

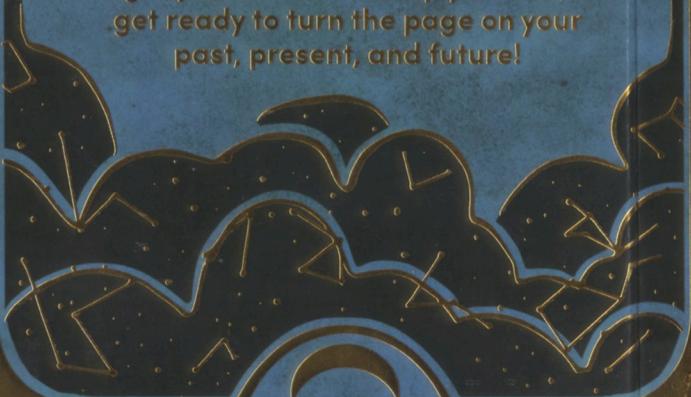


Welcome, dear reader,
to your handy guidebook for
The Literary Tarot: Classics Edition.

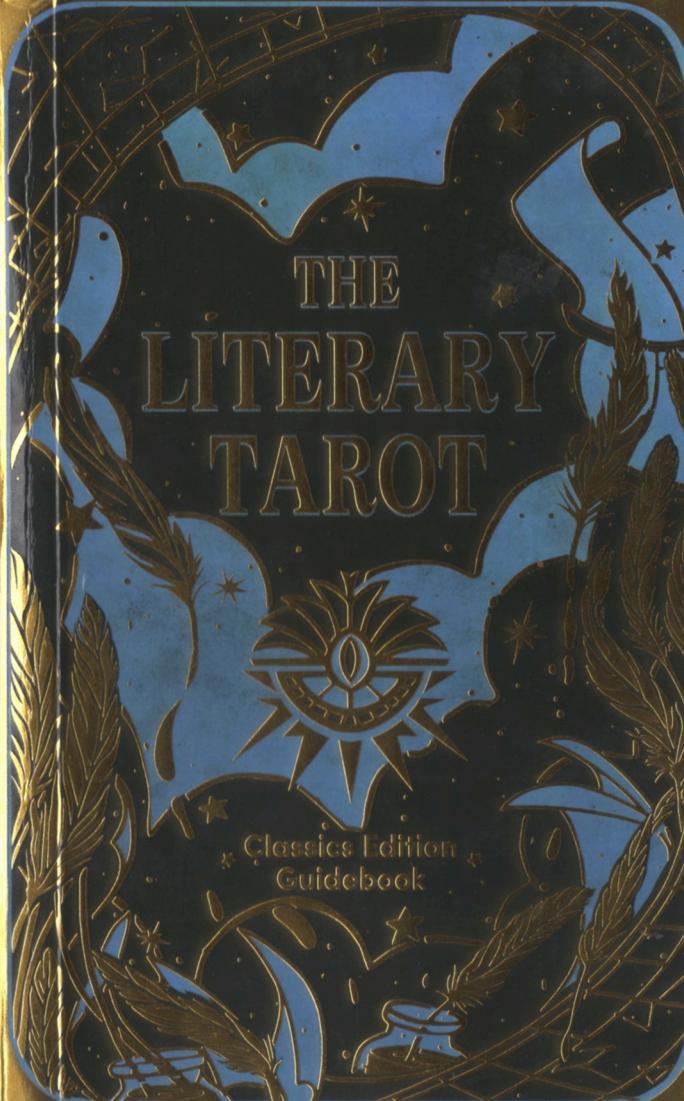
In these pages, you'll find instructions on
how to set up a reading, the logic behind
each suit, and the meaning imbued in all
78 tarot cards.

Each card entry is written by the world-
renowned wordsmith responsible for its
pairing, simultaneously unlocking the
secrets of the arcana and the classic it
embodies.

So light your candles, steep your tea, and
get ready to turn the page on your
past, present, and future!



The Literary Tarot: Classics Edition Guidebook



THE LITERARY TAROT

Classics Edition
Guidebook

*Countless books
stand before you.
Thick covers, tattered pages,
untold secrets, in every letter.
Dare to crack their spines,
uncover each
new plot twist,
tangled romance,
and tragic hero.
Divine truths
from their stories
and discover
your own...*

*This isn't just a tarot deck.
What you hold in your hands is the belief that
stories have the power to change the world.*



We aren't a big publishing company. We are a small charity, working to increase literacy rates, spark a love of literature, and empower underserved communities to turn the page toward a brighter future.

