



MJ CULLINANE

# URBAN CROW

ORACLE

GUIDEBOOK



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*Thank you to all who have bought and  
pre-ordered this deck—it is because of your  
support that I am able to focus on creating!*

*Thank you as always to my beautiful  
daughter who keeps me grounded!*

*And thank you to my beautiful, funny,  
and at times obnoxious neighborhood  
crows who serve as inspiration!*

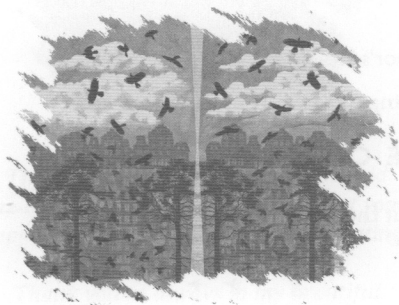


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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The *Urban Crow Oracle* is an illustrated love letter to my neighborhood corvids who provide daily creative inspiration and, not to mention, offer quite a bit of entertainment with their antics. They are just as beautiful as they are intelligent.

Although many illustrations in this deck were inspired by personal interactions with these mystical birds, it is with thanks to John Marzluff's book *Gifts of the Crow*, which inspired this deck and many of the cards.

Living in the city, crows create a bridge between humans and nature. We interact with each other. We observe them; they observe us. We learn from them; they learn from us. From continent to continent, we share stories about crows and ravens, similar experiences that transcend language. It is through crows that we are all connected.



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CROWS

There is no right way or wrong way to read the *Urban Crow Oracle*. But, just like meeting a new friend, before you jump in, introduce yourself to your inner crow energy. Hold the cards and look at the artwork. Take notice of what stands out and how you feel with each image.

When you hold the card, look at it and feel the energy the crow is offering.

The birds of this deck come together, welcoming you into their world. They are yours and you are theirs. Let these wise, intuitive, and mystical creatures guide you, comfort you, provide inspiration, and spark ideas.

Like my *Crow Tarot*, the more time you spend with the deck, the more trust builds, and a relationship is formed.

Fly through the veil, knowing you have the support and protection of the world's most mystical bird.

With love and blessings, MJ

## THE CARDS

## 1. ABUNDANCE

The crows on one side of the bay know that the cannery is a source for a steady and easy meal, making gathering food an effortless task, and as a result they spend their days enjoying their location. However, the crows who reside on the other side of the bay, where food is scarce, find searching for food much more difficult, and as a result much of their days are spent focused on survival. The crows who do not live on the cannery side of the bay are unaware that an easy food source exists just a short distance away, nor do they have the time or energy to waste exploring areas farther away.

Abundance brings a reminder that there is a place where you, too, will find a myriad of possibilities. Focus your energy and attention on not what you lack but what you know is out there waiting for you. Let your intuition be your guide! Abundance may appear if you need a reminder that from your current position you might not see what is out there waiting for you. Of course most of the time this card represents a positive outcome; however, because these crows can be a bit cheeky, the meaning could very well indicate an abundance of something less favorable, such as an abundance of water in your basement.

## 2. ANOMALY

In a sea of black crows, the one that grabs our attention is the rare melanin-lacking one. Something is going to appear, and it will be hard not to notice or avoid it. It is strikingly clear that what you encounter will be abnormally good or perhaps abnormally bad. Either way, it will stand out in some way.

Anomaly may appear if you are contemplating an event within a relationship. You may find yourself questioning if someone's behavior, good or bad, serves as an indication of who they truly are or if the situation was a rare event and out of character. Sometimes we just need to have one small encounter, an outlier, to understand a greater potential or to be able to rule out an absolute.

### 3. ANTICIPATION

Each morning when I wake up, there is a crow outside my window on the streetlamp anticipating the arrival of a meal. Perhaps I trained the crow or maybe it was the other way around! When there is a pattern, we begin to expect a particular outcome. Anticipation brings hope and butterflies in the belly as we expect something to happen that brings joy or satisfaction. There is but one warning: be careful of any attachments held for the desired outcome. If what you receive falls short of expectations, the feeling of joy can transform into disappointment.

What are you looking forward to at this moment? How will you adjust if your expectations are not met?

### 4. BALANCE

Have you ever noticed how even on windy days, crows and other birds can stay perfectly positioned on a thin telephone wire? They seem almost unfazed or unbothered by the wind. When we are in balance, we meet external forces with our internal strength, giving each space to exist in harmony.

When Balance appears you may need to call upon your inner strength, as an approaching situation may test your ability to stay cool and composed. Just like the wind, it, too, will make its presence known and then move along. Balance may also appear when your daily schedule could use some reorganizing. Are you creating time for yourself, or is your day consumed with tasks that drain your energy?

