her mother, Dinah, during the adventure—must have manifested as the White Queen, who always appeared so untidy. So in an interesting and entirely Looking-Glass fashion, the adult becomes like a child as Alice assumes the role of adult and helps the Queen put herself in order. In the background we can see Dinah patiently licking Snowdrop, who bears it rather well, all things considered, although in the text neither were actually in the Looking-Glass world.

While Alice helps disentangle the brush from the Queen's hair and pins her shawl properly with a brooch, she is displaying some aspects of the Empress. As she performs these nurturing tasks she





tries explaining how she's doing it, giving the Queen the skills to do it for herself in the future. "It *can't* go straight, you know, if you pin it all on one side," Alice advises. Similarly, Dinah's grooming will help Snowdrop learn how to take care of her own fur someday.

The relationship goes both ways, though, as the Queen teaches Alice about life in the Looking-Glass world. Just as Snowdrop doesn't appreciate her grooming, Alice isn't convinced the Queen's wisdom has much value. When the Queen explains to Alice that the phrase "jam every other day" means "jam to-morrow and jam yesterday—but never jam *to-day*," Alice is confused. The Queen patiently continues, "It's jam every *other* day: to-day isn't any *other* day, you know" and tells Alice this is "the effect of living backwards." This nonsensical rule is an example of logic that is often employed in our world that seems arbitrary and just doesn't make sense.

Although one can never have jam today, there are, the Queen insists, other benefits to her world and tells Alice about how her memory works both ways. The Queen, in fact, can remember best "things that happened the week after next." This speaks to the idea of the circle of life or the wheel of the year, both of which are very closely associated with the Empress. The natural world follows cycles, and



the Empress knows these cycles very well. She can "remember" what happens next month because she has seen it before. When Alice gets upset about being so lonely, the Queen tries to get Alice to stop crying by advising her to consider something, anything, such as what a great girl she is, how far she's come today, and what o'clock it is. The Queen explains that "nobody can do two things at once."

Her best advice, however, is probably advising Alice to believe impossible things. When Alice says she cannot believe the Queen's age ("one hundred and one, five months and a day"), the Queen says,

"I daresay you haven't had much practice...
When I was your age I always did it for
half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've
believed as many as six impossible things
before breakfast."

In sharing their understanding of how the world works, both Alice and the White Queen are being empresses in their own ways.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Empress is the knowledge of and deep love for the workings of the natural world and all that reside within it. It is also the desire to share that understanding to help others move more





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Chapter 2



comfortably through their lives. It is also the wisdom that to everything there is a season, and if there is no jam today, we can live in hope of jam tomorrow, and just as surely as the sun rises and sets each day, spring will follow winter, abundance will follow lean times, and death will follow life.

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keywords

ABUNDANCE, FERTILITY, CREATIVITY,
PLEASURE, BEAUTY, HAPPINESS,
COMFORT, NATURE, MOTHERHOOD,
MOTHER, NURTURING, LOVE,
PREGNANCY, GENEROSITY



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Major Arcana



• • •
notes

G+





IV • The Emperor

Through the Looking-Glass

After the terror of swimming around in the pool of tears that Alice cried when she was very large, she (much smaller now) and a collection of creatures make their way to the shore. They are all soaked through and very miserable. After a failed attempt to generate dryness by a mouse, who attempted the feat by sharing a very dry bit of history, the Dodo takes over the situation like a true leader.

First he organized a Caucus-race, marking out a vague shape for a track and placing the participants randomly on it. There was no official beginning; rather, the creatures all ran whenever they liked and stopped when they wanted. After a half hour, the

Dodo proclaimed
"The race is over!"

Although it took him some time to determine who won (they had *all* won, and *all* required prizes), it took no time at all to determine who should provide the prizes: Alice, of course.





Luckily she had a tin of lozenges in her pocket, which were handed round as prizes. In the text Alice hands them out, but here, as the Emperor, the Dodo is managing the resources.

Like any good leader, he identified the problem, assessed the resources available, and managed them in a way that benefitted all. Well, mostly all. Having virtually no resources, the Dodo rightly surmised that running around in the sun would help them dry quicker. A race was a diverting way to do it. But since everyone was already out of temper, the rules were loose and no one was named as a loser. Since Alice was the only creature with pockets, only she could possibly have anything that could be used as prizes. While perhaps not ideal, the Dodo did do the best he could in creating an environment where the citizens of his little flock could achieve their goals: get dry and not feel bad.

The setting for this image is a formal garden to represent civilization and culture, the Emperor's realm of command (as opposed to the wilds of the Empress's rule). Order, efficiency, and the achievement of goals, as well as the wise use of resources, are the Emperor's guiding values.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Emperor reminds us that we are the stewards of our own lives as well as active participants in our own societies. The Empress teaches



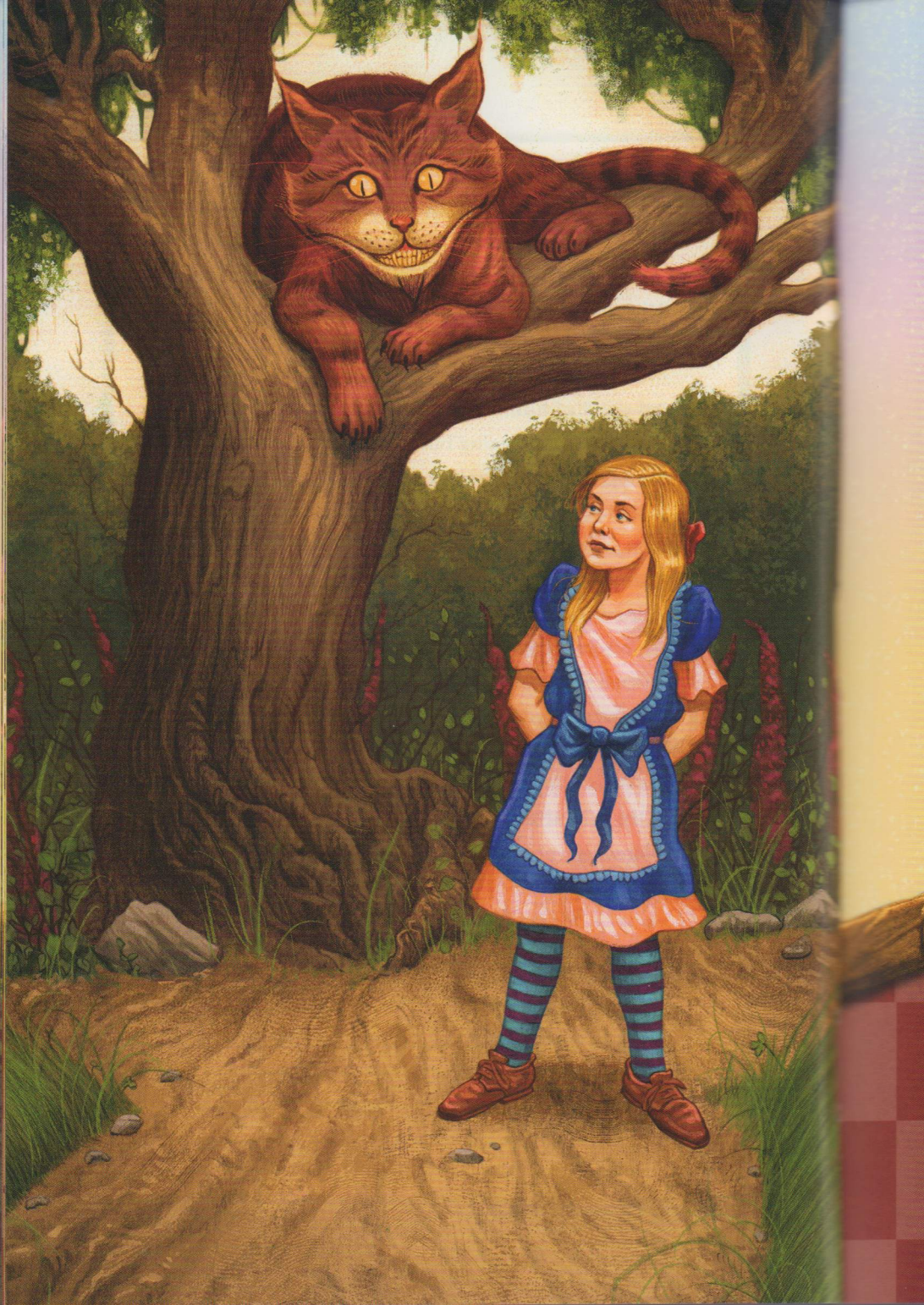
us that there is a season for everything. The Emperor heeds her teaching and knows that food will not be readily available all the time and therefore creates structures to ensure that his people can survive the winter.

Likewise, we must pay attention to our resources and think of future needs to plan accordingly. Even when we are planning our own lives, when we act as emperors for ourselves, our actions affect others as well as the world around us. A true emperor has a long and broad vision. In shamanic understanding, whether an individual does or doesn't agree with their culture, everyone is encouraged to accept their responsibility in creating that culture. It is easy to blame a single person or group of people as "emperors" for the sad state of affairs. Spiritual and moral responsibility for our society lies with each and every one of us. We are all emperors, and hopefully we will all try as hard as the Dodo to do the best we can with what we have.

keywords

STABILITY, STRUCTURE, POWER,
AUTHORITY, LEADERSHIP, CONTROL,
PROTECTION, STEWARDSHIP,
ORDER, BOSS, FATHERHOOD,
FATHER, AMBITION, REASON,
LOGIC, CONFIDENCE





V • The Hierophant

Through the Looking-Glass

These days the Hierophant is one of the most disliked cards in tarot. People have too narrow a view of the Hierophant because traditional imagery shows this character as a Roman Catholic pope. The pope is a manifestation of the spiritual, ethical, or philosophical teacher archetype, which is what this card really is. Regardless of the specific image used to illustrate this card, the Hierophant represents the underlying belief system that guides our behaviors and actions.

Different versions of this archetype—a Catholic pope, an evangelical pastor, a popular philosopher, a self-help guru, a motivational teacher—all share a similar quality: they suggest a possible way that the world works. Once we understand our own beliefs, then we can measure all our decisions, actions, words, and goals against that worldview. The Hierophant as a card doesn't so much represent how to think as to the importance about what we think. What we accept as the "truth" about the world determines our behavior. When our behavior is at odds with our beliefs, we suffer severe emotional, spiritual, psychological, and sometimes even physical distress.

The Cheshire Cat explains to Alice how Wonderland "works" and about the importance of knowing one's goals. Some of the most famous lines (and there are so many) from the Alice stories are:



"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.

"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."

The Cheshire Cat gives an explanation that hinges on the idea that no one knows what is real and what is false. When his remarks are pushed further by philosophers and other great thinkers (as so much in the Alice stories has been), discussions include the inability to know for certain whether one is in a dream while one is in the dream. Likewise, when one is "mad" or what we would call suffering from mental illness, is it possible to know that one is in a state of insanity? The idea of madness continues with the Mad Hatter and March Hare. I've heard that a basic definition of madness is when what is in our heads doesn't match what is outside our heads, or what some call reality. To be in good mental, emotional, and spiritual health, our internal lives (our beliefs) must match our external lives (our actions).

Alice asks for directions but has no destination in mind. The Cat responds with "Then it doesn't matter which way you go." This echoes wisdom from the Talmud that says "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." If you have no goals, no intentions guiding your path, then what you do doesn't matter. The Cat and the Talmud don't mean goals like "make six figures" or "start a success-



ful business," at least not as ends in themselves. We are talking about core beliefs, about why we are here and what we believe we are meant to do.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Hierophant invites us to examine our actions and measure them against our beliefs. If they are lining up but things are still feeling wrong, then perhaps it is time to re-examine our guiding principles. If there is a gap between the ways in which we behave and what we claim to believe, then it is time to tighten up that space and start being the people that we aspire to be. When we are confused about which path to take or which way to go, we often turn to the cards for guidance. This card says that you need no outside advice, but instead to do that which in your heart of hearts you know to be the right thing.

keywords

EDUCATION, TEACHING, LEARNING,
KNOWLEDGE, CONFORMITY,
TRADITION, INSTITUTIONS, GROUP
IDENTITY, VALUES, GUIDANCE,
ORTHODOXY, RITES, BLESSINGS,
STATUS QUO, SOCIAL CONVENTIONS





VI • The Lovers

Through the Looking-Glass

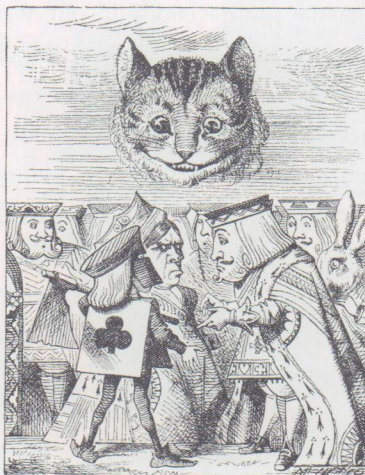
This image looks similar to traditional Lovers cards, with a male character apparently choosing between two females. Consequently, these older images were about the difficulty in making choices. Does one follow one's heart or does one allow other factors to shape the decision? In our Wonderland scene, the poor knave is not making the choice but rather is the passive recipient of the choices of others.

The Queen of Hearts, moved by intense emotion, strongly advocates for punishment, calling for the knave's head to be cut off. Alice, on the other hand, seeks leniency and mercy as well as taking a slower, more rational approach. The action suggested by the Queen is more dramatic, while Alice's methods present a calmer energy.

Should lovers be moved by fleeting but intense emotion or is true love characterized by thoughtful consideration? What is the nature of the love that drives their choices? Romantic notions are idealized in film and literature because drama is always the driving force. But following the Queen's logic, one false or even merely misunderstood action means the end of love. The Queen, as we see in other parts of



the text, is more concerned about her ego than about the truth or about the well-being of others. Alice's path encourages us to keep in mind the larger picture rather than discrete moments. Romantic love may be full of excitement, but a more mature expression of love is, as they say, patient and kind; it protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Lovers can suggest the presence of a love interest but also invite reflection on the nature of love and how it guides our choices. There are many types of love in the world: romantic, platonic, and familial, for example. But even within those variations, the motivation and expression of love comes from the individual. Is our love ego-driven, like the Queen's, or is it patient and truth seeking, like Alice's? Is our love benefitting the beloved or diminishing them in some way? Does our love hurt ourselves by cleaving to destructive people or does it encourage us to be better people? Are we following fleeting emotions without question or are we mindfully and consciously making decisions about who and how we love?

• • • • •
keywords

CHOICES, CROSSROADS, TRUST,
COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIPS,
PARTNERSHIPS, TOGETHERNESS, LOVE,
AFFECTION, SEXUALITY, HARMONY,
ENGAGEMENT, ATTRACTIONS, DUALITY



VII • The Chariot

Through the Looking-Glass

Croquet can be a very straightforward game, requiring some skill but also easy enough for nearly anyone to play. Similarly, we would all have an easier time of it if life were more straightforward and simple. We could all just move ahead, achieving our goals and living pleasantly. Unfortunately, real life is not like a game of croquet. Indeed, it is more like croquet as played in Wonderland.

The Chariot card suggests that if we have good control over our vehicle (and the creatures that pull it), our will is enough to take us wherever we wish to go. Alice's predicament more closely resembles what a normal day for most of us feels like. Instead of a simple tool like a mallet that does exactly what we expect it to, we are handed a flamingo, whose goals are usually not the same as ours. We have to get to know not only what it is physically capable of but also its temperament and what we can hope to coax from it. Instead of a solid ball that will follow the clean rules of physics, we





find a hedgehog at our feet...or running away from us. Not only that, but the arches through which we wish to aim our hedgehogs keep moving.

We all, at least sometimes, think that we (and our will) are the center of the universe, but we forget that everything and everyone else also has will. Just like Alice, we may conclude that life is “a very difficult game indeed.” She complains to her friend the Cheshire Cat that “you’ve no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive.” This brings us to an often-overlooked aspect of the Chariot. Most interpretations focus on successfully controlling your surroundings so that you can achieve whatever goal you desire, which is a dangerous oversimplification of reality and bypasses the true wisdom of this card.

Before Alice can succeed, she must learn to manage her flamingo and hedgehog, not through brute strength but by understanding their natures. She must also try to anticipate the movements of the playing card arches. Until she does these things, any attempts that might succeed are just dumb luck. To gain mastery—to be able to repeat actions with consistency—she must learn and practice. They say that a key element of any professional performance is that the performer makes the act look easy. That ease comes through study and repetition. It is not always easy and rarely graceful. However, without these



skills—understanding, anticipation, and practice—it is difficult to move forward with confidence.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Chariot represents improvement and success through learned and applied skills. In traditional images, the Chariot includes symbols representing the cards that come before it: the Magician, High Priestess, Empress, Emperor, and Lovers. In the Chariot, all the lessons from these cards come together to create the ability to move through life as a fully functioning adult.

However, the Chariot is still an early stop on the Fool’s journey, so just like a young driver who just acquired their driving license, experience is still required to make a confident and smooth driver. At this point, we should recognize and applaud our achievements without being too critical. It is a good opportunity to notice what is working well and where we can improve so that we can steer our lives in the direction that we wish.

keywords

DRIVE, AMBITION, CONTROL,
DIRECTION, DETERMINATION,
SUCCESS, TRIUMPH, VICTORY, WILL,
MOVEMENT, PROGRESS, SPEED,
TRAVEL, CONQUEST, BATTLE





VIII • Strength



Through the Looking-Glass

Alice is on her way to the eighth square, where she will achieve her goal of being a queen. Even though the dark wood scares her, she goes through it because it is the only way to make it across the chessboard. The main feature of this wood is that it is a place where things have no name. Names have such an important role in the Alice stories. The Caterpillar insists on knowing Alice's name, the Red Queen tells Alice to remember who she is, and the White Queen becomes so frightened at one point that she forgets her name. When Alice is asked

"What's the use of their having names," the Gnat said, "if they won't answer to them?"

"No use to *them*," said Alice; "but it's useful to the people that name them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names at all?"

The question of names brings us into some murky philosophical territory, much like the dark wood where we find Alice and the fawn. There is no inherent connection between the names we





give things and the things themselves. We humans name things in order to classify, discuss, and understand the world. Naming is a really useful practice. Without it, we'd find it really chaotic to try to discuss anything. There are other ramifications of naming things. In fairy tales (and some magical paths), knowing someone or something's name allows control over him, her, or it. In the Harry Potter stories, we are told that fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself. In the end, things have different names because we see them as separate entities in some way or another, whether a specific thing, such as a person, or a general thing, such as a species or race. Naming is a way to solidify the concept of us/them and I/you. There are obvious benefits to names. There are also less useful results.

In shamanic teachings, as well as many other spiritual paths, there is a belief called "the lie of separation," meaning that while we see ourselves as separate from everything else (which was the Magician's experience), we are also connected (the desire of the High Priestess is to reconnect). Many practice meditation (or even recreational drugs) to experience, or more accurately to re-experience, being at one with all things. It is hard to imagine what life would be like if we did not move through the world as separate entities at odds with each other. But during these



brief moments of spiritual practice or meditation, we, like Alice and Fawn, allow the barriers between us to dissolve and can exist together not only peaceably but also affectionately.

Where is the strength in this? Ah, but it takes immense strength to recognize everything and everyone in the world as being part of ourselves, to give up the illusion that people from another place or who don't look like us are truly and meaningfully different from us. If we remove that construct, how then would we treat other people, other creatures, and the earth itself?

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, Strength tells us that to be truly strong means to understand others and not just tolerate them but accept them. Most creatures only lash out when scared or in pain. When we experience anger in others, it is normal to react in kind. But Strength says that we are not normal; we are able to be *more* than normal. We can react from that place of deep remembering that was revealed in the High Priestess, where we are one with all things. We can treat others the way we'd wish to be treated, to understand the way we'd wish to be understood. While our egos are often fragile, our truest selves are stronger than we ever imagined.





keywords

STRENGTH, GENTLENESS,
PATIENCE, COMPASSION, HEALING,
INTEGRATION, COURAGE, HEART,
CONTROL, DISCIPLINE, FORTITUDE,
ASSURANCE, POTENCY, VIRILITY,
LUST, INSTINCT, ABILITY, MASTERY



notes



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IX • The Hermit

Through the Looking-Glass

The Hermit is such a romantic figure. Who doesn't sometimes fantasize about getting away from it all—all the distractions of daily modern life, all the responsibilities—simply to have time to be alone with our thoughts? The Hermit is a solitary figure but never seems lonely. In fact, our Hermit, the White Knight, is the most calm and kind character in both the Alice stories. Maybe there is a lesson here about the relationship between self-reflection and kindness.

It is not surprising that the White Knight is kind to Alice, for most Carroll scholars agree that he meant the Knight to represent himself. His bitter-sweet leave of Alice, departing before she took the final leap into her role as queen—or, metaphorically speaking, growing up—supports this idea. Carroll,





like the White Knight, was something of an odd duck, always a little awkward and somehow on the outside of the “in” crowd. But neither Carroll nor the Knight seemed too concerned about that, probably because both were constantly clear that they and they alone walked their path.

The White Knight is an apt representation for the Hermit. Some scholars say that all the items that the Knight carries with him (all mentioned in the text but not shown in this image) have some connection to scenes in both *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*. Similarly, the Hermit carries with him all the ideas that he has picked up along the way. He doesn’t judge anything too quickly but instead carries it awhile in his mind and heart, testing its viability and usefulness as well as how it fits into his worldview. Sometimes he changes his worldview based on new ideas he’s picked up. He’s adaptable and inventive, mentally agile and curious.

Part of the allure of the Hermit is that he is usually shown embarking on a long solitary journey. It is easy to imagine that if we could just be alone for a while in some idyllic place that we would accomplish so much. But in the text the White Knight reminds us that location is not essential to do the Hermit’s work. After one of the White Knight’s many falls off his horse, he keeps talking, and Alice asks how he can continue speaking so calmly.



The Knight looked surprised at the question. “What does it matter where my body happens to be?” he said. “My mind goes on working all the same...”

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Hermit suggests that it is time to take stock of all the ideas you’ve been carrying around. Unpack them and consider them as carefully and as objectively as possible. If they are good and useful, if they ring true to your own ideals—or if they improve your ideals—find a place for them in your personal philosophy. If, after due consideration, you determine that they are not a good match, then release them.

This is a time for you to make decisions based only on your own opinions. Pleasing others may have its time and its place, but that time isn’t now and that place isn’t here. To your own unique self be true, no matter how strange that may be to the rest of the world.

keywords

SOLITUDE, INTROSPECTION,
PHILOSOPHY, MEDITATION,
WITHDRAWAL, CONTEMPLATION,
WISDOM, GUIDANCE, SEEKING,
MYSTICISM, PRIVACY, PRUDENCE





X • The Wheel of Fortune

Through the Looking-Glass

In *Wonderland* Alice is chasing the White Rabbit. In *Through the Looking-Glass* Alice has to run away from the Red Queen in order to catch up with her. The Red Queen, as well as the White Queen, moves very fast, as is common for queens in a game of chess. Here Alice chases the White Rabbit, and perhaps the Red Queen is hidden from view at the bottom of the Wheel. They will each take their turn rising to the top, enjoying a moment at the pinnacle, experience the uncomfortable sensation of falling down, and remembering what it feels like to be at the bottom.

The Wheel tells the story of the organic cycles of life, one season following another. When we are at the bottom, we are comforted by the idea that there is nowhere to go but up. When we are at the top, we have the opportunity to remember what it felt like at the bottom and hopefully will take advantage of our vantage point to act with compassion. This card also can tell a story of chaos and uncertainty because sometimes the hand of fate spins the Wheel and all we can do is hold on tight, wondering where we will be when it stops.



Alice's conversation with the Duchess shows how quickly a situation can move from a rational progression to being thrown for a loop by something unexpected.

"If everybody minded their own business," the Duchess said in a hoarse growl, "the world would go round a deal faster than it does."

"Which would *not* be an advantage," said Alice, who felt very glad to get an opportunity of showing off a little of her knowledge. "Just think what work it would make with the day and night! You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis—."

"Talking of axes," said the Duchess, "chop off her head."

Luckily for Alice, the uncertainty was short lived and no one obeyed the order.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Wheel is vague when read on its own. It is a card that benefits from context. It can herald good luck or bad luck; things turning around for the better or taking a downturn. The one constant is that things are always changing, so don't get too attached to the situation. Another way to look at it is that everything will always be okay because no matter



what, you will be on top again; you just won't always know when that will happen. Like John Lennon said, "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, then it's not the end."

keywords

FORTUNE, CHANCE, CYCLE OF
LIFE, OPPORTUNITY, DESTINY,
FATE, GOOD LUCK, MOVEMENT,
TURNING POINT, ANNUAL EVENT





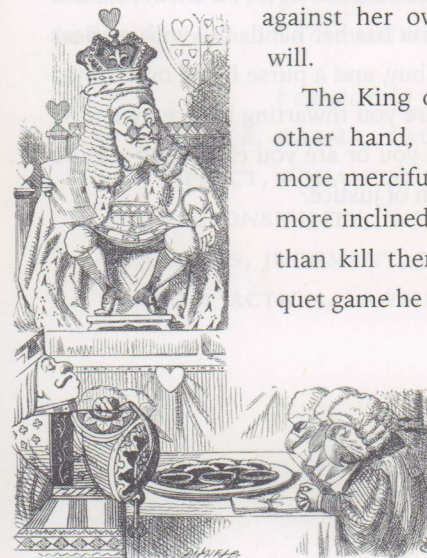
By the Queen
A PROCLAMATION
NOW KNOW YE that We are
Graciously extending Our
Grace and Mercy to grant Our
True Royal Pardon.
All sentences are to be
COMMUTED.
BY HER MAJESTY'S
COMMAND!

By the Queen
A PROCLAMATION
NOW KNOW YE that We are
Graciously extending Our
Grace and Mercy to grant Our
True Royal Pardon.
All sentences are to be
COMMUTED.
BY HER MAJESTY'S
COMMAND!

XI • Justice

Through the Looking-Glass

There are many kinds of justice, some based on fairness, some based on intricate machinations of logic (in the guise of laws), some based on mercy, and some on the rule of debt (such as “an eye for an eye”). In *Wonderland* the trial scene that ends the story is a confusing, nonsensical example of justice. On the one hand we have the Queen of Hearts, who is moved by one aspect of the heart—her own unbri-dled, angry passion. Throughout the story her favor-ite words are “Off with her head!” She makes quick judgments based on perceived slights against her own authority and will.



The King of Hearts, on the other hand, takes a kindlier, more merciful approach, being more inclined to pardon people than kill them. After the cro-quet game he whispers to all the



players due for execution, "You are all pardoned." He even brings common sense to the trial. He acknowledges Alice's opinion that the verses written by the Knave of Hearts are completely lacking in meaning. He pauses, though, to consider. Going through each verse, he teases out reason and concludes that they do indeed prove no crime has been committed, since the stolen tarts were returned to their rightful owner.