As well as all proceeds from this product going to support our nonprofit mission, this deck itself is a vital piece of that puzzle.

We hope that as you delve into each literary pairing, your curiosity and passion for literature blossoms, perhaps inspiring you to revisit old literary loves or explore undiscovered classics for the very first time.

BRINK

LITERACY PROJECT

PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE LITERARY TAROT

Like any great book, tarot offers us the opportunity to critically evaluate our own lives. Do we see similarities between our personalities and the characters before us? Do we sense a similar plot twist or the outcome of a tragic flaw approaching? Do the triumphs of our heroes push us to open our own hearts to forgiveness, exploration, or even an epic Shakespearean love?

These are the same questions we ask ourselves when pulling cards from the tarot. Be open to the insights each literary pairing might spark, and always remember: you are the author of your own future. By writing new chapters or committing to heavy revisions, you can always reshape your story . . .

THEMES OF EACH CARD

Each tarot card is tied to particular themes. This guidebook will help you navigate these meanings, with each entry written by the world-renowned wordsmith responsible for that specific pairing.

For example, The Moon card is all about illusion and getting lost in unreal worlds. By pairing it with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, this card pushes you—like Alice—to lean into your intuition in order to navigate the confusing or deceptive new situations you venture into.



MEANING BEHIND THE SUITS

All five suits (Major Arcana and the four Minors) herald different aspects of our story. Majors tend to center around our greatest influences, most significant plot twists, and most important character interactions.

In this deck, we renamed the traditional Minor suits to reflect our literary framing (read more later in The Minors section). Each suit corresponds to a different aspect of our creative journey:

INK - passion, willpower, and inspiration

LIGHT - emotion, imagination, and intuition

QUILLS - intellect, logic, and conflict

PARCHMENT - material concerns and health

UPRIGHT VS. REVERSED ORIENTATION

Just like Alice tumbling through the rabbit hole, some cards will end up topsy turvy when you shuffle them. But don't fret. That's an essential part of tarot.

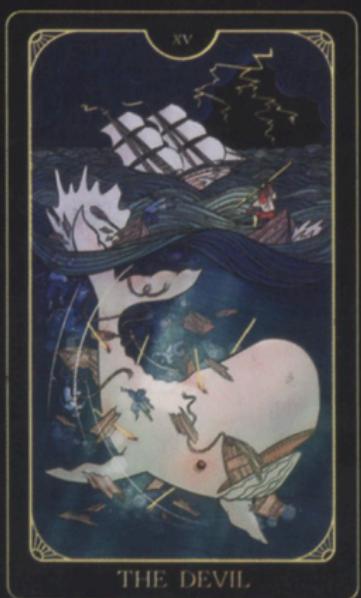
Although each card inherently encompasses certain themes overall, the nuance of the meaning is determined by whether it's upright or reversed. Which is why each card meaning in this guidebook includes upright and reversed meanings!

Note also that each meaning has several keywords for both positions, allowing the familiar reader to pull out themes at a glance.

HOW TO SET UP A READING

Reading tarot can take many forms, ranging from pulling a single card each day to formal card spreads where the placement of each card corresponds to a particular aspect of your journey. However, each style has one thing in common: the question.

Before you start any of the reading types below, think of a question you'd like added insight on. These can be as specific as "What will spending my entire paycheck on a first edition Lord of the Rings bring to my life?" to very broad queries such as "What energy dominates my current relationship?" to discover if your love has Mr. Darcy vibes or is secretly a blood-thirsty Dracula.



ONE-CARD READINGS

Once you have your question ready, simply shuffle the deck and pull out one card. Think about how the themes of this card relate to your query.

For example, let's say your question is "How can I find happiness in my job?" and you draw The Devil card. As one can imagine for a *Moby-Dick* pairing, this card is all about obsession and addiction. Perhaps this card leads you to

wonder if you're unhealthily focused on a task at work, warning that if you don't learn to find balance, you'll lose more than your metaphorical limb to the white whale of your desires.

THREE-CARD READINGS

There are many ways to do a three-card spread, ranging from having each card signify your past, present, and future to delegating a card to represent choices that you're debating between. Remember, the question you ask will largely dictate how you set up your spread . . .