## 5. BATTLE

Crows are incredibly territorial and will fight intruders to maintain order within their space. You may find that defensive feelings are brewing, whether from within or from an external source. If you have perhaps stepped on some toes or entered into someone's territory uninvited, be prepared to deal with the consequences. This card may also indicate that you will need to defend yourself against someone attempting to infiltrate your space.

Take notice of the crows sitting on the wires. They are not involved but are watching on to see which bird is the victor. This may indicate that when it comes to your situation and the battle that is brewing, there may not be much in the way of outside support for either side. This could be an advantage or disadvantage depending on your position.

## 6. BOND

Aside from a few casual swingers (generally male), crows and ravens mate for life. Bond represents a karmic relationship, a connection that goes beyond our everyday existence. Whether it is a relationship to a person, a career, a place, or a hobby, this soul-level connection is deep and strong. You can feel it course within your veins. Bond creates an energy that pulls you closer to where you need to be and will tug back when you get too far away.

When you draw the Bond card, use this as an opportunity to focus on areas of your life that feel deeply connected because it is here that you find your strength to push forward or conjure the enthusiasm needed to reach a goal.

## 7. CACHING

One day while feeding my neighborhood crows, I noticed one of them using their beak to push around some decaying leaves and then dig a hole. The bird looked around, checking to make sure it wasn't being watched, and then swiftly, opened its mouth and dropped in the food. It was saving the dog kibble I had given it for later. The crow didn't want to eat the food right away, but it also didn't want to leave it around for some other creature to enjoy.

You may find yourself either keeping an idea or possession hidden till the time is right or simply unwilling to let go of something you aren't using out of fear that someone else may benefit from your release or surrendering. Sometimes the moment is not right to move forward; however, it doesn't mean that the time will never arrive. You may be working on a project that holds a great deal of promise, but you are unable to devote the energy at the moment. Setting the idea aside does not mean giving it up; it just means that you recognize there will be value in waiting. Caching may also indicate that you will benefit from investing. This may be investing in yourself or investing in a financial institution.

## 8. COMMITMENT

Nature photographer June Hunter has documented the lives of a pair of crows she calls George and Mabel and their commitment to one another. When George's beak broke due to an accident, his loving and faithful partner, Mabel, took over to ensure that George was fed and protected. When they coupled up, they agreed for better or worse, in sickness and in health. This loving pair remains committed.

The Commitment card asks that you examine areas where you have entered into an obligation. Are you ready to put in the work if needed? Are you willing to sacrifice something to ensure that you stay true to your word? If it is a goal you are committed to seeing through to completion, are you willing to offer your time and resources? Think about the commitments you have made. Do they raise your vibration just thinking about them, or do you feel a heaviness associated with the situation? Of course we all have our moments of feeling less than enthusiastic; the question you may need to consider is if those moments of angst and resentment outweigh the love and support your commitment brings to your situation.

## 9. COMMUNICATION

When I lived in my third floor apartment, one of my neighborhood crows would often come calling on my balcony in the morning (this was before we adopted our pup, Layla, who took up chasing the crows away). There was one crow in particular that stood out that my daughter and I eventually named “Brave One” because he or she would go right up to our sliding glass door and rap-a-tap-tap impatiently with its beak. This delightfully persistent bird was looking for a handout.

Communication brings the message to speak up—state what you want. You may think those around you know your needs and desires, but that may not be the case. Now is the time to articulate your wishes. Communication asks that you get clear on what you want so that there will be no misunderstanding or confusion later. Although Communication may point to a situation on an earthly level, it may also indicate that you need to be clearer with what you want when communicating with your spirit guides or higher-self. Are you being too vague? Are you asking for what you want exactly?

## 10. COMMUNITY

Here in the Seattle area, we have three big roosts. The largest, I believe, is the one at the UW Bothell campus. Each of these roosts serves as a community. It is a sanctuary; it is a place for the crows to retreat to in the evening where they are accepted and comforted. Lean on your community; lean into the groups of people who you feel most at peace with during times of friction or stress. When you pull Community, think of it as a nudge to connect with a group that interests you. Not only will you find new opportunities there, you will become part of a group focused on a similar goal.

Community may also indicate that you would benefit from examining your relationships within a group or belief system. Are your goals and beliefs in alignment with the group's philosophy? Do you remain within a community because it is simply part of your history, but your involvement or participation is limited and as result you feel disconnected? You may need to consider if the philosophy of a community that you no longer connect with is still impacting your decisions or your perception of events.



## 11. CURIOSITY

An open door is an open invitation for this brave crow! Now is an excellent time to consider what treasures you will find when you are brave enough to explore. Curiosity asks that you open doors, look inside, and analyze the situation. This is a time to dig in and do your research! Curiosity indicates that you are just scratching the surface. The possibilities are vaster than you are currently seeing; however, you need to get inquisitive. When you start asking questions, a path will unfold. When Curiosity appears you will be better served by putting aside your emotions and thinking like a researcher.