Whether we mean formal justice or the justice that unfolds in our everyday lives, we are part of the system. If the rule at the grocery store is that customers are taken in turns based on their place in a line, then formal justice dictates that whoever was first in line gets checked out first. However, if you are in line and a woman behind you has her hands full with restless children, items to buy, and a purse being overturned by a bored child, are you thwarting justice by letting her cut in front of you or are you exhibiting a more merciful expression of justice?



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, Justice promises that justice will be served. The questions that remain are these: Who is serving up the justice and what type will it be? If we are on the receiving end, we will get what we deserve as determined by those sitting in judgment. Over this we have little control, although we can take a lesson from the King and make sure our facts are in order and are clearly understood by all involved. If we are the ones sitting in judgment (we should note here that the Justice card has far more to do with judgment than the card named Judgement), we have the opportunity to pick which face of justice we wish to embody. Will we forgive others as we would wish to be forgiven or shall we demand our pound of flesh?

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keywords

JUSTICE, KARMA, CAUSE AND
EFFECT, EQUALITY, TRUTH,
RESPONSIBILITY, INTEGRITY,
FAIRNESS, JUDGMENT, CONTRACT,
LEGAL ACTION, LAWSUIT, TRIAL





XII • The Hanged Man

Through the Looking-Glass

Time plays an important role in the Hatter's life. Ever since the Queen of Hearts accused him of murdering time (because of his very poor singing abilities), Time won't do a thing the Hatter wants. In fact, it is always teatime, forcing the Hatter and his companions to sit at an endless table set for tea.

The Hatter has a pocket watch that Alice thinks is useless:

"What a funny watch!" she remarked. "It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!"

"Why should it?" muttered the Hatter.

"Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?"

"Of course not," Alice replied very readily: "but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together."

"Which is just the case with *mine*," said the Hatter.

While the Hatter seems proud of his watch, he does complain that it is two days slow. It's been pointed out that if Wonderland, being underground, was near the center of the earth, solar time would have no bearing but the moon phases would still be the same as if on the earth's surface. Perhaps Wonderland runs on lunar time, which would account for



the Hatter's watch being two days slow (on May 4, 1862, when the story was first told, there was two days' difference between the calendar date and the lunar date). Lunar time might also be associated with lunacy and madness, a prominent theme in the Alice stories.

For the Hanged Man, just like the Hatter, time stands still, or seems to. Even if time does move forward, however it is reckoned—lunar, solar, calendar, or otherwise—it is irrelevant. He is unable to move or to do much of anything. In older tarot decks the Hanged Man was a traitor, often shown with gold falling from his pockets Judas Iscariot-style. If the Hatter was indeed guilty of murdering time, perhaps he deserved a traitor's punishment. In twentieth-century decks he is sometimes shown as a martyr. The Hatter, with his snappish melancholy, often behaves like a martyr. So whatever the present meaning of the card, the Hatter brings with him whispers of past meanings. He also brings with him a bit of magic because I'm not sure about you, but I've never seen anyone drink tea upside-down like he can.

One of the Hatter's companions at the tea party is a dormouse, a small nocturnal rodent (which Victorian children kept as pets in teapots) whose name comes from the Latin *dormire*, "to sleep." The Hat-



ter spends much energy in waking up the dormouse throughout the party. In modern tarot understanding, the Hanged Man is about someone sacrificing something in order to achieve enlightenment. Enlightenment can be seen as a kind of waking up, as in opening our eyes and seeing the light. Given that Alice is dreaming, the Hanged Man is in a limbo state, and the Hatter is in a nightmare tea party, we could have all sorts of philosophical and wordplay fun. Alas, I am only allowed a certain number of pages and there are more cards to get to. Suffice it to say, the Hanged Man waits, whiling away the time—perhaps in meditation, perhaps in telling riddles about ravens and writing desks—for the light of understanding while in a state of lunar time.

Down the Rabbit Hole

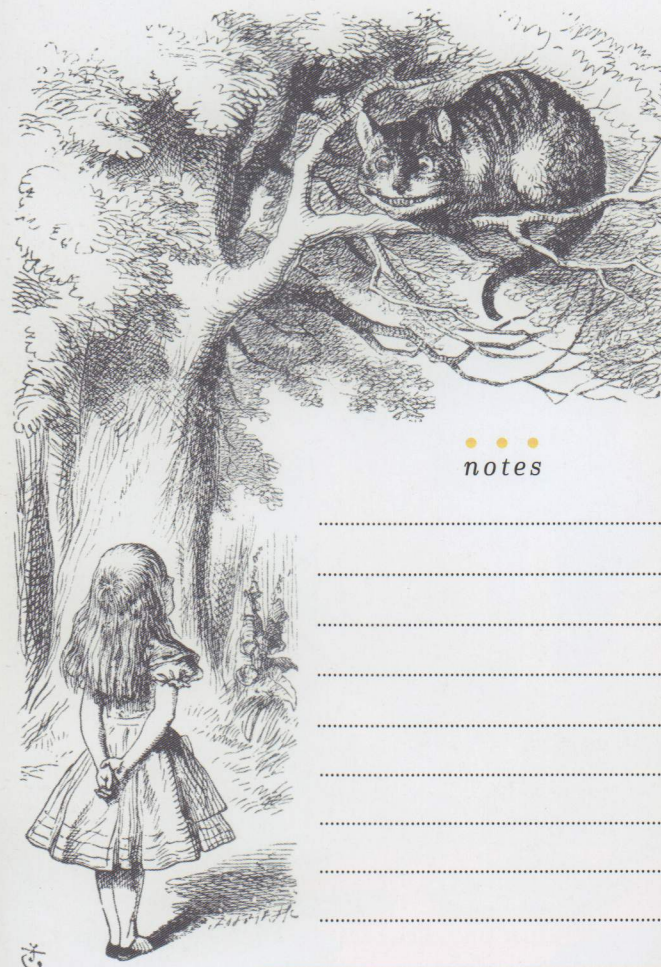
In a reading, the Hanged Man advises patience and stillness. Even when we long to take action, to be proactive in our lives, it is good to remember that choosing to do nothing is still an active choice. You are waiting for an important state of understanding before you can continue. You may be considered by some people to be a traitor to mainstream culture, as are many who seek alternative ways of understanding the world. You may be asked to give up something



of value—time, position, status, old values, outdated belief systems—in exchange for the new wisdom. There is risk involved because you must hand over your old way of being and exist in a state of emptiness, of true limbo, before taking on the new. Sometimes the Hanged Man feels like being in a dreary dream while the waking self still feels the anxiety of the ticking clock. This is not the most comfortable state to be in. The good news is that it doesn't last forever, and the result—enlightenment that will answer the questions your soul has been asking—will prove worth more than any sacrifice asked of you.

keywords

REVERSAL, LETTING GO, SACRIFICE,
SUSPENSION, SURRENDER,
WITHDRAWAL, RESTRICTION,
CRISIS, DELAY, RESTRAINT,
DETACHMENT, ENLIGHTENMENT,
TRANSFORMATION, INITIATION



notes



XIII • Death

Through the Looking-Glass

In *Through the Looking-Glass* the Tweedle brothers tell Alice that she is merely a thing in the Red King's dream and that if he woke up, she would disappear.

"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!"

In *Wonderland*, when Alice is waiting to see the effects of having drunk the liquid in the bottle marked "drink me," she wonders how small she will become:

"[F]or it might end, you know," said Alice to herself, "in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?" And she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing.

Those of us who work with the cards take special pains with the Death card. We say it rarely foretells actual physical death, and in my experience that is true. However, it is a strange state of affairs that we who seek to see the future prefer to ignore the only prediction that we can be sure will come true: everyone dies. However, tarot is a language of symbols and metaphors, and so we dig deeper and face some truths



that may be harder than physical death: the death of the self or of our current reality as we know it.

Reality, we know, is not an absolute, being built on our limited human perceptions and communally agreed-upon ideas. We rely on our perceptions, our social contracts, our reason, and our experiences to create a picture of reality through which we move as we live our daily lives. All that we bring to our concept of reality creates a light, like a candle flame, that allows us to function. Sometimes that flame is extinguished—it is, after all, a delicate thing, needing just the right amount of air and fuel to stay alive. Once that particular flame is gone, even if we relight that same candle, it will never be relit, much in the same way that we can never step in the same river twice. That's because when we step back into that river, or relight that candle, we are not the same people.

Metaphorical death is like the flame that illuminates our reality being blown out. All that remains, at least for a moment, is darkness. There is nothing in that darkness save what we bring to it. We exist for a time with our fears and our hopes, forced to see them not in the clear light of civilized reality but instead only sense them, imagine them. Our eyes adjust and we might see differently, noticing aspects that the light hid in shadow or ideas too shy to show their



faces. When the candle is relit or the lights come on, we are changed, and so is the world around us.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, Death means that something has ended, and after such a loss nothing will ever be the same again. I read once about a village where when somebody died, everyone in the village changed something about their house or yard in solidarity with the bereaved family, noting that their world is no longer the same as it was. We like to assign “good” or “bad” to experiences. It is human nature. With the experience of Death, we should resist this temptation. Death is a part of life and is neither good nor bad. If there is any goodness or badness, it is in how we experience and relate to death.

keywords

DEATH, REBIRTH, ENDINGS,
MORTALITY, LOSS, CHANGE, FAILURE,
DESTRUCTION, SEVERING TIES,
TRANSITIONS, TRANSFORMATION,
INEXORABLE FORCE, ELIMINATION





XIV • Temperance

Through the Looking-Glass

Temperance represents some very neat ideas but often gets overlooked as boring or dull. People often think about temperance as moderation or even abstention from things they enjoy. While the etymological roots do mean restrain and moderation, the word itself doesn't imply who determines what is moderate. Because of some of our Puritan roots and our history (the temperance movement), Americans default to assuming the restraint comes from someone or something external to ourselves. That's where we miss the awesomeness of Temperance. Even Catholics (who, while undoubtedly conservative, were often more liberal than their Protestant cousins) understood that true temperance is the virtue that represents humans' ability to behave well according to that which is within. The moderator is our own internal self.

The Caterpillar in the background is present not only because he is the one who taught Alice about the mushroom, but also because he was our Magician, representing our own individual and unique will. He signifies the part of ourselves that decides. Alice's cunning use of the mushroom shows us how



moderation is far more interesting and complex than simply mixing equal parts of things. This is another way in which Temperance is diluted and reduced to a mundane formula. We often think that a temperate or well-balanced life is one that has equal parts work, play, and rest. Maybe some of us wish that were true, but life is rarely so even. Sometimes we need more of one thing than another. If we are sick, we need more rest. If we are facing a deadline or exam, we make more time for work.

Alice spends her first few bites of the mushroom attempting to achieve her normal height, clearly a moderate act. It was awkward, to be sure. First she made herself too small, then far too large. However, as she moves toward the garden she has been aching to explore, she sees a very tiny house:

"Whoever lives there," thought Alice, "it'll never do to come upon them *this* size: why, I should frighten them out of their wits!"

She begins to nibble until she brings herself down to a more suitable size for the situation. She was able to do this with ease since she had already practiced and got the hang of it.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, Temperance is an invitation to practice mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual maturity, agility, and poise. The opposite of maturity and agility is, of course, immaturity, inflexibility, and instability. Being temperate means that you are in control of yourself. You have the maturity to assess situations from a broader perspective. You have the agility to alter your responses to suit any situation. You have the grace to make such changes look easy. Temperance is the beautiful embodiment of wisdom. It is where theory and proclaimed beliefs have become such a part of you that you express them quite naturally.

keywords

TEMPERANCE, SELF-CONTROL,
BALANCE, MODERATION, HARMONY,
SYNTHESIS, PATIENCE, HEALTH,
COMBINATION, BLENDING,
MANAGEMENT, UNIFICATION,
SYNERGY, GUIDES, ANGELS





XV • The Devil



Through the Looking-Glass

The Mad Tea-Party is one of the most famous scenes in the *Wonderland* story and a perfect metaphor for the Devil. First and foremost, the Devil is about making decisions or taking actions that, in the end, do not bring the satisfaction we thought they would. In fact, the consequences are often pretty terrible, leaving us feeling wretched and trapped. A tea party, after all, is supposed to be a pleasant experience, with tasty treats and enjoyable conversation. An everlasting tea party, though, becomes tedious, with both the cake and tempers growing thinner and thinner.

The Hatter and his friends got into this position when the Hatter attempted to sing at a concert given by the Queen of Hearts. Apparently his singing was not to the Queen's liking because she "bawled out 'He's murdering the time! Off with his head!'" The





phrase “murdering the time” is the Victorian equivalent to our “killing time”—that is, wasting time. Time is our one nonrenewable resource. To waste time, to waste our precious lives, can lead to the same feelings we might have of being in bondage to anything destructive. Some Carroll scholars have speculated that the Hatter wasn’t mad until he became stuck in this limbo of it being forever 6:00 p.m. Similarly, when we become stuck in an unhealthy place, we can lose our judgment, our reason, our sense of perspective.

Lack of reason often marks Devil-centered behaviors. When the Hatter and Hare are pushed to explain the long-term outcome—that is, what happens when they use up all the places at the table—there is no answer.

“Suppose we change the subject,” the March Hare interrupted, yawning. “I’m getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story.”

Distraction is a key element in keeping a Devil situation intact.

Time is a construct, and the only thing keeping the Hatter—to say nothing of his companions, the Hare and Dormouse, who had nothing to do with his crime—at the table is his acceptance of the rule



of time; presumably the rest of the world is not also stuck at 6:00. He could conceivably get up and walk away.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Devil represents something in our life that keeps us bound, that stops us from being the people we want to be. It is anything that distorts our perspective and causes us to lose our way. This can be a bad habit, an unhealthy relationship, a flawed mindset, or even a “good” habit taken to obsessive extremes. One of the dangers with such situations is that we come to believe that we no longer have control and are at the mercy of the thing we gave ourselves to. The longer we remain tethered to the behavior or situation, the more difficult it is to extricate ourselves and to imagine ourselves without it.

keywords

BONDAGE, OBSESSION,
MATERIALISM, TEMPTATION,
SHADOW, FEAR, DOUBT, LIES,
VIOLENCE, DEVIANCY, IGNORANCE,
SEXUALITY, HOPELESSNESS, LACK OF
OPTIONS, TRAPPED, SCAPEGOAT



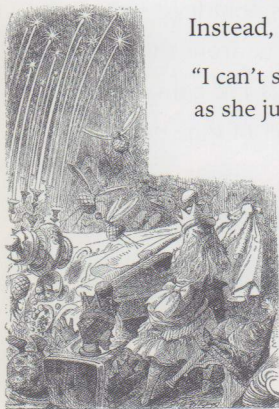


throne where once the White Queen sat while that poor queen ends up in the soup tureen.

Alice tried really hard to fit into the Looking-Glass world and did everything she needed to do to become a queen. During her short adventure she constructed an understanding of the place, a plan to achieve a goal, and nurtured expectations of what it would be like. When the world she so carefully built turned out to be nothing at all like she expected, she did not continue to live in the untenable disaster.

Instead, she pressed the reset button:

"I can't stand this any longer!" she cried, as she jumped up and seized the tablecloth with both hands: one good pull, and plates, dishes, guests, and candles came crashing down together in a heap on the floor.



By literally pulling the cloth out from under the situation, Alice causes her dream to end, allowing her to wake to the reality she'd known before. However, she would always carry with her the memories of her adventures, keeping the lessons that proved useful and worthy while discarding the ones that were arbitrary or cruel or useless.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Tower is a situation, belief, or guiding value upon which we've built an impressive edifice: our very lives. As humans, we are meant to grow, to gain wisdom, and to always become the next best version of ourselves. Therefore, just as one cannot put new wine into old wineskins, we cannot put our new selves into old lives. We must burst out in order to become who we are meant to be. This is part of the transformative process.

Transformation is messy. A caterpillar doesn't magically change into a butterfly (well, okay, it is kind of magical). In between there is the time in chrysalis, where the caterpillar is completely dissolved and rearranged into a winged creature. When things change, there will be destruction. Sometimes we are the instigators of change. But change is scary and hard; sometimes we don't have the stomach for it. In those cases, the universe nudges us along by assisting with the destruction.

• • • • • *keywords*

SUDDEN CHANGE, UPHEAVAL,
ADVERSITY, DOWNFALL,
DESTRUCTION, CATASTROPHE, MISERY,
DISASTER, RUIN, CHAOS, RELEASE,
AWAKENING, FREEDOM, ESCAPE





XVII • The Star



Through the Looking-Glass

Alice's sister doesn't play a very large role in the Alice stories. In fact, she appears only at the beginning and ending of *Wonderland*. In the beginning she is reading a book that Alice thinks is boring, as it has no pictures or conversations. At the end of the story, Alice's sister (who is given no name in the text) remains "on stage" after Alice runs back home to get her tea, lost in thought about Alice's dream, youth, age, and reality. Why is a character who ostensibly plays so small a role in the stories end up on a card as important as the Star? The answer is simply because she best represents the gifts of the Star.

In this image (although not in the stories) Alice's sister retrieves a glove and fan from a pond. These souvenirs represent the magic of Wonderland and the changes Alice experienced there. The dream of Wonderland is now part of Alice's soul and, like a pond nourishing the land around it, will continue to feed Alice's imagination and spirit. Alice's sister imagines that Alice would "keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood."





Alice's sister, as an adult, knows that life, when one opens one's eyes, changes

to dull reality...the rattling teacups would change to the tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen's shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy...

But Alice's sister is still young and perhaps wise enough to realize that it is possible to straddle the edge, the bank where the pond meets the land, to have both reality and magic. Her imagining Alice as retaining a youthful heart as she ages is a wish for her beloved sister, and it is also a blessing. If Alice's sister did not have the capacity to understand the magic of Wonderland, she would have dismissed Alice's dreams as silly nonsense, but instead she sees them as what they are: important lessons that will feed Alice's soul and keep her heart soft throughout the whole of her life. Every time Alice (or her sister, for that matter) puts on a glove or opens a fan, we can imagine a little smile whispering across their lips and sparkling in their eyes, tiny stars indicating the accessing of powerful innocent magic.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Star reminds us that it is time to dip back into the pool that nourishes our hearts and souls, that cleanses our minds, that points our wills toward our own true north. Whatever we are facing, we will be able to negotiate it better if we turn away for a while and attend to the needs of the whole self. When we are, metaphorically, well fed of soul, clear of mind, and renewed of will, it is much easier to determine our way. Decisions become easier because we are not being driven by desperation or the influence of others. Our internal North Star shines like the stars on a clear night, its sparkle and twinkle reminding us that the magic was in us all along to help us live in the world, which can be a hard place, with grace and truth.

• • • • •
keywords

HOPE, FAITH, HEALING, CLEANSING,
RENEWAL, GUIDANCE, PEACE,
BLESSING, TRANQUILITY,
SERENITY, INSPIRATION, OPTIMISM,
HAPPINESS, PROMISES, WISHES





XVIII • The Moon



Through the Looking-Glass

It seems fitting that this card features characters who do not inhabit Wonderland but rather are from a poem recited by Tweedledee because this card is all about illusion, deception, and the nature of reality. The connection of this poem with the Moon card is enhanced because it comes from the Tweedle brothers, who are twins. Aside from their names on their collars, they are hard to distinguish from each other—another experience the Moon brings.

In the poem, the Walrus and the Carpenter cajole the oysters to take a pleasant walk along the beach. The eldest and presumably more experienced oyster refuses, but all the others join in, thinking they are in for a treat. The Walrus and the Carpenter and all the oysters trotted “a mile or so” along the ocean until the oysters claimed to be out of breath. The oysters are allowed to rest while their hosts bring out some bread and vinegar and announce that it is time to eat.





The poem ends with the Carpenter inviting the oysters to walk back home:

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
 "You've had a pleasant run!
 Shall we be trotting home again?"
 But answer came there none—
 And this was scarcely odd, because
 They'd eaten every one.

Alice, being a proper Victorian girl who knows that it is important to judge right from wrong, claims to like the Walrus best because, according to the poem, he felt a *little* sorry for the oysters as he ate them.

"He ate more than the Carpenter, though," said Tweedledee. "You see he held his handkerchief in front, so that the Carpenter couldn't count how many he took: contrariwise."

Alice changes her opinion, only to be told the Carpenter had eaten as many as he could get. Alice is stumped, concluding, "Well! They were *both* very unpleasant characters." It's no wonder she was puzzled, facing the difficult prospect of whether to judge someone based on their intentions, their actions, or the outcome. As more facts came to light about the Walrus and the Carpenter, the more difficult her choice became.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Moon reveals a situation that is filled with uncertainty. Sometimes we need to be told that we do not know all the facts and consequently cannot make a good decision. If we try to decide now, we will base our choice on incomplete or erroneous information. It could very well be that someone is purposefully keeping secrets in order to promote their own agenda. Sometimes we are prone to believing the illusions of the Moon due to our own deep fears or dark desires. Sometimes we miss warnings because we are not willing to trust our intuition. When this card turns up, tread slowly and carefully, avoid rash decisions, and question everything... including your own motives.

• • • • •
keywords

SECRETS, ILLUSIONS, DECEPTION,
 IMAGINATION, MYSTERY,
 SUBCONSCIOUS, CONFUSION,
 FALSEHOODS, CYCLES,
 BEWILDERMENT, ANXIETY,
 INSECURITY, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES,
 VISIONS, PSYCHIC ABILITY





XIX • The Sun

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice, after many adventures and trials, has finally become a queen. The White and Red Queen—who have been allies, teachers, and tormenters to Alice through this journey—sit with her, welcoming her into their ranks. They have traveled the path before her and knew something of its nature. They were familiar with their world and, in their way, tried to prepare her for taking her place in that world. Although they helped and hindered, it was Alice who figured out the crazy rules and behaviors that she found in the Looking-Glass world. She was her own hero and made her own success through her curious, keen mind and strong will. She succeeded, in short, because she was fully herself.

The Sun card is nothing else if not a celebration of the self. It isn't necessarily about the actual achievement (that is more the purview of the World card), but rather it is about the success of being fully and completely your authentic self. The weird lesson is



this: if we release fear, being ourselves is the easiest thing in the world, and it is the thing the world admires the most. So many people work so hard trying to earn recognition for a false self at the expense of being their authentic selves. The journey to self-actualization can be hard and feel never-ending. It can be fun, too. Whether challenging or easy, it is the only real path, and it is worth the effort.

The sun is connected with birthdays, and birthdays, of course, are associated with getting older. Some consider Alice's adventures in the Looking-Glass world as a metaphor for growing up. She begins the story as a child and ends it by becoming a queen. The journey also can be seen as a journey to becoming who we were born to be.

Alice's queen costume may be new, but in her soul she was always a queen and she knew it. We knew it, too, by the way she comported herself. Now she wears the dress and crown as if she were born wearing them, which, in a way, she was. It wasn't an easy journey to the crown. Unfortunately, things get a little crazy in the scenes that follow. But for now, Alice gets a moment to bask in the glory of her queenly self.

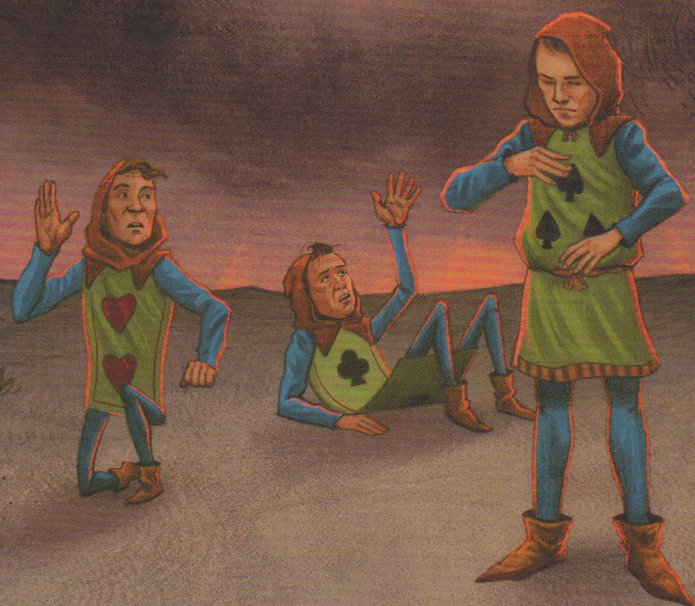
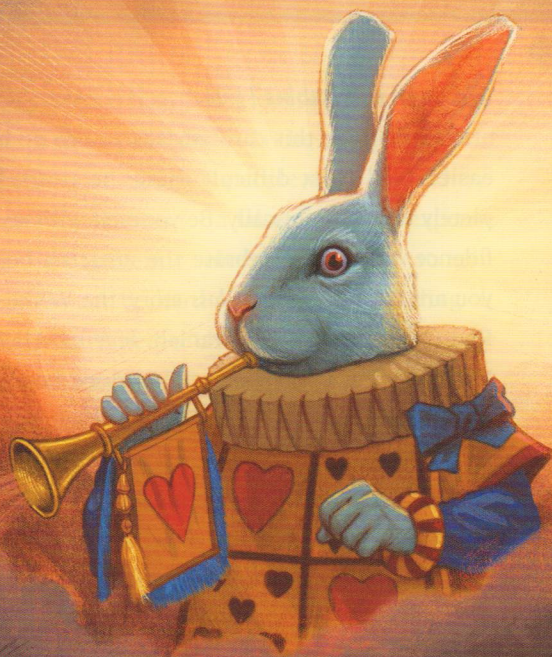


Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card advises you to do both the easiest and most difficult thing: be yourself, completely and authentically. Be yourself with style, confidence, and joy. Celebrate the amazing being that you are. In the *Looking-Glass* story, the White and the Red Queens eventually vanish, leaving Alice alone. With the Sun card, you are also alone because your glory is not dependent on anyone else. You do not need anyone to tell you what to do. You do not need anyone to validate your authentic self. You just have to bask in the sunshine of your own wonderful self—but not for too long. You don't want to get a sunburn.

keywords

HAPPINESS, JOY, FUN, OPTIMISM,
ENTHUSIASM, GLORY, CLARITY,
CONSCIOUSNESS, SUCCESS,
CELEBRATION, ENERGY, VITALITY,
GOOD FORTUNE, GREATNESS, LIFE



XX • Judgement



Through the Looking-Glass

Like several other cards in the tarot deck, this one could do with a new name. “Judgement” as a name implies being judged. In addition, the traditional imagery—an angel sounding a horn and dead people rising from their graves—suggests the biblical story of the Last Judgment, where all people living and dead would be judged. Maybe centuries ago the card was interpreted in this way. However, as human consciousness evolves, so too does our understanding of the cards. It is now more common to recognize that this card is a gift and an opportunity.

In Wonderland, particularly in Tenniel’s iconic illustrations, the playing card people (other than the royalty cards) are shown as flat, as if they are actually made of cardstock. In some ways, they are metaphors for two-dimensional people. In this image they hear the White Rabbit’s trumpet. As they respond, they find themselves filling out and, like Pinocchio, becoming real three-dimensional people. They are, in short, coming to life...or, more





accurately, to new life since they were already alive in some sense of the word.

