

Wayward Dark Tarot

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." -Carl Jung

In the imagery of the Wayward Dark Tarot are the archetypes and symbolism of Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot deck, mirrored and modified into a chthonic afterlife evoking the beautiful and the macabre.

Familiarity with the Thoth Tarot will give you additional insight (and likely, additional critiques) of the Wayward Dark Tarot. Yet it should read on its own strengths as well. As it may be considered a fun house mirror of the Thoth deck, it is the same for your own inner thoughts and imagination. Look to the cards and you might discover a path to your subconscious paved through the archetypes of the Tarot.

"Let the inner god that is in each one of us speak. The temple is your body, and the priest is your heart: it is from here that every awareness must begin." -Alejandro Jodorowsky

There are many ways to use a Tarot Deck. It can be for card games like tarocchini, occult purposes like divination, and in pursuing improvement through self-reflection and self-work. There is no right and wrong way to use your deck, just so long as the way you use it is a way that works for you.

This book provides card keywords and meanings for your own clarity. If you have a stronger association with a card that contradicts the meanings given here, then go by your own interpretation. Above all, this book is meant to be a helpful guide, not a dictator.

That said, there are some things to be aware of with the Wayward Dark Tarot. Most notably, the suits have had their physical objects removed and instead refer purely to their elemental associations, which are as follows:

Wands → Fire

Cups → Water

Swords → Air

Discs → Earth

Each of the elements uses their alchemical symbols, which are the following:

Fire:  Water:  Air:  Earth: 

The small cards depict creatures and objects from the Wayward Dark, and feature illustrations of varied symmetries. The court cards are a blend of complex humanoid creatures, the fae, the magical, the mythical, and the spectral. The element of each court card is matched with the element of the suit that is its home, so for example you will have a queen of the fire suit displayed with the symbol of fire on the left and the water element associated with queens on the right. Each of the court cards within a suit has an element associated to it as follows:

Knight → Fire

Queen → Water

Prince → Air

Princess → Earth

The Major Arcana keep their associations with letters, numbers, planets and elements and represent the most complex cards of the deck. Most depictions follow my specific artistic interpretation of the cards described in Crowley's Book of Thoth with an eye toward maintaining the underworld themes that the Wayward Dark inhabits. I've done my best to edit my take on these cards into a cohesive whole that pays tribute to its source while maintaining an aesthetic that doesn't merely clone the existing deck.

The deck theme is meant to evoke a familiar underworld that never was. Magic and death and beauty, a timeless place of spectral darkness and haunting afterlife. Within it, impossible creatures and mysterious humanoids. An unruly, exploratory place whose shadowed inhabitants possess a sinister beauty.

Performing a Tarot Reading

"It's still magic even if you know how it's done." - Terry Pratchett

Readings are often performed with multiple cards and there are a variety of different spreads you can use for different situations. A popular one to perform with a new deck is an "interview spread" and you can search the internet to find one that you like. This is a way of having a deck introduce itself. Some other useful spreads are:

The One-Card Draw: I use this one commonly on my Instagram feed. It provides a quick reading and I've found it useful for beginning readers as a practice to start memorizing card meanings. It's pretty simple, you draw a card and try to remember the meanings. Don't fret if you've forgotten something, there is a lot to remember in each card! If you need to, refer to online sources or this book(or the booklet) for a quick overview of each card. Once you're comfortable drawing single cards, you can expand into other reading styles from there, or start drawing additional cards and think of how they relate to each other in the context of your query.

The Past/Present/Future Spread: This is a three card spread, and again is pretty popular. Each card that you draw refers to a point in time; the past, the present, and the future.

The Celtic Cross: This is a solid spread that refers to different aspects of the querent's life and situation. It can provide a lot of information in a relatively concise format, but is involved enough that it takes some practice to get down. It is so popular that I've specifically designed the Wayward Dark Altar Cloth to be large enough to fit this spread on it.

Aside from spreads, you may also be interested in readings that use card inversions, and readings using elemental dignities. Inversions are popular and simple, a card drawn upright contains what this book refers to as "well-defined themes", and a card drawn inverted refers to the "ill-defined themes". This deck's

card backs are designed to mirror the upright and inverted draws so you are able to use that system should you desire.

Part of the decision to swap to elemental symbols in the design was to streamline another reading style: elemental dignities. When reading in this way, you look to the element of a card and the elements of cards surrounding it to determine whether a card is considered well or ill-defined, and to what degree.

It can be a little daunting to read with dignities at first, but over time you may find that having the cards relate to each other in this way can provide extra depth to your readings.

Certain elemental combinations work well together, and others weaken each other. Here is a general breakdown:

Element + Same element: Strengthens itself

Fire + Air: Actively strengthen each other

Water + Earth: Passively strengthen each other

Fire + Water: Weaken each other

Air + Earth: Weaken each other

Fire + Earth: Neutral

Air + Water: Neutral

For each card surrounding the one you're currently reading, you can take into account the elements of itself and its neighbors to tell whether it is leaning into its most well-defined features or if it has more of the ill-defined themes to it. A fire card surrounded by fire and air will be well supported in its well-defined themes, but a fire card completely surrounded by water will fizzle into mostly(or all) of its ill-defined tendencies.

Additionally, each card is densely layered with symbolism throughout that can give each reading incredible depth. Even as I go over a more detailed overview of the symbolism of each card, there is always more to read(just a wikipedia or google search away) on each symbol. It is also recommended to check out Crowley's Book of Thoth for further reference. For some, Tarot reading is a lifelong learning process that uncovers more and more depth over time. So don't

be overwhelmed if you don't have each and every detail memorized right away. Even the most experienced readers had to start from somewhere and build their expertise over time.

However you decide to read, and wherever you are starting from, try to do so in a way that makes sense for you! If you aren't ready for dignities or inversions, start without them. If you just want basic themes or you want to do readings one card at a time and stack more from there, go for it. I think that when you're first learning it can be easy to get frustrated, so try to focus on a way of reading that is fun for you and go from there. There's no use in trying to force yourself to learn in a way that will remove any enjoyment you get from the process, so if you're more comfortable starting with something simple and building proficiency from there, do it! Your Tarot journey belongs to you, after all, not to anyone else.

Major Arcana

The Major Arcana represent the strongest archetypes in Tarot. In a reading they could be considered spirit, major life events, karmic influence, and the larger plot points in our personal stories. In the artwork itself is the associated Hebrew letter for each card. At the bottom is the relevant roman numeral, card title, and its planet/sign/element. For this book, I've denoted the Hebrew letter in () next to the planet/sign/element.

0 – The Fool – Air (Aleph)

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Well-defined Themes - Creation, potential, innocence, new life, growth, fun

Ill-defined Themes - Recklessness, wasted potential, distraction, fear, lack of awareness

The Fool bears zero as their number, not as a lack of value but as a placeholder for any conceivable value. It is the universe prior to the Big Bang, life before conception, an empty canvas. They are neither female nor male. Their headpiece serves as a nod to the vulture goddess Maut as well as the chthonic underworld god Zagreus (closely associated with Dionysus) with its horns. The devourer crocodile is a skull fastened around their upper left arm. The tiger cloak covers their right arm but is still located mostly behind them. The gold bands and rings around them, combined with their floating appearance and feathers signify them as the "gold of air", both the father and mother in the abstract and the creator of existence. The sacred dove of Venus/Isis/Mary symbolizes their purity as the blank before becoming, and bears upon it the letter Aleph. The butterfly representing air itself floats in front of the Fool, beckoning them onward into their journey of actualization.

I – Magus – Mercury (Beth)

"Our mind is capable of passing beyond the dividing line we have drawn for it. Beyond the pairs of opposites of which the world consists, other, new insights begin." -Hermann Hesse

Well-defined Themes - Capability, competence, concentration, communication, channeling energy

Ill-defined Themes - Tricks or illusions, removed from reality, distractions, hampered communication

The Magus bears the mask and feathers of an Ibis (in this case, a bald one), referring to the namesake of the Thoth deck and the associated concentration of the bird that stands meditatively on one leg. They maintain a left to right diagonal in their upper layout as a nod to their ability to act as a channel for energy moving from Kether to Binah in the Tree of Life. On their mask is the letter Beth and above their head is the sign of infinity. Their four arms carry the four traditional suits of the Tarot - a wand, a cup, a sword, and a disc. The ankh on their tie is their symbolic means of progress through the worlds. On either side of the ankh are the wings and snakes of the caduceus representing the birth of new things.

II – Priestess – Moon (Gimel)

"I throw a spear into the darkness. That is intuition." -Ingmar Bergman

Well-defined Themes - Intuition, the subconscious, an inner guide, a period of self-reflection, internal change

Ill-defined Themes - A shallow view, ignoring your intuition, a rejection of feminine energy, lacking spirituality

The Priestess bears on her mask the letter Gimel, referring to a camel (also depicted in skeletal form in the card). The card is strongly related to the Moon, in this case representing the highest divine feminine energy. Repeatedly we have the Moon in crescent form, on the lower right symbol, doubled on the facial covering/hat (also reminiscent of the crown of Isis in its design), and outlining the bow behind the Priestess. The Bow of Artemis is her willpower, with her veil/cloak/hat acting as its arrow guiding the spirit upwards as it overcomes its lower nature. Behind all other elements are the twin pillars of Boaz and Jachin, representing mercy and severity. The mouth of the camel carries grapes associated with Dionysus, and the Priestess carries in her hand a pine cone associated with Bacchus.

III – Empress – Venus (Daleth)

"If we are to strive as human beings to gain more wisdom, more kindness and more compassion, we must have the intention to grow as a lotus and open each petal one by one." -Goldie Hawn

Well-defined Themes - Fertility, growth, beauty, nurturing, relationships, empathy, love, nature

Ill-defined Themes - Vanity, emotional damage, self-hatred, disconnect from spirituality

The Empress in my depiction is meant to reference a dryadic form, perhaps channeling a fae queen energy similar to Titania. The letter of Daleth floats above the blue Lotus of Isis in her left hand. The lotus is over her heart chakra and has four petals, representing the manifestation of universal love. In her left hand is a

white rose representing Venus and fertility. Her visible eye is the alchemical symbol for salt, the inactive principle of nature. Her connection as a force of growth in nature is emphasized by all of the creatures upon her as well as all of the vines, leaves, and bark growing from her. Underneath her are a pair of moons each representing growth, fertility, and love as well as letting go, and within both moons is a zodiac patterned circle representing her universal attachment to all signs. The dove on her arm is also associated with Venus. The orb and cross symbol sits on the face of the pelican feeding its young from its own blood, a medieval symbol of the continuity of life which is adorned with the glyph of antimony, combined with a maltese cross that represents a balance of elements. One of the leaves growing from the Empress is in the shape of a Fleur-de-lys, tied to her royalty, strength and courage through love.

IV – Emperor – Aries (Tsade)

“There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.” -Carl Sagan

Well-defined Themes - A fair leader, life experience, self-discipline, logic, systematic problem solving, self-sacrifice

Ill-defined Themes - Failing to meet goals, an overly dominant or controlling figure, rebellion against rules and structure, seeking to take rather than give

The Emperor card faces left while the Empress faces right, so that both cards look to one another if placed next to each other. The Emperor is attributed to the letter Tzaddi, and his body is shaped so as to mimic the symbol for sulphur, the fiery element of the universe. His crown is a ram skull with four horns, representing both Aries and Chesed. From the bark formed in his lap is the orb with the maltese cross, mirroring the Empress with its symbolism for creative energy. Behind him are bees, symbolizing his ability to govern and to maintain order. If the Empress is Titania, he is Oberon, king of the fae. Above and below him are two disks of energy with sixteen points each, which is the atomic number of sulphur. Also mirroring the Empress is his Fleur-de-lis necklace, pointing again to his royalty and rulership. Between the alchemical symbols of The Empress and

The Emperor, the two are the parts of nature that harmonize and maintain equilibrium of the universe.