## 12. DIRECTION

Each evening at around dusk, hundreds of crows fly over my apartment on their way to their evening roost. They are not distracted by the sights and sounds of the city. The crows are focused on moving in one direction. When you know where you are going, it is easier to stay on the path. Direction brings clarity and creates a road map to success. Direction is a call for you to find your North Star, your point on the map that represents your big goal, the destination that no roadside attraction can lure you away from. When you know exactly where you are going, you will be able to stay focused. You will be able to recognize when an opportunity is nothing more than a tempting diversion from your goal. When you pull the Direction card, take time to check to see if you know where you are going. Do you see your path before you?

## 13. DISPLACEMENT

When a crow is angry, it can't always take out its anger on the source, as it may be gone or too significant a threat. Needing a release, crows will express their displeasure in, at times, destructive ways.

Be aware if you are lashing out at someone or taking out your frustration on an innocent bystander because you feel powerless. Emotions centered around shame and how we view our position within an experience can also contribute to displacement. When Displacement appears you may need to consider if you are confronting the source of your anger or just looking for an easy target. Be aware of how your inability to confront a source of frustration may be causing a breakdown in other relationships that you value.

Displacement may also call to your attention an awareness of being someone's punching bag when they are stressed or in a state of shame. Depending on your situation, it may be an opportunity to extend empathy and compassion, or you may need to consider if the relationship is worth maintaining.

## 14. DISTANCE

To get the lay of the land, sometimes you need to take a look from a distance. Distance indicates that you would be best served by taking a step back so that you can see the big picture. You may be focusing too narrowly on one area while there is a whole world out there to explore. You may need to consider if growth within a situation or a relationship is at risk of being stunted due being overcritical or nitpicky. Are you able to see the potential even if there are a few flaws? Of course you might find Distance appears when you are too focused on one positive aspect of a situation or event while missing all of the negative outcomes that may potentially exist. Distance asks if you are too close to a situation to remain impartial or unbiased. You might benefit from taking a leave of absence or literally putting some distance between you and the situation by taking a trip.

## 15. DISTRACTION

Two crows work together to distract a dog. The purpose? To steal something it values, something that provides nourishment: its food! Someone or a situation may be calling you away from what you need to focus on, and as a result you may end up losing something of value. Where are you turning your attention? Will it prove beneficial or a waste of time and resources? Distraction appears when your attention is focused on daydreaming or engaging in activities that take you away from doing the work that in the end will create success. Distraction can be as simple as being lured into bingeing your favorite show or focusing on a flight of fancy that will prove to be nothing more than a waste of time. When Distraction is pulled in a reading, you may need to consider if the situation you are inquiring about is in fact nothing more than a distraction, something that is taking your attention away from a more valuable opportunity. It may also serve as a warning that a successful conclusion may be at risk due to something drawing your attention away from the goal.

## 16. DOMINANCE

Like all creatures, crows establish a pecking order, and to do so the stronger bird asserts its power. Dominance indicates that you may be feeling restricted by someone or that a stressful situation is impacting your thoughts and decisions. Someone or something may be flexing their muscle, which will cause friction within, as you may not be able to fight or defend yourself. This card may represent a boss who makes you work overtime, a partner who always picks the restaurant, or a friend who always has to win. It may also indicate your need to be in control.

On a positive note, Dominance may indicate your power over something and your ability to control a situation.

## 17. EXPOSED

Alone and unprotected, the fledgling is vulnerable to attack. Exposed may indicate you are being thrust into the spotlight and potentially not in a good way, depending on the circumstances. As a result, you may feel helpless and fear possible criticism. Exposed may also point to an open and free opportunity for the taking, as there will not be much in the way of opposition. Exposed speaks to the feelings that surface as a result of feeling vulnerable. Are you comfortable putting yourself out there? Does facing criticism cause you to freeze up? What opportunities have you possibly missed because of a fear of being seen? Exposed may also present itself as a call to examine your situation more carefully as a piece of valuable information is becoming clearer. Something or someone may expose their flaws or weaknesses, and this may prove to be beneficial information in the future.

## 18. FEAR

Have you seen crows hanging around a scarecrow? I am sure they were once afraid of it, but over time with knowledge, that fear disappeared. Are there old beliefs passed down from generation to generation that hold you back out of fear? Fear asks that you examine your beliefs—are they in sync with reality? Are your decisions and actions based on old information that no longer holds relevance today? Sure, fear can save us from making painful or costly mistakes; however, if given too much power, fear also creates inaction and stagnation. Fear prevents our creative mind from exploring all possible solutions to our problems. When this card appears, you may consider looking inward and checking in to see where you are allowing fear to limit your potential.

As the saying goes, "Fortune favors the brave." Just as the crow on the card reaps the benefits of a field of untapped potential as the fearful crows hold back, you, too, have an opportunity where fear keeps others at bay. For you, the fearless, all you need to do is swoop in and seize the moment.