The White Rabbit in the sky takes the place of the tradition angel. In Wonderland he plays the role of herald during the Knave of Heart's trial. Heralds were, among other things, the messengers of the nobility. They were sometimes experts in law or known for giving moral guidance, which explains why, in the text, the Rabbit is able to take control of the proceedings of the trial, even to the point of contradicting the King. He was a voice that represented an order that was higher than earthly jurisdiction.

During the trial Alice waits, curious about the next witness to be called.

Imagine her surprise, when the White Rabbit read out, at the top of his shrill little voice, the name "Alice!"

When she takes the stand, the story reaches its climax and ends with Alice asserting her will and her sense of what is meaningful in the face of nonsense and violence. The White Rabbit did not only call Alice to the stand; he called her to become the person he knew she should be.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, Judgement marks an invitation to hear a higher voice, perhaps your preferred deity or your own higher self, and follow its call. You have the opportunity to leave behind an old life and embrace a new way of living. Humans, though, are resistant to change and try to ignore this call, especially if their old life was not so bad. It is even harder to change your ways if your current life is actually good and comfortable. Plus, answering this call means a kind of death, since you will be leaving some parts of you—some behaviors, some beliefs—behind.

A call like this, though, resonates deeply in the heart, and unless you shut down your heart entirely, you won't be able to resist it forever. After you begin living in this new way, when you look back on your old life, you will see that it was a kind of half life, a cardboard life, a life lacking depth and dimension.

keywords

REBIRTH, RENEWAL, RITE OF PASSAGE,
CALLING, VOCATION, AWAKENING,
CHANGE, DECISION, FORGIVENESS,
REDEMPTION, ABSOLUTION, JUDGMENT



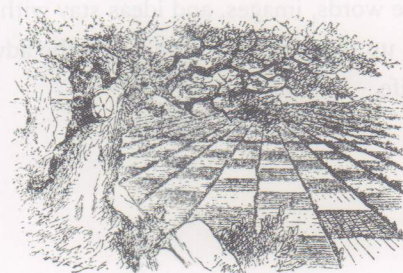


XXI • The World

Through the Looking-Glass

After all her adventures, Alice has come into her own. She has faced the confusing effects of the chaos of the world—represented by the playing card symbols in the corners. She has also learned to navigate the sometimes-arbitrary order dictated by our communal agreement regarding reality—represented by the chessboard.

Throughout the stories, she has faced issues of identity as well as the ideas of childhood vs. adulthood, reason vs. insanity, cruelty vs. kindness, curiosity vs. fear, language vs. communication, freedom vs. confinement, justice vs. mercy, and reality vs. dreams. Alice tried to fit into new situations using knowledge from her own experiences and lessons from the “real world,” and, when necessary, she adapted them to suit this new world she finds herself in. In the end, she always comes back to herself but is forever changed. Because of her adventures, with all their





trials and wonders, she was able to shape her own character and become the person she was meant to be.

It is a paradox, this process of becoming who we were born to be balanced with the creation of ourselves through our will and actions. Balance, opposing forces, and paradox are central to the images of tarot and reflect one of our biggest challenges. Being able to dance on the edge of opposing ideas is to live in the realm of sacred mystery. Most humans can only exist there for brief moments at a time, but it is the North Star that we always reach toward.

Down the Rabbit Hole

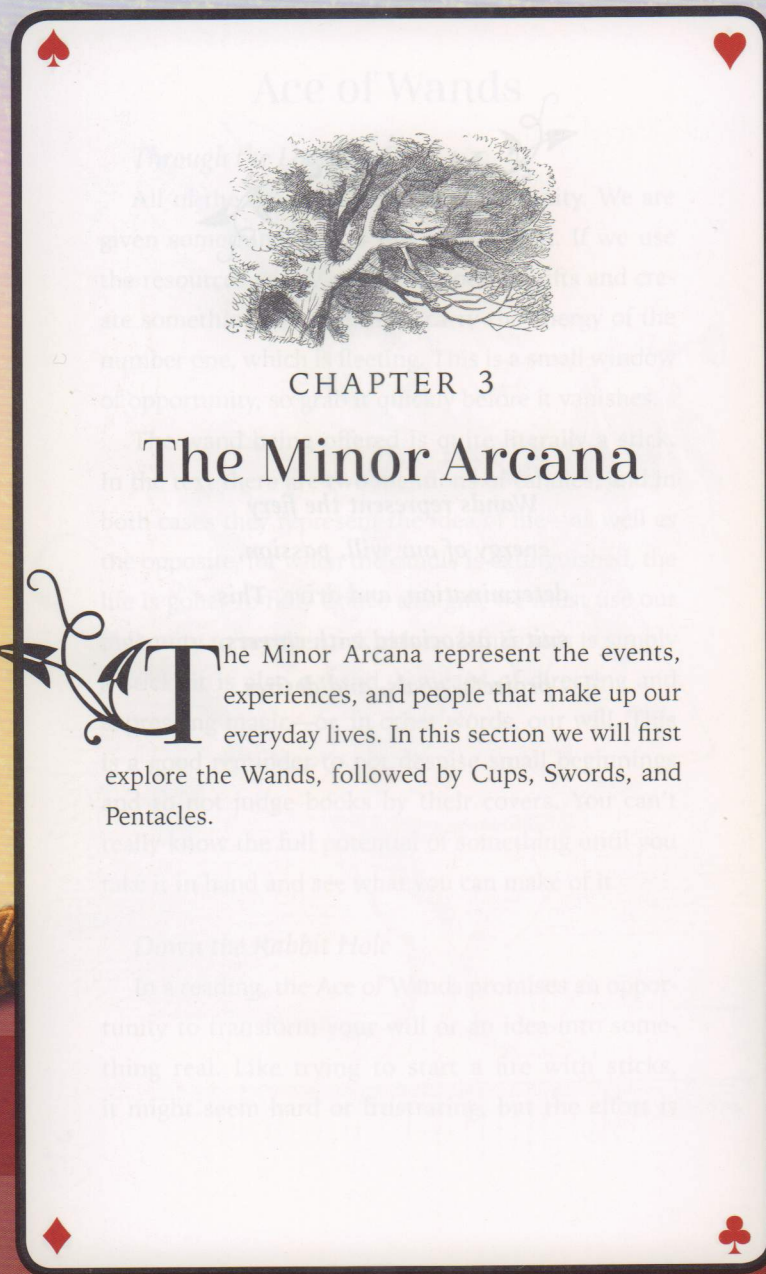
In a reading, the World betokens completion. Whatever adventures you've been on, you've faced challenges and gained rewards. Through facing difficulties, through curious exploration, through dedication, you've been transformed. You are so much more than you were when you started. Like a good book, the story doesn't end when you turn the last page. The words, images, and ideas stay with you as you pick up the next book and begin the adventure in your life.



• • • • •
keywords

COMPLETION, SUCCESS, PERFECTION,
ACHIEVEMENT, ACCOMPLISHMENT,
VICTORY, REWARD, UNITY,
WHOLENESS, FULFILLMENT, ENDING
AND BEGINNING, CELEBRATION,
CENTER OF ATTENTION, TRAVEL





Ace of Wands



CHAPTER 3

The Minor Arcana

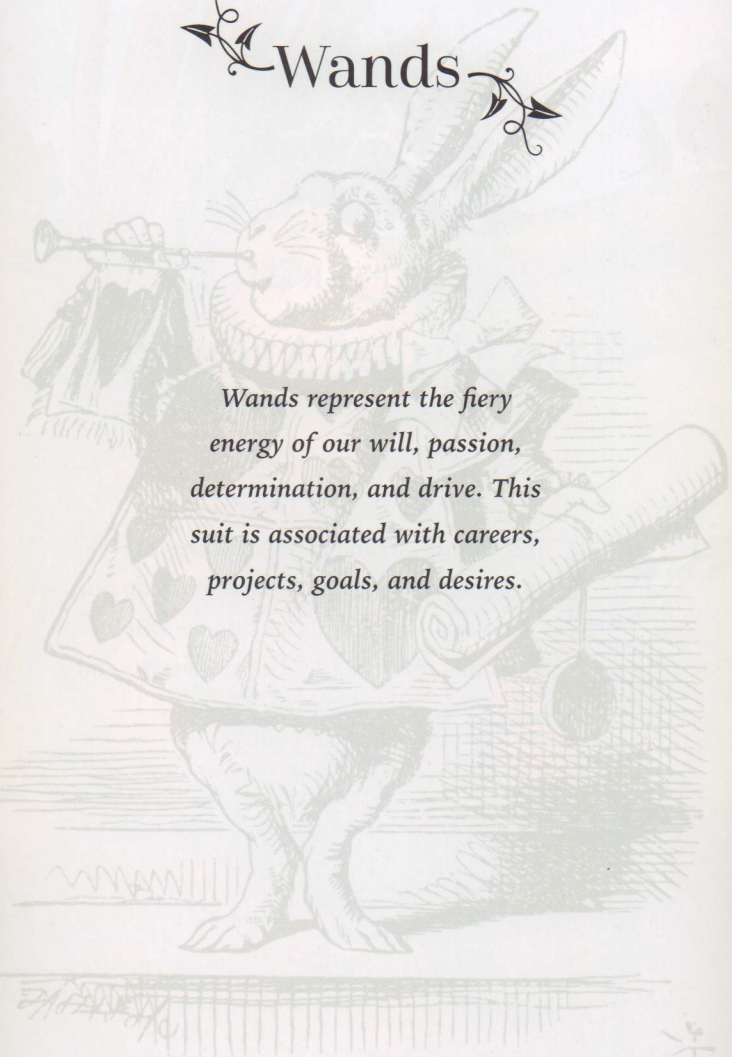
The Minor Arcana represent the events, experiences, and people that make up our everyday lives. In this section we will first explore the Wands, followed by Cups, Swords, and Pentacles.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In reading, the Ace of Wands presents an opportunity to transform your will as an idea into something real. Like trying to start a fire with sticks, it might seem hard or frustrating, but the effort is

Wands

Wands represent the fiery energy of our will, passion, determination, and drive. This suit is associated with careers, projects, goals, and desires.



Ace of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

All of the aces represent an opportunity. We are given something that is full of potential. If we use the resources wisely, we can unlock its gifts and create something of value. Aces carry the energy of the number one, which is fleeting. This is a small window of opportunity, so grab it quickly before it vanishes.

The wand being offered is quite literally a stick. In the text there are two mentions of candles, and in both cases they represent the idea of life—as well as the opposite, for when the candle is extinguished, the life is gone. To fully utilize this gift, we must use our ingenuity to set the stick ablaze. While this is simply a stick, it is also a wand, a means of directing and expressing magic—or, in other words, our will. This is a good reminder to not despise small beginnings and to not judge books by their covers. You can't really know the full potential of something until you take it in hand and see what you can make of it.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Ace of Wands promises an opportunity to transform your will or an idea into something real. Like trying to start a fire with sticks, it might seem hard or frustrating, but the effort is



worth it because what you might create can light up the world or at least some dark corner of it. It is a good portent for the beginning of a new project.

keywords

DESIRE, PASSION, WILL, DRIVE,
INSPIRATION, POTENCY, ENERGY,
ENTERPRISE, CONFIDENCE, COURAGE,
OPTIMISM, SETTING GOALS, INVENTION





Two of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice scans the Looking-Glass world laid out before her:

It's a great huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world—if this is the world at all, you know. Oh, what fun it is! How I *wish* I was one of them! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join—though of course I should *like* to be a Queen, best.

The chessboard is an apt symbol for this card, as it represents making choices and exerting one's will. Alice stands between two wands, which can mean two choices...or they can mean that she stands perfectly poised to make the right decisions. She would be happy being either a pawn or a queen, as long as she

gets to play. Sometimes choices are between two paths rather than an outcome. She is in a portal of sorts, a doorway between worlds. Her desire, indicated by the red roses, and her innocence and pure intent, shown by the white lilies, are in perfect balance.



*Down the Rabbit Hole*

In a reading, this card indicates that even though you are facing a decision about what to do and where to employ your energy to best effect, you should feel confident that you will make the right decision. Intuition is sometimes mistaken as the first thing that comes into your head. This is not true and often gets people in trouble, so that is why they end up not trusting their intuition. Intuition occurs when your desire and intent are in perfect harmony with the universe. You are in that space or are able to get there by questioning your motives. Clear away the debris of expectations or of concerns for the opinions of others and you'll know what to do.

• • • • •
keywords

VISION, ENERGY, AUTHORITY, ABILITY,
DETERMINATION, DOMINANCE,
INTENTION, BUSINESS OR CAREER
PROPOSAL OR DECISION, CONFIDENCE

*Three of Wands**Through the Looking-Glass*

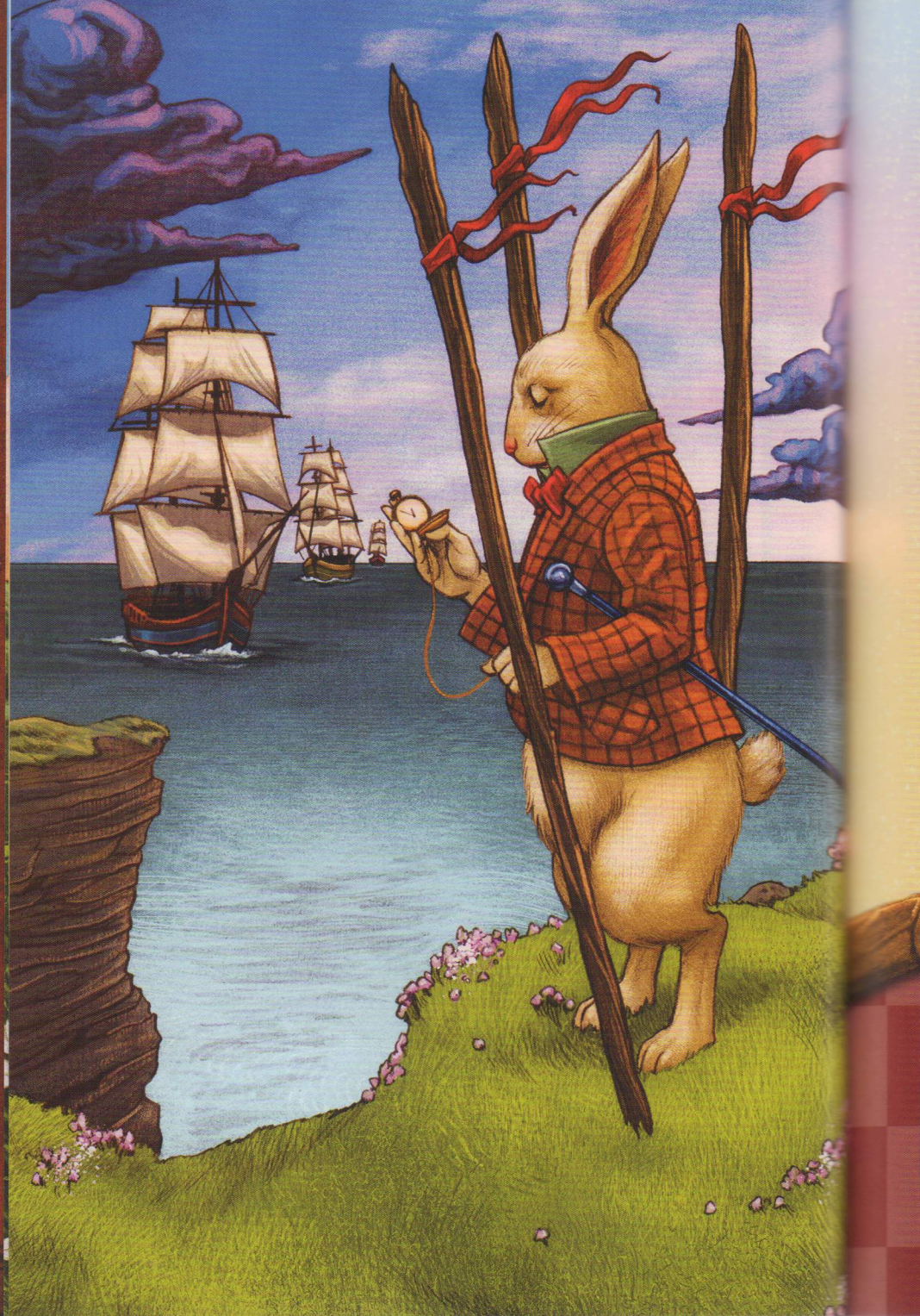
Most of us are familiar with White Rabbit's mantra: "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" Throughout most of the story he is always in a rush. In the tarot world he is still very conscious of time but clearly is more relaxed and confident. This is probably because he is not at the beck and call of a queen or duchess; he is here on his own behalf. Investments he's made are about to come in, and he is eager to see with his own eyes the fruits of his labors.

The phrase "waiting for my ship to come" implies passivity and also uncertainty, because one could never be sure a ship would complete the dangerous voyage. However, the White Rabbit is not passively waiting. He's marked the landing spot with wands and ribbons. He's calculated the time to be sure of being there upon the ships' arrival.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card is not about passively waiting for something that may or may not come to pass. It is about actively waiting, which is a very different thing. While there may not be a lot that can be done, there is always something—the very least of which is





working on an energetic level to support the achievement you desire. Depending on your belief system, that could include prayer, meditation, altar work, or any sort of energetic attraction practice. There is an implication in this card that work was done before the ships left to insure success. Do everything you can to eliminate risk and then actively wait with confidence as your investments return to you, hopefully multiplied tenfold.

keywords

OPTIMISM, EXPECTATION,
ATTRACTION, LAW OF ATTRACTION,
PREPARED, CULMINATION, RETURN
ON INVESTMENT, FOCUS





Four of Wands



Through the Looking-Glass

Alice's cat Dinah, and Dinah's two kittens, Kitty and Snowdrop, are with Alice before and after her adventures through the looking-glass. They are more than just pets; they are her companions and play-mates. Alice talks to them as if they are dear friends:

Kitty, can you play chess? Now, don't smile, my dear, I'm asking it seriously. Because, when we were playing just now, you watched just as if you understood it: and when I said "Check!" you purred! Well, it was a nice check, Kitty, and really I might have won, if it hadn't been for that nasty Knight, that came wriggling down among my pieces. Kitty dear, let's pretend—

Pretending or imagining is a good approach to this card as it represents a step out of ordinary time. It is making something special in the midst of everyday life. It is a space that yearns for imagination, color, beauty, or anything that takes a space and event out of the workaday world.





The daisy chains are a nod to the beginning of *Wonderland* when Alice considers

whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies.

The tea party, of course, reminds us of the mad tea party with the March Hare and the Hatter. The house of cards is not from the text but instead speaks to the temporary nature of the Four of Wands. Although the experience might be ephemeral, the nourishment it provides the soul lingers long after the decorations are put away and the dishes cleaned up.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card marks a celebration of some sort, like the completion of a project, a baby shower, or a birthday party. Some say it can indicate a wedding. The focus in this card is not the object of celebration but the event itself. The gathering should be one that includes thoughtful preparation and little touches that add a sense of importance and merriment. The effort will make the guest or guests of honor feel special and honored, and that is the main point. This is all about them. Also, it is only a temporary situation, so everyone involved can agree to be on their best behavior for a few hours to enjoy the food and decorations and to fete the honoree.



keywords

HOLIDAY, PARTY, CELEBRATION,
GATHERING, HONORING SOMEONE OR
SOMETHING, SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION
OF AN ENDEAVOR, AWARD CEREMONY,
COMMUNAL ACHIEVEMENT





Five of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

At the Queen's croquet game

Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and to stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches.

Once Alice got her flamingo under control, she noticed

The players all played at once without waiting for turns, quarreling all the while, and fighting for the hedgehogs...

While in Wonderland the soldiers were the arches, in tarotland they've become players. Games are meant to be fun and provide ways to socialize and enjoy activities and the company of others. Another purpose of games is to hone skills. When we want to improve, we seek out those who play better than us so that we can challenge ourselves. In this case, the chaos of wands, flamingoes, hedgehogs, and soldiers causes the game to shift from playing to fighting. The participants are thoroughly worked up, and the quarreling has exploded into all-out hostility.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card can represent healthy competition, but it carries within it a little warning. Apparently the situation is more than just a game, and people's egos are involved. Whenever egos have a stake in something, there is always a chance of problems. One of ego's favorite ways to make itself feel better is to crush someone else's ego...and that's how the trouble starts.

Whatever this card refers to—it could be an actual game, an upcoming business meeting, a family event, etc.—take note: unless you really want a blowout, take a few steps back to prepare yourself. First, check your own ego at the door; there will be more than enough ego there already. Second, keep a sharp eye for unsportsmanlike behavior. Third, be prepared to soothe some ruffled feathers and help things continue running smoothly.

• • • • •
keywords

COMPETITION, CONFLICT, DEBATE,
GROUP EFFORTS, COMMITTEES,
STRONG PERSONALITIES,
DIFFERING OPINIONS, NO SHARED
GOAL, LACK OF LEADERSHIP

Six of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

After escaping the noise that drummed the Lion and the Unicorn out of town, Alice was captured by the Red Knight. Before he could take possession of her, a voice cried out "Ahoy! Ahoy! Check!" It was the White Knight, who came to rescue her. The Red Knight refused to give her up without a fight. The knights agree to observe the Rules of Battle and begin. Alice thinks:

I wonder, now, what the Rules of Battle are...one Rule seems to be that, if one Knight hits the other, he knocks him off his horse, and if he misses, he tumbles off himself—and another Rule seems to be that they hold their clubs with their arms, as if they were Punch and Judy.

In the end the White Knight claims, "It was a glorious victory, wasn't it?"

Most Carroll scholars believe that the White Knight in *Looking-Glass* was meant to be Carroll himself, although there are other possibilities. We will assume that the White Knight, indeed, represents Carroll. It can be argued (and hardly argued against) that the Alice stories are Carroll's greatest claim to fame—his victory. Here we see the White Knight, as



tall and handsome and knightly as Carroll himself never was, surrounded and supported by the characters that are his great legacy and best achievement.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card reminds us that victories do not happen in a vacuum. No hero has ever achieved glory entirely on his own. A good victor remembers that and makes sure all those who supported the mission are remembered and honored as well. Those who help make such achievements possible should always remember that they are also supporting themselves because whenever greatness touches one person in the community, it touches everyone in that group. Whether you are a leader or foot soldier or cook, it takes everyone's best efforts to accomplish something of value. Work together, stand together; be stronger and better together.

keywords

VICTORY, HONOR, ACHIEVEMENT,
RECOGNITION, PRIDE, PUBLIC
CEREMONY, ACCOLADES,
ACCOMPLISHMENT, SUCCESS, TRIUMPH





Seven of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

During the trial of the Knave of Hearts, Alice is ordered to leave the courtroom because, according to Rule 42, newly penned by the King, "all persons more than a mile high to leave the court." Alice stands up for herself, claiming she is not a mile high. A short time later, she proclaims, "Stuff and nonsense!...The idea of having the sentence first!" when the Queen insists that sentences come before verdicts. The Queen orders Alice to be beheaded and, for the first time when so ordered, nobody moves.

"Who cares for *you*?" said Alice (she had grown to her full size by this time). "You're nothing but a pack of cards!"

At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her...and [she] tried to beat them off...





Alice wasn't afraid because she was filled with the strength of her convictions. She knew she was right and wasn't going to be cowed by a ruthless queen and ineffectual king. Once she realized her own power, she was able to face those who had become her enemies. In the text, this is when she wakes from her dream. If, as many believe, this story is about growing up, Alice has reached a stage of maturity where she knows right from wrong and knows that she must defend her values.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card describes a situation where you must take a stand against what feels like incredible odds. As the chaos swirls around you, you keep your balance—and your head—by staying true to your ideals and fighting for what is right. Just as Alice wakes before we learn the outcome of her fight, this card does not guarantee victory. The important thing is to defend the truth as you see it; that matters more than winning. Hold tight to your convictions, tap into your deepest reserves of courage, and face all comers with integrity.

keywords

DEFENDING, PROTECTING, VALOR,
COURAGE, STANDING UP FOR BELIEFS,
BRAVERY, RESOLVE, TAKING ACTION



Eight of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

In the Looking-Glass world, Alice learns from the Red Queen that

"Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"

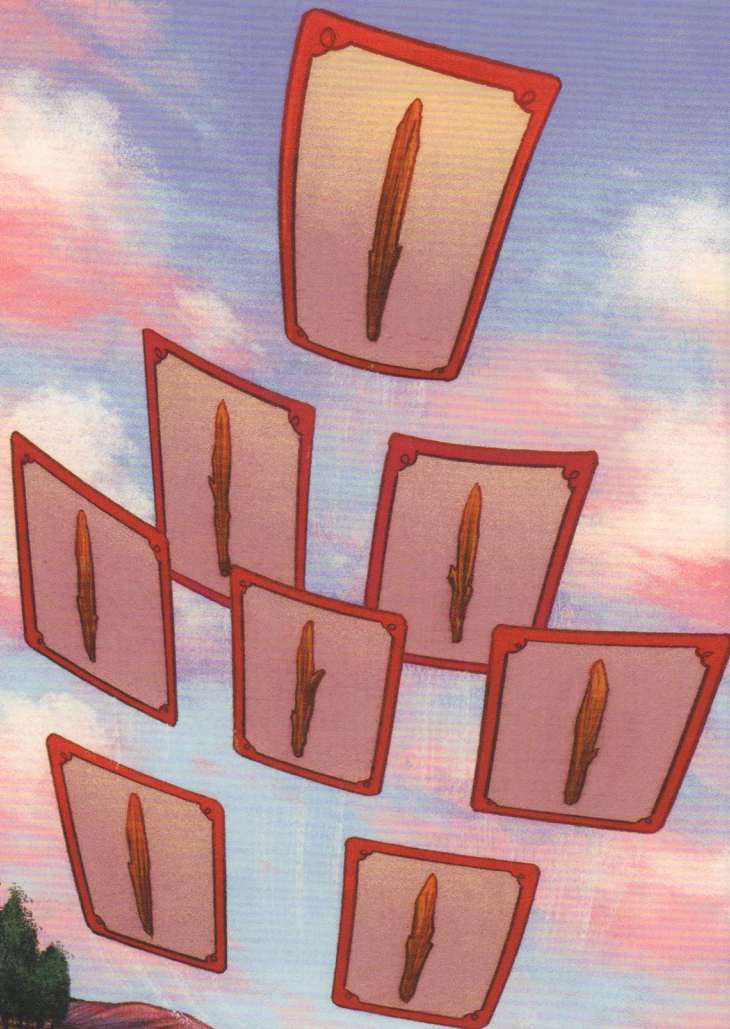
After the fight between the Lion and the Unicorn, Alice sees the White Queen running across the board, away from an enemy. She asks the White King if he would go help her.

"No use, no use!...She runs so fearfully quick. You might as well try to catch a Bandersnatch!"

She also learns that actions taken in the Looking-Glass world do not have the same outcomes as in her world. Screaming in pain comes before pricking oneself with a brooch. Cake is handed around before it is cut. Punishments are given before crimes are committed.