PAST / OPTION 1



KING OF LIGHT

PRESENT / OPTION 2



KNIGHT OF INK

FUTURE / OUTCOME



PAGE OF QUILLS

FIVE-CARD READINGS

For the more complicated query, larger spreads add options to determine how other influences, people, and decisions can impact the insights you discover.

You can lay these down in a line or in the cross formation shown on the right. Regardless, the order of cards determines how the reading forms, starting with your “current situation” card in the middle and building more context around it. We’ve outlined a few of our favorite options in the following diagram.

FOUR OPTIONS FOR FIVE-CARD READINGS

OPTION 1:

1. Present
2. Past
3. Future
4. Potential
5. Advice



OPTION 2:

1. Situation
2. Challenge
3. Guidance
4. Focus
5. Outcome



OPTION 3:

1. Present
2. Past
3. Current Influences
4. New Influences
5. Big Picture



OPTION 4:

1. Your Role
2. Your Love's Role
3. Past
4. Present
5. Future

OTHER CARD READING FORMATIONS

Just like stories, tarot readings come in every size, from the one card “flash fiction” all the way to *War and Peace* level tomes (like the 10–12 card Celtic Cross formation).

We encourage any new reader to start small and work your way up, toying around with inventing your own format that feels right for you.

This is your story. Explore whichever order, formation, or strategy resonates with your situation and personality!

CLOSING NOTE

Whether you’re a seasoned tarot expert or this is your very first deck, tarot is only as powerful as the mind’s willingness to be open.

Just as you would create a ritual around reading your favorite book—perhaps curling up with a cup of tea in a cozy armchair or sliding into a bubble bath—create that same mental space for tarot.

Whether you’re the reader or the recipient of the reading—or often, both!—take your time. Open your heart and your mind to critically evaluate your decisions, goals, and feelings.

Tarot, like any great story, has the power to help us see ourselves and those around us through clearer—and more empathetic—eyes. But only if we let it.



MAJOR ARCANA

Comprising twenty-two of the most iconic cards, the Major Arcana depict life's significant stages, telling an archetypical story beginning with 0, The Fool, and ending with XXI, The World.

Historically, these cards have carried a greater meaning in fortune telling and in the tarot card games played as early as the fifteenth century. These cards tend to embody the most important and universal events in our individual human stories, so they feature bold characters and images, and intense, powerful meanings meant to help us on our journeys.

O. THE FOOL

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes

Pairing by Patrick Rothfuss



Every quest has a beginning. No matter what you seek: adventure, fame, love . . . Your first brave steps into the unknown mark you as a bright and beautiful Fool.

**Upright: freedom, creativity,
idealism, vision, exploration**



They say you are mad, but your eyes burn with the fire of an inner vision. You love not wisely, and often not well, but you give the whole of your heart. You dare. You dream. You make falling look like flying. But know this, if your head is in the clouds, you need a friend with feet on the ground. A kite needs a string.

**Reversed: hesitant, careless,
gullible, bumbling, faint**

Beware the blunderous nature of dull folly. Not brave, only reckless. Not dreaming, distracted. And remember, a kite needs a string, not an anchor. The wrong companions will chain you to the ground with fear and doubt. Choose your Sancho wisely.



I. THE MAGICIAN

Journey to the West by Wu Cheng'en

Pairing by K-Ming Chang



Welcome to the banquet of the Immortals. You are not a guest but a thief, harvesting heavenly power and returning to earth with a full belly and a penchant for party-crashing. In your hands, the world is the sweetest peach, and your fur can be scattered like seeds to grow anything. Tend to possibility.



Upright: willpower, desire, skill, ability, manifestation

The banquet may not have a seat for you, but why wait for an invitation? Reach for the highest, ripest peach. Any monkey knows it's possible to scale any tree, any sky, as long as you treat your desires as divine. No permission needed.

Reversed: manipulation, cunning, trickery, illusion, deception

Changing your appearance may protect you, but not all disguises are benevolent. Watch your garden carefully for what fruit it may bear, poisonous or sweet: its ripe color may be deceiving you.



II. THE HIGH PRIESTESS

King Lear by William Shakespeare

Pairing by Madeline Miller



The world roars like a dragon, thundering pride and folly, scrabbling for gain. But you stand apart, and calm. Your treasure is already within: the quiet conviction of your knowing heart.