## 19. FREEDOM

Freedom brings the message that you do not need to stay where you are; you can change your position. You can rise up and see the world from a different point of view. You have the wings; all you need is the desire and self-confidence to fly.

Freedom brings movement, flexibility, and the ability to expand your horizons. Whether it is freedom to travel, freedom to make the decisions at work or freedom to splurge on your favorite meal, when this card appears, you may need to ask yourself some questions: In which areas of your life would you like to expand your freedom? What is your definition of freedom?

## 20. GHOSTS

Shadows of the past. Let them visit, but don't let them stay. They no longer hold substance in your world, and if they linger too long, they may become trapped in your psyche. Have you ever found yourself having an argument with someone who wasn't even in the room? The argument plays out in your head. That situation that brought about the feelings and emotions that led to the internal disagreement is a ghost. Like a ghost repeating the pattern of walking through a room as it has done each night since its human form passed, it is stuck in a moment in time. There is nothing that can be said or done that will change what occurred. Ghosts asks that you examine your feelings regarding a past event. Are you able to find acceptance and move forward into healing? Are you unable to forgive or seek forgiveness, allowing old wounds of the past to remain open? Pay attention to when ghosts appear; they may indicate the source of a block. It might be time for an exorcism.

## 21. GIFTS

When I would discover a foreign object on my apartment balcony, my heart would sing. One time my gift arrived in the form of a bright green cap, and another time it was a very long stick! Crows express gratitude and appreciation when they feel a connection with a human. Gifts asks that you take a moment to recognize a connection and make someone's day by dropping off a gift.

Gifts come in all shapes and sizes. Not everything needs to be shiny or valuable; sometimes a gift is simply a smile or someone holding the door for you. Gifts during a reading may appear as a reminder to be grateful for all the good things that have happened during your situation. Just like crows dropping off a bottle cap as a loving gesture, the Universe sends us gifts every day; all it wants in return is to know that they are appreciated. Imagine if you gave someone a gift and they didn't acknowledge it—you might think twice before giving them another. Now think about when you give someone a gift and they are appreciative; it makes you want to give them another one. The Universe is just like that. Gifts is simply a reminder to say thank you so that the Universe will continue sending you more!

## 22. GRIEF

Crows make time to grieve. They have funerals and gather solemnly around their fallen friends in silence. It is essential to allow yourself time to feel sadness for a loss, honor the memory, and express your emotions. Healing begins the moment you confront the source of your pain.

Grief may appear if you have suppressed emotions around a loss; for growth to take place, you must address an ending, which allows for closure. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve; this is a ritual that is unique to you. Make time to mourn. Allow the feelings to surface because there are important lessons within the sorrow for the living.

## 23. GROWTH

Crows become more vocal and aggressive when it is time for the young ones to learn how to fly. This is a pivotal moment in the young bird's life, and once this lesson has been mastered, the world becomes so much greater. You, too, may be at a crucial moment, and the lesson may be difficult at first, but once you understand it, a new world will open to you.

Growth directs your attention to areas of your life that have become remarkably different as a result of gaining a skill or understanding that you did not possess in the past. For example, learning a new language may have opened the door to new opportunities. Developing an understanding of your triggers that lead to sabotaging behavior or habits can help you overcome a block that once created stagnation. You may pull this card if you are on the cusp of a growth spurt as a change that will move your life in a new direction is approaching.

## 24. ILLUSION

Have you ever been absolutely, positively, 100 percent certain about a situation only to find that the complete opposite is true? During a reading, Illusion may surface to help you uncover if you are clinging to a narrative that suits your feelings about a situation rather than the facts. For example, the person who spends their day angry that their email was not answered. They assume the recipient read it and ignored it. All that energy being upset and angry could have been avoided if they just realized that they themselves forgot to hit "send." Illusion might appear if we are operating on false assumptions or if we are in denial and do not want to accept the reality of a situation. When we double down or commit to the story we created in our minds, our actions and behaviors are then a by-product of what we want or assume to be true. If our assumptions are wrong, our actions and behaviors may have negative consequences. Does your interpretation match reality, or are you acting on an illusion?



## 25. INFLUENCE

Like impressionable teenagers, crows pick up on our habits, even the bad ones. Crows have been known to get drunk as well as smoke! Are you letting someone influence your behavior? There is a loss of control when influence is at play. A more dominant personality may make you feel inclined to engage in a risky behavior you would otherwise avoid. On the flip side, you may find someone strong and healthy to be inspirational, and because of their influence, you, too, feel motivated to make positive changes.

Influence brings to your awareness the decisions that you may not have made if it weren't for an outside force leading the way. Like a piper leading the way with intoxicating music, you may be caught in another's spell. A situation—whether it be current, from the past, or in the near future—may be the result of someone's charm or talent at swaying people. When Influence appears, consider taking a moment to examine if you have been swayed into making a decision that you might not have made if the situation were different. For example, a salesperson may influence your decision to buy something you can't afford if they know the right way to manipulate you.

