

The Fool's Journey: Tarot Solitaire Card Game

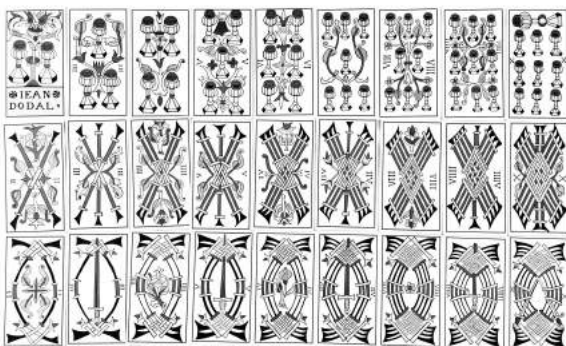
by Desmond Meraz

The Fool's Journey is a solitaire card game designed for use with a standard 78-card Tarot deck. In this game the Fool embarks upon a journey in which he acquires wisdom, takes chances, and overcomes numerous challenges with the aid of mysterious helpers. It was inspired by thematic solitaire playing card games such as Scoundrel, Donsol, and Card Crawl and the Monomyth described by author Joseph Campbell. This game was created for the 2016 Solitaire Print and Play Contest.

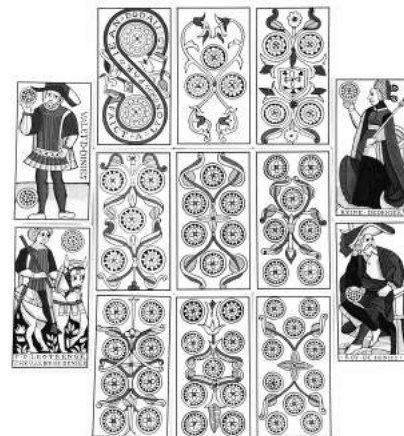
THE PREMISE



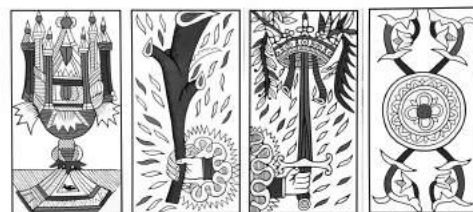
The Fool embarks upon a Journey ... The numbered Minor Arcana or Pip cards (2-10) of the Cup, Baton, and Sword suits represent the interior state of the Fool upon his journey. Cups represent his Vitality, Batons his Strength, and Swords his Volition. Vitality, Strength, and Volition cards all possess the value indicated by the number on the card.



in which he acquires Wisdom ... Coins represent Wisdom. Each Wisdom card (including Royals but excluding the Ace) is counted as one unit regardless of the number associated with it.



takes Chances ... Aces represent Chance. A Chance card may be played to reshuffle the cards in the Adventure Field back into the Deck and begin a new adventure.



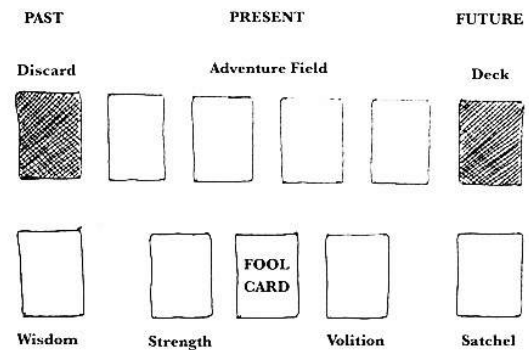
and overcomes numerous Challenges ... The Major Arcana or Trump cards represent Challenges that the Fool must overcome on his journey. The power of the Challenge is indicated by the number on the card.



with the aid of mysterious Helpers. The Royal Pip cards of the Cup, Baton, and Sword suits represent Helpers. Helpers double the value of numbered Pip cards of the same suit.



GAMEPLAY LAYOUT



STARTING AN ADVENTURE

The Fool commences his journey with 25 vitality points and the game progresses in four card rounds (Adventures). The game is set up by shuffling all cards into the Deck except for the Fool Trump which is placed face-up on the table. An Adventure begins with 4 cards being dealt from the Future (Deck) into the Present (Adventure Field). Completed cards are placed in the Past (Discard Pile).