For the real Alice, life at Oxford was filled with lazy afternoons on the river and leisurely teas. Victorian ideas of order ruled the day. Things moved slowly and as if by clockwork. For us, life seems to move more quickly. However, even we recognize that there is a normal pace and there are times where things move





more quickly than normal. While we acknowledge that most of the time there is a rhyme and reason and outcomes usually make sense in terms of actions taken, there are occasions when chaos plays a role and things don't always make sense.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card lets you know that things will move much faster than anticipated. It also suggests that although there is a potential for chaos (as indicated by the playing cards), that chaos never manifests. Instead, things always reach their logical conclusions, albeit with more speed than anyone might have anticipated. The speed does create an opportunity for one to throw a wrench into the works, though. If things are moving toward an end that is not desirable, simply get in the way of one moving part and the rest will fall apart. It is a risk, though, because when chaos is courted, there is no way to predict the outcome.

keywords

SPEED, SWIFTNESS, EVENTS SET
IN MOTION, TRAVEL, MESSAGES,
COMMUNICATION, THINGS
RUNNING SMOOTHLY, REASONABLE
CONSEQUENCES, EXPECTED RESULT





Nine of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

In the text, after Tweedledum and Tweedledee's battle, the brothers are faced with another foe.

"It's the crow!" Tweedledum cried out in a shrill voice of alarm; and the two brothers took to their heels and were out of sight in a moment.

The brothers who claimed to be so brave and great warriors when battling each other lose their valor when faced with "the monstrous crow." In the tarot world, although battered and bruised, Tweedledum stands against the crow who threatens their quiet wood. He looks as though he can barely manage to fight, but using his wand—a symbol of his will—for support, he finds the inner strength to stand firm against his enemy.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card recognizes that you may feel worn out and beaten down. You've already been fighting the good fight and really just want it to be over. Unfortunately, you have one more last stand to make. Something you care about needs protecting and you know it. Yes, you are ready to be done, but deep down you know that you can't just walk away. Take a deep breath and gather all your resources. You can do this. A little while longer and it will be over.

keywords

PROTECTING, DEFENDING,
STAMINA, LOYALTY, STRENGTH,
DISCIPLINE, WOUNDED WARRIOR

Ten of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

Guinea pigs are abundant in Wonderland. The text tells us that there are two at the White Rabbit's house helping him to remove Alice. It is easy to imagine that they were the ones who dumped the barrowful of pebbles in the window of Rabbit's house. The pebbles turned into cakes that Alice ate to shrink enough to escape the house. Later, at the trial, we hear about the guinea pigs being suppressed thusly:

They [the officers of the court] had a large canvas bag, which tied up at the mouth with strings: into this they slipped the guinea-pig, head first, and then sat upon it.

The poor creatures seem to be put to hard labor and subject to cruel punishment if they acted out of line. It's not easy being a guinea pig in Wonderland.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card describes a burdensome situation. You have too much responsibility and your strength is running out. However, unlike the guinea pigs who seemed to have no choice in the matter, you do have a choice. And, in fact, it may very well have been your choices that landed you in this situation.

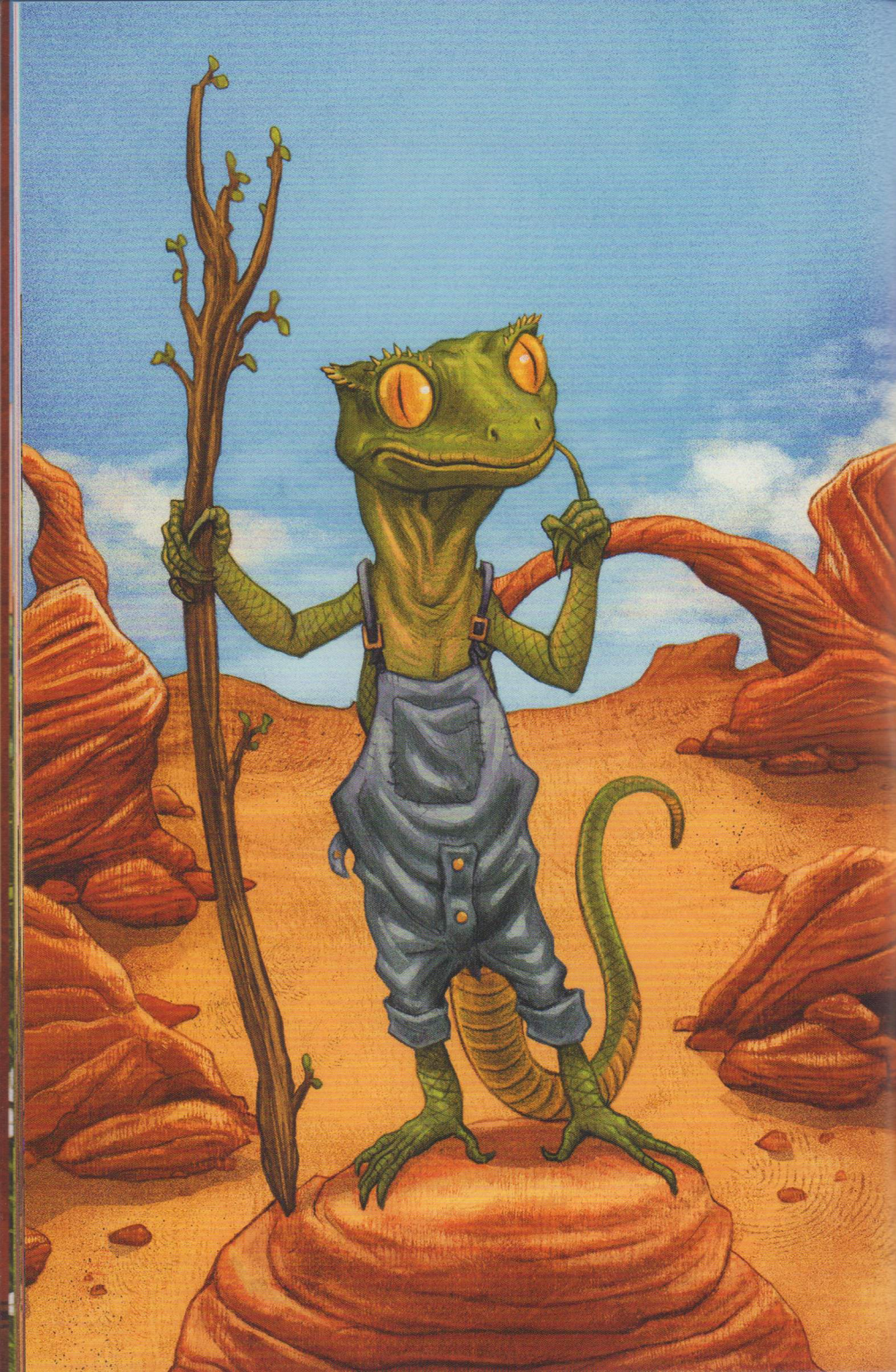


Wands represent projects and tasks as well as our will. Sometimes we get so enthralled by so many good ideas that we take on too much. Other times, our will deserts us and we allow others to press too much responsibility on our shoulders. The advice here is to either let go of some obligations or find the will to refuse what others would thrust upon you. There is another option: find a better way to manage all the responsibilities. You have to pick and choose because you cannot go on like this much longer.

keywords

BURDENS, OBLIGATIONS,
NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES,
DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES





Page of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

Our Page of Wands is Bill the Lizard. We meet him early in the Wonderland adventures. Alice became stuck in the White Rabbit's house when she unexpectedly started growing. The White Rabbit and Pat decide that Bill must go in through the chimney to deal with Alice, but as he makes his way down, Alice gives a little kick and sends him flying. Bill may not be the cleverest of creatures, but he is brave and agrees to perform tasks that others refuse to do. As Alice says, "Why, they seem to put everything upon Bill!"

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Page of Wands is someone who is either young or has little experience in whatever they are attempting. They are brave, energetic, and creative, always coming up with clever ideas. What they lack in practical experience they more than make up for in enthusiasm. They embarrass easily, which makes them defensive or angry, so treat them gently and avoid hurting their ego, at least until they gain confidence, and you'll have a good ally.

• • • • •
keywords

MESSAGE, STUDENT, YOUNG
OR INEXPERIENCED PERSON,
SUPPORTER, ENTHUSIASM, ENERGY,
CREATIVITY, SENSITIVE EGO



Knight of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

The Lion—who, from the sounds of things, regularly battles with the Unicorn for the White King's crown—is our Knight of Wands. For those familiar with Tenniel's illustrations of the lion, whose image has definite but unsubstantiated political overtones, this may seem a strange choice. In fact, even the text mentions the lion yawning and seeming sleepy.

However, after a battle, it seems likely that our Lion would be very worn out because, like a true Knight of Wands, he would pour all his energy into whatever he is focused on. His charisma, imperiousness, self-confidence, and anger, trademarks of any Wands court card, come through with such lines as: "Fair play with the cake, you know!" "Then hand round the plum-cake, Monster," and "Why, I beat you all around the town, you chicken!"



*Down the Rabbit Hole*

In a reading, the Knight of Wands is likely someone who is, like all the knights, extremely focused. He has a goal in mind and will use all his talents and abilities to achieve it regardless of who gets trampled on the way. He may charm you into supporting his cause. He may bully you to do as he wishes. The potential of his anger might compel you to comply. If you are not interested in helping him with his plans, lay low and hope his (in this case luckily) short attention span moves elsewhere. If, on the other hand, you want to distract him and get him to help you, appeal to his ego, his sense of honor, and his courage. He will almost always welcome the opportunity to display his best self.

• • • • •
keywords

FOCUSED, GOAL-ORIENTED,
 SHORT ATTENTION SPAN,
 CHARMING, BULLY, STRONG EGO,
 HONORABLE, COURAGEOUS

*Queen of Wands**Through the Looking-Glass*

The Queen of Hearts from Wonderland is unquestionably incredibly passionate. She is also very concerned with the recognition of her authority, and any actions that threaten her will are met with a shrill

“Off with his head!” or “Off with her head!”
 about once in a minute.

While her judgments are extreme, they are not completely without warrant. The Seven of Hearts character was threatened with dire punishment because he brought the Cook tulip bulbs instead of onions. A group of the card characters were worried about her anger because they planted a white rose tree instead of a red one.

When her authority is respected, as when Alice tells the Cheshire Cat that she doesn't like the Queen because she is “so likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game,” the Queen smiles and passes by without comment.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Queen of Wands represents someone who is very sure of herself, and with good reason. She has earned authority through experience and has extremely good intuition (represented by her black cat companion), which is probably why she is so good at sussing out when her instructions haven't been followed. She is a woman of action, a good leader, and quick decision-maker. She doesn't put up with fools, but if you express a desire to get something done, she'll be eager to help you make it happen. In our world (as opposed to Wonderland), this queen can be very charismatic, although she does prefer to keep the attention on herself.

• • • • •
keywords

ALLY, CONFIDANTE, HELPER,
AUTHORITY, ACCOMPLISHED,
DECISIVE, IMPATIENT, DRAMATIC,
CHARISMATIC, LOVES ATTENTION





King of Wands

Through the Looking-Glass

Our character for this king is not an actual character but a character in a poem that the Caterpillar asked Alice to perform. As with many of the poems in the text, it is a nonsense version of an actual poem. A young man asks his father, a hearty and hale older man, a series of questions. The young man is curious about how Father William can stand on his head, eat very hard foods, and turn summersaults, even though he is so old. Father William answers them all. With the last question, though, his father loses his patience and refuses to answer: how can he balance an eel on his nose?



Father William's response beautifully captures the impatience with talking that is a characteristic of the King of Wands, who is essentially a man of action.



"I have answered three questions, and that is enough," Said his father; "don't give yourself airs! Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff? Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs!"

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the King of Wands is someone who can be charming and is willing to share the secrets to his success...up to a point. He is happy to show off his skills and enjoys being admired. Above all things, he values taking action and particularly loves starting new projects. He isn't as interested in talking things through, committees, or attending to details.

If you want to gain his support, present an exciting new idea and appeal to his sense of adventure. Hit the right chord with him and he'll help make things happen but will expect you to work out all the details. Whatever you do, don't let him be embarrassed or you'll never get another chance. Be as entertaining and on point as you can. If he finds you boring, he may take a cue from Father William and threaten to kick you out of his office.

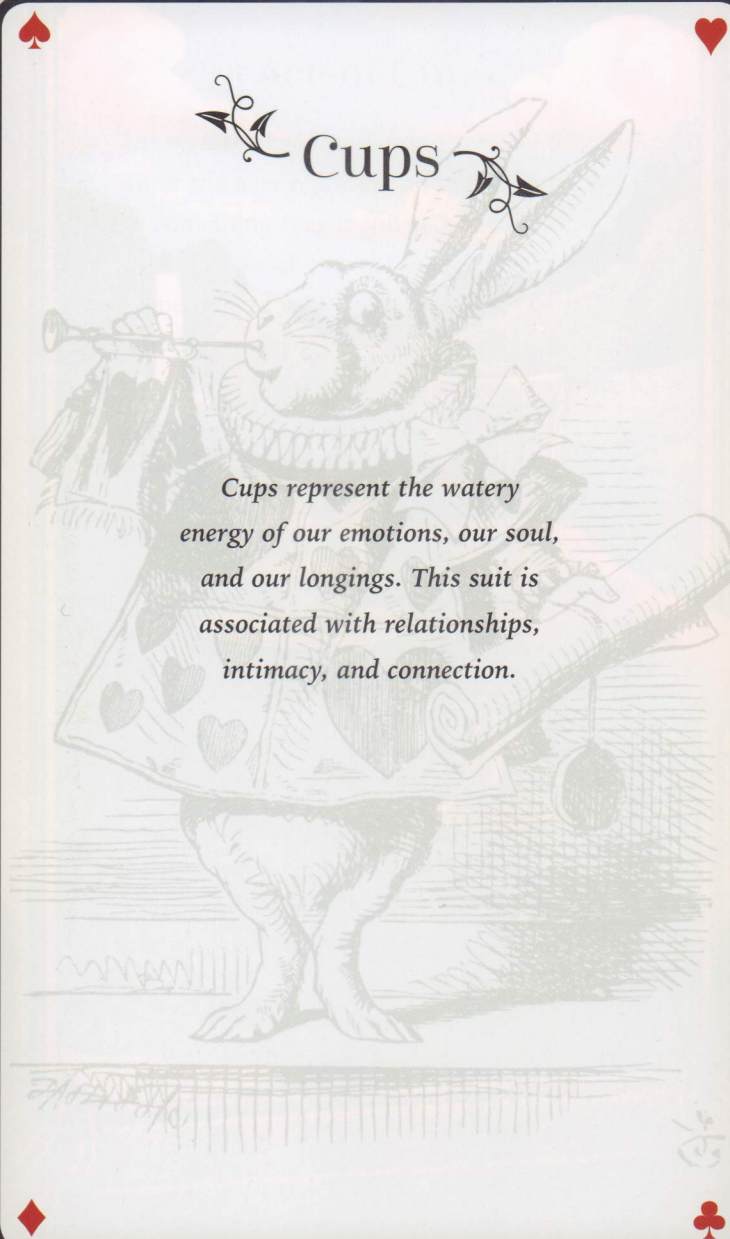
keywords

AUTHORITY FIGURE, DECISION-
MAKER, POWER, EXPERIENCE, ACTION,
DECISIVE, SEEKS EXCITEMENT AND
ADVENTURE, LOVES NEW IDEAS



Cups

Cups represent the watery energy of our emotions, our soul, and our longings. This suit is associated with relationships, intimacy, and connection.





Ace of Cups



Through the Looking-Glass

All of the aces represent an opportunity. We are given something that is full of potential. If we use the resources wisely, we can unlock its gifts and create something of value. Aces carry the energy of the number one, which is fleeting. This is a small window of opportunity, so grab it quickly before it vanishes.

The chalice in the Ace of Cups isn't something we are likely to use in everyday life. It is an ideal, like the Holy Grail. As such, it holds noble gifts: grace, love, peace, healing, and forgiveness. We all have access to these offerings through our higher selves and through our hearts. However, these virtues come into the world through us and are therefore not idealized but shaped by our individual natures and experiences. We present them to others not as ornate mythological grails but as mundane and homey expressions. Through our actions, we form relationships. Like a well-used teacup, our relationships may have some cracks and stains, but they also have the patina of time and affection. They are all the richer for their imperfections.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Ace of Cups lets us know that we are the recipients of divine love and all that entails. In this cup we can find forgiveness, grace, peace, and love. We must drink deeply and accept the gift because until we love ourselves, we cannot love another. If this card arises, you will want to be ready to love another because the opportunity for a new (or newly deepened) relationship is on the horizon. To make the most of it, you'll want to be prepared.

keywords

RELATIONSHIP, PEACE, LOVE,
HEALING, GRACE, CREATIVITY,
JOY, OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS,
INTUITION, AFFECTION



Two of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

During the mad tea-party, the Hatter and the March Hare bicker like a comfortable old married couple:

"Two days wrong!" sighed the Hatter. "I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!" he added, looking angrily at the March Hare.

"It was the *best* butter," the March Hare meekly replied.

There is more depth to their relationship than quibbling. The Hatter is under a punishment by Time and the Queen. For the Hatter, it is always tea-time (6:00 p.m.). Oddly, the mad tea-party is held at the March Hare's house. They must be pretty tight friends for the Hare to share a perpetual (and progressively more disgusting) tea with the Hatter. In addition, the two show up in the Looking-Glass story as two messengers, Haigha (pronounced to rhyme with "mayor" and sounds like "Hare") and Hatta. Two messengers are needed, you know: "one to come, and one to go."

The text doesn't tell us how the two friends met, but we can imagine that a relationship that can survive a time curse, imprisonment, and new names and roles in a completely different story probably had some noticeable magic right from the start.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card marks the beginning of a possibly intense and long-term relationship. It's common to assume this means a romantic relationship, but it can be any sort. Keep in mind, this card acknowledges the *potential* of such a relationship; it does not guarantee it. If you've ever met someone that you just "clicked" with, then you understand exactly what this card means. It's that little spark of excitement when some part of your soul recognizes a kindred spirit. Just because there is that connection doesn't mean it will blossom into something more, but there is definitely something worth investigating. The relationship doesn't have to be with another individual. It can be with a group, a new interest, a skill, an author, etc.

keywords

UNION, PARTNERSHIP, CONNECTION,
FALLING IN LOVE, LOVE AT
FIRST SIGHT, HARMONY, LOVE,
FEELING IN LOVE, KINDRED
SPIRIT, ATTRACTION, ROMANCE





Three of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

In the text, the two queens are more like Alice's adversaries—perhaps that old word “frenemies” would apply. Between the advice, the support, the undermining, the humiliation, and the comfort, the relationship between the three characters is complicated. Nowhere in the story do the three actually celebrate together like this, but here in tarotland, they do.

Despite their differences, despite their opposing goals (the Red Queen and White Queen are in competition, after all), despite their vastly different temperaments, they can have these joy-filled moments. All the pieces connect and together they make this kaleidoscope of unique magic. Together, they are more than the sum of their parts. They may not understand how it works, but they recognize and value it because it makes all of them more completely themselves.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card is that moment when you and your people (even though there are three in the image, it really can be any number) create an upward spiral of awesomeness. You all feel really good and confident and think that each other is really fabulous. You feed that shared energy, creating more. It's an exciting place to be, and you can create some good things while in that space. That level of energy cannot be maintained long term, so enjoy it while you can. While the original reference for the phrase "much of a muchness" is something like the American "six of one, half a dozen of the other," thanks to certain movies, that idea has evolved (just like tarot is always evolving and sacred texts are always generative) to mean something inherently wonderful about a person. Losing one's muchness is a sad thing. In this card, everyone is celebrating their own and their friends' muchness, and as a result all the muchness grows more robust.

keywords

FRIENDSHIP, FAMILY, CASUAL PARTIES,
JOY, FUN, ABANDON, ABUNDANCE,
CELEBRATION, CONNECTIONS,
SAVORING THE MOMENT

Four of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

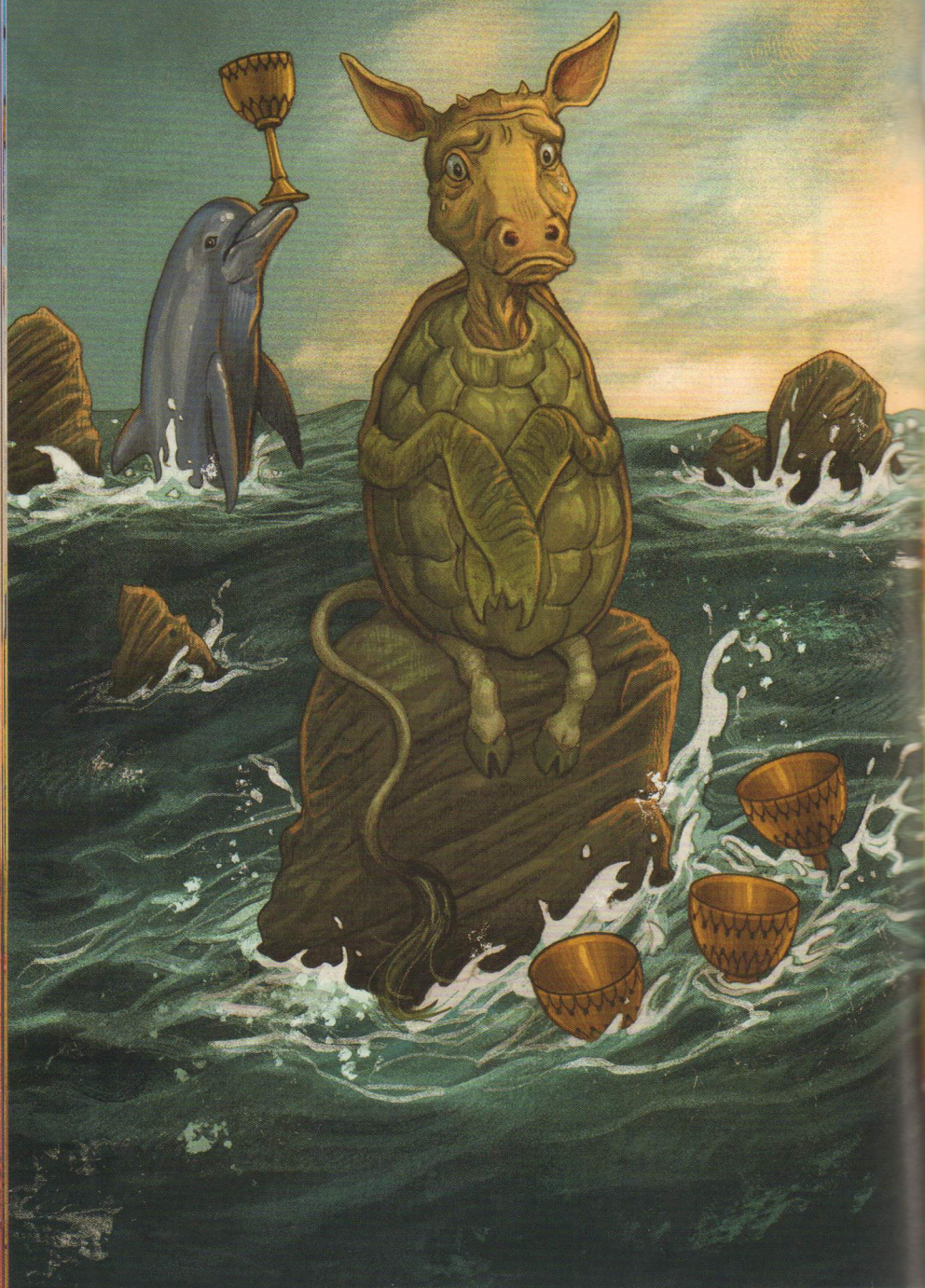
The Mock Turtle is one of the saddest creatures in the text:

Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break. She pitied him deeply. "What is his sorrow?" she asked the Gryphon, and the Gryphon answered, very nearly in the same words as before, "It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know."



We never really know why he is so sad, except that he used to be a real turtle. We don't know how or why he became a Mock Turtle. This chapter, in fact, leaves a lot of questions unanswered and many Carroll lovers dissatisfied. Many who've analyzed the story say that this part lacks the richness of the rest of the story. It is entertaining and clever, but it's all sizzle and no steak, which makes the Mock Turtle an even more appropriate choice for this card.

If grief or heartbreak are not processed, they become a pointless cycle, leading nowhere. There is no transformation or redemption. Even the fishes in Wonderland value having a purpose:



"They were obliged to have him [the porpoise] with them," the Mock Turtle said: "no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise."

In this card the Mock Turtle has forgotten his own wise advice, as we often do when we are in the depths of despair.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card shows someone who is unhappy, disengaged, and lackadaisical. This is not a card of mourning nor of heartbreak, although either of those emotions could have been the starting point. When we hold our emotions tightly, rather than letting them flow to be experienced and processed, they stagnate.

Like the Mock Turtle, you've dwelt too long in the past. You've held on too long to some slight or some disappointment, and now it has transformed and filled your heart and mind with ennui. You are dissatisfied with what you have. You cannot see any fresh possibilities even though they are right under your nose. The card does not indicate whether you shake this off or keep stewing, so it is completely your choice.

keywords

DISCONTENT, DISSATISFACTION, ENNUI,
BOREDOM, LACK OF GRATITUDE,
DEPRESSION, RESISTING CHANGE,
STAGNATION, LACK OF INSPIRATION





Five of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

When Alice's tumble down the rabbit hole is done, she is in a tunnel and is determined to find her way out into the garden. A key, conveniently placed on a glass table, opened a tiny door.

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway...

Luckily, Alice drinks from a bottle and becomes smaller—the perfect size to fit through the door. Unluckily, she left the key on the table and

found she could not possibly reach it: she could see it quite plainly through the glass, and she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery; and when she had tired herself out with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.

In the text, Alice is a resourceful and determined young lady. She keeps trying things until she is finally able to achieve her goal. In this card, she isn't so strong willed. It is as if she is mourning the lost liquids and is completely oblivious (at least for now) of



the two chalices that are so close to hand. As long as she focuses on what is not to be, she will never see what could be.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this is the card of mourning. Mourning is a natural and essential part of human life. But one thing that we sometimes forget is that mourning is a process and that it is active. Simply sitting around being sad leads to stagnation, such as we see in the Four of Cups. Nor is it to be confused with grief, which is more the purview of the Three of Swords. Grief is the realization of loss; mourning is the process of dealing with the loss. Grief is sharp and can cut like a knife and is usually not long-lived (hours, days, weeks, maybe months). Mourning can only happen if the bereaved proactively deals with rebuilding their life to accommodate the loss. After recognizing, grieving, and mourning what is gone, you must turn to what remains and start making your life again.