## 26. INSIGHT

Crows and ravens are problem solvers. Crows make tools and learn from each action. In this illustration, you see the crow dropping rocks into the water. After testing a couple of rocks, the crow began to understand the relationship between the stones and the water. It learned that with each rock, the water would rise, and as a result the buoyant shrimp would rise too. Insight asks that you take the time to examine your situation. Test out different strategies to gain wisdom. When you understand the relationship between all contributing factors, you will be able to identify actions that yield little benefit or remove any obstacles that may have been in your way, and in turn apply strategies that expedite success.

## 27. ISOLATION

Even when surrounded by a group, we all have experienced a feeling of being alone at one time or another. You may need to consider if you are holding back input out of fear of expressing an unpopular opinion. This card may also indicate a group or community that didn't connect with your beliefs, causing you to feel ostracized. Use this time to look inward, examining what ideas or insights come to mind. Isolation may also indicate a need to remove yourself from a situation to quiet your mind and contemplate your next move.

Isolation may bring to the surface feelings associated with abandonment and can represent a block centered around a fear that your actions may lead to not being accepted or removed from a group. Fear of being cast aside might result in you limiting your potential by withholding ideas or suppressing inspiration. For example, if you grew up in a home where lack and scarcity of resources was a dominating factor and now as an adult you have opportunities to create financial freedom, the fear of no longer fitting in with your family may prevent you from reaching your greatest potential. If you are successful, you may risk conflict with your family as your paths diverge.

## 28. LUCK

It is a happy day for the crow who finds fish raining from the sky. Something good is coming, be sure to position yourself in a place that will yield the best results.

Luck does not happen by accident, although it often feels that way. Luck occurs when we are in the right position at the right time, with the right skills. When Luck appears good fortune is coming, but it will be your talents that will seal the deal. Imagine being fortunate enough to be on an elevator with the person who you have been wanting to pitch an idea to. It's only luck if you are prepared and ready to articulate your vision; otherwise, it's just another elevator ride.

## 29. MEMORY

Crows never forget a friend or a foe. In a changing populated landscape, these remarkable birds recognize the faces of those who have hurt as well as helped. When crows spot a predator or known human who has been less than kind, they go into a frenzy, calling out to all that danger is near. They spread the word about the good stuff too, such as people who tend to share their lunch or places where food is often discarded. What is remarkable is they also pass down the memory of their experience to their young. As complex as these birds are, forgiveness does not seem too likely. Memory asks you to examine areas where you may be letting a past hurt or situation impact how you engage with someone today. Are you cautious or holding a grudge? Do you expect others to behave in a certain way because of past behavior?

## 30. MIMICRY

The crow's call was so humanlike that it convinced the dog that it was its guardian calling out. Although most cases are found within domesticated crows, like parrots, crows have an ability to mimic sounds from voices to sirens. Mimicry may arise in a reading if you need to consider if someone is putting on airs or is pretending to be something that is not genuine. On the other hand, it may be you that might benefit from a little mimicry. Sometimes we need to fake it till we make it and project a persona that is not our own to get a foot in the door, but be cautious. The truth may come out, and you may be required to prove your authenticity.

Mimicry may also indicate that someone is trying to sound or pass themselves off as something other than themselves to gain favor or your attention. You may need to ask yourself if this individual is showing you their authentic self or simply pretending to be something you find more attractive.

## 31. MISCHIEF

Crows and ravens have a penchant for pulling tails: dog tails, cat tails, cow tails, even other bird tails. If it has a tail, a crow will feel compelled to pull it. It appears that some may be doing this to distract the animal, but other times it is purely just to get a rise out of the other creature. Mischief indicates an annoyance, nothing detrimental, just a situation that causes a bit of short-lived grief. You may be the target of someone's delinquency or bad behavior. This card may also indicate that you need to add some innocent mischief or passion in your life.

## 32. NATURE

It is our connection to nature that fills our spirit and reunites us with divine energy. Living in a city full of concrete buildings, it can feel as though Mother Nature resides so far away, but she is here in the grass that sprouts up in the cracks on the sidewalk, in the overgrown empty lots, in the birds that mingle with us in the park. All we need to do is look, and we will find that connection. Nature asks that you see the evidence of divine energy that is all around you, regardless of the landscape.

When Nature appears it may also indicate that you are long overdue for some outside time. Take this as a cue to go for a walk, head out into a park, or go to the beach. New ideas and inspiration will come through connecting with nature.

### 33. NIGHT

It is here that all the chatter, all the noise, all the action of the day subsides, and quiet returns. Night creates a space to contemplate the day as a whole. What event had the most significant impact and will help you grow? Are there events such as petty squabbles that serve you little and can be released into the dark? Night brings to your awareness your sleep hygiene.