V – Hierophant – Taurus (Vau)

“Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” -Socrates

Well-defined Themes - Tradition, rules, regulations, learning, mentorship

Ill-defined Themes - Blind obedience, bureaucracy, controlling mentors, over-reliance on structure and tradition

The Hierophant is associated with Taurus, an earth sign, and bears upon their sword the Hebrew letter Vau, meaning nail, which represents their ability to join the micro and macrocosms. A snake winds its way up the sword and behind them are dove wings, together representing energy flowing between spirit and matter. There are nine nails around their heads, a nod to the ninth sephiroth Yesod, ruled by the Moon which is exalted in Taurus. The cherubs of the Crowley Thoth have been replaced by symbols of the fixed signs of the zodiac upon disks which are adorned on the arms, and which emphasize the practical earthy qualities of this card in action. There are six points to the Hierophant's head, hands, and sword, giving the layout that of a hexagram. Within it is an inverted pentagram in the form of the four-horned ram skull on the sword(which itself gives the sword its cross shape). Within that pentagram is another upright pentagram, which has the eye of Horus. These repeated geometrical shapes symbolize the macro and microcosms of this card. The wand is that of the three Aeons, each interlocking ring standing for the Thelemic Aeons of Isis, Osiris, and Horus. The bottom left hand forms a bridge between heaven and earth with its gesture of blessing. Crowley writes of the Scarlet Woman of the New Aeon of Horus being equal with her male counterpart, but depicts her as smaller in his version, which is why I've opted for the "dual mask" design of my card. Here she is an equal to her male counterpart and may even be considered second mask that a single being of duality wears. The moon, nine nails, and feminine mask all embody feminine energy while the sword, snake, and male mask embody masculine energy, and in this card they are all interlinked with one another.

VI – Lovers – Gemini (Zayin)

"I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet." -Sylvia Plath

Well-defined Themes - Choice, consequences, relationships, love, connection, self-love, attraction, desiring union

Ill-defined Themes - Unequal and strained relationships, lacking self-love, lacking relationships, imbalance, internal conflict

The Lovers card is associated astrologically with Gemini and the Hebrew letter Zayin, meaning sword. This card is one of decisions, relationships, and the kind of separation that arises out of dividing unity - one which yearns for reunification. We have at the center of the card a marriage kiss, a uniting between the royalty of the sun and the moon, a symbol of a constant push-pull of contradictory ideas. Overlooking from above is a version of the cloaked Hermit(hidden as to signify life's mysteries that cannot be seen by the visible eye), who holds on either side of them the scrolls of intelligence and creation. Behind the Hermit is Eros, a symbol of inspiration, with a mask that covers their eyes(a symbol for the unconscious pull to unite opposites), with an arrow representing will, or spiritual intelligence, and the Law of Thelema that states "Love is the law, love under will". In the background are the heads of Eve and Lilith, representing life and death and the duality of Binah. The archway behind all of them is made of swords, a tool of division and a symbol of analysis, and the gateway to the spiritual light of Kether. The Kings of the Sun and the Moon are sulphur and salt, and intermingled on them are the snake and bees representing birth, death, and rebirth. Under are the twins of Gemini wearing headdresses of the Lion and the Eagle. The Lion is fire, the Eagle is water, and on each side are four roses and a club. With the twins, they are Geburah and Chesed and they assist the Kings. Between them is the Orphic Egg, the product of the marriage of the Kings. The Holy Grail combined with the sacred lance unite the masculine and feminine energies of the kings and acts as an arrow for the bow at the bottom of the card which links this to the Art card(XIV - Art) and hints at the future re-integration of parts divided. The wings behind the Orphic Egg symbolize Hadit, wisdom, and enlightenment.

VII – Chariot – Cancer (Cheth)

"If my mind can conceive it, and my heart can believe it, then I can achieve it." -Muhammad Ali

Well-defined Themes - Overcoming adversity, self-discipline, success and victory, courage, goal achievement, contemplation

Ill-defined Themes - Conflict, recklessness, lack of focus, unable to connect to or achieve one's goals in life

The Chariot is associated astrologically with Cancer and the Hebrew letter Cheth, meaning fence or field. The charioteer is the crablike knight on top of the card, who does not drive the moon (representing the subconscious, they are on top of it and so not ruled by their emotions) but rather is focused on holding the Holy Grail. The grail itself has four handles symbolizing Chesed, and six rays within symbolizing Tiphareth. The grail pours four pillars of water which represent the four parts of the Tetragrammaton, the link between the spiritual and the physical. The four sphinxes of Crowley's card have been merged into the bottom creature which carries the moon and moves everything forward on its back. It has within it the horns of a bull (Taurus), the face mask of a human (Aquarius), the body of a scorpion (Scorpio, degraded from the Eagle to match with the overall more deathly theme of this deck), and the mane of a lion (Leo). Upon its mask are the four elements. The charioteer is covered in armor on its torso and crabshell on its lower half, so as to protect them. The face is a mask reminiscent of the creature below. The form of the charioteer itself is hidden beneath its armor and mask, as none may look upon its true form and live; its true identity would forever change the viewer spiritually. Its armor has the ten Stars of Assiah, which also refer to the ten sephiroth of the Tree of Life. Their helmet itself hides within it the word of the new Aeon, "ABRAHADABRA".

VIII – Adjustment – Libra (Lamed)

"So be sure when you step, step with great care and great tact. And remember that life's a great balancing act." -Dr. Seuss

Well-defined Themes - Taking stock, karma, decisions and consequences, clear vision, balance, what gives life meaning

Ill-defined Themes - Unbalance in life, refusal to change, meaninglessness in life, lacking fulfillment

Adjustment is associated with a more distant and less human-centric concept of justice. It leans more towards karma and cause and effect than it does law and order. It is the order of the universe and nature. As Crowley writes, nature is exact. This card is astrologically associated with Libra, and the Hebrew letter Lamed, associated with an ox-goad. Adjustment's figure suggests a Harlequin, linking this card with the normal depiction of the Fool, and she holds in her hands the Magic Sword representing Geburah and the will of humankind. She also carries two balanced scales marked with alpha and omega, with which she weighs the universe. The ostrich plumes around her neck are a nod to Maat, the Egyptian goddess of Justice. Upon her forehead is the Uraeus Serpent, lord of life and death. The pattern on her clothes is a repeated diamond pattern, a hint towards the diamond of Kether. The chains around her reference the restrictive but balanced energy of Saturn and calls on the discipline required to achieve a zenlike harmony to one's life. She has four arms and four legs, signifying law and limitation. Her design is highly symmetrical and carefully balanced.

IX – Hermit – Virgo (Yod)

"Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkneses of other people."

-C.G. Jung

Well-defined Themes - Fresh insight into a situation, illumination, withdrawal into soul-searching, wisdom, knowledge, sharing what you've learned

Ill-defined Themes - Becoming too isolated, being self-absorbed, keeping too much to yourself, ignoring others, being out of touch

The Hermit is astrologically associated with Virgo, and its Hebrew letter is Yod, meaning hand. At the very center of this card is one pair(out of four pairs) of hands keeping aloft its diamond lantern, a symbol of Kether, of spirit and purity. A

sunburst behind references the light of spirit which the Hermit uses to learn more about their own self as well as the world, which in turn lights the wisdom of others. There are eight hands, eight rays, eight eyes, and eight strands of wheat, linking this card with the eighth sephiroth on the Tree of Life which is Hod, ruled by Mercury. The wheat references not only Virgo and Persephone, but also the growth of our own inner wisdom. Cerberus is at the lowest section of the card, representing the three qualities of the lower self which have been conquered by the Hermit. The Ibis mask points us back towards the Egyptian god Thoth, and looks upon the Orphic Egg, representing that by looking at the manifested universe without, we may also find it within.

X – Fortune – Jupiter (Kaph)

"If one did not have at least a little luck, one would never survive childhood. But luck can be spent, like money; and lost, like a memory; and wasted, like a life." -Catherynne M. Valente

Well-defined Themes - Change, optimism, adaptability, self as the stable center in chaotic times, unexpected opportunity

Ill-defined Themes - Bad luck, powerlessness, stress, lack of control over external events, cautiousness, helplessness

Fortune is associated with Jupiter and the Hebrew word Kaph, meaning the palm of the hand. At the center of the wheel is an eye within a triangle, representing enlightenment and understanding, as well as the Eye of Shiva. The triangle itself points to the three symbols of sulphur, air, and salt(which are also representations of three Gunas), and symbolizes the stabilization of all three. There is a ten pointed star and ten spokes/rays on the wheel, referencing the sephiroth Malkuth on the Tree of Life, as well as completion. The stars at the top are each five pointed, and come in different sizes and shapes, representing the diverse harmony of the universe and those in it. The figures from the Thoth deck are here represented by the head and two arms of our person of fortune. Their head is a lion's skull and mane linking them to the Sphinx, associated here with sulphur and the mind. Their left arm holds a heart bleeding into a scale, associated with Anubis(converted from Hermanubis for this deck's closer link to the underworld) and air(due to the link to Mercury of Hermanubis, and the

Association with the Magus card). Their right arm contains a multitude of snakes and lightning as a nod to Typhon, and the symbol of salt. The lightning bolts which strike Typhon are meant as a link to Zeus(Jupiter) and his habit of interfering with mortal affairs just as fortune may be considered to do. The wheel and the associated links around are meant to be temporarily stabilized before turning once again.

XI – Lust – Leo (Teth)

"Let all of life be an unfettered howl." -Vladimir Nabokov

Well-defined Themes - Desire, passion, accepting of animal nature, courage, sex, self-acceptance

Ill-defined Themes - Lack of passion, mismatched sex drive that is a detriment to your life, struggling with sexuality, reckless actions, mindlessness

Lust is associated with Leo, fire, the sun, and the Hebrew letter Teth, meaning serpent. Crowley's card features the beast trampling on saints at the bottom of the card as a way of shaming their denial of humanity and expressing the dawning of the new Aeon. We are now within the new Aeon and so I leave them to the past and give them no expression within this card. The Scarlet Woman represents our more physical desires. She is the moon illuminated fully by the sun. Her left hand holds reins that represent the passion that links her to the beast. In her right hand is the Holy Grail. The seven masks here are the seven heads of the beast. The lion at the bottom is held in reins from the woman, and around her coils a serpent with thirteen rays around its head, the number associated with the Hebrew words for love and unity. The other six masks are an angel, a saint, a poet, an adulterous woman, a valorous man, and the head of a satyr. The grail here has been de-emphasized and instead it is the woman's mind which serves as the emblem of the new light which destroys and re-creates the world. This depiction is meant to give less power to the past and more emphasis to the new Aeon and the enlightenment it may bring. The rebirth of this card asks for destruction of the old to make way for the new. At the top is this rebirth, but modified to be one born of the mind rather than the grail. The ten sephiroth from the Tree of life are here as are the ten horns/serpents that destroy the old to

create the new. It represents not just sex, but the acceptance and attraction to something other than the self. It is the death and dissolution of identity, and the joy of strength exercised. Lust here is an expression of our passions.