• • • • • *keywords*

MOURNING, FEELINGS OF LOSS,
SADNESS, REGRET, REPENTANCE,
BITTERNESS, FRUSTRATION



Six of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice and the White Rabbit share a private moment. Well, except for that flying elephant. They don't notice the elephant because they are lost in a moment of kindness, generosity, and transitory delights. Normally anxious and in a hurry, the White Rabbit is calm, happy to be right where he is. Alice, often defensive and judgy (albeit often with good reason), is open and accepting, willing to receive the gift without criticism. In this colorful, sweet bubble of time, normal behaviors melt away.

Just as memories change every time we bring them to consciousness, when we dwell in memory or live in the past, we are changed. We react and respond to things that might not be real and may lead us to behave in ways that we normally wouldn't. A couple who has split up for good and healthy reasons may find themselves in bed together when all they really meant to do was return each others' books. An adult child returns "home" and falls into old, destructive dysfunctions. Memories were activated and the people in these examples reacted with old behaviors, even though they knew better.





While Alice and the White Rabbit make themselves giddy by indulging in all those cupcakes, when they wake from their sugar comas they may have a whole swarm of flying elephants to contend with. Or perhaps they used discretion and only partook of a reasonable amount of sweets. Everyone's life is made brighter with a touch of sweetness.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card invites us to look for romantic or nostalgic memories that are influencing our behavior. We may not be seeing things as they really are but rather are blinded by an illusion, a hope, a wish, a dream. Or worse, we could be using past connections to manipulate someone or allowing others to manipulate us. On the other hand, we could be acting out of gratitude for past kindnesses. When in doubt, do something honest, authentic, and kind.

keywords

NOSTALGIA, HAPPY MEMORIES,
KINDNESS, INNOCENCE, SELFLESSNESS,
GENEROSITY, INNOCENT
PLEASURES, UNCONDITIONAL
LOVE, ROSE-COLORED GLASSES





Seven of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

After Alice's fall, she is in a large hall.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

In the text, she finds a key to a tiny door and consequently only has one option.

Here, though, she may be lost in a great hall, but she's found an intriguing tansu cabinet, similar to a cabinet of curiosities. The images on the doors may hint at what is inside or maybe they don't. She won't know until she makes a decision and looks. Let's hope she chooses carefully because it is probably enchanted to allow each visitor only one chance.

There are different ways to make choices and different parts of the process: gathering data, weighing pros and cons, measuring possibilities against our values, etc. Another part of the process is to imagine potential outcomes. This is one of the great gifts (and also burdens) of being human: the ability to project into the future. In the text, Alice was focused on a goal: to get into the garden. In tarotland, faced

with this marvelous cabinet, she has no clear objective. Instead, we imagine she spends time wondering about each door and what might be inside. We can just imagine her approaching it, eyes huge, whispering, “Curiousier and curiousier!”

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card focuses on creativity, invites us to lean into our imagination, and beckons our curiosity. The world is full of possibilities. Some already exist. Some scare us even if we aren’t sure why. Some pull at our hearts like the call of home. Some draw our attention even though we don’t really want them. Some emerge from the realm of all possible futures when we imagine them more fully and feed them with our creative energy. That is important: whichever dreams you spend the most time nurturing are the ones that are most likely to manifest. Recognize your incredible imagination and your creative power.

keywords

CONFUSION, FANTASIES, CHOICES,
IMAGINATION, DREAMS, ILLUSIONS,
LACK OF FOCUS, WISFUL THINKING

Eight of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

In Wonderland Alice visits the Duchess, who, along with the Cook, lives very violently, likely due to all the pepper they use. While there, Alice makes a decision to take the Duchess’s baby with her.

“If I don’t take this child away with me,” thought Alice, “they’re sure to kill it in a day or two. Wouldn’t it be murder to leave it behind?”

As she walked, Alice noticed that the baby, who would not be comforted, was transforming.

“If you’re going to turn into a pig, my dear,” said Alice, seriously, “I’ll have nothing more to do with you.”... So she set the little creature down, and felt quite relieved to see it trot away quietly into the wood.

Alice started off with a clear plan: to take the baby away in order to save it from being killed. But as she realized that the circumstances changed, so did her objective. There was no reason for her to rescue a pig, which seemed perfectly capable of taking care of itself.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card lets you know that either you or the circumstances have changed. You are starting to feel uncomfortable and restless. What was a perfectly good plan or way of life no longer suits you. Deep down, you already know that you have to leave, whether literally or metaphorically. One of the chal-

lenging parts of this idea is that your life, which seemed completely fine yesterday, now isn't, and the people around you are probably going to have a hard time with that. On the one hand, you have people questioning your need to move on and your own natural fear of the unknown; on the other, there is this resonant pulsing in your heart



urging you on: go, go, go. You may not even know exactly what you are going toward or looking for, and this uncertainty adds to the resistance you might be feeling.

keywords

QUEST, JOURNEY, SEARCH,
MISSION, DISCONTENT,
DISSATISFACTION, UNHAPPINESS





Nine of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice meets the Caterpillar when she is feeling pretty miserable about her state. She complains,

"Well, I should like to be a little larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind...three inches is such a wretched height to be."

The Caterpillar, who is nothing if not perfectly content with himself, is indignant:

"It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).

He is so very comfortable that he can't even imagine feeling uncomfortable in the future. Alice supposes that after he's turned into a chrysalis and then a butterfly that "you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?"

"Not a bit," he replies.

During the mad tea-party, the creatures get into an argument about logic. When the Hare tells Alice that she should say what she means. Alice claims, "I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know." Of course, the Hatter counters with,

"Why, you might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"

"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"



In most cases, the Hatter and the Hare are probably right. However, with the Caterpillar, it is easy to imagine that he both gets what he likes and likes what he gets and thus exists in perfect contentment.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card is always a lovely little surprise but can, for some, be a little annoying. In old fortunetelling traditions it was called “the wish card.” While most of those quaint old methods are no longer used, this is a nice one to keep in play. Who wouldn’t like a wish, whether large or small, to come true? We get not only the promise of a granted wish but also some advice on how to help make that wish come true: gratitude. Being grateful for what you have is a great way to generate the kind of energy that helps manifest the future. This card says that you get what you like and you like what you get. With all that “you” focus, it is pretty clear that whether or not you are going to be happy depends entirely on—well, *you*.

keywords

WISHES FULFILLED, CONTENTMENT,
SATISFACTION WITH LIFE, PRIDE,
HOSPITALITY, SENSUALITY,
WORLDLY PLEASURES, HAPPINESS



Ten of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

The White King and Queen have a rather sweet relationship. When Alice first goes through the mirror and into the Looking-Glass world, she sees the chess pieces moving around. The King and queen sat together until the Queen heard her pawn, Lily, crying. The Queen rushes to reach her child, knocking the King over. Since the Queen was far from Lily, Alice (always trying to be helpful) picks the Queen up and moves her next to Lily.

The Queen gasped, and sat down: the rapid journey through the air had quite taken away her breath, and for a minute or two she could do nothing but hug the little Lily in silence. As soon as she had recovered her breath a little, she called out to the White King, who was sitting sulkily among the ashes, “Mind the volcano!”

The volcano is Alice, who is invisible and inaudible to the beings in the room. Alice picked up the King and moved him next to his wife, frightening him half to death. He says that he will never forget the horror of the moment. His wife says, “You will, though, if you don’t make a memorandum of it.” Later in the story, he admits that he cannot help his wife when an enemy is chasing her because she moves so fast, but he says that he will make a memorandum about





her because "she's a dear good creature." These little homely moments, more than large gestures or planned events, are the heart and blood of intimate relationships. Like the King and queen, families know each other's worst and best qualities. True love and deep affection smooth away rough edges and polish us to become our best selves, just like water on stone.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card is very like "and they lived happily ever after." Of course, we know there isn't really a static, unchanging "ever after" and that most of the time the "ever after" is really just the beginning of a new chapter or story. You are at the point in a relationship where stability and shared vision prevail. The relationship is not necessarily personal or romantic, although that is certainly likely. Regardless of the details, as far as the big picture, you are both sharing the same dream and are very happy to do so. Joy, optimism, and sweetness prevail as you face the future with confidence and determined goodwill.

keywords

FAMILY, DOMESTIC BLISS,
OPTIMISM, COMFORT, TRANQUILITY,
PEACE, SANCTUARY, JOY,
HAPPINESS, DEEP AFFECTION

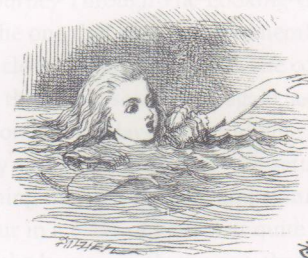




Page of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

Given Alice's intense curiosity, logical mind, and practical nature, she could easily be any and even all of the pages. This image draws from the scene in *Wonderland* when Alice (along with many other creatures) swims in the pool of tears she cried when she was nine feet tall. Although Alice is scared, she draws on her past experience to make sense of her current experience and imagines she is at the English seaside. When she realizes that this place is very different, she reaches out to the other creatures, trying to establish connections and form relationships. The little fish in the cup is holding a scroll, which we imagine is an invitation to adventure.



*Down the Rabbit Hole*

In a reading, the Page of Cups could be someone who is young or they could be someone who is emotionally immature or simply inexperienced in relationships. Inexperience doesn't stop them, though, from diving into the deep end. If someone offers them the opportunity to connect, the page is all in. They have soft hearts and might be overly sensitive, needy, or clingy, but they are also loving and sweet. Treat them with kindness and gently nurture their dreams and they will be a loyal and true friend.

• • • • •
keywords

MESSAGE, STUDENT, YOUNG OR
 INEXPERIENCED PERSON, SUPPORTER,
 CURIOSITY, SENSITIVE, NEEDY,
 ROMANTIC, SWEET, TRUE

*Knight of Cups**Through the Looking-Glass*

We've already met this wonderfully sweet knight in the Hermit card. The White Knight is a very apt Knight of Cups, with his dreamy idealism. When Alice seems sad, he says, "Let me sing you a song to comfort you." Alice, who had heard a great deal of poetry already, asked if it was long. He replies, "It's long, but it's very, very beautiful. Everybody that hears me sing it—either it brings the *tears* into their eyes or else..." trailing off midsentence, as a true dreamer of dreams and singer of sad songs is wont to do.

Alice's reaction to him is the very description of a Knight of Cups character:

Of all the strange things that Alice saw in her journey Through The Looking-Glass, this was the one that she always remembered most clearly. Years afterwards she could bring the whole scene back again, as if it had been only yesterday—the mild blue eyes and kindly smile of the Knight—the setting sun gleaming through his hair, and shining on his armour in a blaze of light that quite dazzled her—the horse quietly moving about, with the reins hanging loose on his neck, cropping the grass at her feet—and the black shadows of the forest behind—all this she took in like a picture, as, with one hand shading her eyes, she leant against a tree, watching the strange pair, and listening, in a half-dream, to the melancholy music of the song.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this knight represents someone sweet, creative, and dreamy. Like the other knights, he does focus intensely on his goal, but because he lives in a kind of between-worlds state, we can't always "see" or understand what he is doing; consequently, it is easy for him to be misunderstood. Luckily, he is more concerned with whatever he is working on to care much what others think about him.



If you want to catch his attention, appeal to his commitment to the kind of truth he values...the "truth is beauty" kind, not necessarily the "these are the facts" kind. Show him how his participation can really help someone in need or serve a greater ideal. Don't expect things from him that he can't give. He'll never be a take-charge person or a natural leader, but he will be a true friend and support you with every bit of his vast heart.

• • • • •
keywords

FOCUSED, GOAL-ORIENTED, SHORT
ATTENTION SPAN, DREAMER,
COMMITTED, IDEALISTIC, ROMANTIC





Queen of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

The White Queen is our dreamy, gentle Queen of Cups. From the text, we know that she is sensitive and in some ways very childlike. For example, she very sweetly confesses to Alice that she knows her ABCs and invites Alice to say them over with her, and encourages Alice about learning to read by saying, "However, don't be discouraged. You'll come to it in time." Even the cranky Red Queen is gentle with the White Queen, making excuses for her: "She means well, but she can't help saying foolish things, as a general rule."

The Red Queen helps protect the White Queen's tender sensibilities by giving Alice helpful suggestions. She encourages Alice to pat the White Queen's head, and further to "smooth her hair—lend her your nightcap—and sing her a soothing lullaby." We mustn't forget, as well, her trouble with mundane things like managing her hair and her shawl, as we saw in the Empress card. Yet her heart is true and she cares so much for those she loves. When one of the white pawns begins crying, the White Queen cries out, "It is the voice of my child!...My precious Lily! My imperial kitten!"

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Queen of Cups is a dreamy creature, prone to getting lost in her thoughts. She is more focused on the internal world than the external. Water symbolizes many things, one being the soul. The Queen of Cups holds water in an elaborate chalice and gazes at it lovingly, showing her respect for and interest in things of the heart. She is gentle, quiet, and often seems surprised at the world around her. She values relationships and distains conflict.

She isn't all light and love, though, and can be overly sensitive, needy, and even emotionally manipulative. Most often, though, she returns kindness for kindness, so if you want her support, do her a good turn. Be sincere, though, because although all the queens are intuitive, she is particularly gifted and will know if she is being played. Don't let her absent-mindedness fool you...she is more perceptive than she lets on.

• • • • •
keywords

ALLY, CONFIDANTE, HELPER,
AUTHORITY, ACCOMPLISHED,
INTROVERTED, INTUITIVE, INSIGHTFUL,
PSYCHIC, KIND, SENSITIVE, NEEDY

King of Cups

Through the Looking-Glass

The King of Hearts plays our King of Cups. Unlike his wife, this sweet, befuddled king apparently has a heart. When the Queen of Hearts wants to execute Alice, he argues that Alice is just a child and should be spared. Throughout the course of the croquet game, the Queen had ordered so many executions that all the soldiers had to leave off being arches to attend to the prisoners and all the players were in custody. The Queen, the King, and Alice had to stop playing. As they walked past the crowd of prisoners, the King whispered, "You are all pardoned." The Gryphon tells Alice "they never executes nobody, you know!" During the Knave of Hearts's trial, the King refuses to jump to conclusions but instead looks at the facts (see XI, Justice).

While the King is someone who follows his heart, he is still a king who understands that there are rules and red tape that must be worked around. He knows the system very well so that he can manipulate it to achieve his ends. In Wonderland this means understanding his wife. He participates just enough to keep her happy and to let her think that her bidding is followed. In this image, the chessboard shows that he is firmly grounded on (and knows intimately) the laws of the land. The cards indicate the role that chance



plays in life. The chalice holds his vision. He works within the confines of order and chaos to manifest his heart.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the King of Cups values the leadings of his heart and relationships. He has ideals but is not naïve. The world is not always kind to dreamers and the tenderhearted. His own heart has probably suffered, which gives him the ability to empathize with others. However, he is not a bleeding heart. As a king archetype, he knows that one must be wise in the ways of the world and cunning enough to outwit those who work against him. Knowing the system is essential because you can't play the game if you don't know the rules.

To enlist the sympathy of this person, be sincere and make sure your idea truly serves a greater good in some way. He is not interested in overthrowing the system, so revolutionaries of that sort need not apply. Instead, if you want to work within the system to create good in the world, the King of Cups can be a good ally.

keywords

AUTHORITY FIGURE, POWER,
DECISION-MAKER, EXPERIENCE,
IDEALISTIC, EMPATHETIC BUT NOT A
PUSHOVER, VALUES STRONG IDEALS

Swords

Swords represent the airy energy of our intellect, logic, and reason. This suit is associated with communication, problem-solving, and the nature of truth.

Ace of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

All of the aces represent an opportunity. We are given something that is full of potential. If we use the resources wisely, we can unlock its gifts and create something of value. Aces carry the energy of the number one, which is fleeting. This is a small window of opportunity, so grab it quickly before it vanishes.

A sword is a dangerous thing and ironically represents what is (as far as we know) uniquely human: our ability to conceptualize and express abstract ideas. We do this through knowledge, logic, reason, and a desire to identify truth. In its pure, ideal form, the sharp edges of what we deem to be truth or knowledge can cut the bonds of ignorance or destroy life. Truth and knowledge are not ends in themselves, although many use them in that way. Truth and knowledge should support life and enhance understanding, not simply kill or overpower all that oppose someone's ideas about how life works. The gift of the Ace of Swords is best used in service of the world and all the creatures that live here.

The imagery here brings to mind the famous Wonderland riddle: Why is a raven like a writing desk? This is a riddle that has no answer in the text; while



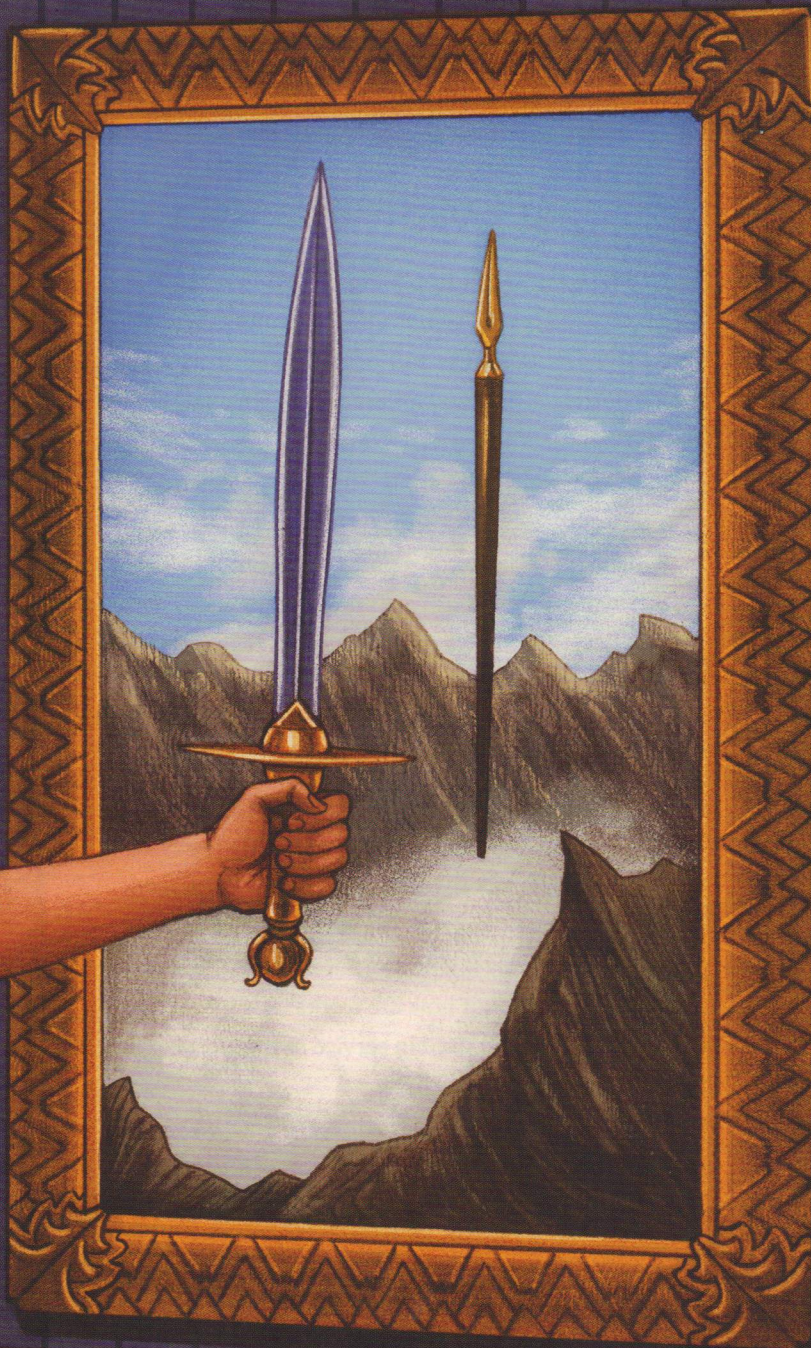
many have suggested possible responses, it could be that there simply isn't one or perhaps they are all correct. This is an abstract idea of the sword: it is double-edged, and sometimes we are asked to hold two opposing ideas in our minds at once and to count them both as true. Another consideration with this ace is this: Are accuracy and truth always the same thing?

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Ace of Swords indicates a realization that can change your way of thinking. It can be the answer to a difficult problem, an insight that broadens your horizons, or an idea that could change the world (or your little corner of it). You are reminded to use this gift gently. Tread softly on the earth and on the hearts and minds of your fellow beings.

keywords

LOGIC, INTELLECT, REASON,
TRUTH, VICTORY, DECISION,
CLARITY, ACTION PLAN, JUSTICE,
KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION





Two of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

"In *that* direction," the Cat said, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter: and in *that* direction," waving the other paw, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."

This is the Cheshire Cat's advice to Alice when she asks for directions. She isn't sure where she wants to go, "as long as I get *somewhere*," she says. With this information, she weighs her options. She's seen a hatter before, so that choice is less interesting. Since the month is May, perhaps the Hare won't be "so mad as it was in March." As she approaches the Hare's house, she second guesses her choice: "Suppose it should be raving mad after all! I almost wish I'd gone to see the Hatter instead!"

As it turns out, the Hatter was at the Hare's and they are both behaving pretty madly. All Alice can do is make the best of it, try to get out of the situation unscathed, and learn whatever

lessons she can. In the end, we are all glad she made the decision she did because the mad tea-party is one of the most well-known chapters from *Wonderland*.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card shows a situation where a decision must be made, and it also gives advice about how to make that decision. In many cases, tarot suggests listening to our intuition and values what we think of as “other ways of knowing.” However, the suit of Swords is about logic and reason. Alice sits with her back toward the ocean and the moon, both symbols of the subconscious and intuition. She is blindfolded so that she doesn’t look for more input. She is alone with what she already knows; using that information, she must make her choice.

You already have all the facts that you need. Use your reason, weigh the pros and cons, and make your decision. Waiting for more input is just a way to procrastinate. Neither choice may be optimal, and putting off the decision will not change that.

keywords

NEEDING TO MAKE A DECISION,
INSUFFICIENT DATA, LACK OF FACTS,
DENIAL, FEELING CONFLICTED,
HEAD AND HEART IN OPPOSITION



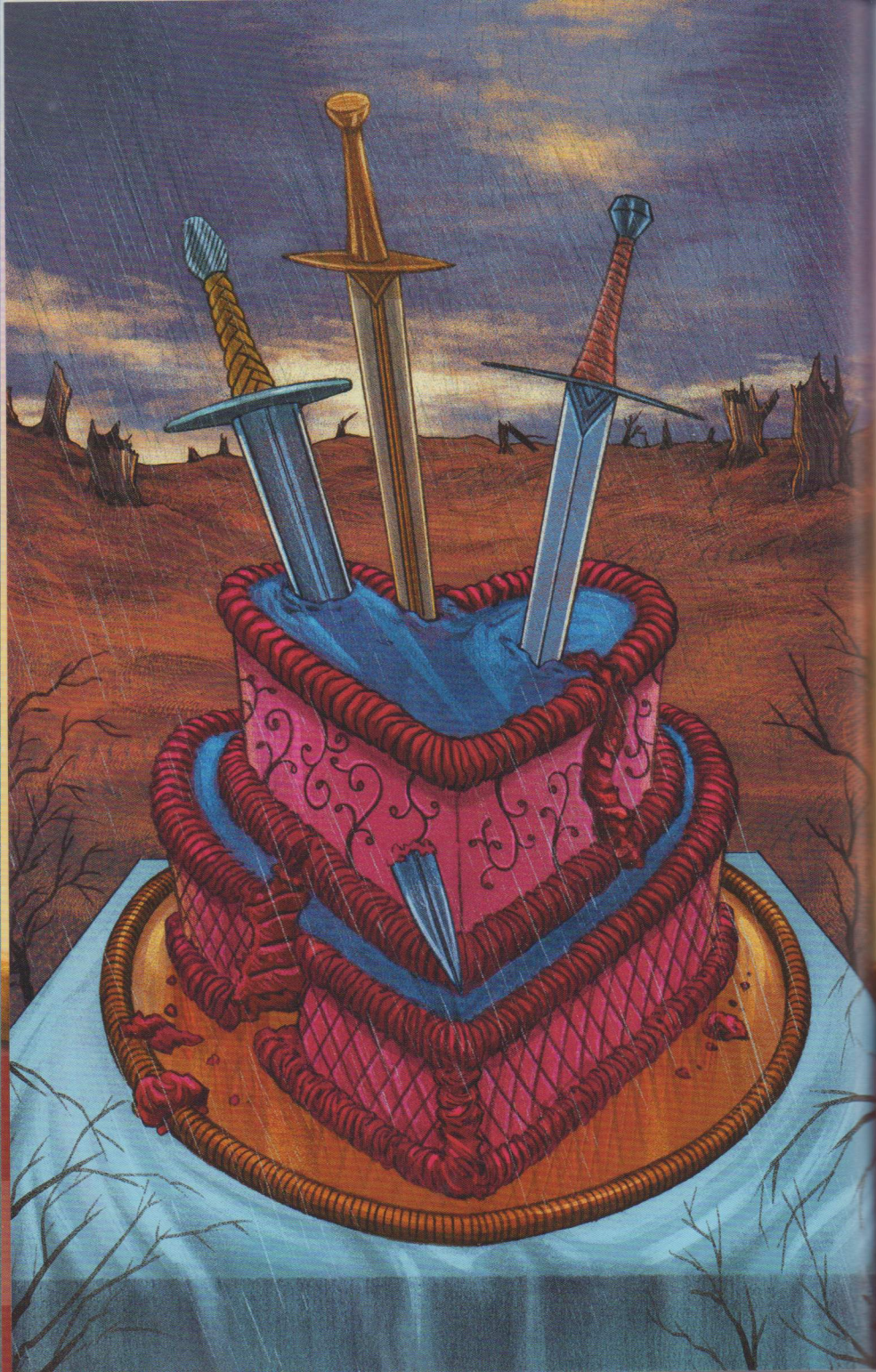
Three of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Throughout Alice’s adventures, she learns many things that shake her sense of reality. For example, she learns that rules are sometimes arbitrary and don’t always make sense (Rule 42), that some questions don’t have answers (Why is a raven like a writing desk?), sometimes you have to choose between two evils (the Walrus and the Carpenter), and that her own identity and reality can be questioned (the Caterpillar and the Red King’s dream). If a theme of the Alice stories is the journey toward adulthood, a subtheme is that your response to these reality-shifting situations shapes the person you will become.