The ability to get a solid eight hours of sleep has been proven to not only help your mood but also improve your health. Both dementia and heart disease are linked to lack of sleep. Do you practice healthy sleeping habits? Are your nights filled with restorative sleep, or does your racing mind keep you awake? When the Night card appears, you may need to focus on creating a healthy bedtime routine.

### 34. OBSERVATION

The crow watches the spider, intrigued by how it catches its meals. The crow could simply pluck that spider right up, but instead it decides to learn a little first. Observation asks that you hold back from reacting and take some time to analyze the situation. There may be something of value that will only reveal itself if given the time. This card may also indicate that you would be better served by being a spectator and staying out of a situation. You will learn more from listening than from talking.

## 35. PERSPECTIVE

Crows really do hang upside down! The birds take this position to get at the food that would not be attainable otherwise. When you take a moment to stop, disengage, and open your mind to seeing the situation from a different perspective, you might realize there is more information available that will assist in ensuring the best course of action is taken. When Perspective appears your situation will benefit from slowing down and holding off on any significant decision-making, as you may not have all the information that is available to ensure that all aspects of the situation are considered.

## 36. PLAY

Crows are not always so serious. They enjoy the company of friends and spend time engaging in play. When this card appears, it is time to relax, exercise your creative mind—and maybe your body too—and play. When we give our brains something different to consider, something that brings us joy, they will reward us by being more productive when it comes time to go back to work.

In a world where we are constantly consuming information, Play asks that you disconnect and allow your brain to create some output. It is during play that our creativity expands. It is during states of play that our minds relax and out of the blue we discover the solutions to problems that may have been eluding us.

## 37. PREPARATION

Here in the Seattle area we have lots of ferries, and these smart birds have mastered the ferry schedule. The crows know when the boat will return and on which side of the road the cars will disembark. While the ferry is crossing the sound, the birds harvest the clams from the nearby beach. They bring the clams over to the ferry landing and strategically place the clams just right so that when the cars leave the boat, they run over the shells, breaking them apart and leaving fresh clam meat for the picking. Preparation speaks to getting ready for something you know is on the horizon and planning for it accordingly. It's about getting all your ducks in a row, or in this case, clams, so that you achieve the most beneficial outcome.

## 38. PROTECTION

Crows are fiercely protective of things they cherish. When I created this card, what I wanted to feel at that moment was protected. With everything going on in the world, knowing that there is something greater out there watching over us creates space for peace. It is when we feel at ease that we can create, that we can grow. Hold this card when you need to feel at one with your higher-self and divine spirit, as together they offer protection. Use this card as a sign to move forward knowing that you are protected. Lean into its energy during times of stress or when you're feeling vulnerable; doing so will allow you to shift your focus away from fear and restriction to feeling confident to take action.



## 39. RELEASE

When the time comes when you cannot grieve anymore and it is time to let go, Release is that next step. This card may come to you when you need help moving forward or accepting an ending. It is time to move on, rise up, and release yourself from the past. Release represents the transition between letting go and moving on. It is that moment when we become aware that we can no longer hold on to the past or an event that cannot be altered. You may need to consider if your situation is blocked or impacted by something that needs to be released.

## 40. RESISTANCE

There may be a strong wind coming your way, however, you do have the ability to find a path with the least resistance. Have you ever seen a crow get thrown by the wind? The bird may get taken off guard, but it finds its balance again.

Resistance brings an obstacle or adds friction to a situation. Ideas that once would have sailed into completion might now require some additional work. You may find a project or goal now requires an extra step to pass on to another phase. Resistance might manifest itself as a need for approval from an outside influence that takes longer to achieve. When Resistance appears in a reading, you are asked to be adaptable and find the path of least resistance.

*"You are the sky. Everything else—  
it's just the weather."*

PEMA CHÖDRÖN

## 41. RISK

The clams on the rock presented an interesting opportunity for the daring crow. Despite the raging waves that threatened to pull the crow into the water, the bird held its position long enough to grab a piece of clam meat. You may need to assess if the reward is worth the risk, and if it is, now may be the time to take a chance on something you desire. Risk brings to your awareness an opportunity that others might forego out of fear; as a result you may discover there is less competition, opening the door for you to succeed more easily.

## 42. ROUTINE

Every morning I watch the crows return to my neighborhood, and every evening I see them as they depart. It is like clockwork. The crows have a routine that they have stuck with for as long as I can remember. Routine speaks to the things we do out of habit because it is part of who we are—what is expected of us. In many ways, it is routine that creates stability; however, it can also lead to stagnation or getting into a rut. Ask yourself, are you in a routine that makes a foundation for success, or are you merely going through the motions because you don't know what else to do?