Upright: unconscious, intuition, mystery, spirituality, higher power

You have no fear of storms, of spitting fire or spouting rain. Your eyes are clear. You are young in your journey, yet strong in wisdom. Listen to the sure and silent voice of yourself. It leads you home.

Reversed: repressed intuition, hidden motives, superficiality, confusion

You cannot heave your heart into your mouth. Or is it that you will not? Silence can be stubbornness, separateness deluded pride. The truest fools are those who think they are wise. Pause a little. You are only turned around, not lost forever.



III. THE EMPRESS

The Wife of Bath's Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer
Pairing by Catherynne M. Valente



The energy of the great and powerful Alisoun is with you, and so is her delight in all things earthly and earned. Listen to her song of experience and welcome great hope of wealth, status, and joy . . . but only if you are willing to work for it.



Upright: divine feminine, sensuality, fertility, nurturing, creativity

You should embrace your divine femininity, like the Wife of Bath, who cultivates clever mastery of one's fate. Care not what society thinks, and instead relish in all that you have borne, love, gathered, and made.

Reversed: insecurity, overbearing, negligence, smothering, lack of growth

Take care that your divine and loving embrace does not outreach its compassion and gifts, for you may discover others feeling burdened and smothered, or worst, stunted, by your influence.



IV. THE EMPEROR

Poirot Investigates by Agatha Christie

Pairing by Chelsea Cain



The machinations of all things are visible, knowable, and ready to be ordered, if you're of the disposition to look . . . Take the lead and show the others how it's done.



Upright: authority, control, focus, structure, protection

Mon ami. You may be the smartest person in the room, and you will achieve your goals (locating a missing valise or jewel case, perhaps?) if you continue to practice self-control, focus on the details, follow the rules, and maintain excellent personal hygiene.



Reversed: stubborn, lack of tact, headstrong, domineering, rigid

Mon Dieu! These are grave days. Your tie is crooked. Your mustache is untrimmed. Shoes do not shine themselves. You are out of sorts. Perhaps you should visit your old friend, Monsieur Poirot? Until then, be vigilant. There may be an authority figure working against you.

V. THE HIEROPHANT

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas
by Jules Verne

Pairing by Seven Asmund



The captain of this vessel bears a list of orders you must follow to accompany him. His order and orthodoxy bring you certainty in your actions, a divine direction.



Upright: tradition, conventionality, conformity, knowledge, beliefs

In his exile, Captain Nemo exists between worlds, and you—through his methods—may join him. Follow the laws and rules you find arrayed before you and plunge deeper into this new world. These depths, like the heavens, have answers that are greater than ourselves.

Reversed: rebellion, new methods
unconventionality, ignorance

You have followed orders for too long, and the sacred knowledge is no longer worth the cost of conforming. Go beyond tradition to find your own answers or the tentacles of despair may hold you at the bottom of the world.



VI. THE LOVERS

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

Pairing by Silvia Moreno-Garcia



Oh, truest Love! It bestows the loyal Lovers with harmony and unity, but can you discard the yoke of tradition and duty to claim it?



Upright: love, unions, relationships, choices, romance

Like yellow roses sprouting, a wonderful match could be just on the horizon. Draw strength and confidence from this shared bond, even if your love must remain largely unspoken, driven by stolen moments, glances, and shared longing.

Reversed: disharmony, imbalance, conflict, detachment, indecision

A union of two does not always mean a union of all. Like the Countess and Newland, difficult circumstances can prevent your love from coming to fruition. Unless you cast off your concerns for the opinions of others, your love might dwindle, living on only in the memory of one stolen kiss.



VII. THE CHARIOT

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

Pairing by Simon Tolkien



Avast, ye scallywags! With a steady ship—or whatever shape your chariot takes—you can finally seek the treasures of the life you desire.



Upright: success, ambition, control, determination, willpower

Whether captain or stowaway, leader or follower, your journey now has the potential for true greatness. Set your sights on your ambitions and goals, stand strong against those that may defy you, and propel yourself forward to your dreams.

Reversed: forceful, no direction, no control, powerless, obstacles

Manning the helm of your life comes with consequences. Many obstacles may appear in your spyglass, from troubled seas to a mutiny from within your ranks. But like any great sailor, know that the waves and wind are out of your control. Sometimes you need to lean into the tide to keep your schooner afloat.