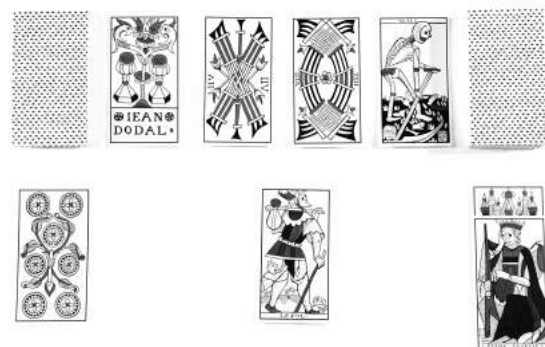


Figure 1: This layout will be used as an initial reference. It features an arrangement that might be encountered mid-game. The Adventure Field includes the 2 of Cups (Vitality), 7 of Batons (Strength), 8 of Swords (Volition), and the Death Trump (Challenge) with a value of 13. The Fool

has equipped the 7 of Coins (Wisdom) and stored the Ace of Cups (Chance) and Queen of Swords (Helper) in his Satchel. He does not have any Strength or Volition Cards currently equipped.

During an adventure the player may accomplish any number of the following tasks in any order:

Store cards in the Satchel. The Satchel can hold up to three non-Challenge cards from the Adventure Field.

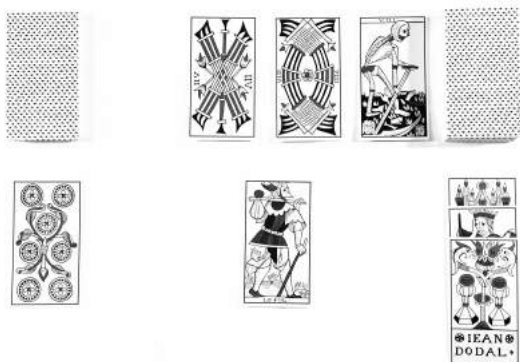


Figure 2: Starting from Figure 1, the Fool has transferred the 2 of Cups into his Satchel. It now contains the maximum of three cards.

Equip the Fool with Wisdom (Coins), Strength (Batons), and Volition (Swords). The Fool may be equipped with up to three Wisdom cards, one Strength card, and one Volition card at a time. They may be played from the Adventure Field or Satchel and remain in play until used or fully expended.

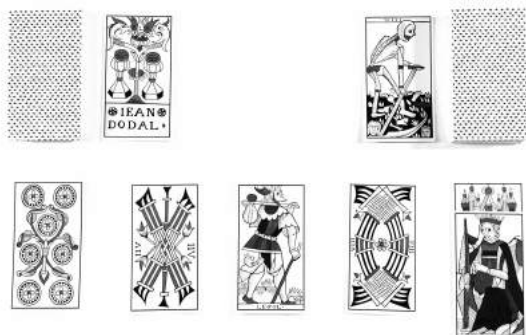


Figure 3: Starting from Figure 1, the Fool has equipped the 7 of Batons (Strength) and 8 of Swords (Volition) and may now use them to resolve challenges.

Replenish Vitality (Cups). The Fool's vitality may be replenished by placing a Vitality card from the Adventure Field or Satchel into the discard pile. Vitality can only be replenished up to the starting value of 25 points.

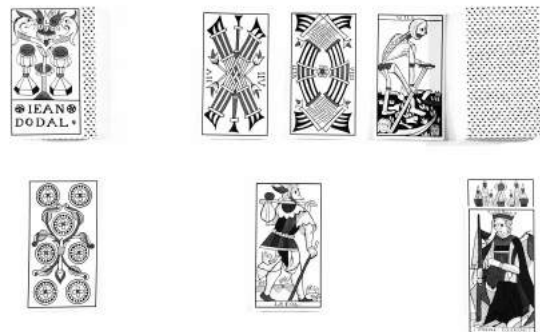


Figure 4: Starting from Figure 1, the Fool has expended the 2 of Cups and gained 2 vitality points by placing it face down in the discard pile. Discarded cards will be depicted face up in these diagrams for the purpose of illustration.