## 43. SACRED SPACE

Maybe your Sacred Space is your nest—your home—or maybe it's the beach, or your favorite path in the woods. Sacred Space may also point to an inner place, a belief you hold dear. It is a place that brings comfort and nurtures your development. This is your sanctuary. When you receive this card, it is a call to rejuvenate your spirit. It is time to connect with the healing energy of your Sacred Space. Make time to connect with this space, as it will help you center your energy and recharge your spirit.

## 44. SCAVENGE

The crow searches for anything, even the smallest crumb. Although insight may be gained and scavenging can promote brain development, the crow's attention is on an area that may not yield the greatest reward. Scavenge suggests that you may be settling for less because it is easy. Your attention may be on a situation that holds little promise, yet at the same time you are hoping to find some source of nourishment or value. While in between jobs or relationships, you might find that the Scavenge card will appear more frequently as you jump around from one opportunity to another. Use this time to gather information and determine what you like, what you don't like, what you can and won't settle for. This card may also appear if you have been simply taking what you can get instead of directing your attention toward the steps that would lead to something more substantial.

## 45. SELF-INTEREST

I regularly have four neighborhood crow visitors. There is one crow that seems a bit more selfish when it comes to the food I put out. While the other crows take their turns, grabbing a nugget or two of the dog food I leave out on a plate, there is one that will shove as much in its mouth as possible, not caring if there isn't a single crumb left for the others! Self-Interest indicates that you may be looking out for only yourself, and as a result others will be impacted. On the flip side, be aware of the actions taken by those around you, as someone may try to come in and take more than their fair share. Being selfish isn't always bad; sometimes we need to focus on our wants and needs. Depending on your situation, Self-Interest may indicate that you are in need of some pampering or that it is time to put your needs above others. For example, your dream job may require a move or a shift in lifestyle. You may need to weigh the impact taking this job will have on those around you. In the short term you may be perceived as selfish, but in the long term your decision may benefit all those involved.

## 46. SOAR

Have the confidence to fly. Get up, open your wings, and feel the supportive wind carry you to your destination. There are no obstacles in your way; now is the time to move. Conjure up your courage and take action. Soar brings a rush of energy and an open channel to receive the information needed to progress quickly with confidence toward your goal. It is in this space that blocks are removed and events flow beautifully as you sail on to success.

## 47. SURVIVAL

The crow is trapped in a bush as the hungry fox patiently waits for his meal. When we are in survival mode, we are restricted; we, like the crow, cannot fly. This card calls your attention to how you are feeling about a situation. Are you hunkered down waiting for the threat to be over, or are you moving, doing your best to find a path out? When we are in survival mode, our possibilities are limited by a creative mind solely focused on getting through a difficult situation. It is in this space that we are not thinking about future opportunities, as the decisions we make are done so to simply release any immediate pain; because of this, we risk accepting a quick fix that limits our growth.

## 48. TEAMWORK

Crows have mastered teamwork. Mobbing is one example of how crows work together on a common goal. When an intruder or a predator enters their territory, the birds jump into orchestrated action. Each member of the group holds an advantageous position in fighting off the threat. If your situation is a bit more complex or you could use an extra hand, teamwork will be the solution to finding success. Call upon your team, your family, or your friends to assist you when facing a challenge that requires more than you can comfortably handle. Teamwork strengthens bonds, creates positive memories, and reinforces an awareness that you are not alone.

## 49. TERRITORY

Crows are very territorial. They have distinct groups, and they will not hang out too long on a block that is not theirs. Territory indicates that someone may be entering your space uninvited, or that you may be the one who is the intruder. This card may also ask if you are protecting something out of concern that someone may be trying to step on your toes or take over something you cherish. When Territory appears in a reading, you may need to consider what boundaries are in place or if they are needed. Would the situation benefit from establishing some ground rules? Territory may also appear if you need to carve out some space for yourself, whether that be within your home or in the form of time to be alone. You may need to define an area that is solely yours and yours alone.

## 50. TRICKERY

Crows are known for stealing another bird's stash and then hiding it, covering it up with leaves to throw off its tracks. Trickery brings to your attention that someone may be trying to deceive you. When Trickery appears it is a signal to be aware, to be more conscious of the actions of those around you because someone may be trying to employ a bit of deception to get what they want. If you have a contract to sign, give it a closer look; there may be a clause in there that was not discussed that you may find unfavorable. Trickery takes many shapes and sizes, from the innocent trickery to get someone out of the house so that a birthday party can be prepared to an employer using their position to get you to work overtime by promising a promotion that will never materialize. This card may also indicate that your situation could benefit from allowing for some innovative and creative thinking. A little deception for the sake of the greater good may be warranted.

