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Instructables

Turkish Coffee Fortune Telling

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Introduction: Turkish Coffee Fortune Telling



In the Balkans and Turkey, a favorite pass time is drinking Turkish coffee followed by having your fortune told from the leftover coffee grounds in the cup. Turkish coffee readings fall in the category of [Tasseography](#), the divination methods of interpreting patterns in tea leaves, coffee grounds or wine sediments.

Now, I am not the superstitious type and I find this pastime one step removed from the [Rorschach test](#), which makes the fortunetelling so much fun for me. Usually, the professional fortunetellers, like most in similar professions, are good at picking up first impressions of their customer's personality. I think it's fun, but please don't make any major or life-changing decisions based on any fortune reading. As Yoda would say: "Difficult to see. Always in motion is the future."

Because Turkish coffee readings are entertaining, I do encourage everyone to try it at least once. At first, the patterns may seem chaotic and random but through practice, a bit of intuition and, a dash of imagination the patterns in the cup will take shape allowing the reader to interpret them.

Step 1: Preparing for the Reading



Turkish coffee readings are done by professional fortunetellers or between friends who have some experience with it but it is not custom to read your own cup. For example, I grew up with my grandmother giving readings to her friends and the skill of Turkish coffee readings is passed down the generations.

When a reading is requested, the fortuneteller will do the following:

1. Prepare a strong, velvety [Turkish coffee](#)
2. Serve the coffee in small cups with a solid white inside
3. Ask the person drinking the coffee to drink the coffee with intent, meaning to think about their questions as they drink. In some countries the person will be required to drink the coffee in a certain number of sips, usually 1,3, or 5
4. When they are done drinking, they will turn the cup over upside-down on the saucer
5. Then, ask them to take the upside-down cup and saucer and while thinking about their intent, swirl the cup and saucer 3 times clockwise or counterclockwise, loosening the sediment inside
6. Once they are done swirling, ask them to put down the saucer and cup. While the sediment is draining down the cup onto the saucer, the fortuneteller will ask the person who drank the coffee to put a ring or coin on top of the cup if the intent is love or wealth

Step 2: Basics of Turkish Coffee Readings



To do a Turkish coffee reading you will need intuition, charismatic storytelling and a decent knowledge of the symbols. While the coffee is draining down the cup, use the 5-10 minutes to chat with the person who drank it. It's OK to ask them details about their intent and why they feel anxiety over their future.

In some countries, the fortunetellers will read both the cup and the saucer. After about 5-10 minutes the cup will be ready to be read. The diviner will pick up just the cup trying to separate it from the saucer

- If the cup and the saucer will not separate immediately because of suction ([Bernoulli's Effect](#)) it is considered that the cup shouldn't be read. This is called the "Prophet's Cup" and very auspicious favoring the drinker's intent
- If the majority of the coffee sediment drained from the cup onto the saucer, the fortuneteller should comment that "worries are leaving" the person who drank the coffee
- A perfect little raised mound on the saucer suggests that "money will come soon"
- In some countries if the cup leaves a perfect circle outlining the rim on the saucer means that the intent will come true while a broken circle suggest otherwise

There are number of ways to interpret the cup. The most common are:

- **Past, present and future readings** where the bottom of the cup represents the past, the midsection of the cup shows the present situation while the area around the rim symbolizes the future
- **Five section readings** divide the cup into five general section that have representative meaning. If you turn the cup so the cup's handle is pointing towards you, the fortuneteller, then
 1. The area around the handle represents love and relationships
 2. Across from the cup's handle is the section related to money and wealth
 3. Left of the handle symbolizes the present situation of the person who drank the coffee
 4. The section right of the handle predicts future events
 5. The bottom of the cup advises things related to the home and family

Step 3: Typical Symbols



When reading someone's cup, choose one of the methods described in the previous step. Pay special attention to bigger shapes as they carry more weight than the smaller ones. There are some typical patterns that occur in cups and some typical meanings.