XII – Hanged One – Water (Mem)

"It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution." -Oscar Wilde

Well-defined Themes - Redemption of a transgression, letting go of guilt, giving to others, sacrifice in pursuit of self-fulfillment

Ill-defined Themes - Self-punishment, guilt, self-sacrifice in detriment, spiritual manipulation, non-action for too long of a period

The Hanged One is associated with the element of water and the Hebrew Letter of Mem, meaning the ocean. At the very top of the card is an ankh, connected symbolically to a cross, life and death. The coiled snake forming the loop of the ankh is the creator and destroyer. The light of Kether is at the top of the card, and the Hanged One's body is shaped like that of a triangle with a cross above it. This Hanged One depicts the right leg crossed over the left, which implies a conscious approach to learning as opposed to an unconscious one. It is active rather than passive. The nails surrounding him link him to the Hierophant card. Crowley writes of this card "Redemption is a bad word; it implies a debt.", and so this card is not meant to be one of flagellating self-sacrifice but one where one's actions for others originate from love rather than guilt or obligation. The number four is represented here with the eyes, the horns, and the serpents, and references the four elements that make life in Malkuth as well as the serpent of new life, encouraging us to abandon that which restrains us spiritually.

XIII – Death – Scorpio (Nun)

"I have always believed, and I still believe, that whatever good or bad fortune may come our way we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value." -Hermann Hesse

Well-defined Themes - Transformation, change, letting go of that which doesn't serve you, crisis, difficult personal growth

Ill-defined Themes - Resisting change, stagnation, unresolved issues, feeling trapped or stuck

The Death card is associated astrologically with Scorpio and the Hebrew letter Nun, meaning fish. My personification is similar to the Ankou of Breton folklore with her wide-brim hat and long white hair. She is skeletal, and as the card reads from top to bottom she increasingly is breaking down, having a mostly human face at the top and disintegrating into pieces at the bottom. Loosely, the form of the figure and her scythe and scarf follow the glyph of Saturn, representing the essential structure of existing things. The lily on the left leg and lotus on her right are also both ties to Saturn. The link to Scorpio is found in the lowest form as the icy scorpion at the bottom of the card, also as the watery snake in the middle, and the rising gas bubble of an eagle at the brim of Death's hat. As these three forms of water, the three links to Scorpio also represent the essential types of putrefaction. The shape of a person's body is separated from its head by the scythe, an analogy not about literal beheading but instead about separating the higher mind from the carnal desires of the body. As the bubble figure is beheaded, new figures also arise at the top of the card, completing the analogy of death as a destroyer of the old and creator of the new.

XIV – Art – Sagittarius (Samekh)

"I see the world on the edge of a blade. Without balance, it will fall." -Victoria Aveyard

Well-defined Themes - Balance, moderation, tranquility, calm, coordination, patience

Ill-defined Themes - Unbalance, conflict, excesses, stress, tension, impatience, haste, competition

The Art card is astrologically associated with Sagittarius and the Hebrew letter Samekh, meaning prop. It is a card about the integration of opposites, the re-unification of divisions that were started in the Lovers card. The lion and eagle

are symbolized in the skulls on our two characters(who themselves are in the process of merging with one another). The snake and bees as well as the moons and sun in the background also reference this integration of opposites introduced in the Lovers card. The crow on the skull represents death, and that which is removed in the purification process. The cross on the skull is a sign of integration of the elements, as are the two figures pouring into the waters that they stand in the combined elements of water and fire. The characters have six breasts(a nod to Artemis), linking them to the number of the sun and the sixth sephiroth of Tiphareth. The arrow reaching above the figures references Sagittarius and its fletching is a rainbow. The words "VISITA RECTIFICANDO INVENIES OCCULTUM LAPIDEM" are on the moon behind the arrow, detailing the purification process that leads to the philosopher's stone (Crowley goes more in depth into this in the Book of Thoth). The balance of the three alchemical principles are expressed in the word VITRIOL, which is derived from these words. The figures themselves are a part of the waters they pour their opposite energies into, making the sea of this card itself the cauldron which integrates that which was formerly divided.

XV – Devil – Capricorn (Ayin)

"There are all kinds of addicts, I guess. We all have pain. And we all look for ways to make the pain go away." -Sherman Alexie

Well-defined Themes - Restriction, attachment, overly focused on the material, sexual attraction

Ill-defined Themes - Compulsion, addiction, feelings of being trapped, aggression and dishonesty

The Devil is associated astrologically with Capricorn, and the Hebrew letter Ayin meaning eye. The satyr is our central figure and is meant to be heavily influenced by Pan, who fueled much of modern religion's take on the devil's appearance. Pan is a god of physical pleasures and rejoices in all existing things equally without judgement. Our figure has ten eyes and each eye contains doubled horizontal pupils meant to look like pairs of chromosomes. On his hands are male and female symbols, with the transgender symbol enlarged between them

at the center of the caduceus(a source for the drive to create). The twin serpents around the caduceus are the unification of opposites mentioned in the previous card. Whereas I've de-emphasized much of the Christian and religious symbolism in other cards, the devil card has had its link to Christ (due to its astrological month of December and its Tree of Life association of Tiphareth) emphasized a bit more. In this card, the holes in its hands push this as a reference to stigmata. They also stylistically stand in for the orbs containing the souls waiting to incarnate. Behind the devil are the rings of Saturn, penetrated by a pillar of energy. The devil's horns are spirals referencing a DNA helix. Repeated symbolism behind this card all point toward the process of creation.

XVI – War, AKA Tower – Mars (Pé)

"Perhaps in the world's destruction it would be possible at last to see how it was made." -Cormac McCarthy

Well-defined Themes - Destruction of stability and a re-alignment of a fundamental understanding, a time of crisis and turmoil, difficult emotions, a sudden reversal of fate, upended expectations

Ill-defined Themes - Fight and conflict, resistance to change, remaining in a toxic situation or environment, prolonging difficult times and situations, repeating cycles without learning from them, mental breakdown

The Tower card, here titled War(Crowley references the title as either/or), is astrologically associated to Mars and the Hebrew letter Pé, meaning mouth. The Mouth of Dis spits flames that bring destruction to everything within them. The flames have nine points referencing the 9th sephiroth Yesod, the moon, which is change. From the mouth fall four humanoid figures, transformed into geometrical shapes as they have lost their physical form and transfigured into something new. At the top is the Eye of Shiva, the opening of which destroys the universe. From the eye emanate 27 rays of light, the number of its path on the Tree of Life. Behind is a lightning bolt that is spiritual illumination. Within its pupil is a sectioned circle of 10 squares, the number of the 10th sephiroth Malkuth. Within the flames are a dove, representing passive love, whose eye is sectioned into four pieces to symbolize the four elements. Below that is the snake Abraxas,

who is life and death, and together with the dove represents the will to live and the will to die, the two forms of desire. Together the symbolism of this card describes a violent and dramatic change, the end of the universe. A purification through fire, one directed not by malice but through a paradoxical love. The eye of Shiva transforms the universe through destruction and in doing so frees from the prison of the physical form. So it is in this fiery destruction that one becomes freed from what was before.

XVII – Star – Aquarius (Hé)

"Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be." -Shel Silverstein

Well-defined Themes - Inspiration, fulfillment, joy, love, encouragement, hope

Ill-defined Themes - Loss of hope or faith, scepticism, disconnect from the self, joylessness, lacking fulfillment

The Star is astrologically associated with Aquarius and the Hebrew letter Hé, meaning window. From her highest hand she holds the symbol of the sun and pours its ethereal water (and milk and oil and blood) upon her head. From her lower hand she pours the water of the moon (that of ambrosia, amrita, the universal medicine and blood of the grail) upon the junction of land and water. The Star of Babylon with seven points is in the corner, and the celestial globe is behind her. She is the Lady of the Stars, Nuith, in physical form. The earth under her is crystallized, the Sea of Binah is underneath, and a city of pyramids beyond the sea represents a home for enlightened souls. On her eye is the Seven pointed Star of Venus, the number seven associated to Venus and the seventh sephiroth Netzach. This card represents our own unique highest potential unlocked. The light of the sun reflected or refracted through a window. The universe resolved into its ultimate elements.

XVIII – Moon – Pisces (Qoph)

"These woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep." -Robert Frost

Well-defined Themes - Deception, feeling lost or directionless, the hidden self, repressed memories or feelings

Ill-defined Themes - Depression, unhealthy mental states, especially over a long period of time, a lengthy directionless period, meaninglessness

The Moon is associated astrologically with Pisces, and with the Hebrew letter Qoph, meaning the back of the head. At the bottom, Khepri(or Khephra) pushes the solar disc out of the darkened depths. Khepri is an incarnation of the Egyptian Sun God, symbolizing the coming dawn around the corner and with it the subconscious depths that must be traversed in the meantime. The Moon above drips nine parts downward, the largest of which is shaped as a glyph of Neptune, symbolizing the ninth sephiroth and potential yet to be fulfilled. The towers in the distance are the gods Anubis and Set, guarding passage to the distant black-soiled land Khem. The symbols of Mercury and Neptune are upon them and each extends a hand to the submerged sun. This card is the hidden, the subconscious, the fearful dark night of the soul that one passes through on the path to enlightenment.

XIX – Sun – Sun (Resh)

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer." -Albert Camus

Well-defined Themes - Abundance, joy, success, confidence, illumination, positivity, simplicity, new perspective, clear sight

Ill-defined Themes - Lacking enthusiasm, pessimism, difficulty seeing what to do and maintaining positivity, a difficult situation, joylessness, lacking perspective

The Sun card is linked astrologically to the Sun(surprise!) and the Hebrew letter Resh, meaning the head. The two opposite forms of the Egyptian God Horus are

Heru-Ra-Ha, here mirrored and dancing at the center of the card. In his dual form he is Hoor-Pa-Kraat and Ra-Hoor-Khut. The new Aeon is here and so these are now young men, symbolizing both the childlike theme linked with the Aeon of Horus as well as our more developed position within the Aeon. The sun has within it a rose, which I've re-used on the back of the card design in this deck just as Crowley's was for his rose cross (although mine has been mirrored for its use on the card back, so it differs slightly). It is the flowering of solar influence, and around it twelve rays and the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The twins dance upon discs with rose crosses on them, signs of the old Aeon. They are themselves symbolic of air and fire, of souls freed, of Kether and Geburah, of the next stage of freedom attained by mankind. From the disks the roses are growing vines around them which are the fertile earth aspiring upwards to the heavens. This micro growth is also the macro which is the attainment we aspire to symbolized in this card.

XX – Aeon – Fire (Shin)

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” -Anais Nin

Well-defined Themes - Life changing experience, a major decision, a time of deep change, growth, and new understanding, spiritual expansion

Ill-defined Themes - Mental blocks keeping you from making positive decisions, repeating destructive cycles without learning from them, negative choices, blocked growth

The Aeon card is linked to the element of fire and the Hebrew letter Shin, meaning tooth. At the very center is a youthful androgynous Heru-Ra-Ha given form. They have two horns evoking the Egyptian god Khnum and wear three serpents on their head, one of which rests on top of their third eye, representing growth and illumination. They wear a necklace with a falcon skull to reference Horus, and their lower section is skeletal symbolizing the new age coming into being. Their gesture of silence is slightly modified from the one used by the Greek God Harpocrates, who is in turn a similar but different God to Horus. They are surrounded by an archway of light adorned with spheres of fire, symbolizing

the fire of change, Libra, justice, and a new order. Behind and embracing them is the Star Goddess Nuith who is potential and possibility. Her bracelets have patterns linking her to the formed and formless universe. On her hand is the caduceus wand, the top of which is an orb of fire representing Hadit. The overall symbolism replaces Judgement's strong Christian themes of end-times with a different birth of a new Aeon central to the Thoth deck. It is the torch-bearer of a new era.