## 51. UPHEAVAL

Nature does not discriminate. Upheaval is a reminder that things can change on a whim, through no fault of your own. Are you prepared for change? Are you able to regain your composure and fly off to a better, more stable position? From being laid off to being forced to move to a new home, change can appear sudden and sometimes cruel, but not always. Sometimes there are clues that change is coming, yet we ignore the signs. Sometimes change brings a fortunate situation or moves us into a position to receive a greater opportunity. When Upheaval appears ask yourself if you can feel the rumblings, like a seismic wave just below the surface, that something is about to shift in your life. When you connect with your intuition, you will get a feeling that something is about to happen; you will pick up on the changing energy that will soon impact your life. When you can anticipate a coming upheaval, you will be better able to plan for the shake-up.

## 52. WARNING

This card was created during the height of the smoke from the eastern Washington wildfires that infiltrated the city. Crows have scouts that sit high up over all the action to serve as a lookout. It is their job to spot the signs and warn others of danger. Warning indicates the signs are around you, something less than favorable is approaching, and your attention is needed to ensure you have time to react. Warning brings to your awareness the red flags that you may be missing or denying, putting you in a less than desirable situation. From the employer who always pays a day or two late to the partner who never seems to want to be seen together out in public, too often we make excuses in an attempt to dismiss the warning so as to avoid accepting the reality.

Warning signs appear throughout various scenarios in our lives. Sometimes it takes a friend or someone on the outside to point out what we don't want to acknowledge. When this card appears in a reading, consider the signs that you have received. Do they shed light on a situation that you may have been avoiding?



## 53. WATERPROOF

Crow feathers have a greasy protective coating that prevents water from getting through to the skin. You, too, have the ability to create a waterproof exterior. When we are waterproof, we are protected from others' draining emotions that can weigh us down. Being waterproof allows you to experience a storm without letting it hold you back. When we are waterproof, the words, actions, and emotions of those around us do not impact our perception of who we are or our self-worth. Casual insults, snarky comments, and emotional vampires don't bother someone who is waterproof. Being dragged into someone else's drama can take an emotional toll and leave you feeling waterlogged, but when you are waterproof you can be a good listener, and a shoulder to cry on without absorbing their emotions; leaving you free to support others in need. Waterproof asks you to create a barrier between the feelings of others and yourself when inner strength is needed.

## 54. WRATH

One day, I heard the sound of what could have been a hundred crows outside my window. The sky was nearly black with swarms of angry birds dive-bombing the tree outside my apartment. A young raccoon had killed a baby crow. The energy in the air was almost palpable. You could feel the anger of the crows as well as the fear of the raccoon who clung desperately to the tree for dear life. Wrath creates a powerful energy. It can be destructive and can lead you down a path that may strain or cause friction within a relationship.

Wrath adds another element to anger, the element of revenge. It's not just enough for the offender to know that you are angry; they must also feel or experience that anger in some way. Wrath asks you to consider the energy that you are creating from your anger. Is it one that will in the end create a positive change in the relationship, or are you creating resentment that fuels the desire for future revenge? Although it may have been a single event that caused the energy of anger to present itself, it is through Wrath that the anger mutates and splinters, creating a breakdown in the relationship and negative emotions.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**MJ Cullinane** (aka Margaux Jones) is an award-winning Seattle-based artist, writer, mother, and lover of all things magical—especially crows. She attended Parsons School of Design, yet her unique technique for telling stories through digital collage is self-taught and has been her passion for over 10 years.

Nature and its creatures are a familiar theme in MJ's work; however, having grown up south of Boston, her collages are heavily influenced by the energy of the city. Her work often merges the two worlds.

MJ's art is influenced by Frida Kahlo, Robert Rauschenberg, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Gustav

Klimnt. With a background in mixed media, MJ's primary art specialty comes through digital collaging. There are a lot of misconceptions about this technique for creating. MJ does not simply cut out images and photoshop them, she paints the images on the screen, and adds elements to images to enhance the story she wishes to tell.

Her path into the world of tarot was a beautiful accident that came out of a difficult time in her life. The process of creating the *Crow Tarot* helped her discover her own wings, though at the time she didn't realize how life-changing the project would become. She simply fell in love with the process, the messages, and the feeling each card evoked.

The *Crow Tarot*, MJ's first published deck, has achieved a significant following and recognition with crow lovers and the tarot community, including winning the 2019 CARTA Award for Best Tarot Deck and Best Illustrator of a Tarot Deck.

When MJ is not making art or writing, she is spending time with her daughter, playing in nature, practicing magic, and finding new sources of inspiration.



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Like dark sentinels observing our world through intelligent black eyes, many see crows as foreboding omens. But crows bond, mourn, play, and even remember faces, offering gifts to humans they like and dive-bombing humans who have wronged them. This 54-card oracle deck and guidebook connects you to the mystical messages and intuitive insights of these clever and captivating birds, from the sacred space of a nest to the gift of a shiny trinket.



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digital collage is self-taught and has been her passion for over 10 years. The award-winning *Crow Tarot* was her first published deck. When she is not making art or writing, MJ is spending time with her daughter, playing in nature, practicing magic, and finding new sources of inspiration.



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