Beautiful ideas about our relationships, our society, our world, and ourselves are treasures, and we protect them as well as we can. Not all of these ideas stand up to the test of time and experience. They dissolve like cake in the rain and we are left with an unappealing mess. The lovely treat is gone, but the truths, like the swords, remain. Acclimating to this new reality isn’t always easy. In the end, though, they add depth to our souls, and by bringing contrast to our lives they also bring richness to the complex beauty of life.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card acknowledges and honors a hard truth that we have learned. Something precious, something we've valued, has been forever changed. We are probably deeply saddened, heartbroken even, and can't imagine how we will reclaim that bit of goodness that we've lost. We all survive these experiences, and even though things will never be the same again, we also adapt to our new reality. The human spirit has a great capacity to thrive. Even though it feels like it's going to be a long time before you can move on, an important lesson to bring forward is to continue to hold on to the truth you've gained. Hold on to it, but don't let it become a prison of bitterness or a weapon to keep others out.

keywords

UNWELCOME KNOWLEDGE,
PAINFUL TRUTHS, HEARTBREAK,
HEARTACHE, BETRAYAL,
DISLOYALTY, UNFAITHFULNESS





Four of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Once the chess game begins, the Red King sleeps throughout the rest of the story. In chess it is common for a king to stay put the whole time. He is vulnerable and limited in his ability to protect himself even though he is surrounded by danger. In some ways, until the game is over,



there is nothing he can do. Unfortunately, at the end of the game in this story, he has been checkmated. Ironically, we learn from Tweedledee that the Red King is dreaming of Alice, who later becomes a queen, takes the Red Queen, and places the King in check.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card reminds us that sometimes the best thing we can do is to take a nap. This can mean an actual short nap or it can mean a metaphoric nap, and both can perform the same functions. There are three different times when we should consider a nap or just sleep in general.

When we are exhausted, it is much harder to deal with the stresses of daily life. Most people walk through their days in a sleep-deprived state. Being





well rested on a regular basis is a good baseline for healthy functioning.

Even when we have had enough sleep, sometimes taking a break, even if it is just a few deep breaths, is the best approach to certain stressful situations. This can keep us from lashing out. A short break can help us eliminate potentially unproductive emotional reactions that would only escalate the problem.

Finally, some challenges are complex and when we focus too much on them, they seem to tie themselves into tighter knots and become even more impossible to unravel. If this is the case, step away from the problem. Try to let it go. The best way to do this is to focus on something else (this is an example of a metaphoric nap). Very often when we quit trying so hard and turn our attention elsewhere, we find that as soon as we are absorbed in a new task, the solution reveals itself. This is one reason Sherlock Holmes plays the violin and Sheldon Cooper took a job as a busboy.

You may need to re-prioritize sleep in your daily life, take mindful breaks before responding to certain situations, or take a longer metaphoric break from a larger problem. Whatever form your nap needs to take, just take it. Besides, everything seems a little less dire after a little lie-down.

• • • • •
keywords

REST, RETREAT, MEDITATION,
PEACE, RECOVERY, REGROUPING,
CAREFUL CONSIDERATION



Five of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice wonders why the gardeners are painting white roses red:

“Why, the fact is, you see, Miss, this here ought to have been a *red* rose-tree, and we put a white one in by mistake; and, if the Queen was to find out, we should all have our heads cut off, you know. So you see, Miss, we’re doing our best, afore she comes, to—”

The subjects of Wonderland live in fear of the vindictive Queen of Hearts. Any mistake, any insult (intended or perceived), any whim of Her Highness can end in a death sentence. This makes for very unhappy people who serve to avoid punishment rather than out of respect and love. It’s a pretty stupid move on the part of the Queen, but then she probably doesn’t realize that people do better work when they feel safe and appreciated. While she may get what she wants in the short term through terrorizing people, it won’t be a long-lived victory. In the long run she will probably find herself facing a revolution that could end in *her* losing her head.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card marks a pyrrhic victory. Whatever you've done or are planning to do will probably end in you getting what you want. Unfortunately, there will be a cost attached to that victory. The price will be higher and broader reaching than you imagine. The seeds of discontent or bad feelings that are planted will grow and become a much bigger problem down the line. If you've already taken the actions, try to mitigate the damage. If you haven't, reconsider your plan and see if there is a resolution that won't create future enemies.

keywords

VICTORY, DEFEAT, HUMILIATION,
AGGRESSION, POOR SPORTSMANSHIP,
SUCCESS AT A GREAT COST





Six of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Alice's surreal boat trip with the Sheep visually mirrors the traditional composition for this card and also underscores a deeper meaning. In the text, Alice walks with the White Queen, who turns into the Sheep. In the Sheep's store, Alice is overwhelmed by the choices of things to buy. After noticing Alice's confusion, the Sheep hands Alice a pair of knitting needles that turn into oars, and the pair find themselves in a boat. During the ride, Alice wants various things—scented rushes and a crab—only to discover that, in the end, they weren't really what she thought they'd be. Just as suddenly as they left, Alice and the Sheep are back in the shop, and Alice knows what she wants to buy.





In the chess game being played throughout the Looking-Glass story, the Sheep is the White Queen's bishop. When the pieces are set up, the bishops are directly next to the king and the queen. The positions of the pieces reflect the roles they play. The bishops are nearest to royalty and are their advisors. The knights are next and are active protectors. The rooks are last and are the last defense of the royal pair. In our world, advisors are expected to be straightforward and clear when communicating ideas. In the Looking-Glass world, this advisor takes a circuitous route helping Alice make a decision by creating a safe space for Alice to make mistakes. Through these experiments that have no ramifications in her actual situation, Alice is able to figure out what she truly wants.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card indicates a safe space, a liminal space, that exists between one reality and another. In traditional images (and this one) the rough water represents a dangerous situation. The smooth water indicates a better one. So in some way, whether literal or metaphoric, you are moving from an undesirable situation to a better one, although it may just be a safe harbor and not your final destination. During the time in between there is an oppor-



tunity to think about what you've wanted, what you thought it would be like, and how it actually was. More importantly, you can start to think about where you want to go next, who you want to be, and how you will live. Just as Alice had the Sheep and royalty have their bishops, you will likely have someone (whether a real person, a book, a class, a podcast, etc.) that can advise you or provide you with a safe space to figure things out.

keywords

JOURNEY, HEADING TOWARD SAFETY,
ESCAPE, FLIGHT, TRAVEL, ASSISTANCE,
ADMITTING DEFEAT, IMPOSSIBLE
SITUATION, PROTECTION, SHELTER





Seven of Swords



Through the Looking-Glass

In Wonderland, the Knave of Hearts is accused of stealing the Queen of Heart's tarts. It is unclear from the text whether or not the Knave is actually guilty. The poem (title and author unknown) says that the Knave did indeed steal the tarts but then returned them "and vow'd he'd steal no more." His vow comes after being caught and beaten by the King, making his new leaf seem more a choice of necessity than a true change of heart. But we cannot know for sure... and this is part of the problem with this card.

We do not know, for example, why the Knave stole the tarts. Did he just want to eat them? Did he want to get the Queen's attention? Was he trying to frame someone else? Were they made with flour stolen from a peasant and he, Robin Hood-like, was trying to return it? It seemed to be no secret in the poem or in this image that the Knave *does* take the tarts. He is leaving a trail that will be easy to follow. Is he that stupid or is this part of his plan? As they say, the truth is rarely pure and seldom simple; such is the case here. For true justice to be served, one has to be free of prejudice or bias and tease out the facts.

Alice comes from a world where order and control are valued. Interestingly, Alice herself is highly adaptable, able to adjust to a changing world and establish



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card tells us that this is a very complicated situation. Someone has done something that looks suspicious, and on the surface it would be easy to simply proclaim guilt. But there are also things that don't make sense and don't completely support that scenario. If you are the wronged party in the situation, don't be so quick to judge but instead see if there is more to the story. If you are the one who took or is planning to take an action, make sure that it clearly reflects your intent. Let there be nothing in your behavior that could be taken the wrong way because if there is, be assured someone will pounce on that. It is not fair, but some will take the appearance of guilt as actual guilt.

• • • • •
keywords

STEALING, RESCUING, STEALTH,
DISHONESTY, SABOTAGE,
SNEAKINESS, TRAITOR, SPY

Eight of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Luckily for Alice, nowhere in the text is she bound and surrounded by swords. However, she does find herself in some (literally) tight spots. She gets trapped in Rabbit's house and only escapes with outside help. Most of the time, though, she gets herself out of trouble. She escapes potential conflict with the Queen of Hearts by using her wits: she tells the Cheshire Cat that she doesn't like the Queen at all, but when she sees the Queen approaching, she quickly adds that it's because the Queen is so "likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game." Again, using her wits, she figures out how to navigate a conversation with Humpty Dumpty. At the end of *Wonderland* Alice literally stands up for herself to avoid being beheaded. In *Looking-Glass* she not only stands up but also changes the situation by pulling the tablecloth from underneath the feast.



Alice comes from a world where order and control are valued. Interestingly, Alice herself is highly adaptable, able to adjust to a changing world and establish



order in chaotic circumstances. These are great qualities for us to practice, too, because there are all kinds of hard situations. Some, symbolized by the chessboard, are inherent in the order and structure of the situation (family, relationship, job, society, etc.). Some are unexpected, as represented by the playing cards. Accidents, unexpected actions by others, pure good luck (or bad luck)...try as we might, there is no way to plan for every eventuality.

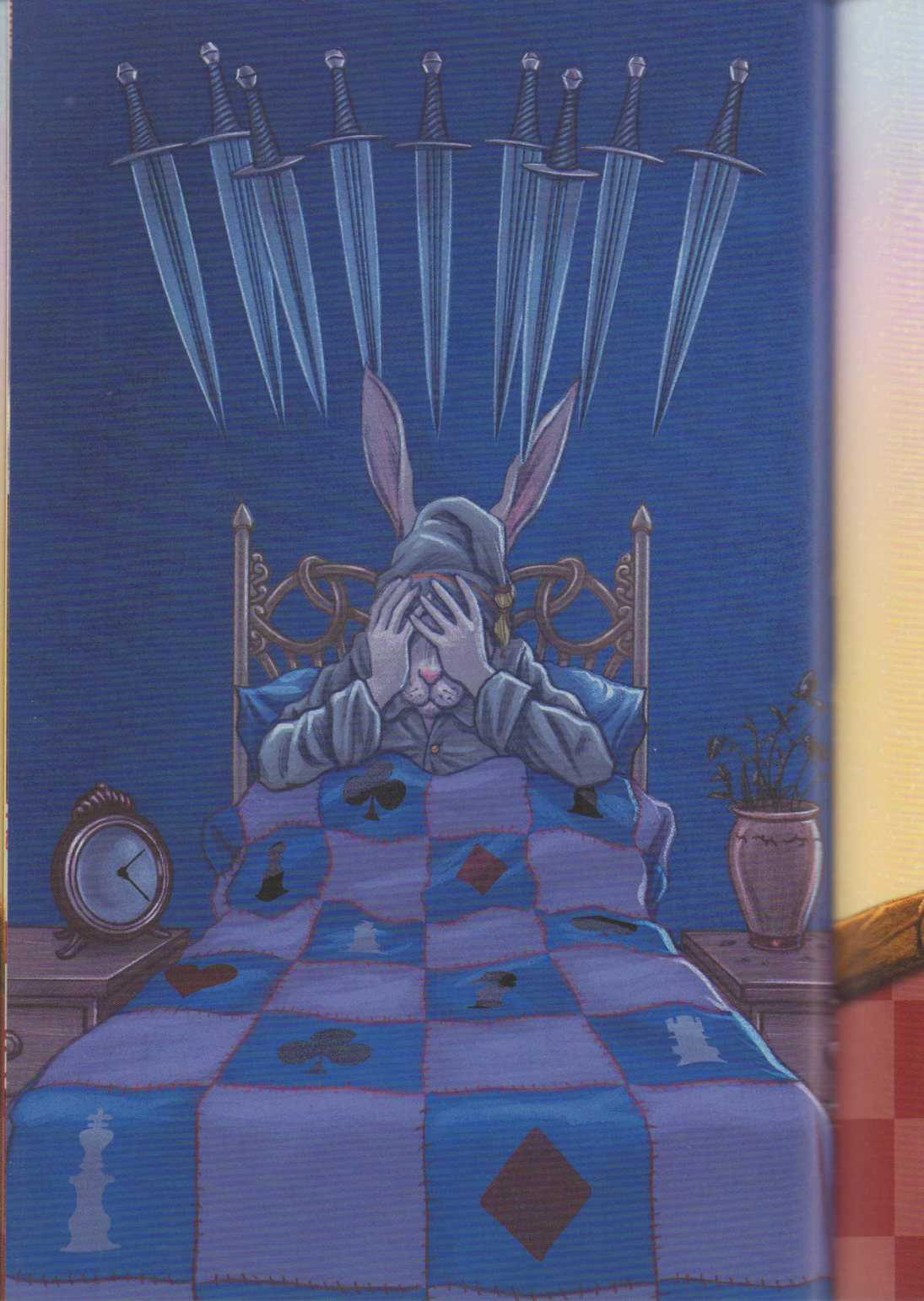
Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card describes a very precarious situation. No matter how you came to be in this position, getting out is going to be a challenge. You have some options. First, you can wait to be rescued, although there is no guarantee how long that could take, what form it will take, or even if it will ever arrive. The other route means that you take responsibility and rescue yourself. Swords are the suit of intelligence, so be smart like Alice. Pay close attention to your surroundings, rely on what you already know, be open to new ideas, think outside the box, and take advantage of any opportunities. Keep your head, use your brain, and know that you can find a solution.

keywords

FEELING TRAPPED, RESTRICTED,
DANGEROUS SITUATION, LIMITED
OPTIONS, HELPLESSNESS,
COMPLEX PROBLEMS





Nine of Swords



Through the Looking-Glass

The White Rabbit is a very fretful creature. The structure of his world, illustrated by the chess pieces on his quilt, creates concerns. For example, he worries a lot about the consequences of being late. The potential chaos of the world, represented by the playing card suits on the quilt, also creates fear. Alice brings a touch of the unexpected to his life, and he worries about being overheard when he tells Alice that the Duchess has been sentenced to execution.

Sometimes both order and chaos work together to make a challenging situation, such as when he has to balance proper court proceedings with the actions and desires of the King and queen. This poor creature lives a life that is steeped in stress. While it is easy to see what causes his worry, to know how hard it is for him, and to pity his existence, it is also hard to be around that kind of energy. When we are near people who are worked up or when we are drowning in anxiety ourselves, all we want to do is escape.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card describes those nights we all hate: we can't sleep because we are worried about something. So many things can cause this, such as





regret over an action or careless word, a bad decision, an upcoming confrontation, or disastrous possibilities that may or may not ever occur. If the problems that plague you are things that you can do something about, then get out of bed, make a list, and write out what you will do the next day. Maybe you need to apologize to someone. Perhaps you can revise or alter a decision. Role-playing can help plan for a difficult conversation. Worrying about possible worst-case futures can be more difficult, although you can also spend your energy figuring out what you would do if the worst happens rather than just worrying about whether it will or not.

Swords is the suit of logic and planning. Knowing that these nights come to all of us, experiment with techniques until you find one that works for you, that helps you find repose in the face of uncertainty. It is easy to let our thoughts control us, but they are just thoughts; you can choose to let them pass by or let them come in and take over.



keywords

OBSESSIVE THOUGHTS, SLEEPLESSNESS,
NIGHTMARES, REGRET, WORRIES,
GUILT, DESPAIR, OPPRESSION



Ten of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Despite Humpty's confidence that he would never fall, he did tumble from his wall. He was so sure that "They'd pick me up again in a minute, *they* would!" He clearly thought he would survive the fall intact, but as we see here, and as the poem tells us, "All the King's horses and all the King's men, couldn't put Humpty Dumpty in his place again." Some versions say "couldn't put Humpty together again," which matches the meter better and reflects the reality of the probability of an egg breaking when it falls from a height. Of course, this is the Looking-Glass world and as anyone who's been there knows, anything is possible. One can only hope, though, that if Humpty is restored, he will learn his lesson. For he was a very proud creature and it was likely his great pride that caused his downfall. It was also a lack of reason, for Alice asks him: "Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground?...That wall is so *very* narrow!" He replies, "Of course I don't think so!"

One doesn't like to blame the victim, and poor Humpty was the victim of a horrible accident. On the other hand, we can't help but think if only he'd had a little more common sense, it all could have been avoided. Whether through no fault of our own or through our own bad decisions, horrible things sometimes happen in life.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card shows that finally the thing we feared has happened. In a way, it is a relief because at least now it is over. For some people the anticipation is worse than the actual event. Now that the moment has passed, it is time to think about picking ourselves up, dusting ourselves off, and regrouping.

The sky gives us two messages. First, when read as a sunset, it reminds us that the situation we hoped to avoid is over. Second, when read as a sunrise, it encourages us with a fresh start and a new day. We can collect ourselves, attend to our wounds, and move on. If we are wise, we will analyze the situation and see if we can learn any lessons so that we can avoid similar circumstances in the future. Even if we discover that we *could* have done something differently, it is important not to beat ourselves up over it (and end up revisiting the Nine of Swords) but rather make a commitment to not making the same mistake again.

keywords

SURRENDER, ENDING, DISASTER,
DEFEAT, RUIN, STOP FIGHTING,
GIVING IN, GIVING UP,
ACKNOWLEDGING AN ENDING





Page of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

The White Rabbit in his heraldic garb appears in the Judgement card. There he is an angel, a person of majestic abilities. Here our dear friend is brought back down to earth and is, after all, just a small rabbit trying to fill an important role. Throughout the story the White Rabbit is stressed and harried, always fretting about punctuality and his responsibilities. And no wonder: he serves the Queen of Hearts, a cruel taskmaster. Heralds did many tasks, including being a messenger for nobility. This echoes an old tradition in tarot where the pages were sometimes read as people and sometimes read as predicting a message.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Page of Swords, like all the pages, can be a young person. They can also be someone who is taking on new responsibilities or beginning to explore new ideas. They are interested in language and communication, taking pleasure in the sounds of words and the precision of their meanings. This means that they can be a little snobby and maybe a bit of a know-it-all. Because this page has such a logical mind and keen eye, they can be brilliant problem solvers with excellent out-of-the-box thinking...and



they can, I'm sorry to say, be something of a gossip. Don't laugh at their funny affectations, take their ideas seriously, and you'll have a great support person at your side.

*keywords*

MESSAGE, STUDENT, YOUNG OR
INEXPERIENCED PERSON, SUPPORTER,
ENTHUSIASM, KEEN EYE, GOSSIP,
LOVER OF WORDS, EAGER TO BEGIN

Knight of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

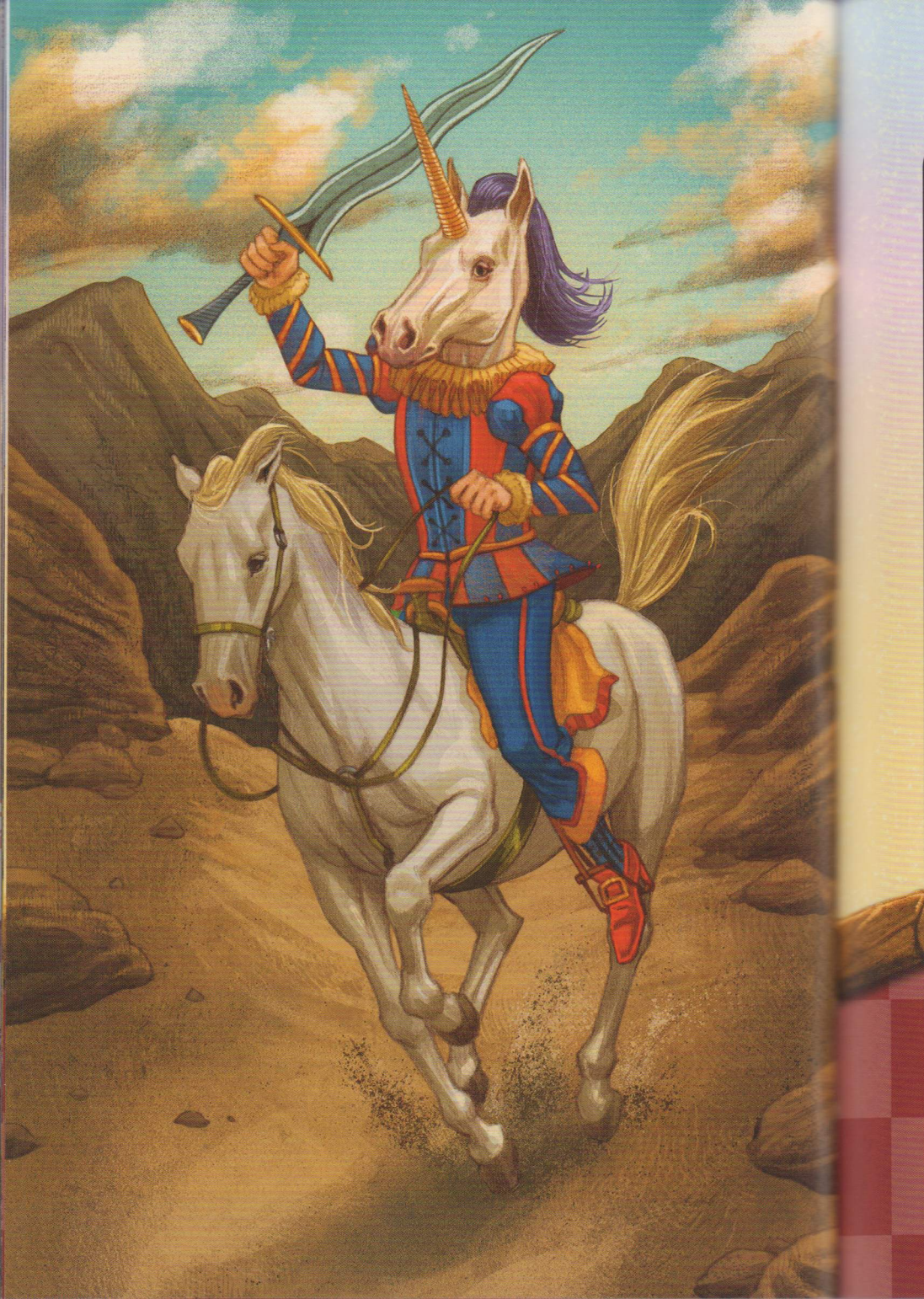
The Unicorn, who fought the Lion for the White King's crown, makes an excellent Knight of Swords. Aside from having his own built-in sword, he exhibits many Sword-like tendencies. As soon as the battle is over, he comes to the King in search of a decision as to the winner. When he sees Alice, he demands to know what she is, having never seen a little girl before. He had heard of them, of course, but "always thought they were fabulous monsters!" To which Alice replies,

"Do you know, I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters, too! I never saw one alive before!"

"Well, now that we *have* seen each other," said the Unicorn, "if you'll believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?"

"Yes, if you like," said Alice.

And when the poor King is seated between the Lion and the Unicorn, "'what a fight we might have for the crown, *now!*'" the Unicorn said, looking slyly up at the crown," showing that he is always thinking and planning, using his keen mind to achieve his goals. After he sees Alice having trouble with the plum cake, he doesn't hesitate to say, "You don't know how to manage Looking-glass cakes...Hand it round first, and cut it afterwards." Finally, he shows a stern sense of justice when he remarks,



"I say, this isn't fair!" cried the Unicorn...
"The Monster [Alice] has given the Lion
twice as much as me!"

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Knight of Swords is someone who has a reverence for logic, facts, truth, and justice. Once he is convinced that something is right, he will defend it vigilantly. His defense can be practical but he excels in communication and shows his skills to best effect in speaking or writing. His biggest problem is that once he has been convinced, then it is hard to unconvince him. That is to say, once he decides something is true, that becomes more important than the actual quest for truth.

Also, while he can speak and write well, he doesn't necessarily have the charisma of the Wands court and can sound pedantic. If you must cross swords with him, forget emotion and ethics. Facts and logic, even philosophy, are the best tools. To get him on your side, appeal to his reason or admit that you cannot solve a certain problem, that the challenge is simply beyond you, and that it may be beyond solving at all. He'll happily rise to the challenge.

keywords

FOCUSED, GOAL-ORIENTED,
SHORT ATTENTION SPAN, SERVES
TRUTH AND JUSTICE, DOGMATIC,
RELIES ON FACTS AND LOGIC





Queen of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

The Red Queen, our Queen of Swords, is all rules and commands. Upon her first meeting with Alice, she asks,

"Where do you come from?...And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time."

She corrects Alice over errors in logic and continues with advice such as "open your mouth a *little* wider when you speak." Although the Red Queen is quite formidable and often impatient, she is not hot-headed like the Queen of Hearts (our Queen of Wands) and helps Alice form a plan to achieve her goal: to become a queen herself. She arranges for Alice to take Lily's place and maps out a plan, telling Alice what to do and what to expect as she makes her way across the chessboard.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Queen of Swords is a very intelligent person who wields her authority confidently. She has a penchant for rules and a gift for logic. But she is not all theory and abstractions, being able to assess a situation, determine desirable goals, and make efficient and effective plans. Because her thought



processes are so quick, her decisions and opinions may seem arbitrary, but be assured that they are well thought-out. Although she is not driven by emotion, she can be cruel, using her skill with language and perceptive eye to make cutting comments. Somehow, she always knows how to find weakness. To gain her support, never attempt to deceive her, acknowledge her abilities, and forget trying emotional pleas. She is not interested in sob stories but is very keen on making things happen.