XXI – Universe – Saturn/Earth (Tau)

“Make glorious, amazing mistakes. Make mistakes nobody's ever made before. Don't freeze, don't stop, don't worry that it isn't good enough, or it isn't perfect, whatever it is: art, or love, or work or family or life. Whatever it is you're scared of doing, Do it. Make your mistakes, next year and forever.” -Neil Gaiman

Well-defined Themes - The completion of a major project or journey, taking control of your own fate, enlightenment, finishing

Ill-defined Themes - Procrastination, being enslaved by the material, refusing to accept an end of something, lacking closure, not being able to finish a project, spiritual stagnation

This card is astrologically associated with Saturn and the Hebrew letter Tau, meaning cross. It is also associated with the element of earth. It is the complement of the Fool card and so mirrors the position of The Fool and is designed so that the two cards look to each other. The figure at the center crosses one leg behind the other, yet is not constrained by it and instead is free and dancing. They are surrounded by skulls of the four Kerubim with numbers upon them. The eagle bears the number thirteen as a link with the Death card and Scorpio, the human bears the number seventeen, a link to the Star and Aquarius, the lion bears the number eleven, a link to Leo and Lust, and the bull bears the number five, linking it to Taurus and the Hierophant. The central figure is pregnant symbolizing the goddess mother, associated to Binah, and referencing fertility associated with Saturn. From their second Chakra forms the serpent, which is both the light and dark of duality. They stand upon it, symbolizing freedom from matter and the conquering of the universe. On their head is the

square of light, which is matter and light inside and upon that, centered on their third eye, are ten rays of illumination. In the background is a circle of twelve stars with eighteen points each, numbering 216 total which references the material world. Triple rings interlocked into a kind of mobius strip with a sphere behind it hide the Tree of Life. A simplified shape of the periodic table of elements lies below and on top are pyramids symbolizing creation. This card is attainment and completion, the end of a cycle, a glyph of completion of the Great Work.

The Court Cards

The court cards are the second classification of cards. I have leaned into the elemental associations for these cards, as it felt the cleanest and perhaps most direct way of relating to them. Each court card has the suit's element on the left, the title/rank of the card, and the element associated with the title/rank on the right. Additionally, each of the court cards represent four letters of the Name YHWH or Yahweh. Knights are the Yodh(Y) and fire, relating to the second sephiroth Chokmah. Queens are Hé(H primal) and water, relating to the third sephiroth Binah. Princes are Vau(W) and air, relating to the sixth sephiroth Tiphareth. Princesses are Hé(H final) and earth, relating to the tenth sephiroth Malkuth.

Knight of Fire (Fire of Fire)

"Talent is a flame. Genius is a fire." -Bernard Williams

Well-defined Themes - Activity, generosity, fierceness, impulsiveness, pride

Ill-defined Themes - Cruel, bigoted, brutal, evil

The knight of fire is the fiery part of fire. He is chitinous and insectoid like Scorpio and centaur-ish like Sagittarius. He is draped in blacks, including his horse-like features as a nod to Mars. His many legs reference Sleipnir, his remarkable swiftness and out of control movement towards his goals. His wand, hand, tail,

and entire being emanate strong fire. He is a very fierce character, sometimes brutal or reckless but always abounding with strong, impulsive, and creative forward momentum and activity.

Queen of Fire (Water of Fire)

"Set your life on fire. Seek those who fan your flames." -Rumi

Well-defined Themes - Self-discovery, power, strength, beauty, independence, goal-oriented, active

Ill-defined Themes - Quick-tempered, tyrannical, domineering, jealous

The queen of fire is the watery part of fire. Her cloak and hair are that of fire itself but she is unaffected by them, showing her mastery of it and her self-control. Her fish clasp on the cloak is linked to Pisces and so points to her compassion and sensitivity. The pattern on her cloak is leopard spotted, matching her attendant leopard that she has at her feet. She carries a flaming pine cone associated with Dionysus/Bacchus, which refer to her prosperity, enjoyment, and at times hedonism. She is adaptable, persistent, calm, and generous.

Prince of Fire (Air of Fire)

"Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one." -Marcus Aurelius

Well-defined Themes - Honesty, integrity, a turning point, energy, enthusiasm, generosity, loyalty

Ill-defined Themes - Cruel, vain, arrogance, self-importance, recklessness

The prince of fire is the airy part of fire. He carries the phoenix wand of the Second Adept, symbolizing his power and creativity. His left arm bears the seven pointed star of Babylon with the mark (shown in detail on the Ace of Earth), a signature left over from Crowley (this card is his Significator card). Similar to Lust, the prince is bound to the lion by his left hand's wraps. His face is even slightly

made up to match the look of a lion and at his third eye is a winged lion's head. His crown is made up of eleven rays, eleven being the number of magic. Leo's influence is felt strongly in the repeated lion symbolism of this card, as the qualities of a Leo are strongly tied to this card. This character loves being the center of attention and can be extremely outgoing, confident, and creative.

Princess of Fire (Earth of Fire)

"The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." -Sylvia Plath

Well-defined Themes - Confidence, excitement, freedom, non-conforming, ambitious, impulsive

Ill-defined Themes - Vengeful, shallowness, cruelty, unruly, temper

The princess of fire is the earthy part of fire. She is within the flames, consumed by her passions. Her crown of five roses is the passion of the five senses, and at the front is an ostrich plume refers to the Crown of Maat and the justice implied therein. She holds in her hand the symbol of the Sun, which is her energy and enthusiasm. She is fearless in the self-expression of her nakedness and though she is indeed cut through in the shape of tiger stripes, she is unphased by it, showing her courage in the face of fear and even in her potential destruction.

Knight of Water (Fire of Water)

"Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend." -Bruce Lee

Well-defined Themes - Loving, generous, supportive, spiritual, intuitive, open, warm

Ill-defined Themes - Fickle, overly emotional, unreliable, unfaithful, insecure, impractical, shallow

The knight of water is the fiery part of water. She is part crab, linking her with Cancer and emphasizing her sensitivity and nurturing nature. She is amiable in a passive way. She has a white shell with black joints, symbolizing her aggressiveness and purity. She stands in front of peacock feathers, looking beyond them, which refers to ego and vanity and her overcoming said qualities for something more brilliant and pure. She is creative and graceful and perhaps too open to external influence. The mixing of fire and water degrades her character somewhat, and so she can be shallow and may have an impractical kind of swift violence to her. She may be degraded enough to leave behind a trail of failure, but at her best she is passionate, beautiful and pure and returns love with a passive ease.

Queen of Water (Water of Water)

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less." -Marie Curie

Well-defined Themes - Intuition, control over and understanding of emotions, communicative, meditative, calm

Ill-defined Themes - Disconnected from reality, distorted understanding, overly-influenced by others, depression, loss of self

The queen of water is the watery part of water. She is reception and reflection. Her visage is hidden and can only be seen in her doubled reflection, symbolizing her ability to reflect the observer which can veil her own truth and keep one from truly knowing her. She is beauty and purity. The moon behind her speaks to her subtlety and illusion. A crayfish rises from her left hand, shaped in the form of Neptune's fork, who links her to inspiration and the seas. Her right hand grows the Lotus of Isis with nine petals, symbolic of Yesod in the ninth sephiroth. Two more lotuses are in the lake and link her to Gemini. Her double reflection also speaks of Gemini and her intuition. The Ibis stands on one leg and refers to Thoth, in turn referring to intellect, the moon, the eighth sephiroth Hod. Her beauty is that of the water, reflected, refracted, flowing, ceaseless. She is tranquil and dreamy, patient and reflective, though sometimes distorting that which passes through.

Prince of Water (Air of Water)

"We have to continually be jumping off cliffs and developing our wings on the way down." -Kurt Vonnegut

Well-defined Themes - Hidden passion, giving, creative, intuitive

Ill-defined Themes - Selfish, unreliable, secretive, volatility

The prince of water is the airy part of water. He floats above a lake which is being rained upon, representing his secretive nature and the depths of his waters which are hidden and unengaged even by himself. He is subtle and ruthless and can be extremely intense. He combines the watery part of Scorpio in the snake at the center of the card (also representing Mercury and intellect) with the airy part of Scorpio in the eagle skull that is his head. He holds his own black reins as a control over his emotional state and a symbol of the decay of Scorpio. In his right hand is an inverted lotus blossom held low, a sign of his esteem for intelligence over emotion. The serpent is partly coiled in a loose figure eight, referring to the eight sephiroth Hod. He is artistic but seems impassionate about it on the surface. The calm of the exterior hides the whirling storm that can be within.

Princess of Water (Earth of Water)

"Keep your electric eye on me babe, put your ray gun to my head. Press your space face close to mine, love. Freak out in a moonage daydream, oh yeah!" -David Bowie

Well-defined Themes - Romance, kindness, daydreaming, depth

Ill-defined Themes - Shallow, indolent, disconnected

The princess of water is the earthy part of water. She dances in the water poured upon her by a lotus while riding on top of a crystallized turtle's back. The turtle is both a nod to Cancer in its shell-like appearance and also the Hindu tortoise that supports the elephant who has the universe on its back. The crystallization is the essence of the princess of water, her earthy and watery qualities combined. Her

head is the combined skulls of both the swan and the dolphin, the swan linked to an eastern philosophy symbol of AUM, referencing the entire process of creation. The dolphin is a royal fish linking her to Pisces and also symbolizes the power of creation. The lotus is open, referring to her being emotionally open and both giving and receiving love and affection. All of this points toward her being sweet, gentle, flowing, and graceful. She is a dreamer and a romantic and though she may lack grounding she always gives back.

Knight of Air (Fire of Air)

"I am a brain, Watson. The rest of me is a mere appendix." -Arthur Conan Doyle

Well-defined Themes - Clear insight, quick work, transition, setting emotions aside and thinking logically, mental sharpness, restlessness

Ill-defined Themes - Uncaring, inability to express feelings, cyclical damaging relationships, inability to stay in one place

The knight of air is the fiery part of air. He is intent on his goal and will not be distracted. Surrounding his eye is a slight compass, marking his direction as southeast which is a combination of his elements as south is associated with fire and east is associated with air. His swords are his penetrating intellect, and paired are a reference to Gemini. The longer sword has a symbol of Gemini (also linked with air) on it and the smaller one bears the symbol of the sun for fire. Around him fly three swallows, linked to Mercury and communication. He is delicate but courageous, fierce and clever, subtle but skilled. He is a burst of activity directed. His ideas come suddenly and without reflection or contemplation, and are just as immediately understood. His insight and action are a flash of action and are directed with precision.