Deploy Helpers (Royals). To deploy a Helper, place one equipped Wisdom card in the discard pile and then place a Helper card from the Adventure Field or Satchel on top of an equipped Strength or Volition card that is not currently in use or place it on top of a Vitality card in the Adventure Field or Satchel. The Helper doubles the value of the card that it is attached to and is discarded along with it after the attached card has been used or expended. Helpers can only be played on cards of the same suit.

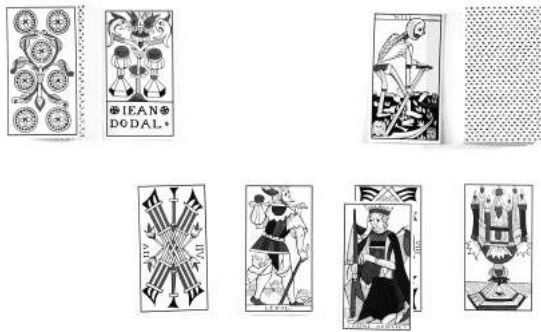


Figure 5: Starting from Figure 1, the Fool has expended 1 point of Wisdom (7 of Coins) to deploy the Queen of Swords (Helper) which is placed on the equipped 8 of Swords (Volition). This doubles the value of the card which is now worth 16 points.

Take a Chance (Aces). A Chance card may be played from the Adventure Field or Satchel by placing it on the Discard Pile. All cards in the Adventure Field, including deployed Helpers, are then reshuffled into the deck and a new adventure is dealt.

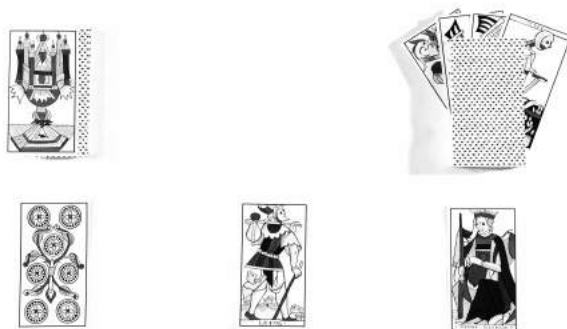


Figure 6: Starting from Figure 1, the Fool uses the Ace of Cups (Chance) from the Satchel by placing it face down in the Discard Pile and reshuffles all cards from the Adventure Field back into the Deck.

Complete Challenges (Trumps). Challenges may be overcome with Volition (Swords), endured with Strength (Bats),

with a combination of the two, or directly without the use of either. See the complete description below.

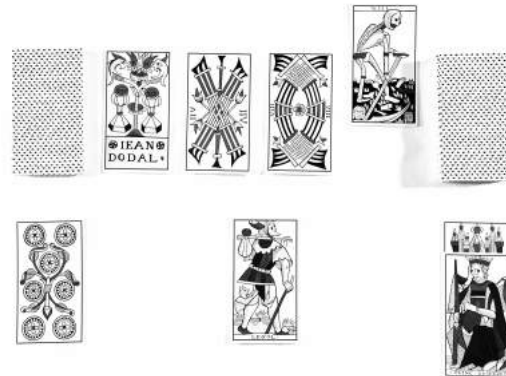


Figure 7: The Death Trump (Challenge) is slightly raised here to highlight it. In the Tarot, this card generally does not pertain to physical death but rather indicates some type of profound change. The Tarot of Marseilles depicted in the image displays a figure partly covered with human skin that seems to be in a state of transition. In the examples of the next section we will illustrate various ways in which the Fool can utilize his interior resources and seek aid from mysterious helpers to resolve this challenge of personal transformation.

Discard unwanted cards. Any number of non-Challenge cards may be discarded from the Adventure Field or Satchel at any time by placing them face down in the Discard Pile. Equipped Wisdom, Strength, and Volition cards, deployed Helpers, and Challenge cards may not be discarded prior to use.

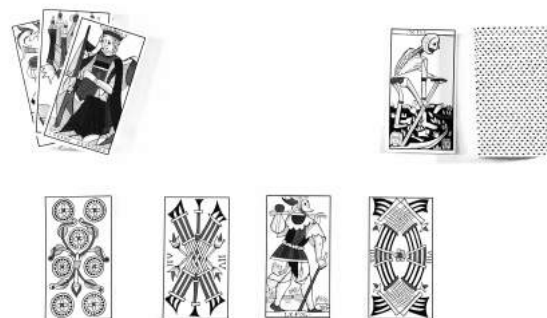


Figure 8: Starting from Figure 3, the Fool discards non-challenge cards from the Adventure Field and Satchel. The remaining Challenge card and equipped Wisdom, Strength, and Volition cards cannot be discarded until resolved, expended, or used.