Lines

Vertical lines are your goals in life. The bigger and darker the line is the better the outcome gets. If the line reaches the rim of the cup, it is considered auspicious for that goal. All straight lines or paths show a clear plan with specific goals whereas the wavy or broken lines mean uncertainty.

Dots

A group of black dots means that you might receive money soon. Some also interpret these dots as messages you will receive soon.

Triangle

Change is coming to your life

Circle

Overall success

Square

Comfort and peace

Y

Crossroads, options in decisions, or help coming from a friend

?

Question you want answered, concern. If the question mark has the dot, your question will be answered and if it doesn't uncertainty will remain,

!

Danger, excitement

:

Sign for good luck

Step 4: Letters and Numbers



Now keep in mind that the symbology can vary greatly between cultures. The previous step described some fairly common meanings but starting from this step, you might want to look up symbolic meanings specific to your culture and region. Mainly, not all cultures consider the same numbers or letters auspicious. Similarly, certain animals and objects have different meanings in different cultures.

Numbers

Numbers can have either a numeric or symbolic meaning, depending on the overall story of the cup and the reader's interpretation. If the meaning is numerical, it implies that an event will happen in a certain number of days, weeks, months, or that one has or will get a certain quantity of something.

Some of the symbolic meanings of numbers are:

- 0 : Things repeating them selves, going in circles
- 1: Start of something new
- 2: Choice(s) or indecision between two things
- 3: Meeting
- 4: Jealousy, misfortune
- 5: Success
- 6: Sex
- 7: New love
- 8: Double luck
- 9: An offer

Letters

Letters, like numbers, can have literal or symbolic meaning. Since alphabets are really a regional and cultural thing, I will stick to Roman symbols. Letters, like numbers can be interpreted literally. In the literal case the letter will symbolize a name, place or object starting with that letter. This is interpreted by the overall story of the cup or information provided by the person who drank the coffee.

Some typical symbolic meanings of letters are:

- A: Start of something new
- B: Conflict
- C: Children and protection
- D: Home
- E: Unexpected news, good or bad
- F: New relationship, friendship
- G: Joy
- H: Pride, hubris
- I: Surprise
- J: Love
- K: Branching out, expanding
- L: Lies
- M: Healing or family
- N: Rejection
- O: Success, marriage
- P: Family expansion, pregnancy
- R: Resting, relief
- S: Happiness
- T: Punctuality, timeliness or lack of
- U: Desire for material things
- V: Victory
- X: Crossroads or target
- Z: Ending, finish

Step 5: Objects, Animals and Other Symbols



The interpretation of symbols is very specific to regions and cultures. I would suggest looking up the symbology that is specific to your culture since different objects and animals have different meanings in different countries. A symbol or totem considered auspicious in one region might not be in another.

Here is a list of some common symbols to get you started:

A

Airplane: long travel, promotion, moving forward

Anchor: settling, finding stability, weighing down

Angel: good news, happiness, protection

Ant: fruit bearing, determination

Apple: new love

Arrow(s): bad news, wrong direction

Ax: conflict, problems

B

Baby: minor worries

Bag: large amount of money

Ball: need to invest work or training to get things started

Balloon: idealization or a person or situation, be careful

Bat: stealthy intentions, fear of people

Beans: financial issues

Bear: careful decision making, don't overreact or panic

Bed: personal problems, sickness

Bee: new friends or friends gathering

Bell: visitors

Bird: news, letter, message

Boat: staying afloat or on top of things

Book: wisdom, legal issues

Bottle: active social life

Box: secrets

Branch: helping a friend in trouble

Bridge: overcoming obstacles

Broom: questioning one self, self-examination

Bull: independence or advances from a married man

Bus: group travel

Butterfly: change, transformation

C

Cage: depression, unhappiness

Camel: news from far away

Candle: help from friends, knowledge, wisdom and learning

Car: luck in new ventures, travel

Cat: solitude, fighting with friends or loved ones, catfight

Chain: loss of freedom, unhappy union in marriage or business

Chair: unexpected guest or stability

Chicken(s): gossip, idle chatter

Church or temple: ceremony, spiritual growth

Circle: success, wishes come true

Claw: fighting, enemy

Clover: luck or affection

Comet: unexpected visitor

Compass: need for direction

Cow: wealth

Cross: sacrifice

Crown: acknowledgment, reward, peer recognition

D

Dagger: divorce, severing of ties

Devil: danger, beware of influential people, unhappiness, bad omen

Dog: friendship, loyalty

Dolphin: joy, fun

Door: opportunity

Dragon: past is haunting you

Drum: scandalous news

E

Eagle: high goals or expectations

Egg: wealth and success

Elephant: intelligence and longevity

F

Face: new friendship, face value

Fence: protection, seclusion

Feather: contemplation about life, self-examination

Fish: financial news or career achievement

Flag: danger waiting

Flower: happiness, beauty

Fork: argument with spouse

Fortress: success after hardships

Fox: cunning, beware of hypocrites

Fruit: prosperity in endeavors

G

Gate: opportunity, exit from a bad situation

Goat: business competition

Goose: resolution to a problem

Grave: death, sadness, misfortune

Gun(s): battle, argument, major disruption in relationship

H

Hammer: brute force, overcoming challenges with force

Hand: agreement

Harp: harmony

Hat: success in life

Heart: Love, good health or heartbreak if the heart is broken

Horse: nobless, strength

Hourglass: imminent danger, incompleteness, time running out

House: success in business, security

I

J

K

Kettle: socializing with friends

Key: moving, new solutions

King: power, highest form of success

Kite: tethered, tied down

Knife: enemies approaching, break-up

L

Ladder: work related travel, promotion

Lamp: resolution, shedding light on something

Leaves: ambition, money

Letter: news

Lines: path, goal

Lion: influential friend, success at work

M

Maiden: honor

Man: money

Mask: lies and deception around you

Mermaid: success in love, beauty

Monkey: curiosity

Moon: full moon means love, crescent moon means spiritual calling

Mountain: powerful person, it could be friend or foe depending on context around it

Mushroom: sudden growth

N

Nails: hurt, injustice

Nest: pregnancy

Net: danger around you

Nose: someone is inquiring about you, gossip

O

Owl: warnings about unlucky events

Old woman or hag: sadness in the home

P

Pear: financial security, social status

Pig: gain

Pot(s): wedding, positive changes

Purse: you will receive money

Q

R

Rabbit: success with children

Raven: bad or sad news

Rat: loss of employees, disloyalty

Ring: marriage, broken ring means divorce or bad luck

Reptiles: unpleasant discussions, discomfort

S

Saw: trouble from strangers

Scales: justice

Scissors: trouble at home, break-up, illness, sadness

Scorpio: revenge

Shark: high danger or death

Ship: staying afloat, successful journey

Shoe: new beginnings

Shovel: hardship approaching

Skull: major worries, failure, loss

Smoke: legal issues

Snake(s): beware, bad people are around you

Spider: money on its way

Square: happy marriage and home

Star: investments

Swan: happy love life

Sword: arguments, especially between lovers

Sun: power, wealth

T

Tie: engagement

Tower: longevity, long life

Toy: nostalgia

Train: new ventures

Trees: changes for the better, prosperity

Triangle: changes

U

Umbrella: difficulty, annoyance

Unicorn: scandal, unrealistic expectations

V

Vase: dignity

Violin: selfishness

Volcano: things are outside of your control

W

Wall: unfruitful business

Waterfall: overly emotional

Witch: dangerous, scheming woman, poisoning of mind

Wheel: change of fortune, inheritance

Whip: high energy, sexual activity

Window: neighborhood gossip

Wolf: need for family

Worm(s): secret enemies

X

Y

As a letter: making decisions regarding a goal, forking in the road

Z

Zebra: indecisiveness