Queen of Air (Water of Air)

"All opinions are not equal. Some are a very great deal more robust, sophisticated, and well supported in logic and argument than others." -Douglas Adams

Well-defined Themes - Unbiased intellect, directness, clarity of thought, logic

Ill-defined Themes - Being critical, emotionless, judgement that blocks understanding, emotional hang ups, clouded thoughts and unclear logic

The queen of air is the watery part of air. She is the Liberator of the Mind. The clear, conscious perception of an idea. Her sword is her ability to cut through the old ways of thinking and analyze with great clarity. It is in fifteen pieces, linking her to Hod the eighth sephiroth (by adding each of the numbers from 1 to 5) and intellect, and also Mercury and Virgo. Her upper half is naked and so she is unafraid of her vulnerability. By knowing herself she knows others and loses her fear. Her sarong represents her grace, balance, and talent with dance. The severed old man's head represents the thoughts that are outdated and irrelevant to our current life, severed to give way to a fresh and unprejudiced perspective of the cherub. By cutting away that which is no longer useful, she gains clarity, also represented in her crystalline crown/forehead. She is intensely perceptive, observant, swift and accurate. She is strongly individual and razor sharp in her intellect.

Prince of Air (Air of Air)

"I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying." -Oscar Wilde

Well-defined Themes - Intellectual, philosopher, creative, independent, questioning

Ill-defined Themes - Blocked creativity, undeveloped ideas, scattered thought, lacking in emotion and empathy

The prince of air is the airy part of air, and may suffer slightly for it. Without any grounding, he may be very active without any plans of how to build foundations to support his goals. He is deeply intellectual and philosophical. He is distracted by the moths surrounding him and so does not move in any particular direction but instead is chaotically directed and capricious. His sword may create but his

sickle will destroy immediately afterwards. He has the brilliant conviction of a fanatic but never for long enough to linger on one single cause. He wears eight pieces of banded jewelry, each with eight bands, linking him to the eighth sephiroth Hod and Mercury and representing his great intellect. His mind is immensely powerful but without anything to focus it he may wander from one idea to the next entirely at whim.

Princess of Air (Earth of Air)

"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best day and night to make you like everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting." -E.E. Cummings

Well-defined Themes - Clever, outgoing, aggressive

Ill-defined Themes - Vengeful, destructive, conflict-driven

The princess of air is the earthy part of air. Her hair is a mass of snakes calling to mind Medusa, associated with Aquarius and Mercury and signifying her intimidating personality. Crowley writes that she represents "the fixation of the volatile" and is "to some extent the anger of the Gods". Her intellect is clever regarding practical matters but she may be followed by misfortune in life. If she is able to persist she may eventually see reward but is likely to have to fight every step along the way for it. Her anxious inner self may be overcome with her higher intellect. Her gains are hard won and so she may face what feels like neverending battles, both from within and without.

Knight of Earth (Fire of Earth)

"The poetry of the earth is never dead." -John Keats

Well-defined Themes - Work ethic, patience, in tune with themselves and nature, reliability, stability, support

Ill-defined Themes - Dull, predictable, lacking intelligence, materialistic, lacking interest, stagnation

The knight of earth is the fiery part of earth. He is a stag centaur with legs firmly planted on the earth, reflecting his practicality. His head is that of a stag skull and he stands on a field of wheat, linking him to prudence, the Hermit, Virgo, the harvest, fertility, and Osiris. Behind him is a pentacle of the Zelator Adeptus Minor, and in context here is about invoking the spirits of the earth for a bountiful harvest. He is not active but stands passively in his field of plenty. He is associated with the harvest and farming and agriculture. He may be preoccupied with the material and can come across as boring, but he is hard-working and patient. He is creative and cultivates growth around himself.

Queen of Earth (Water of Earth)

"The earth laughs in flowers." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Well-defined Themes - Practicality, security, nurturing, loving, comfort, prosperity, compassion, growth, fertility

Ill-defined Themes - Lacking fulfillment, unhealthy, barren, cut off from emotions, lacking support

The queen of earth is the watery part of earth. Her horns are a markhor goat's, symbolizing her vision, perception and clarity. Her body and the caverns surrounding it grow plants and flowers and vines, representing her fertility and the slow subtle growth she brings to everything around her. She touches an orb with thirteen interlocking rings, referring to the thirteenth path on the Tree of Life, and the sun and moon, and therefore her emotional balance and nurturing energy. She carries a staff with a three-dimensional hexagram within a cube at the end, symbolizing her focus on productivity and usefulness and her ability to manifest her practical goals through inner growth. She possesses many quiet qualities and may be thought of as dull or servile. She relies on instinct and intuition and has great reserves of kindness and affection. She is only ambitious for that which is practical and so is hard working and often very domestic.

Prince of Earth (Air of Earth)

"If you trust in yourself...and believe in your dreams... and follow your star... you'll still get beaten by people who spent their time working hard and learning things and weren't so lazy." -Terry Pratchett

Well-defined Themes - Hard-working, focus, building, responsibility, practicality, goal-oriented, competence, reliability

Ill-defined Themes - Stubbornness, emotionally distant, insensitive, boring, dull, out of touch

The prince of earth is the airy part of earth. His head is that of a bull, linking him to Taurus and representing his down to earth practicality. He carries a large orb within which are geometrical symbols, together symbolizing his planning and dominion over agriculture. In his other hand is an orbed sceptre with a cross atop it, a symbol of the Great Work accomplished. His pose is considerative of the geometrical orb, showing his tendencies to contemplate and plan. Behind him are the fruits of his labor, representing abundance and growth from his careful planning and tending. The prince of earth is a careful and deliberate worker who measures twice and cuts once. He is enduring and capable and competent. He is adaptive and plans well. He may come across as dull, boring, or emotionless, but his character is that of a careful and thoughtful planner whose slow and steady work brings beauty and sustenance.

Princess of Earth (Earth of Earth)

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness." -John Muir

Well-defined Themes - Benevolence, straightforwardness, productiveness, accomplishments, growth, nature, peaceful, empathy, support

Ill-defined Themes - Disconnect from self and nature, impracticality, barrenness, closed off, lacking growth, stagnation

The princess of earth is the earthy part of earth. She is strong and brooding and beautiful. She has ram horns and wears a cloak of sheep's wool that associate her to renewal and Aries. The trees behind her symbolize spirit and earth. Her third eye is a line adorned with a diamond, representing the birth of the purest light in the deepest and darkest elements, and likening her to a priestess of Demeter. The disk on her chest is a Yin/Yang and is surrounded by thirty-six petals from the Rose of Isis, representing the decans of the astrological wheel. Together the symbols are equilibrium and the renewal after a completion of the astrological cycle. She carries within her the secret of the future and fertility. Though the trees behind her are barren, it is implied that she will restore the growth and life to the forest. She is stark and immovable, feminine and rugged, sacred and meditative, kind and in touch with both herself and the earth.

The Small Cards

The small cards represent insects, objects, and other minor creatures in the Wayward Dark. The Aces follow the organization of the court cards in their layout, as they represent the link between the court and small cards. The other small cards have the associated roman numeral over top of their suit on the left, the card title in the middle, and then the associated astrological/planetary symbolism on the right.

Fire: Fire cards represent wands, creative energy, sometimes impulsive or reckless but always a force ready to burst with forward momentum.

Ace of Fire (Spirit of Fire)

"The artist must create a spark before he can make a fire and before art is born, the artist must be ready to be consumed by the fire of his own creation." -Auguste Rodin

Well-defined Themes - Potential, creation, energy, passion, discovery, opportunity, breakthrough

Ill-defined Themes - Recklessness, thoughtlessness, low energy, executive dysfunction, difficulty beginning

The ace of fire is the spirit of fire. It is the element of fire at its inception. The card depicts geometrically arranged branches forming the Tree of Life, engulfed in flames with lightning springing forth. Within the flame are ten Yods representing the ten sephiroth in the Tree of Life. It is the root of the fiery energy that moves throughout this suit. It can be a breakthrough that results in a swell of creative energy and forward momentum.

Two of Fire - Dominion - Mars in Aries

*"Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt."
-Sun Tzu*

Well-defined Themes - Planning, decision, discovery, travel, change, taking charge, moving forward, exploration

Ill-defined Themes - Lack of passion, unclear goals, lack of planning, impracticality, playing it safe, stagnation

The two of fire is known as Dominion and represents Mars in Aries. Mars is all about energy and assertiveness, Aries about exploration. Depicted are two snake skeletons intersecting, the snakes representing change and renewal. At the base are six candles with six flames, symbolizing the sixth sephiroth Tiphareth and the Sun. The Aries association with this card benefits from the influence of the Sun and so the overall meaning is that of making a plan or a decision and branching out afterwards into adventure and change.

Three of Fire - Virtue - Sun in Aries

"Live a good life. If there are gods and they are just, then they will not care how devout you have been, but will welcome you based on the virtues you have lived by. If there are gods, but unjust, then you should not want to worship them. If there are no gods, then you will be gone, but will have lived a noble life that will live on in the memories of your loved ones." -Marcus Aurelius

Well-defined Themes - Constructive work, Honesty, Integrity, Perspective, Success

Ill-defined Themes - Dishonesty, lacking fulfillment, Negative action, lacking perspective, unrealistic plans resulting in failure

The three of fire is known as Virtue and represents the Sun in Aries. This is a strong combination and so the card is very positive. The three lotus wands are associated with Isis and the power of creation, and each lotus has nine petals, which points them toward the ninth sephiroth of Yesod. The Sun in Aries is the beginning of Spring and so this card overall relates to birth, creation, being open, and virtuous beginnings.

Four of Fire - Completion - Venus in Aries

"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things." -Leonardo da Vinci

Well-defined Themes - Accomplishment, attainment, conclusion of work, stability, security

Ill-defined Themes - Starting too many projects, taking on too much, imbalance, complacency, delays

The four of fire is Completion and relates to the energy of Venus in Aries. It has eight spokes to the wheel which are comprised of the bones of a ram's legs and four skulls of the double horned ram. The rams refer to Aries and the father-god Amoun-Ra. There are four Doves of Venus and four double flames. The circle is complete and the imagery is heavily mirrored, symbolizing the completion of work and the solid systems of law and order and organization useful to its completion.

Five of Fire - Strife - Saturn in Leo

"Knowing when to fight is just as important as knowing how." -Terry Goodkind

Well-defined Themes - Conflict especially in the workplace or a relationship, competition, diversity of opinion, clashing points of view

Ill-defined Themes - Impostor syndrome, avoiding conflict too much, inability to work with others, inferiority complex, feeling overwhelmed by work

The five of fire is called Strife and represents the influence of Saturn in Leo. This pairing is difficult as Leo is very expressive while Saturn is cold and limiting. The central wand in this card is the wand of the Chief Adept with a caduceus and Crowley's mark with the seven-pointed star of Babylon (a nod to opposites and creation). This is the wand of Mercury and the authority of Jupiter. We also have two "wands" with mirrored phoenixes at their head, referring to the wands of the Major Adept which brings the idea of destruction through fire and subsequent resurrection. Below that is a pair of wands of the Minor Adept with lotus flowers atop them, representing the feminine principle. The ten flames formed from the tail and wings of the flaming phoenixes is a nod to the upcoming ten of wands when Saturn comes to dominate the suit of fire. The coiling two-headed serpent merging from the top to the bottom into one snake is the union of opposites yet again, and may be thought of as a resolution from conflict. It is difficulty that eventually produces balance.