COMPLETING CHALLENGES

An equipped Volition (Sword) card may be used to overcome a Challenge (Trump) card. If the Fool's Volition is greater than or equal to the power of the Challenge, then the Challenge is overcome and both the Volition and Challenge cards are placed in the Discard Pile. If the Fool's Volition is less than the power of the Challenge, then the power of the Challenge card is depleted according to the value of the Volition card which is placed on top of the Challenge card to visually account for the depletion. Multiple Volition cards may be played against a single Challenge.

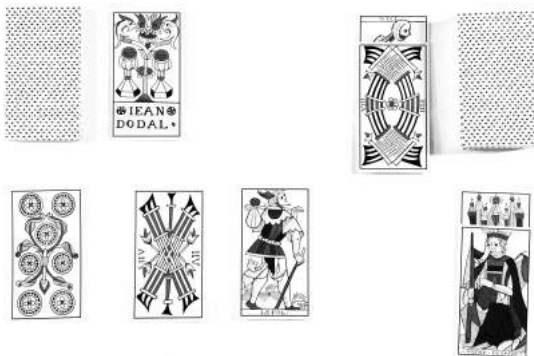


Figure 9: Starting from Figure 3, the Fool plays the 8 of Swords (Volition) against the Death Trump (Challenge) which has a value of 13. Because the value of the Fool's Volition is less than the power of the Challenge, it depletes but does not overcome the Challenge which is now worth 5 points. The 8 of Swords is left on top of the Death Trump to visually account for the depletion and gameplay continues.

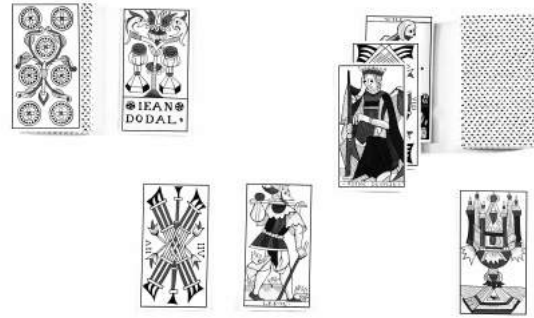


Figure 10: If we start from Figure 5, however, the combined value of the 8 of Swords and Queen of Swords is 16 points, a higher value than the Death Trump. These cards may be used to successfully overcome the Challenge as depicted here. All three cards are then placed in the Discard Pile.

An equipped Strength (Baton) card may be used to endure a Challenge (Trump) card. If the Fool's Strength is equal to the power of the Challenge, then both the Challenge and Strength cards are placed in the Discard Pile. If the Fool's Strength is less than the power of the Challenge, then both the Strength and Challenge cards are placed in the Discard Pile and the difference is depleted from the Fool's vitality. If the Fool's Strength is greater than the power of the Challenge, then the Fool's Strength card is depleted according to the value of the Challenge card which is then placed on top of the Strength card to visually account for the depletion. The depleted Strength card remains in play and must be used to endure additional Challenges with the remaining value prior to being discarded.



Figure 11: Starting from Figure 3, the 7 of Batons (Strength) may be used to endure the Death Trump (Challenge). Because the value of the Challenge is Greater than the Fool's Strength, the difference of 6 points is subtracted from the Fool's Vitality, and these two cards are placed in the Discard Pile.

A combination of both Volition (Sword) and Strength (Baton) cards may be used to complete a Challenge (Trump) card. If a Volition card has previously been used against a Challenge, a Strength card may then be used to endure the remaining value of the Challenge according to the previously stated rules.