• • • • •
keywords

ALLY, CONFIDANTE, HELPER,
AUTHORITY, ACCOMPLISHED,
QUICK-WITTED, SMART, CLEVER,
EFFICIENT, PERCEPTIVE, CRUEL,
DOES NOT ABIDE DECEPTION

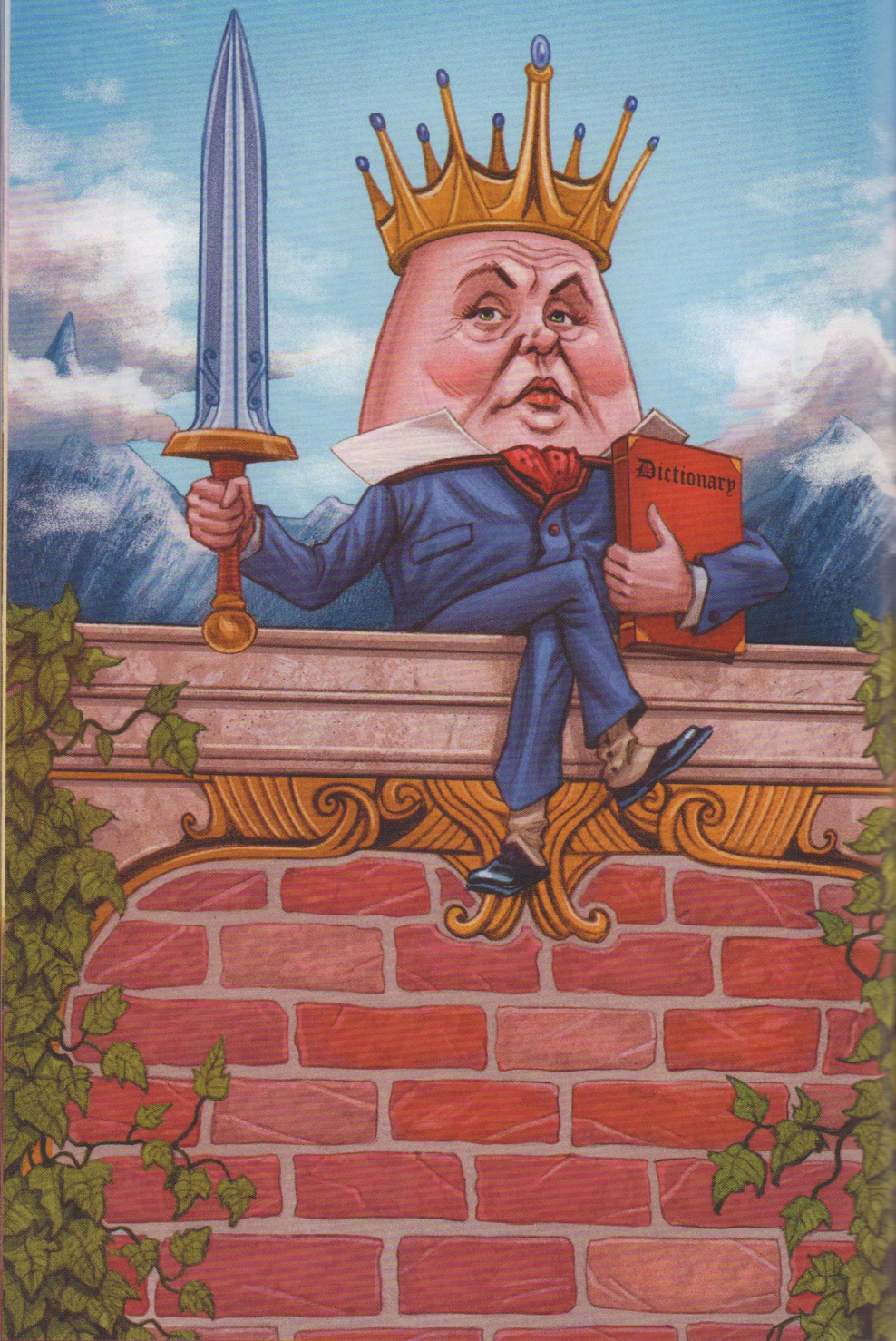
King of Swords

Through the Looking-Glass

Humpty Dumpty is all logic and pride, albeit Looking-Glass logic. He argues that Alice's name doesn't "mean" anything, insisting that proper names must mean something beyond denoting a specific person. On the other hand, while most of us have a shared or general meaning for common nouns, Humpty has a different view: "When *I* use a word...it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." When Alice asks whether we can make words mean different things, he responds, "The question is... which is to be master—that's all." He also assures her that "When I make a word do a lot of work...I always pay it extra." Alice finally figures out how to talk to him and asks him to explain all the confusing words in the poem "Jabberwocky," which he is very happy to do.

We learn a lot about Humpty; he is very easily offended and is fond of rules. He will accept what you say if you tell him that you read it in a book. As a representative of pure logic, Humpty lacks any artistic sensibility. It has been noted that the poem he repeats for Alice is the most boring, uninteresting, uninspired poem in the text. It has rhyme and meter but no plot and no conclusion—nothing that grabs the imagination.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the King of Swords holds reason, truth, and control above all other values. He wields his authority with precision and efficiency. Unlike Humpty Dumpty, the King of Swords is an excellent communicator and can be extremely witty, although sometimes his wit is laced with cruelty. He doesn't suffer fools gladly and will not allow his authority to be questioned. The wisest of these kings are smart enough to surround themselves with good advisors and carefully weigh their information and advice.

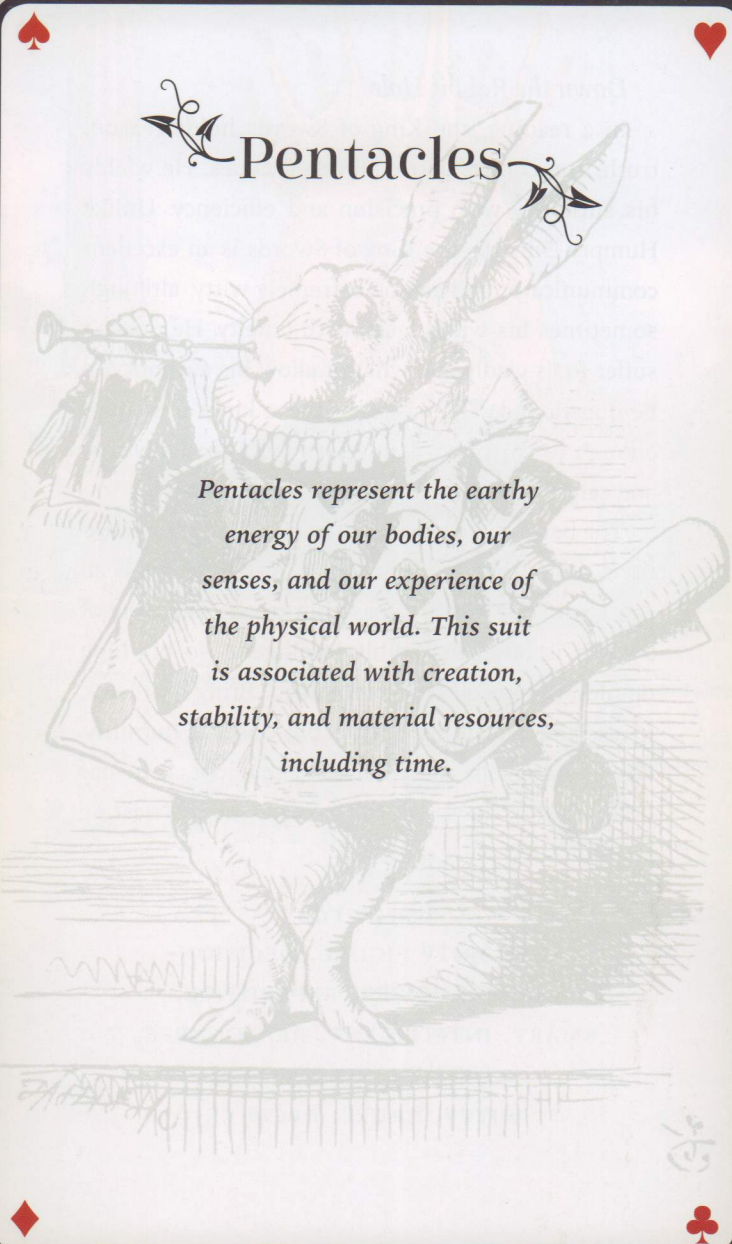
The best way to work with him is to ask him questions rather than tell him things outright. This is an ego issue, but it is also based in truth—the King of Swords is often incredibly intelligent, so his high opinion of himself isn't unfounded. Bring him facts, ideas, and questions with a big dose of humility. Leave excitement and emotion at the door, as he has no interest in them and will assume you are wasting his time.

keywords

AUTHORITY FIGURE, DECISION-
MAKER, POWER, EXPERIENCE,
SMART, INTELLIGENT, REASONABLE,
CONTROLLING, CLEVER,
WITTY, CRUEL, DECISIVE

Pentacles

Pentacles represent the earthy energy of our bodies, our senses, and our experience of the physical world. This suit is associated with creation, stability, and material resources, including time.



Ace of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

All of the aces represent an opportunity. We are given something that is full of potential. If we use the resources wisely, we can unlock its gifts and create something of value. Aces carry the energy of the number one, which is fleeting. This is a small window of opportunity, so grab it quickly before it vanishes.

Pentacles represent resources. We naturally think of money because our culture has taught us that money is the most important resource. But money, like the pentacle, is a symbol, a representation of other things. Money in and of itself is almost useless. It is what we do with money that gives it value. We use it to purchase necessities, and these necessities are the true resources: food, water, shelter, clothing, and materials for making things that we need or that bring beauty to the world. It is easy to forget the most important resource, what we trade for money: our time. The Ace of Pentacles, although lovely and shiny, lives in the world of abstraction while its mirror image, a beautiful cake, is something real, something that has value for physical life. It not only nourishes our bodies but also creates connections as we share meals with others.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Ace of Pentacles is one of the most auspicious cards to get. It promises the ability to create and share abundance. You will receive a new resource or see an old resource with new eyes, allowing you to make something truly special. Use your gift to add value to the world, whether through something practical or through something beautiful...or both! The irony of this card is that wealth is not meant to be hoarded but instead seems to multiply when it is shared.

keywords

ABUNDANCE, RESOURCES, MONEY,
WEALTH, HEALTH, COMFORT,
PLEASURE, CREATION, LUCK,
ACHIEVING GOALS, SMALL BUT
FORTUITOUS BEGINNINGS





Two of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

The poor Hatter is a prisoner on several levels. He is a prisoner of time, being forever stuck at six o'clock teatime, and a prisoner of the Queen of Hearts because of his performance at her concert. He is also, it seems, a prisoner of his relationship with the March Hare, as both are together in Wonderland as well as in the Looking-Glass world. Within the constrictions of his life, he also juggles a never-ending tea party, his career as a performer, and his job as messenger to the White King. No wonder our friend sometimes seems a little mad. Who wouldn't be with all of that going on?



Like many in this position, he has no end game, no plan. Alice observes that they've set the table for so many people even though there are just the three of them. They don't have time to wash up and reset the table "between whiles," so they just keep moving down one space. When she asks, "What happens when you come to the beginning again?" the party agrees to change the subject and asks Alice to tell a story.

*Down the Rabbit Hole*

In a reading, this card describes a situation that feels a little chaotic yet controlled, but only just. You know the feeling: you are busier than usual, circumstances like weather or traffic make things worse than normal, your resources are being spent faster than they are coming in, and you are perpetually breathless and two steps behind. Unfortunately, we all have periods like this. It won't kill you, but it can sure fray the nerves and make daily life really unpleasant.

The resources being used up can be money, time, energy, interest, attention, etc. The questions are: How long can you keep this up, and how is it going to end? Be honest with yourself about how long you can maintain this level of expenditure before long-term damage occurs. One way to get through these times is to know that there is light at the end of the tunnel. If there is not a built-in endpoint, then make sure you create one. It'll help you keep going and help you feel empowered as you take control of your situation.

*keywords*

MULTITASKING, BALANCE, TIGHT
BUDGET, COMPARISON SHOPPING,
ALLOCATING RESOURCES,
CALM OR ZEN-LIKE BEHAVIOR
IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

*Three of Pentacles**Through the Looking-Glass*

While perhaps not the most obvious choices for a mastermind group, Alice, the White Rabbit, and the King of Hearts are working together to create something special. In the text, the three are together only once: during the Knave of Heart's trial. In that scenario we don't get to see them really working together, but here in tarotland we can imagine what that might be like. Here, they each have unique skills or gifts that add to the value of their project. Alice, of course, brings her curiosity and knowledge of how the real or physical world works. The White Rabbit overflows with a love of details and precision. The King has the authority, experience, and resources to make anything possible.

Creation takes just the right balance of just the right things. Inspiration, intuition, and drive brings beauty and that "certain something" that makes anything special. Planning and logistics are essential or the project remains merely an idea without a hope of manifesting. Practical application and hands-on experience bring the vision to life in the physical world. Sometimes these aspects come from different people and sometimes all from the same person. When a project lacks any one of these aspects, it can still happen and might be just fine, but usually that's all it will





be. Perhaps it is perfectly functional but aesthetically flat or perhaps astonishingly creative but useless.

Down the Rabbit Hole

This card suggests that there is great potential in whatever you are considering doing. Whether you are doing it alone or with others, make sure that you have the perfect blend of inspiration, planning, and experience so that you create something you can be really proud of. While it is true that this can represent something you do alone, it is more often a team effort. The final project is usually something worth far more than the sum of its parts. Everyone involved can feel as if they are part of something greater than themselves.

If you are working alone, make sure to engage all aspects of yourself for the best results. If you are working with others, don't forget to value their contributions. In either case, have a clear-enough vision to guide you but include enough flexibility so that the vision can evolve if needed.

keywords

TEAMWORK, CREATION, SKILLED
WORK, MAKING SOMETHING OF VALUE,
CONTRIBUTING TO A WORTHWHILE
PROJECT, HIGHLIGHTING ABILITIES



Four of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

The poor Dormouse, who really only wants to nap, is much abused at the mad tea-party:

A Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head.

The Hatter and the Hare often forgot about the Dormouse in this way, but when they do notice him, they pinch him or pour hot



tea on his nose to wake him up. After a while, Alice had enough of their rudeness and left; "the last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot." Dormice were common

pets of Victorian children, who often kept them in old teapots.

Energy and resources are meant to flow. When they aren't permitted to move, they stagnate, and mostly anything that stagnates usually gets pretty gross. The sleepy Dormouse in a teapot is an apt symbol for energy that isn't moving. First of all, he is asleep, so he is literally quite still. Second, he is in a teapot, which is meant to pour tea (moving



resources) but is being used to keep something contained (stagnating). Sometimes it is necessary to collect and save resources, just as sometimes it is necessary for dormice to sleep. The trick is knowing when to stop holding back and when to start flowing again.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card lets you know that things are at a standstill. The energy and resources in your life are not flowing. That's not completely true—resources may still be coming in, but the longer you hoard them, the more slowly they will flow.

You may be saving for something out of fear for the future. That's fine and sometimes sensible. But if you are unsatisfied with the amount flowing in, you should do something to get things moving. Even moving something from a long-term savings account to a more active investment would still allow for savings but also create a different energy flow. That's the key here: find a way to move the energy while still achieving your goals. Otherwise you will sit there, neither increasing nor decreasing.

keywords

POSSESSIVENESS, GUARDING AND
MANAGING RESOURCES, SAVING,
PROTECTING, STEWARDSHIP, HOARDING

Five of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

After Alice becomes a queen, she finds herself before an arched doorway with the words QUEEN ALICE in large letters. Despite her persistent knocking, no one answered the door. Alice asks a Frog about the servant “whose business it is to answer the door.” He wants to know, “What’s it been asking of?”

“Nothing!” Alice says. “I’ve been knocking at it.”

“Shouldn’t do that...wexes [vexes] it, you know...You let it alone...and it’ll let you alone, you know.”

In the text, Alice figures out that in terms of the queenhood she is not just visiting; she is actually a queen. She is not a servant, as queens serve no one but their own fancies (at least in the Looking-Glass world). In the end she simply opens the door and enters. In this image, we see that it is not always easy to claim our rights. Alice is in rags, hungry, and ill, although she still has her crown, so she still has some connection with her sovereignty. The Frog represents Alice’s subconscious, animal fears, and irrationality. The door symbolizes her path to the material and spiritual sustenance she needs. She knows where she needs to go and she knows that she has a right, but some damaged part of her keeps denying herself any comfort.



Down the Rabbit Hole

This card shows the hard times of material lack, which means a great opportunity to learn something. The card also contains a clue about the reality of the physical world. This suit is marked by pentacles, which show the four classical elements—fire, water, air, and earth—



under the governance of spirit. This card invites you to think about the connection between the spiritual and the physical in your life. We often say that this card means that the church is not doing its job to help people. A better way to look at it is to realize that a church is a community. If you are not part of a church, then what community are you a part of? Communities are not something we turn to only when we are in need. We invest time and energy into creating community to help others and to be helped in turn.

keywords

POVERTY, LACK, NEED, HUNGER,
BANKRUPTCY, RUIN, DESTITUTION,
HEALTH CONCERNS, REJECTING HELP,
BEING BLIND TO POSSIBLE AID





Six of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass



We often think of the mad tea-party as being the Hatter's affair since he is the one, after all, who is stuck at 6:00 p.m. However, the party is held at the Hare's house. The Hare is the one who offers Alice wine, even though there isn't any. He is the one who offers her *more* tea, even though she hasn't had any yet. Even though the Hatter sometimes acts like he is in charge, such as taking the clean places at the table, this really is the Hare's event.

Children have strong ideas about fairness—in fact, one of their favorite complaints is that something isn't fair. Throughout Alice's adventures, she faces many situations that aren't fair. As befits a story about growing up, naturally coming to terms with the sometimes unfair or arbitrary rules of society is important. Sometimes Alice's choice in the face of unfairness is to simply leave, which is what she does at the tea party. Sometimes she tries to change things, with varying degrees of success.



Here, the Hare is in charge of all the treats, and Alice and the Hatter get only what he allots them. Are his methods of deciding who gets what entirely fair? That probably depends on who you ask.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card suggests that resources are needed and they are also available. If you have a need, there is a way to get it met, but it won't come for free. There will be hoops that need jumping through and paperwork that needs filling out. People need to be contacted. Cases need to be made. Pride might need swallowing. Help can come in the way of scholarships, loans, endowments, or charity. If you are not in need, then this card invites you to consider helping those who are through some method of formal giving.

keywords

CHARITY, FAIRNESS, GIFT, DONATION,
GRANT, SCHOLARSHIP, LOAN, SOUND
JUDGMENT, TAXES, FEES, SHARING
THE WEALTH, ASKING FOR HELP



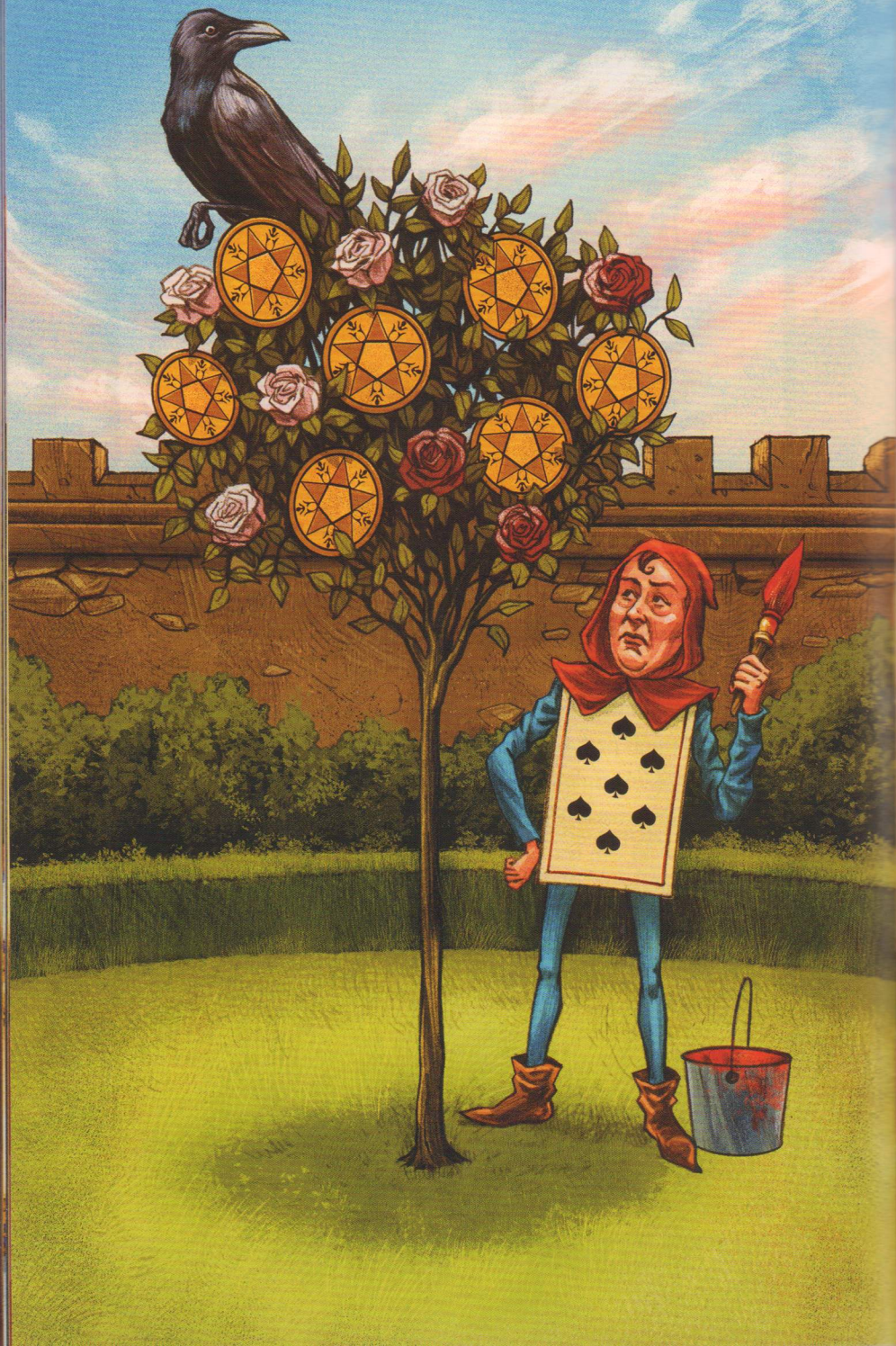
Seven of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

In the Queen of Hearts's realm, red is the preferred color. When the gardeners plant a white rose tree by mistake, they know there will be trouble in the form of beheading threats. As soon as the gardeners realize their mistake, they set about to correct it. In the text, the Queen finds out and shouts her usual savage refrain: "Off with their heads." Alice hides the gardeners so the soldiers can't find them. When the Queen asks if their heads are off, the soldiers respond, "Their heads are gone, if it please your Majesty!"

If the gardeners had ample time to paint the roses, they could probably have done a decent job of it, although perhaps the paint would kill the roses anyhow. Only time would tell the effect of paint on Wonderland roses. That is the big difference between the scene in the text and this card: time. Here, time is abundant and the gardener can go slowly, assessing his work as he goes, making sure everything is just how he wants it.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card lets you know that you have time and should take the time to review your work. Your project or situation is at a low ebb. There isn't much that can be done; things have to sit and ripen at their own speed. Make good use of this time in other ways. Look over what you've done. Figure out if the effort yielded the results you hoped for. Decide what areas could be improved and come up with plans to make them better. Maybe, like our gardener friend, bring in another set of eyes to offer suggestions.

keywords

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION,
REFLECTION, MEASURING RETURN
ON INVESTMENT, HARVEST,
REWARDS, APPRAISAL



Eight of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

In the text, the White King is often silly or ineffectual, but it is not always his fault. When Alice is invisible and inaudible in the Looking-Glass drawing room, she notices the King using a large pencil to make a note.

A sudden thought struck her, and she took hold of the end of the pencil, which came some way over his shoulder, and began writing for him.

The poor King...struggled with the pencil for some time...and at last he panted out, "My dear! I really *must* get a thinner pencil. I cannot manage this one a bit: it writes all manner of things that I don't intend—"

Whether the King continued trying to write, the text doesn't say, and Alice soon leaves the room shortly to roam the garden. However, the King seems like a committed fellow, and it is easy to imagine him laboring diligently with his unwieldy pencil. Eventually his letters and words will come out exactly as he intends.

*Down the Rabbit Hole*

In a reading, this card shows the rewards of hard work and diligent practice. In our world of hacks and instant experts, the tradition of dedication to honing a craft has fallen out of favor. However, it seems that our infatuation with fast and “good enough” is finally waning and we are starting to rediscover the joys and satisfactions of high-quality work and polishing skills. This card shows the single most important way to achieve that: practice. Materials and teaching will only get us so far. Hands-on experience and making lots of mistakes are the best ways to become really good at anything—including, by the way, reading tarot.

• • • • •
keywords

WORK, SKILL, CRAFTSMANSHIP,
ARTISAN, DILIGENCE, DEDICATION,
FOCUS, DRIVE, DETERMINATION,
STEADY PROGRESS, SATISFYING
WORK, ATTENTION TO DETAIL



Nine of Pentacles

*Through the Looking-Glass*

In the text, Alice never did solve that riddle of why a raven is like a writing desk. When she confesses that she cannot solve it and asks what is the answer, the Hatter says, “I haven’t the slightest idea,” and the Hare adds, “Nor I.” After spending *quite* enough time with the Hare and the Hatter, she goes off in a huff:

“At any rate I’ll never go *there* again!” said Alice, as she picked her way through the wood. “It’s the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life!”

After visiting with Humpty Dumpty, Alice

quietly walked away: but she couldn’t help saying to herself as she went, “Of all the unsatisfactory—” (she repeated this aloud, as it was a great comfort to have such a long word to say) “of all the unsatisfactory people I *ever* met—”

Through her adventures, Alice is learning about the worlds she travels through and about herself. She is discovering quite a bit about what she doesn’t like—unsolvable riddles and illogical, arbitrary rules, for example—as well as what she does value. Fairness, kindness, politeness, and compassion are a few traits Alice shows in the text. We can imagine that when Alice is able to create her own world, it will contain exactly what pleases her and nothing else.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card is usually very welcome, especially by those who like to work hard and be in control of their resources. It portends success and happiness earned by your own hand. Everything can be exactly how you like it, just as you've always imagined. There is the tiniest bit of a caveat, though. Alice is alone and has created a very large garden that separates her from the rest of the world. This is fine; many people prefer solitary lives. However, if you are not one of them, remember that material achievements



are awesome, but if they come at the expense of personal relationships, the trade-off may not be worth it. Perhaps, then, a little compromise is in order.

keywords

DISCIPLINE, SELF-CONFIDENCE,
INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT, MATERIAL
WEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY, SOLITUDE





Ten of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

In the text, Alice's sister is mentioned, but not any other family specifically. Instead, Dinah, Snowball, and Kitty are her closest companions from this world that show up in the stories. In *Wonderland* Alice's sister imagines what waking-world sounds inspired Alice's dream. In *Looking-Glass* Alice does her own analysis, perhaps showing that she is indeed growing up and becoming more self-reflective. Alice talks to the kittens as if they are people, trying to find answers to some of the questions that plague her.

"Now, Kitty, let's consider who it was that dreamed it all. This is a serious question, my dear, and you should *not* go on licking your paw like that—as if Dinah hadn't washed you this morning! You see, Kitty, it *must* have been either me or the Red King. He was part of my dream, of course—but then I was part of his dream, too! *Was* it the Red King, Kitty? You were his wife, my dear, so you ought to know—Oh, Kitty, *do* help to settle it! I'm sure your paw can wait!" But the provoking kitten only began on the other paw and pretended it hadn't heard the question.



No matter how many unanswered questions Alice has and no matter how often the cats will not do as she asks, Alice is safe, comfortable, and loved in the drawing room by the fire.

Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, this card shows the gifts of a stable and loving family, the value of legacy, and the comfort of tradition. While we know all too well that family often brings obligations and dysfunctions that we'd rather do without, we also know that our ancestors and our current families also benefit us. This card reminds you to value those benefits, to honor them within your own life. Throughout this suit we've seen how the material and spiritual worlds are bound together. This is true here, too. Material and spiritual stability and life are important gifts that family members give each other. If this is not true in your life, this card asks you to change that.

keywords

STABLE FAMILY, SECURITY, WEALTH,
ABUNDANCE, COMFORT, ROOTS, PLANS
FOR THE FUTURE, CONNECTION,
BALANCED AND HAPPY LIFE

Page of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

Haigha is a messenger for the White King in Looking-Glass (his name is pronounced to rhyme with "mayor" and consequently sounds like "hare"—indeed, this is our old friend the March Hare from Wonderland). Haigha brings a message to the King: the Lion and the Unicorn are fighting again. He not only acts as messenger (a traditional aspect of the pages), he is an excellent Page of Pentacles because he is prepared for anything. When the King feels faint, he pulls hay and ham sandwiches from his bag. After the fight

Haigha took a large cake out of the bag, and gave it to Alice to hold, while he got out a dish and carving-knife. How they all came out of it Alice couldn't guess. It was just like a conjuring-trick, she thought.





Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Page of Pentacles may technically be young or inexperienced, but out of all the pages, they are the most mature and capable. The tradeoff is that they may be a little slower than the other pages, but that is the price for stability. This page is always prepared, which shows that they have a bit of all the pages in them. They can take the initiative like the Page of Wands, anticipate and solve problems before they happen like the Page of Swords, and are thoughtful like the Page of Cups. These pages can be a bit awkward and lacking in charisma, making them shy. If you notice their abilities and take them under your wing, you will make a loyal and able friend who will be devoted for life.

keywords

MESSAGE, STUDENT, YOUNG OR
INEXPERIENCED PERSON, SUPPORTER,
ENTHUSIASM, PREPARED, MATURE
BEYOND YEARS, DELIBERATE, TAKING
TIME TO DO THINGS CAREFULLY



Knight of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

Tweedledum is a perfect Knight of Pentacles, although admittedly, he doesn't exhibit this knight's best side. In the text, Tweedledum becomes extremely upset, his "voice choking with passion, and his eyes growing large and yellow all in a moment" when he saw a broken rattle under a tree. We learn that he is beside himself because

"It's new, I tell you—I bought it yesterday—my nice NEW RATTLE!" and his voice rose to a perfect scream.

After getting his brother, who broke the rattle and is trying "to hide himself under the umbrella," to agree to have a battle, the Tweedle brothers haul out a pile of odds and ends. Tweedledum says, "Every one of these things has got to go on, somehow or other."

In this short scene we learn that Tweedledum, our Knight of Pentacles, is extremely concerned with material items.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Knight of Pentacles can represent someone who values not only material items but also resources of all sorts. Remember, time is a resource, and this knight has a great affection for efficiency. He also understands that the physical world follows certain laws or principles and cannot always be rushed, so he is the most patient of all the knights.

The really interesting thing about him is that because he understands finances, he knows that money ebbs and flows and that there are always ways to get money. Consequently, he realizes the even higher value of another resource: human relationships. This knight has a sense of devotion to those he cares about that supersedes anything else. If he promises to do a thing, he will do it. Treat him with respect and you will not find a more reliable ally.

keywords

FOCUSED, GOAL-ORIENTED, SHORT
ATTENTION SPAN, UNDERSTANDS THE
MATERIAL WORLD, PATIENT, SLOW,
CAUTIOUS, DEDICATED, DEVOTED

Queen of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

The Sheep shop owner is our Queen of Pentacles. Her store is so filled with things that Alice can barely focus. Not only that, but the items behave so strangely, and yet the Sheep is not bothered at all. Even when Alice's shopping is interrupted by a dreamlike boat trip that ends with them both back in the shop, the Sheep continues knitting and only asks, as if nothing had happened, "Now, what *do* you want to buy?"

After Alice decides to buy an egg, the Sheep takes Alice's money and tells her get her egg herself:

I never put things
into people's
hands—that would
never do—you must
get it for yourself.



Alice doesn't understand why it would never do, but the Sheep knows that it is better for people to reach for their desires on their own. She is happy to help, but doing things for Alice isn't the best way to help. The Sheep is from the "teach a man to fish" school of supporting others.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the Queen of Pentacles understands the physical world and is a master of material things. Using whatever resources are at hand, she can make almost anything she needs. She is a canny businessperson but isn't known for greediness. Because she has made her own way in the world, she understands true value. Lessons are learned through experience, and the Queen of Pentacles will happily help you gain that experience, but she isn't giving anything away. She'll encourage you to figure things out but will not let you fail; she'll step in to save the day when necessary. It's likely because of that that you'll never make the same mistake again. Gain her friendship and aid by appealing to her practical side, ask her to teach you, and be willing to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty, if need be.

• • • • •
keywords

ALLY, CONFIDANTE, HELPER,
AUTHORITY, ACCOMPLISHED,
RESOURCEFUL, GENEROUS,
LEARNS AND TEACHES THROUGH
EXPERIENCE, SUPPORTIVE





King of Pentacles

Through the Looking-Glass

Even though technically the tea party in the text takes place at the March Hare's house, most consider the Hatter as the true host. While he likes a bit of wordplay, he is also extremely focused on the material world. He complains about the butter and the fact that it has crumbs in it. He is very proud of his watch. The March Hare asks Alice if she'll take more tea. She says that since she hasn't had any yet, she can't take *more*. The Hatter chimes in, "You mean you can't take *less*; it's very easy to take *more* than nothing."

During the trial of the Knave of Hearts, we learn that he is a tradesperson. When asked to remove his hat, he says that it isn't his: "I keep them to sell... I've none of my own. I'm a Hatter." As a businessperson, he understands the exchange of goods and resources. Probably, though, he is most knowledgeable about what some may consider the most important resource in our lives: time. Sadly, through a very traumatic experience at a concert (see XV, the Devil), he has learned that time is not to be beaten because there are dire consequences. In the end, though, we remember him most as a host offering questionable delights at an endless party.



Down the Rabbit Hole

In a reading, the King of Pentacles is a lover of life and all its pleasures. The barest minimum can sustain a human body, keeping it alive if not actually thriving. This king knows that whereas bread and water may do, a feast is better. A proper meal can feed all the senses as well as the soul. Abundance is the gift of life, and he intends to accept every good thing life has to offer. To that end, he creates the means to insure he wants for nothing. However, he is not a hoarder. Time is important, and how he fills that time is even more important.

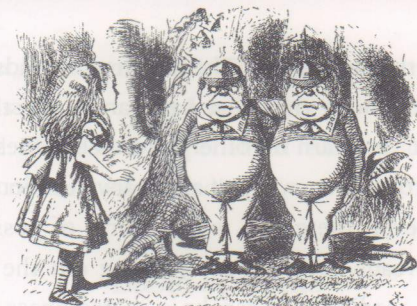
The King of Pentacles enriches his enjoyment of the material world by sharing his bounty with friends and family. Although he is generous, he will not be taken advantage of. If you seek his assistance, don't try to pull anything over on him and don't try to get him interested in hare-brained ideas. Instead, show him how your plan benefits his stability and prosperity and he just may be willing to invest in you. Keep in mind that benefitting his prosperity doesn't necessarily mean monetarily. His enjoyment of life can be increased through good company, time efficiencies, or material improvements of all sorts.



keywords

AUTHORITY FIGURE, DECISION-
MAKER, POWER, EXPERIENCE,
PROSPEROUS, CREATES WEALTH,
VALUES MATERIAL WORLD AND
BEAUTY, GENEROUS, PRACTICAL





CHAPTER 4

Spreads

Tarot spreads are the skeleton of a reading. The cards are the flesh and muscle. The question is the breath. The reader brings the heart and pulse. A tarot reading is a living, organic thing, full of mystery and magic. As the skeleton, the spread forms the structure and gives the reading shape. In more practical terms, the most basic kind of spreads tells the reader how to lay the cards on the table and what position each card falls in.

Most spreads are like this: a diagram for setting down the cards. For beginners or those looking for quick answers, these are the most appropriate ones to use. They are clear and simple, with virtually no moving parts. They provide answers and insight, and



usually that is enough. The first four spreads given here are among the most basic and easiest that I know. If you learn no other spreads but these, you could probably answer just about any question.

However, there is a whole world of possibility with spreads beyond simply laying out the cards. A tarot reading also can be a sacred space where magic occurs. Of course, magic can (and does) occur in readings using simple spreads. But just as Alice was interactive with the worlds in which she found herself, you, as a tarot reader, can interact with your spreads. Perhaps more importantly, you can use them for deeper questions, self-reflection, and healing.

The seven spreads that follow the basic spreads are based on themes explored throughout the Alice stories. They go deeper. They go beyond. They ask more of you as a reader. Consequently, they can deliver more. For these spreads, read through the instructions carefully, as they are not like usual spreads and sometimes ask you to do things you wouldn't normally do. The spreads are a little bit like Wonderland and the Looking-Glass world. Some things feel familiar and others tilt your practice and hopefully your world—just a little—to help you see differently than you have before. Sure, that's a lot of pressure to put on a spread, but I think you'll agree that they are up to the challenge.



First, let's warm up with some tried and true basic spreads. On the other hand, don't let me boss you around. If you are an experienced reader or an adventurous novice, jump ahead!

Basic Spreads

One-Card Reading

The easiest spread is the one-card reading. Ask a question, pull a card, and there's your answer. Simple? Many think so. Effective? For some, it can be. As you work with your cards, you will discover that you have your own natural inclinations and will develop your own style. One card may give you exactly what you need. For others, ironically, one card gives too much information, and those readers prefer to have other cards on the table to help focus the answer.

Three-Card Reading

Three is probably the most popular number of cards for a spread. Whereas one-card readings have their own challenges, three cards seem like just the right amount for virtually anyone and can be incredibly versatile. Generally, the cards are laid out in a horizontal row as shown below:

1 2 3



The positions traditionally assigned to the cards are:

1. **The Past:** energy, people, or events that influence the current question
2. **The Present:** a description of the current situation, which may include previously unknown information
3. **The Future:** the probable outcome if all things remain as they are

However, it is easy and useful to change the position meanings to suit your specific question. Here are some examples that you can use or that may inspire you to select your own three positional meanings:

- 1: The Situation
- 2: The Problem
- 3: The Solution

- 1: The Decision
- 2: Choice A
- 3: Choice B

- 1: The Situation
- 2: What To Do
- 3: What Not To Do



- 1: The Situation
- 2: Challenge
- 3: Advice

- 1: What Person A Wants
- 2: Compromise
- 3: What Person B Wants

Choices Spread

There are many reasons people turn to the cards. One is because they are facing a decision. The spread below is designed for a decision with two choices. If there are more than two, it can easily be modified by simply adding more columns.

1	
Choice A	Choice B
2	5
3	6
4	7

- 1: How you feel about the choice
- 2 and 5: The advantages of the choice
- 3 and 6: The challenges of the choice
- 4 and 7: The likely outcome of the choice



A Simple Yes/No Spread

Some readers refuse to use yes/no spreads. Their reasons include the facts that most questions are not black and white and that simply answering yes or no isn't very useful or interesting. However, this spread addresses both those concerns by building in room for gray areas and by providing more information than just a one-word answer. This spread is from Susyn Blair-Hunt's book *Tarot Prediction and Divination*. It's been a mainstay of my practice for many years.

The cards are laid out in a horizontal row:

1 2 3 4 5

To determine the answer, count the cards thusly:

- Major Arcana cards and even-numbered minors count as yes
- Court cards and odd-numbered minors count as no

Because there are five cards, there is never a tie. If all five cards come up as either yes or no, then the answer is a strong yes or no. This is as rare in the cards as it is in real life. Four yes or no cards indicate a strong yes or no. Three cards are a very clear maybe. These probabilities are, I think, accurate reflections of reality. Few things are certain, a few more are probable, and most will be maybe.

After determining the answer, examine the cards to gain more insight into the situation. This is a spread where you really get to use your intuition because the positions have no assigned meanings. It is a great opportunity to challenge yourself and really get to know how the cards relate to each other and work together to tell a story.

Tarot in Wonderland Spreads

I am so excited to share these spreads with you. As I worked on them, they felt like gifts from Wonderland and almost rose to my consciousness fully formed. When I put them into practice for myself, I was astonished at how different the experiences were from other readings. Perhaps it is not surprising, as these spreads approach working with tarot differently.

In the past, we've laid out the cards and read them, card by card, as discrete points. These spreads invite you to interact with them. As the quantum physicist Carlo Rovelli says, all reality is interaction. Our twentieth-century understanding of a mechanized universe, where all things have their place and function, is evolving. No longer do things exist in isolation; rather, all that is is defined in terms of relationship and relationship-involved interaction. We do

not only have to observe tarot cards in a spread as some immutable truth. We can and should interact with the spread as a way to learn more about ourselves, the nature of reality, and the possibilities of the future. I hope you get as much from these spreads as I have.

Please note the words and instructions used in these spreads:

Select: when instructed to select a card, this means to go through your faceup deck and pick a card that best represents whatever that card stands for: yourself, a goal, etc.

Draw: when instructed to draw a card, this means to randomly pull a facedown card by whatever means you prefer, such as shuffling and drawing from the top or fanning the cards out facedown and randomly pulling one

Falling Down the Rabbit Hole

One reason many turn to tarot readings is to gain as much information as possible in the hopes of making the best decisions. We assume that there is a “best” decision. How is that best decision determined? It’s easy to think that a best choice will lead to abundance or ease of achieving one’s goals. However, as humans, our views and understanding

are limited. Our judgments are based on flawed and incomplete ideas. The truth is that even with tarot, interpreted as it is by imperfect humans and further put into action by querents whose understanding of what the reader says can be very different from what was intended, we do not know and see all. This spread challenges us to explore our complex relationship with the unknown and chance while it also provides information for achieving a goal.

The spread creates an experience similar to Alice’s as she fell down the rabbit hole. As she fell, she was able to examine some things hanging on the walls of the tunnel.

In this spread, as you fall through the rabbit hole, you have the opportunity to examine some things but not others. As you fall through each level, you may select up to one card to turn over. You may also choose to turn over no cards. You are compelled to make choices. Obtain information that will help you in some way or stay closer to the heels of your goal.

The Layout

			A			
1	2	3		4	5	6
			7		8	9
10	11					
				12	B	



Positional Meanings

A: You in pursuit of your goal

B: Your goal

1–12: Various items or information that can be available to you

Preparation

- Select cards for A (yourself in relation to your goal) and B (your goal as you understand it)
- Draw and layout cards 1–12, forming four rows as shown, and keep these cards facedown
- Place A at the top and B at the bottom, and keep these cards faceup

The Reading

Move card A “down the rabbit hole” to the first row. Decide whether you want to pick one of the cards in that row. If so, make your choice and flip that card over. No matter how many cards are in the row, you may only pick one of them. Even though you, like Alice, are falling slowly, there is only time to examine one card. The others remain facedown, never to be looked at, even at the end of the reading.

Repeat this process for the remaining three rows.

Pick up all the unflipped cards and put them back in your deck without looking at them. Interpret the cards (up to four) as information about your goal, how to achieve, and the viability of achieving it. How do the cards you picked transform your ideas about your goal? How does the card that you picked to represent yourself relate to the cards you turned over? This gives you the opportunity to use your intuition and work out what the cards are saying in relation to each other.

Reflect on how you felt about only being able to pick one thing, as well as putting aside the rejected options without looking at them. Do you value the cards you picked more because you picked them or do you worry that you “made the wrong choice” and wished that someone or something else had made the choices? How does it challenge or support your beliefs about reality and the capabilities of a tarot reading?

Through the Looking-Glass

When Alice climbs on the mantle of her fireplace, she looks through the mirror and sees her drawing room—but in reverse and also, interestingly, alive. The mirror doesn’t so much reflect (although it also kind of does) as it reveals. Alice doesn’t look into the



mirror but *through* the mirror. Everything in the room is animated in some way. In some belief systems, people believe that our world is animate and alive. Everything has agency, destiny, energy, and will. We don't always see the world that way. But what if we could see the unseen world that underlies our ordinary reality? This spread helps you do just that.

Compared to some of the other spreads in this section, this one is the most straightforward—because, let's face it, seeing the unseen world is revelation enough.

Use this spread to see something in your life differently. After the directions, there is information for a modified version of this reading if you are interested in seeing something through a specific mirror or lens.

The Layout

1 A 2 4
3

The Positional Meanings

A: The object you are observing (the object can be a physical thing, a person, a situation, a belief, a bad habit, a specific tarot card that you don't understand or don't like, etc.)

1: The lens through which you see the object



- 2: The looking-glass (the particular lens that this looking-glass provides)
- 3: What you must discard in order to see what the looking-glass is revealing
- 4: How the mirror shows you its version of card A

Preparation

- Select a card for A (the item you want to observe), choosing a card that most closely represents how you see it in your ordinary reality
- Draw cards 1–4 and place faceup as shown above
- Place card A faceup as shown above

The Reading

This is a simple reading, with no moving parts. Simply interpret as you would normally interpret a spread.

Modification

In the spread above, the cards themselves select the lens through which you see the object. Sometimes we want to see something through a specific lens. For example, if there is a difficult person in your life and you'd like to see them through the eyes of compassion, then in addition to selecting card A, you





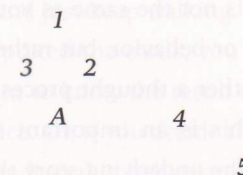
would select card 2. In this example, perhaps you would pick the Empress or the Ace of Cups as a mirror of compassion. If you want to explore something that you feel obsessed with, you may choose Temperance as the mirror. If you want to check to see if you are assessing something or someone fairly, the Justice card might be a good mirror to use. And actually, if you are questioning your own judgment in any situation, it would be interesting to *draw* card A instead of selecting it, and let the cards show what lens you are really using.

The Mad Tea-Party

The mad tea-party is mad in part because the characters involved keep repeating the same actions over and over again, forever caught in a cycle. This is one definition of insanity. Of course, we are not speaking of clinical insanity or madness but rather our own unreasonable and often uncontrollable emotional or mental reactions to things. We are usually aware of the times when we react in ways that are disproportionate to the situation, but we don't always examine them. When we let these behaviors persist, we are kept in bondage to them and are not truly free. This spread can help you understand your own "mad" behavior and find a solution to overcome it.



The Layout



The Positional Meanings

A: Your madness

- 1: The trigger
- 2: Your reaction
- 3: The result
- 4: How to walk away
- 5: Result

Preparation

- Select card A by picking a card that best represents how you view or understand the behavior you wish to change; lay faceup as shown above
- Draw cards 1–4 and lay them out faceup as shown above
- Draw card 5 and place it facedown as shown above

The Reading

The spread is designed like a clock, with one card leading to the other. The trigger is the sort of thing



that sets off your undesired behavior. Card 2, your reaction, is not the same as your madness, which is an action or behavior, but rather your internal reaction, whether a thought process or emotional experience. This is an important step because understanding the underlying story that happens instantaneously between the trigger and your madness can be key to breaking the cycle. It is usually a story that perhaps once was true but is no longer true. It keeps you in bondage because part of you still behaves as if it were true.

Card 3 is the result of your mad behavior. This card is usually complex because the result in such circumstances is usually not great—an escalation of tension, anger, a closing-off of communication. However, we do not engage in repeated behavior unless we are, on some level, receiving some kind of reward or benefit, so try to interpret this card from both angles.

Card 4 gives you advice on how to walk away from your undesired behavior, just as Alice walked away from the mad tea-party. This may not be easy. Even in the story as Alice walked away she noticed that “neither of the others took the least notice of her going, though she looked back once or twice, half hoping that they would call after her.” Your undesired behavior is likely the result of long repetition. The behavior has taken on a kind of life of its own. Once something



has been given life, it will fight to stay alive. Be strong and smart like Alice and just keep walking.

After you’ve interpreted the cards, you may turn over card 5 if you want to know the result of putting this advice into practice. Or, if you decide that simply being free from an undesirable behavior is enough, just put the card back in your deck without looking at it.

The White Rabbit’s Stress

In the Alice stories we know the White Rabbit as a very stressed-out creature. He has good reason to be stressed, living as he does under the cruel and unreasonable authority of both the Duchess and the Queen of Hearts. He worries about the time and being late is his stressor, but it is fear of the Duchess or Queen’s reaction that gives the stressor power. While we can’t help him, we can use his experience as a template to find our own solutions to the stressors in our lives. Items associated with the White Rabbit (his gloves, scroll, and fan) are used to represent various aspects of the stressful experience.

The Layout

1/1a

2/2a

3/3a 4/4a 5/5a 6/6a

**The Positional Meanings**

- 1: Watch (your stressor, whether a person, event, or situation)
- 2: Rabbit (you in relation to your stressor)
- 3: Queen (the underlying fear that causes the stress)
- 4: Gloves (how you currently prepare to deal with the stressor)
- 5: Scroll (what you currently believe to be true regarding the stressor)
- 6: Fan (what you currently do when in the midst of the stress)
- 1a–6a: the same positions but showing an alternative approach dealing with the stressor in order to alleviate or eliminate the stress

Preparation

- Draw cards 1a–6a and lay them facedown as shown above
- Draw cards 1–6 and lay them faceup on top of cards 1a–6a

The Reading

Interpret the faceup cards first to gain an understanding of how you function and react to your stressor. Then turn the facedown cards up on top of the original cards for advice on how to better



approach your stressor. To gain more clarity, compare and contrast cards 1 and 1a, 2 and 2b, etc. This will help highlight concrete differences, making your transition to more peacefully moving through life even easier.

How to Play Croquet

During the Queen's croquet game, Alice is faced with a situation that she thought she understood because she had played croquet in her real life. She discovers that in Wonderland the game is very different. New items replace the equipment she was accustomed to using, and nothing behaves as it should. The flamingo/mallet has a mind of its own. The hedgehog/ball moves on its own. The arches won't stay in one place. When you are facing a situation that isn't going as expected, this spread can help you get a handle on things.

The Layout

	2/2a
1	4/4a
	3/3a

The Positional Meanings

- 1: You
- 2: How you are handling the flamingo (a tool or action you are using)





3: How you are handling the hedgehog (a tool or action you are using)

4: The arch (your objective)

2a: Something about the nature of the flamingo that can help you use it better

3a: Something about the nature of the hedgehog that can help you use it better

4a: Something about the nature of the arch that can help you meet it better

Preparation

- Draw cards 2a–4a and place facedown as shown above
- Draw cards 1–4 and place them faceup as shown above

The Reading

Interpret cards 1–4 as usual to gain an understanding of your current approach. Turn cards 2a–4a faceup next to cards 2–4 to reveal a better understanding of the tools you are trying to utilize and the goal you are trying to achieve.

Which Way Should You Go?

When Alice asks the Cheshire Cat which path she should take, he replies that it depends on where she wants to get to. After her choices are explained



(either the Hatter or the Hare), she makes her decision and starts off down the chosen path. This spread helps you make a choice in a very interesting way. Like the Falling Down the Rabbit Hole reading, this one may challenge you on a few levels. The discomfort is intentional as it shakes you out of your normal state, which can lead to a very new perspective.

The Layout:

	1	
2	6	
3	7	
4	8	
5	9	

The Positional Meanings

1: You

2–4: The path to choice A

5: The outcome of choice A

6–8: The path to choice B

9: The outcome of choice B

Note: you can add as many paths to this spread as you have choices

Preparation

- Write your choices on small, individual pieces of paper, fold them up so you don't know which is which, and mix them up



and lay one at the end of each “path” (you will not know which choice each path leads to until you finish the reading)

- Draw and lay card 1 faceup as shown above
- Draw and lay cards 2–4 and 6–8 (as well as any additional “paths”) facedown as shown above
- Draw and lay cards 5 and 9 (as well as any additional “outcomes”) faceup as shown above

The Reading

Observe cards 5 and 9. Not knowing which choice either card is associated with, select the outcome that you like best. Take the cards from the path (or paths) not selected and put them back in your deck without looking at them. Move the piece of paper or papers off to the side. You are left with just one path and one piece of paper.

Turn over the facedown cards to learn about the path you must take to reach the outcome you desire.

Finally, unfold the piece of paper to reveal the choice you have made.

Note: If none of the outcomes appeals to you, then either select the one that is least objectionable or determine to not choose any of them at this time.



Who Are You?

Alice’s adventures, even or perhaps especially the most difficult ones, help her to discover who she is and the type of person she wants to be. This is one of the most important uses of tarot: to know ourselves and to become the best version of ourselves possible. This spread, inspired by the Caterpillar’s insistence that Alice explain herself, helps you to discover your best and worst qualities and gives advice on how to diminish one and nourish the other. Like the mad tea-party reading, this one is straightforward in terms of the layout. Also like the mad tea-party reading, it asks you to dig deeply into your own nature and to face it with complete honesty.

This reading looks at your higher self, positioned like the Caterpillar on top of the mushroom. Remember, one side of the mushroom made Alice grow larger and the other, smaller. In this reading, the focus is not on your physical stature but on your character. One side of the mushroom feeds your small self (your small, petty, or otherwise less desirable tendencies). The other side feeds your large self (your best self).

The Layout

		1		
3	4	6	5	
		2		





The Positional Meanings

- 1: Your higher self
- 2: Your default or normal everyday self
- 3: Your smaller self
- 4: What feeds your smaller nature
- 5: Your larger self
- 6: What feeds your larger nature

Preparation

- Simply draw all the cards and lay them out as shown above

The Reading

Interpret the cards as you normally would. If the card representing your higher self reveals something that you consider negative, first make sure that you are not reverting to a stock interpretation; try to look deeper or consider other facets or aspects of the card. If it still feels like something is wrong, it could be that you've neglected your higher self to the extent that it has become a shadow of itself. If this is the case, it needs to be healed and nourished before it can act as a guide for you. Pull an additional card to see how you can help your higher self gain its natural robustness. Notice what feeds your smaller nature and make plans to stop feeding it. Be prepared for pushback. Your smaller self has enjoyed freedom and life

and, as mentioned earlier, once something has been given life, it will fight to stay alive. To help counter that pushback, pay particular attention to what feeds your larger nature and fill yourself with that.

Part of the inspiration for this reading, in addition to the Caterpillar, is the Native American story about the boy who tells his grandfather that two wolves live inside him and fight all the time. He doesn't know which one will win. The grandfather wisely advises, "The one that you feed."



CONCLUSION

It is hard to believe our time together is already done. Blending the Alice stories and tarot has been one of my most fulfilling projects, and I truly hope you've found the journey just as fascinating. Hopefully this book and deck will inspire other Alice-themed projects because, honestly, this literature is so rich that it can be interpreted in tarot terms so many ways.

There are entire groups and literary societies devoted to Lewis Carroll and his writing for a reason. Even though he claimed they were nonsense stories, for some reason people continue to find extraordinary meaning and sense in them. This is just one of

the qualities that the Alice stories (as well as Carroll's other work) share with tarot.

Is anything truly random and without meaning? I don't think so. It is the nature of human beings to seek meaning, and if you seek it, you will surely find it. Enjoy the treasure hunt, and no matter where you go or what you do, remember: we are all mad here.



Finding the Tarot in Wonderland *and the* Wonderland in Tarot



Discover how to navigate the dreamlike world of *Tarot in Wonderland*. This book shares two perspectives for each card—one explores how the cards relate to Alice's adventures and the other explores how the card can be interpreted in a tarot reading. Author Barbara Moore also includes basic and advanced spread ideas to help you get the most from your deck.

Whether you're most interested in using tarot for divination or for your own inner work, the strangely familiar, mirrorlike sensibility of these cards provides new doorways for the movement of spiritual and emotional energy. In the pages of this illustrated guidebook, you will learn how to work with the motif of opposites, read the Alice stories as sacred texts, and find answers and insights in the cards.



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