Six of Fire - Victory - Jupiter in Leo

"I've always been famous, it's just no one knew it yet." -Lady Gaga

Well-defined Themes - Success, progress, public recognition, confidence, celebration, promotion

Ill-defined Themes - Self-importance, egotistic, fall from grace, lacking confidence, lacking direction

The six of fire is Victory and represents the influence of Jupiter in Leo. The conflict of the five of fire has stabilized into a more complex yet much more balanced form. The wands of the Chief, Major, and Minor Adept have fallen into place and found harmony. The winged Eye of Horus at the top wands is our clarity achieved. The flames are more subtle and have nine points, representing

the sephiroth Yesod and the moon that balances out the strong influence of the Sun in this card. Overall this is an achievement of harmony and balance obtained after the strife of the five of fire.

Seven of Fire - Valour - Mars in Leo

"There is a stubbornness about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My courage always rises at every attempt to intimidate me." -Jane Austen

Well-defined Themes - Taking a stand, courage, challenge, strength, fighting for what you believe in

Ill-defined Themes - Defending an ill-considered position, giving in to others, stubbornness, lacking courage, fighting against the odds and losing

The seven of fire is Valour and brings the influence of Mars in Leo. The balance and harmony of the previous card begins to waver. Mars gives its warlike energy to the sign of Leo and so this becomes a fight to maintain what was achieved. This is a card about encouragement to stand one's ground and stand up for their place. The central wand is a lion skull and spine that are forming cracks and breaking up under the strain of its challenges, and yet it stands. The lotus blossoms on the wands have closed as their link with Venus is in trouble while surrounded by the energies of Mars. The caduceus wands begin to fall into the background and lose focus and so the Eye of Horus on each of them begins to become obscured, as does the clarity once held in the six of fire. The fires surrounding the wands have given way to chaotic and sputtering forms and so this card's best qualities will only hold by the strength of the individual.

Eight of Fire - Swiftmess - Mercury in Sagittarius

"He taught me that if you are interested in something, no matter what it is, go at it full speed ahead. Embrace it with both arms, hug it, love it and above all become passionate about it." -Roald Dahl

Well-defined Themes - Insight, movement, communication, completion, action, speed

Ill-defined Themes - Impulsiveness, thoughtlessness, resisting change, procrastination, lack of communication, impracticality, slowness

The eight of fire is Swiftiness, the influence of Mercury in Sagittarius. We have a symmetrical burst of chain lightning from the center of the card, which refers to the rapid fire of the card. The overlapping diamonds give us eight points to the central shape and symbolize the eighth sephiroth Hod, which is also ruled by Mercury. This is a card of fast energy, like lightning. Above the organized forms is a rainbow(as best I could make one with a limited palette used in this deck, anyway) symbolizing creation arising from the interplay of differing parts. The arrows which lightning is arching around are a nod to the somewhat frustrated Sagittarius in this card. Its nature is restless in combination with the strong influence of Mercury. Communication and action are the strongest themes.

Nine of Fire - Strength - Moon in Sagittarius

"And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in." -Haruki Murakami

Well-defined Themes - Standing your ground despite obstacles, flexibility, confidence in the face of adversity, pushing on past exhaustion

Ill-defined Themes - Being overwhelmed, lacking the ability to go on, feeling drained, lacking flexibility, inability to function, overcome with doubt, drained by obligations

The nine of fire is Strength(not to be confused with the Major Arcana) and represents the Moon in Sagittarius. There are eight crossed "wands" upon which are nine phases of the moon for each of them. These wands are all kept in place by the central strong arrow of Sagittarius, with the sun at the top and the moon at its arrowhead pointed down. The dominant arrow brings the subconscious of the moon to the consciousness of the sun, and awakens our hidden strength applied to the task before us. The directed will of the arrow taps into that strength and directs it. The number nine repeated in the lunar phases is the strong influence of

the moon in this card. Behind this are ten flames, a reference to Malkuth the tenth sephiroth. This card is in perfect symmetry and so its strength is powerful, and it may be considered the fullest development of the energy of the fire suit.

Ten of Fire - Oppression - Saturn in Sagittarius

"So throw away your baggage and go forward. There are quicksands all about you, sucking at your feet, trying to suck you down into fear and self-pity and despair." -Aldous Huxley

Well-defined Themes - An unwinnable situation, feeling trapped, being drained, blocked from a goal, needing to walk away

Ill-defined Themes - Destructive self-sacrifice, self-harm, disconnect from emotions and yourself, abusive relationships

The ten of fire is Oppression and represents the influence of Saturn in Sagittarius. The former wants restriction and order and the latter wants to expand and so they are at odds. The wands in the background are trees and the ground heaves around as if in a fish-eye lens, everything becomes distorted. There are eight trees criss-crossed over each other, showing that the potential and organization we saw in the nine of fire is still within, but are now distorted and imprecise. The mirrored lightning striking shows the swift and violent energy striking out as if in frustration against the now prison bar-like background. The energy of this card is difficult and can be an indication of the difficulties of being stuck in a trying situation and feeling that there is no escape from it. It may be a work situation where all meaning has been sucked out of it, or a relationship that has soured, or something else where we are feeling trapped and lifeless as a result.

Water: Water represents the emotional and relationships. In a standard deck these are cups. They are sometimes troubled or so emotional that they lose clarity of thought, but they are the source of nourishing relationships and our emotional core.

Ace of Water (Spirit of Water)

"We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone." -Orson Welles

Well-defined Themes - Creation, new relationships, new life, unconditional love

Ill-defined Themes - Vulnerability, repressing emotions, emotional numbness, disconnect from the emotional self

The ace of water is the spirit of water. It shows a mirrored lotus that is two-in-one, which is being filled and overflowing with life-fluid represented here as water. The dove of the Holy Ghost lies within (in this case a rock dove skeleton), consecrating it. The overflowing waters then create the form of and fill the moon at the base of the card. As Crowley writes, "it is the virtue of this card to conceive and to produce the second form of its Nature."

Two of Water - Love - Venus in Cancer

"When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too." -Paulo Coelho

Well-defined Themes - Beginning of new healthy relationships, marriage, close friendships and partnerships

Ill-defined Themes - Break-ups, misunderstandings, disharmony, a schism in close relationships

The two of water is Love, the influence of Venus in Cancer. Venus is a planet of beauty and love and Cancer is a sign of support, healing and nurturing so the two are very well matched in this card. Two dolphin skulls grow from them massive lotus flowers and together they issue forth the waters of life. The dolphins represent the harmonious union of masculine and feminine energies, of the sun and the moon, as well as an alchemical balance. The ten streams are a nod to Malkuth and represent the manifestation of things. With the streams, dolphins

and lotus flowers combined, this is a card of joy and harmony, and of course love.

Three of Water - Abundance - Mercury in Cancer

"The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for." -Bob Marley

Well-defined Themes - Shared accomplishment, friendship, abundance of emotion, nurturing others, enjoyment

Ill-defined Themes - Extravagance, lacking shared goals, stagnation in relationships, disconnected communication

This is the card of Demeter and Persephone and so it is a very important one in the theme of the Wayward Dark since it exalts in themes of the Underworld. The three of water is the influence of Mercury in Cancer and is titled Abundance. The "cups" are pomegranates which were used by Hades to trick Persephone into remaining in the Underworld. The hands are skeletal at the base and as they rise from the underground, they become more and more fleshed out, just as Persephone split her time between the lands of the dead and the living. The lotus at the top which overflows into the pomegranates has eight petals, linking it to Hod ruled by Mercury, who was the messenger in the story. Eight is also the number of months Persephone spends in the land of the living. There are seven total streams of water, representing the number of Venus that rules Netzach. The pomegranates are the good things in life that should be greeted with skepticism. This is a card of the shared ties with those close to us. The abundance in the title is an abundance of feelings and the clear communication of them with those closest to you. It is a card of nurturing and enjoying your good fortune, but being aware that some good fortunes come with a cost.

Four of Water - Luxury - Moon in Cancer

"Boredom: the desire for desires." -Leo Tolstoy

Well-defined Themes - Appreciation for what we have, stagnation of goals, boredom, materialistic goals, temporary pleasure

Ill-defined Themes - Avoiding opportunities and change, depression, stuck in comfort zone, stuck in discontent due to inability to face difficult changes

The four of water is titled Luxury and represents the influence of the Moon in Cancer. I have leaned into the astrological depictions a bit more with this card. The lotus at the top has multiple stems, showing that the influence of the dyad has gained strength. The "cups" of this card are barnacles on the crab (which is related to Cancer) and the top ones overflow into lower ones which then go nowhere, a sign that pleasures no longer bring us contentment. The lotus stems curl around the crab and form an infinity symbol underneath as a sign of infinite potential. The card is overall positive but a threat of disturbance is in the background and the luxury that it is titled after is the threat of an affluence which grows bored with life and stagnates emotionally as a result.

Five of Water - Disappointment - Mars in Scorpio

"Cynicism masquerades as wisdom, but it is the farthest thing from it. Because cynics don't learn anything. Because cynicism is a self-imposed blindness, a rejection of the world because we are afraid it will hurt us or disappoint us." -Stephen Colbert

Well-defined Themes - Wallowing, lacking fulfillment, disillusionment, unrealistic expectations leading to disappointment, inability to attain a goal

Ill-defined Themes - A longer and more drawn out version of the above themes leading to longer term stagnation and depression

The five of water is Disappointment and shows the influence of Mars in Scorpio. The lotus flowers forming the cups have withered and are beginning to lose leaves, symbolizing an emotional emptiness and lack of return on what we've invested time and effort in. The stems form an inverted pentagram representing spirit becoming overwhelmed and weighed down by the world. The geomantic figure of Rubeus is an evil omen and is associated with this card. It is roughly shown in the placement of dead lotus leaves. The lotus flowers are not dried up

completely but are in the process of attrition and so this card is one where our expectations have not matched up with the reality of a situation.

Six of Water - Pleasure - Sun in Scorpio

"Sex is an emotion in motion." -Mae West

Well-defined Themes - Pleasure experienced after difficult times that is transformative, sexual fulfillment and/or a healthy relationship, healing, a return to happy emotions after a period of flatness or difficulty

Ill-defined Themes - Mismatched relationships, out of touch with yourself, unhealthy sexual expression, dwelling in the past

The six of water is titled Pleasure and shows the influence of Sun in Scorpio. The lotus flowers are arranged symmetrically in a hexagram, and each one pours into its mirror above and below, with no energy wasted. Within the lotus flowers are snakes referencing transformation and regeneration in Scorpio. The lotus stems dance in a symmetrical formation at the base of the card and there are ten of them, referencing Malkuth in the 10th sephiroth and grounded insight. The pleasure referenced is in its highest sense even as the card is emphatically about the fulfillment of sexual will. It is not about desires gratified but rather transformation and the loss of self involved.

Seven of Water - Debauch - Venus in Scorpio

"I will no longer mutilate and destroy myself in order to find a secret behind the ruins." -Hermann Hesse

Well-defined Themes - Addiction, giving in to unhealthy emotions, overindulgence, negativity, self-destructive coping habits especially those involving sex and drugs

Ill-defined Themes - The same themes as above but drawn out over a longer period of time, or repeating endlessly because of inability to learn from mistakes

The seven of water is Debauch and shows the influence of Venus in Scorpio. Venus lacks an outlet in this pairing for its sensitivity and emotions and so they get channeled through unhealthy means and excess. The lotus flowers have dried up and now the water has become poisonous, taking on a sickly, slimy, and upsetting appearance. This card is nearly the shadow of the six of water as it is the same impulse that can bring transformation but is engaged in without joy or meaning. This is the card of self-destructive behavior, negative addictions and dark meaningless excess.