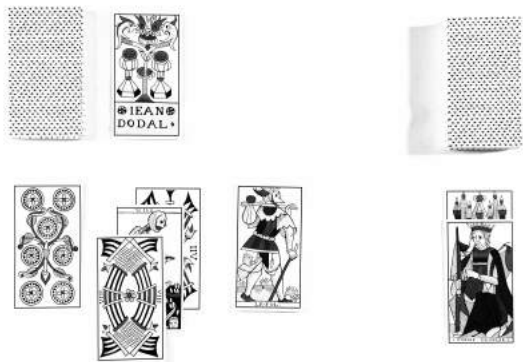


Figure 12: This figure illustrates how multiple cards may be used to resolve a Challenge. Starting from Figure 9, the 7 of Batons (Strength) may be used to endure the Death Trump (Challenge) that has a depleted value of 5 points. Because the Fool's Strength is greater than the

value of the Challenge, the Challenge is successfully endured and the Strength card is now depleted with 2 points remaining. The 8 of Swords and Death Trump are left on top of the 7 of Batons to visually account for the depletion and gameplay continues.

A Challenge (Trump) card may also be completed without the use of Strength and Volition cards whether or not these cards are in play. To complete a Challenge directly, subtract the value of the Challenge card from the Fool's vitality and place it in the discard pile. The completion of a Challenge card may be postponed indefinitely.

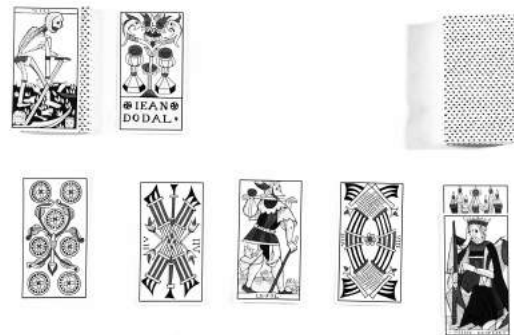


Figure 13: Starting from Figure 3, the Death Trump (Challenge) is placed directly into the Discard Pile and the full value of 13 points is subtracted from the Fool's Vitality. A depleted Challenge may also be resolved directly in this manner.

STARTING A NEW ADVENTURE

An Adventure ends when only one card is left in the Adventure Field. Three new cards are dealt and a new adventure begins.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when the Fool has been completely depleted of his vitality. It is completed when all of the cards in the deck have been dealt and the Fool has survived all

of the challenges of his journey. In the event of a draw, where the Fool's combined vitality and interior resources are equal to the final Challenge, consider the context and significance of the story that has been created to determine whether the outcome is a win or loss.

THE FOOL'S JOURNEY

Each of the Challenge (Trump) cards tells a story. One possible interpretation of the Fool's Journey may be represented by the following chronology.

The Fool decides to embark upon a new undertaking (1), makes preparation for the journey (2), is brimming with enthusiasm (3), secures his finances (4), discovers his life's purpose (5), falls in love (6), starts to move forward (7), discovers perfection in imperfection (8), turns backward to continue forward (9), ends one adventure and begins a new one (10), learns to trust his instincts (11), is exiled from the human world (12), undergoes a profound transformation (13), achieves inner balance (14), experiences the dark night of the soul (15), enters a dance of cosmic joy (16), finds his place in the world (17), communes with his soul in solitude (18), experiences a regenerative renewal (19), is born into a new world (20), and achieves total realization at the completion of his journey (21).

The rich symbolism featured on the Tarot Trumps provides a powerful stimulus to the imagination and opens up the possibility of creating a unique story with each game.

ADVANCED RULES: REVERSALS

The following rules may be adopted to expand the core gameplay with additional possibilities and playful combinations. Completed Challenges are no longer immediately placed in the Discard pile. With

the exception of those that become attached to a Strength card as a representation of its depleted value, completed Challenges are reversed and remain in play within the Adventure Field. They may be played immediately, discarded, or stored in the Satchel for future use unless otherwise indicated. Reversed Challenges possess the following unique effects related to their depicted images and are discarded after use. Mnemonic devices are included in brackets to facilitate memorization.