Eight of Water - Indolence - Saturn in Pisces

"Participate in your life, don't just bear witness to the rain washing you away." -Thomm Quackenbush

Well-defined Themes - Lack of interest in others or self, denying ourselves pleasure, lacking effort, apathy, feeling empty, lacking motivation to do anything

Ill-defined Themes - Depression, emotional distress over a long period of time, suicidal thoughts, a flatness of emotion, feelings of pointlessness

The eight of water is Indolence, and shows the influence of Saturn in Pisces. Pisces here is suffocated by Saturn's influence and Mercury is at odds with Pisces as well. The ocean has dried up beneath the lotus flowers, now reduced to pods. The energy is gone out of them and there is only the slightest slimy trickle into the dying bottom pods. It is hard to look at. If the seven of water is pleasure given into to the point that it loses meaning, this is a complete denial of and inability to attain pleasure at all. This is a card of depression and apathy that steals meaning from our lives to the point that we no longer make an effort at anything. It is stagnation and a denial of that which is emotionally fulfilling for us.

Nine of Water - Happiness - Jupiter in Pisces

"Sometimes the dreams that come true are the dreams you never even knew you had." -Alice Sebold

Well-defined Themes - Wishes coming true, attainment of what you've wanted, fulfillment

Ill-defined Themes - Emptiness, lacking fulfillment, inability to succeed at your most valued goals

The nine of water is Happiness, the influence of Jupiter in Pisces. Given the gloom of the previous two water cards, this is a much needed recovery. Jupiter and Pisces are very strong together. The emotional fulfillment touched on by the ace is now fulfilled, with the love, care and compassion from Jupiter magnified by Pisces. Jupiter is the planet of Chesed representing water in its highest qualities and Pisces brings out the passive qualities of the water. The number nine is also the number of the moon which further strengthens this pairing. The lotus flowers are all full and arranged with careful symmetry. They overflow into and around each other. The ocean is full once more.

Ten of Water - Satiety - Mars in Pisces

"The joy of life consists in the exercise of one's energies, continual growth, constant change, the enjoyment of every new experience. To stop means simply to die. The eternal mistake of mankind is to set up an attainable ideal." -Aleister Crowley

Well-defined Themes - Short-lived happiness, happiness attained that is now fleeting, fulfillment now edging into boredom

Ill-defined Themes - Cyclical attainment of that which does not truly fulfill you, staying in a comfortable situation that does not nurture your growth or soul, stagnation within one's comfort zone

The ten of water is Satiety and represents Mars in Pisces. It depicts lotus pods in the form of the Tree of Life. But there is trouble hinted at in the pairing of disruptive Mars with peaceful Pisces. The calm waters are due to be disturbed. The stems are all intertwined and one wrong movement can bring the entire arrangement out of order. The card is one where attainment or achievement has been satisfied and after a beat one asks, "What next?". It might be where having

got what one wanted, one discovered that it wasn't truly what they were after, after all. It is an unease after fulfillment that hints at troubles to come.

Air: Air represents swords, thought, logic, and the mental realm. They can be cold or emotionless but are logic, fairness, and clarity in the purest form.

Ace of Air (Spirit of Air)

"It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. We must dare to invent the future." -Thomas Sankara

Well-defined Themes - Clarity, thought, breakthrough, insight, inspiration, vision

Ill-defined Themes - Clouded thinking, being overly aggressive, lack of will

The ace of air is the spirit of air. It represents a moment of breakthrough and insight, the achievement of a new inspiration and perspective that allows your goals to be achieved. It is the higher mind gaining clarity. It is here depicted by a three-horned rhinoceros beetle, with the side horns taking the place of the typical Ace of Swords' crown and its middle horn representing the Sword of Magus, centered and extending in front of it to show its clarity of purpose. Upon the horn is the Word of Law and behind are twenty-two rays of pure light dispelling and dispersing the darkness. On its body are the crescent moons balancing out its energies.

Two of Air - Peace - Moon in Libra

"Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without." -Buddha

Well-defined Themes - Balance, peace, weighing decisions, harmony

Ill-defined Themes - Hasty decisions, stalemate, confusion, stress, indecisiveness, lack of harmony

The two of air is Peace and represents the Moon in Libra. The central rose has five petals, representing the letter of the Goddess. At either side is a dove depicted with a skull and an exaggerated beak that becomes the crossed "swords" of the suit. Additionally, from the rose are two rays. Everything around the rose is in perfect symmetry and balance, representing the general equilibrium of the card. Between the Goddess, the Moon, and Libra, we have a very peaceful and harmonious card.

Three of Air - Sorrow - Saturn in Libra

"Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad." -Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Well-defined Themes - Pain over loss and separation, fears, longing, unhappiness, abandonment, melancholy

Ill-defined Themes - End of a close relationship, unresolved grief, long-term depression and sorrow

The three of air is Sorrow, representing the influence of Saturn in Libra. The rhino beetle with its symbol of the great Sword of the Magician upon it from the ace returns here, but is inverted and precarious. Its "sword" horn holds the besieged rose in place. The two hornets that attack the rose are our past hurt resulting in our present imbalance. The rose is our broken heart torn to pieces by these hornets. There is a yearning here for relationships that is stomped by the harsh realities of our past.

Four of Air - Truce - Jupiter in Libra

"In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers." -Fred Rogers

Well-defined Themes - A break from conflict, unresolved conflict, recuperating from stress

Ill-defined Themes - Lingering conflict, unable to take time off from a stressful situation, Burn-out that you haven't recovered from

The four of air is Truce, representing Jupiter's influence in Libra. The center of the card is a rose with an overwhelming forty-nine petals, representing social harmony and the mystical number of Venus which rules over Libra. Each of the bald Ibis birds has an element upon their eyes and behind them is the St Andrews cross, which hints at a lack of self-esteem or confidence. The spirit that the rose represents sheathes the "swords" of the Ibis beaks, symbolizing the need to stop and restore our spirit for a moment. Jupiter lends a period of rest to Libra's need for balance and so we have a moment of respite within the card. Difficulty has preceded this card but we now have a moment to breathe.

Five of Air - Defeat - Venus in Aquarius

"You are here to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up. And when it happens that you are broken, or betrayed, or left, or hurt, or death brushes near, let yourself sit by an apple tree and listen to the apples falling all around you in heaps, wasting their sweetness. Tell yourself that you tasted as many as you could." -Louise Erdrich

Well-defined Themes - Fear, betrayal, sabotage, past hurt affecting our present, turmoil

Ill-defined Themes - A more drawn out betrayal that we aren't able to forgive or move on from, mental and emotional drain from previous pain in our lives, difficulty dealing with the present because of a painful past

The five of air is Defeat, symbolizing Venus' influence in Aquarius. The rhino beetle is beset on all sides by the curved stingers of four different hornets, and is coming apart as a result. The five together are overlaid on top of an inverted pentagram, showing matter dominating the spirit. The top left hornet has a fish on its lower half, symbolizing inability to let go of the past. The lower left hornet has a serpent wrapped around it, symbolizing that we are lacking renewal and transformation. The top right hornet has a handkerchief dripping blood, symbolizing negative thoughts, fear, and reopened wounds. The lower right hornet has its antenna bent to resemble rams horns, symbolizing a lack of

creativity. The rose from the previous card has been shredded entirely and now forms the outline of the inverted pentagram. Despite all of the hardship, a light shines from within this pentagram. It is our spirit trying to make its way through the situation and shine brightly once again.

Six of Air - Science - Mercury in Aquarius

"To dare to see is to steal fire from the Gods.." -Janet Fitch

Well-defined Themes - Intellectual clarity through life experiences, trial and error, rethinking different ways to approach a situation you've had difficulty with, a new approach, thinking things through and trying again

Ill-defined Themes - Inability to learn from experience, repeating mistakes, thoughts clouded by emotion, overthinking a situation

The six of air is Science, and represents the influence of Mercury in Aquarius. It is a highly symmetrical and organized card. Mercury and Aquarius are both air and so the card is highly intellectual and analytical. At the center is a variant of the rose cross. For this card, it is the symbol of integration, unification of the micro and macrocosms, everything as an expression of one, the womb of creation. The bees surrounding it are a hexagram(combined, meaning as above, so below), the pattern within hexagons, and the outer shape a diamond. This is a perfect geometry created within nature. Altogether we have a perfect balance of all mental faculties and the exaltation of the concept of science. Trial and error, clarity through difficulty, awareness of the self and the universe.

Seven of Air - Futility - Moon in Aquarius

"To speak of knowledge is futile. All is experiment and adventure. We are forever mixing ourselves with unknown quantities." -Virginia Woolf

Well-defined Themes - Self-doubt, distraction, negative thinking, self-sabotage, scattered mental state

Ill-defined Themes - Appeasing others at our own expense, mental stress, compromising too much of ourselves, being overwhelmed by our own thoughts

The seven of air is titled Futility and symbolizes the Moon in Aquarius. The central figure is a luna moth with the symbol of the sun on it, representing our center. It is beset by six hornets which are the mental blocks that challenge our center. Mercury is poor communication, Mars is a lack of drive to get beyond obstacles, Jupiter is negative self talk, Venus is the feeling of being unloved, Saturn is rigid thinking, the Moon is distrusting instinct. All of these contribute to the feelings of futility, the reasons we give ourselves to not get what we want. If they are not dealt with they can tear our very center to pieces.

Eight of Air - Interference - Jupiter in Gemini

"Nothing is so exhausting as indecision, and nothing is so futile." -Bertrand Russell

Well-defined Themes - Indecision, too many choices, overthinking all options, wasted attention on details that don't matter

Ill-defined Themes - Inaction over a period of time, missing opportunities, delaying too long, prioritizing what doesn't matter over what does

The eight of air is Interference, the influence of Jupiter in Gemini. Jupiter wants to expand but the inquisitiveness of Gemini is keeping it too distracted to achieve this goal. The center is a split luna moth representing a split intellect that cannot focus. It flies upright so it is in better shape than the seven of air but is still harassed by the distraction of the six flying ants in the background. Too many small things demand attention and split our focus.

Nine of Air - Cruelty - Mars in Gemini

"Self pity will destroy relationships, it'll destroy anything that's good, it will fulfill all the prophecies it makes and leave only itself." -Stephen Fry

Well-defined Themes - Self-denigration, self-harm, hateful thoughts directed inward that nonetheless harm others

Ill-defined Themes - Self-hatred over a period of time that causes pain to everyone involved, self-destructive behavior especially mentally, self-sabotage as a coping mechanism

The nine of air is Cruelty, representing the influence of Mars in Gemini. Gemini is scattered and Mars dominates it with harmful thoughts and words used as weapons. Its nature is that of the unrestrained inquisitor, it may have intellect but it is only used as a means to injure and pierce. A line of inquiry is dropped the moment it is not useful in those means, and a sharper one picked up. The snake at the center is the victim of this viewpoint and the nine piercing needles are the aggressive and poisonous thoughts directed either at our self or towards another. The snake and its blood are the suffering and pain of the spirit under assault.

Ten of Air - Ruin - Sun in Gemini

"Smooth and smiling faces everywhere, but ruin in their eyes." -Jean-Paul Sartre

Well-defined Themes - Painful learning experiences, growth through a difficult time, loss of stability especially material objects, letting fear ruin opportunity

Ill-defined Themes - Painful experiences that you aren't growing from, permanent loss, self-destructive behavior brought on by personal fears, difficulties repeating in a cycle

The ten of air is Ruin, it is the influence of Sun in Gemini. The hummingbird at the center has its body pierced and broken and its very beak is shattered to pieces. It is the sun, the heart, the child, it is intellect ruined. The needles are positioned to occupy positions of the sephiroth, and are themselves breaking apart in the process, signifying that their destructive acts take their toll on all involved. It is the cannibalization of intellect turned on itself. The needles bear symbols and meanings associated as follows: Kether, scales and Libra. Chockman and Binah, hourglasses of time and Saturn. Geburah and Chesed, the Tau Cross of Saturn. Tiphareth(the center), the heart. Hod and Netzach with four pronged guards. Yesod and the Sun (obscured). Malkuth, the pentagram and lunar crescent. This

card is the result of the malefic energies of both Mars and Saturn. This is the card of reason divorced from reality. It is not just a card of great difficulty, it is a card of a mind working against itself. If not dealt with, it can be the negative thinking which destroys the spirit.

Earth: Earth relates to disks/pentacles, the material and the spiritual. They can be simple and greedy but are also a great source of stability, practicality, and spirituality.

Ace of Earth (Spirit of Earth)

"Opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor." -H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Well-defined Themes - New work, financial opportunity, sustenance, tangible work, start of a new practical skill set, understanding of nature, constructive growth

Ill-defined Themes - Greed, exploitation, financial opportunity falling through, lack of spiritual harmony, overwork, lack of practical drive

The ace of earth is the spirit of earth. It features a disc surrounded by six wings. The disc's outer ring has inscribed upon it "To Mega Therion" to reference the pre-greek creation myth and the beast. At its center I have kept but modified Crowley's personal Hieroglyph into sixes of stylized whirling to better emphasize the churning theme of this card along with its repeated references to the number six. The seven-pointed star serves as a nod to Babylon, while the decagram (formed from two heptagrams) points us towards Malkuth. In the center we have the union of male and female energies symbolized. The wings have been changed to bat wings to emphasize the cavernous earthy theme of this suit over the airy connotations that the angel wings evoke. The overall representation can be taken as an omen for material growth and satisfaction, and spiritual harmony.

Two of Earth - Change - Jupiter in Capricorn

"We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." -Maya Angelou

Well-defined Themes - Learning to work within changing situations, everything in a state of flux, focus on the practical, finding calm in a chaotic setting

Ill-defined Themes - Inability to let go, recklessness in practical matters, finances out of control, change that is to your detriment

The two of earth is titled Change and represents Jupiter in Capricorn. The two coiled serpents roughly resemble a yin/yang symbol and an infinity sign. The snake's eyes contain symbols of fire and water in the lighter snake and air and earth in the darker snake. Between them is a seven-pointed star relating to the seventh sephiroth ruled by Venus. The rotated infinity symbol of the snakes together resembles an eight relating to the eighth sephiroth ruled by Mercury. Altogether these are the interplay of the four elements, the active and the passive, and yin and yang rotating infinitely.

Three of Earth - Works - Mars in Capricorn

"Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration, the rest of us just get up and go to work." -Stephen King

Well-defined Themes - Good omen for practical matters, reward for work, diligence, balance, following that which betters you

Ill-defined Themes - Conflict at work, lacking fulfillment in work, career stagnation or indecision

The three of earth is Works, representing Mars in Capricorn. This pairing is very good and results in a constructive relationship between the two. The pyramid of the regular card has flipped to better match the alchemical symbol of earth. At each of the three points are the three gunas or three alchemical symbols of salt, sulphur, and mercury (also water, fire and air, tamas, rajas and sattvas). At the center is a spider resting comfortably in its completed web. This card is one of industriousness and balance that benefits the energy and activity of the worker.

Four of Earth - Power - Sun in Capricorn

"It was when I stopped searching for home within others and lifted the foundations of home within myself I found there were no roots more intimate than those between a mind and body that have decided to be whole." -Rupi Kaur

Well-defined Themes - Material stability, confidence in work, a healthy foundation, financial security

Ill-defined Themes - Greediness, financial insecurity, materialism, inability to share yourself or your good fortune, coldness, rigidity

The four of earth is Power, the effect of the Sun in Capricorn. It is a stag beetle perched upon branches. This beetle is solid and powerful, a fortress unto itself. Its maws are its control over what it allows close and on its shell are the four elements. Its six legs reference the number of the sun. It faces south towards Malkuth where it directs its power. This card is powerful, grounded, secure and stable.

Five of Earth - Worry - Mercury in Taurus

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength." -Corrie ten Boom

Well-defined Themes - A threat to one's material and spiritual security, worry that keeps you from your present moment, anxiety over one's situation that makes the situation worse, difficulties made worse by dwelling thoughts

Ill-defined Themes - Inaction over a long period of time due to worry, anxieties that interfere with your foundations, lengthy instabilities drawn out over a long time due to one's negative thoughts

The five of earth is titled Worry and represents Mercury in Taurus. My depiction leans into the astrological symbols a bit more and shows a bull skull dripping the liquid metal of mercury upwards. The five eyes upon it are the five disks and points in an inverted pentagram. Its pupils are the following symbols: The bottom is an egg, which shows our spirit is crushed under the weight of the world. The

circle is our difficulty with communication and expression. The moon is our emotional lack of support. The square is the worry of our practical life. The triangle is our lack of energy. Taken as a whole it is a worry that drains significance from each moment. This card suggests that this worry has been ongoing. As we strain ourselves with scenarios of what could go wrong we lose the value of what is in front of us.

Six of Earth - Success - Moon in Taurus

"Always be on the lookout for ways to turn a problem into an opportunity for success. Always be on the lookout for ways to nurture your dream." -Lao Tzu

Well-defined Themes - Material and spiritual success, opportunity for profit, reminder of past success, financial growth

Ill-defined Themes - Reckless spending, greed, debt, financial and material struggle, poor financial control

The six of earth is Success and represents the Moon in Taurus. The central rose has forty-nine petals interplaying the number seven with seven and representing the sun idolized. The planets are arranged in a hexagram around the central rose, in accordance with their usual order and respective sephiroth. Each of them is success as seen through their attributes: Saturn is discipline and orderly work, Jupiter is openness to new opportunity, Venus is following our heart, Mercury is strong communication, the Moon is nurturing our self, and Mars is our energy directed constructively in life. The cross behind, combined with the rose bring to mind the Rosicrucian Cross used by the Golden Dawn which partly symbolizes the integration and interplay of all elements together. I have leaned into the astrological components with the design, adding a bull skull for Taurus and its horns arranged to match the crescent moon's curves at the bottom disk. This card is one of success attained, but the moon's transitory nature implies that the success is likewise a brief one.

Seven of Earth - Failure - Saturn in Taurus

"Don't spend time beating on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door." -Coco Chanel

Well-defined Themes - Stagnation and difficulty with material affairs, fear affecting our spiritual and financial success, inertia, learning from setbacks, repeated failures resulting in discouragement, an opportunity that did not pan out

Ill-defined Themes - Staying on with a lost cause, stagnating in a losing situation, avoiding difficulty due to fear, not moving on from a failure

The seven of earth is Failure and the influence of Saturn in Taurus. The coins bearing symbols of Saturn and Taurus are arranged in the geomantic figure of Rubeus, previously mentioned as an evil omen. The vegetation around is dead or withering. Rubeus itself is attributed to Scorpio in Mars and so I've included obscured and mirrored scorpion claws holding the disks aloft in the dead vegetation, but the influence of Mars implies that the goal of the claws may be destructive in nature, suggesting money that has gone bad in addition to the blighted vegetation.

Eight of Earth - Prudence - Sun in Virgo

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." -Harriet Tubman

Well-defined Themes - Continuing with something you are working on, giving a project time and dedication, development of something fruitful over a period of time, patience, persistence, eventual material success

Ill-defined Themes - Rushing a project, focusing too much on details that don't matter, too much focus on one thing that leads to difficulties with other parts, hastiness, impatience

The eight of earth is Prudence and represents the Sun in Virgo. The fruit within the flowers and the number of petals on each flower both number five, representing the mother of tetragrammaton associated with nature and fertility, and combined representing the number of Malkuth in the tenth sephiroth and earth. The flowers are huge and bloom, protected by the tree, lit in the background by the sun. Hod in the eight sephiroth involves Mercury in his most

spiritual aspect. Combined with Virgo and the Sun we have a very productive grouping. It is intelligence applied lovingly to the material, in particular agriculture and craft. This is a card of hard work and organization paying off and blossoming into being.

Nine of Earth - Gain - Venus in Virgo

"Hurl yourself at goals above your head and bear the lacerations that come when you slip and make a fool of yourself." -Sylvia Plath

Well-defined Themes - Reward, improvement, material success after hard work, financial gifts

Ill-defined Themes - Financial success that leaves others poorer, reckless spending, impending material strain

The nine of earth is Gain and symbolizes Venus in Virgo. Venus is represented in the background by the flower myrtle and Virgo is in the wheat stalks. The coins in this card are arranged in a hexagon around a center of three interlocking disks and plants, expressing creativity and growth and material benefit. The coins are to our benefit relating to their symbols as such: Saturn is knowing boundaries and following plans, Mars is directed energy, Jupiter is openness to opportunity, Mercury is the importance of communication, Venus is following our heart and the Moon is the trust in our intuition. Virgo focuses on the practical and organization and Venus gains strength here in the ninth Sephiroth of Yesod, the result being harmony in the pairing. This card is gain and expression after hard work, particularly relating to material matters.

Ten of Earth - Wealth - Mercury in Virgo

"Contentment is natural wealth, luxury is artificial poverty." -Socrates

Well-defined Themes - Material wealth, financial achievement, wealth that brings stability shared with others, achievement of spiritual and financial success

Ill-defined Themes - Miserliness, greed, financial riches but spiritual emptiness, misapplication of one's finances, wealth achieved at the expense of others

The ten of earth is Wealth and represents Mercury in Virgo. The coins are arranged in the form of the Tree of Life and mostly bear upon them various signs and symbols of Mercury. The coin in the eight sephiroth is the cipher of the Sun, representing the intellect and inspiration needed to renew the creative cycle. Virgo is expressed in the background of flourishing wheat. The tens of the suits in general are slightly imbalanced as they must break apart to start movement into the next suit, but here we have the completion of the cycle and no next suit to go to, so the energy must break up and start the very top of the cycle. The energy must be carried forward or it stagnates and so the energy is regenerated and carried aloft to the top of the cycle in part here by the symbolism of the caduceus referencing Hermes, Thoth, and Mercury. The overwhelming energy of Mercury in this card is exalted in Virgo. The organization of Virgo and the communication of Mercury result in an interplay of abundance and wealth. Overall this is a card of great material success but with a warning that hoarding or sitting on that energy/money will cause us to spiritually stagnate.

Closing remarks

My hope is that this book provides a helpful starting point and reference guide for the Wayward Dark Tarot, and that it is useful for all levels of readers. There are many great resources for you online as well, and the Tarot community is mostly a warm and welcoming group, so don't be afraid to reach out to them. If you'd like to find me online, I am at the following links:

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*"M is for magic. All the letters are, if you put them together properly. You can make magic with them, and dreams, and, I hope, even a few surprises..." -
Neil Gaiman*