1. The Magician. Spend one point of Wisdom to shuffle any non-Challenge card from the Adventure Field back into the deck and draw a new card. *[A sleight-of-hand]*

2. The High Priestess. Spend one point of Wisdom to discard equipped Strength and Volition cards. *[Fragile and pacifist]*

3. The Empress. Spend one point of wisdom to draw a card from the Deck and add it to your Satchel. The drawn card may be added to a Satchel already containing the maximum of 3 cards. If a Challenge card is drawn it must be resolved within the Satchel. *[A pregnant woman]*

4. The Emperor. Spend one point of Wisdom to remove all attachments from an equipped Strength card. *[A strong general]*

5. The Hierophant. Discard from any location to gain 1 point of Wisdom. It may also be equipped in excess of the maximum of three Wisdom cards. *[Expounder of wisdom]*

6. The Lovers. Spend one point of Wisdom to attach this to a numbered card of any suit to double its value. When applied to a Wisdom card, the doubled value allows for the simultaneous play of two Helpers or Reversed Trumps. *[Wild love]*

7. The Chariot. Spend one point of Wisdom to shuffle any card from the Adventure Field back into the Deck. *[Drives it back]*

8. Strength. Spend one point of Wisdom to equip a reversed Challenge card from the Adventure Field or Satchel as a Strength or Volition card. *[Tames the beast]*

9. The Hermit. Spend one point of Wisdom and attach this to the equipped Strength card to prevent the depletion of the Fool's vitality when using Strength to endure a Challenge of greater value. *[O Sensei]*

10. Wheel of Fortune. Spend one point of Wisdom to shuffle all cards face-up on the table (except the Fool) back into the deck and deal a new adventure. *[Cycled out]*

11. Justice. Discard to use an equipped numbered Wisdom card as a Volition card. When applied to the reversed Trump 5, it produces a 5 value Volition card. *[Scale and sword]*

12. The Hanged Man. Spend one point of Wisdom to reverse an upright Challenge card in the Adventure field discarding any attachments currently applied to it. *[Upside down]*

13. Death. Spend one point of Wisdom to discard a Challenge card from the Adventure Field that has a reduced value. *[The brink of death]*

14. Temperance. Spend one point of Wisdom to attach this to any numbered non-Challenge card in the Adventure Field or Satchel which then becomes a Vitality card. *[The two cups]*

15. The Devil. Spend one point of Wisdom to discard an upright Challenge card from the Adventure Field. *[Total destruction]*

16. The Tower. Discard to transfer a random card from the Deck to the Discard Pile. *[Falling tower]*

17. The Star. Discard to shuffle a random discarded card back into the Deck. *[Rising star]*

18. The Moon. Spend one point of Wisdom to attempt to overcome two Challenges simultaneously with the equipped Volition card. This card mimics the properties of the equipped Volition card and each is placed on a separate Challenge card. *[Two wild dogs]*

19. The Sun. Spend one point of wisdom immediately prior to attempting to overcome a Challenge to restore the Fool's vitality equal to the value of the equipped Volition card. *[Vital and deadly]*

20. Judgement. Spend one point of Wisdom immediately prior to resolving a Challenge to revive the Fool with 1 point of vitality after taking fatal damage. *[Resurrection]*

21. The World. Spend one point of Wisdom to restore the Fool's maximum vitality points. *[Wholeness]*

GAMEPLAY VARIATIONS

Difficulty Adjustment. Difficulty can be adjusted by increasing or decreasing the maximum vitality points of the Fool and the number of Wisdom and Satchel cards that can be stored. The difficulty can also be decreased by allowing Helpers to be played on both equipped and unequipped Strength and Volition cards.

Random Order Variant. Randomness can be increased by introducing a new procedure for resolving Challenges directly. After the Fool's vitality has been depleted according to full value of the Challenge, the Challenge card is

placed face down on the table and a number of cards equal to its value are drawn and placed face down on top of it. The Challenge card serves as the first count of the draw and the rest are taken alternately from the Deck and Discard Pile. This pile is then shuffled and placed face down on top of the Discard Pile. The top card of the new Discard Pile is placed face up in the Adventure Field and gameplay continues. This procedure does not apply to the first trump card. *(Contributed by James)*

Ace Up the Sleeve Variant. Begin with one Ace (Chance) card in the Satchel or begin with all Aces on top of the Fool card. In the second option each Ace may be used once to banish a Challenge card to the bottom of the deck. *(Contributed by Chris Smith)*

Supportive Friend Variant. In addition to the Satchel, store up to two Helpers underneath the Fool Card or create a new column for storing helpers to the right of the Wisdom pile. *(Contributed by IndigoWaves)*

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