VIII. STRENGTH

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

by Robert Louis Stevenson

Pairing by H.E. Edgmon



The power of a name is a peculiar thing. Today you draw Strength—in ages passed, it would be Fortitude in your deck. For it is not strength of body you need, my dear, but of spirit.



Upright: courage, bravery, confidence, self-confidence, inner power

Is there anything you cannot do? It needn't matter if the others see you for who you truly are—you know yourself. Indeed, even as the strangeness of the world presses in, you've the mettle to survive it.

Reversed: self-doubt, weakness, low confidence, inadequacy, cowardice

I know you grow tired of their denigration, and how freeing it would be to show them their misjudgment. But practice restraint, beloved. Succumb to an animal's instincts, and an animal you may remain.



IX. THE HERMIT

***Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley**

Pairing by Isaac Marion



Oh, the tempest within your hermit's heart! Blessed with high dreams and fine sensations, you find no home among brutish humanity. You may be compelled to flee from the world that you seek to know.



Upright: introspection, contemplation, withdrawal, solitude, search for self

Tenderly, you observe the world from afar, learning and growing, enlarging the world within you. What wonders might you discover in your solitary seeking? Might you yet find a way to share them?

Reversed: loneliness, isolation, recluse, rejection, revulsion of society

Wretched creature! Your isolation deforms you! You are quick to abandon humanity and proclaim yourself a monster. But be wary, for if you flee so deep into your own mind, you may never find the way out!



X. THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Vanity Fair by William Makepeace Thackeray

Pairing by G. Willow Wilson



Whether princess or pauperess, you will always be subject to the machinations of fate. Your victories will be followed by defeats. Remember, marrying well may result in an unwell marriage.



**Upright: change, cycles, fate,
luck, fortune**

Know that all things come and go in their own due course; wealth, joy, love. You may find that the path your family designed brings happiness that's soon replaced with sorrow. Enjoy the moment, for change will come.

**Reversed: bad luck, lack of control,
unwelcome changes, delays**

Nothing is going your way. Perhaps your perfect partner ran afoul of his kin and lost his inheritance, or you've had a run of terrible luck. Do not lose hope, for as the Wheel turns, felicity will return to you.



XI. JUSTICE

The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas

Pairing by Alix E. Harrow



Justice is a promise and a threat: those who have sinned against you will be judged, but so will you. It is a storm. You will bask in the sunlight one moment, be shattered on the rocks the next. The measure of a person is what they do when the storm comes.



Upright: karma, accountability, truth, justice, law

The great accounting is nigh! Truths will come out, wrongs will be righted. If you live honestly and fairly, you will find it the most beautiful, noblest, most sublime thing in the world—but remember that Justice carries a sword.

Reversed: injustice, retribution, corruption, unfairness, dishonesty

The scales are unbalanced. You must go to battle but take care not to confuse justice with revenge—one who pours out vengeance runs the risk of tasting a bitter draught indeed.



XII. THE HANGED MAN

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot

Pairing by Celeste Ng



Sometimes standing still is making progress. There will be time, there will be time—consider your visions and revisions. How should you begin?



Upright: sacrifice, waiting, uncertainty, lack of direction, contemplation

Pausing isn't always being passive: sometimes it's an opportunity to reflect, prepare, heal, or change your perspective. Take a moment to contemplate your relationship to the world, and whether you dare disturb the universe—and if so, how?

Reversed: stalling, disinterest, stagnation, avoiding sacrifice, apathy

There's a difference between meditating and being stuck. You may be measuring out your life with coffee spoons—or worse, frozen like a patient etherized upon a table. Ask yourself: are you being politic, cautious, and meticulous? Or are you simply pinned and wriggling on the wall?



XIII. DEATH

***Dracula* by Bram Stoker**

Pairing by Rebecca Roanhorse



You have so long feared death that you have not seen the promise in it. Why, it is as natural as life itself! The ending that precedes a beginning.



Upright: transformation, endings, change, transition, letting go

Just like Lucy, you may be going through a major transformation. Beware those who would prefer to keep you idealized in their own image of who you should be. They will use everything in their power to control you. Embrace the change, even if some think that makes you a monster.

Reversed: fear of change, repeating negative patterns, stagnancy, decay

Change comes whether we wish it or not and resisting it will cause you distress. Careful that you do not remain caught in the darkness, playing out past heroics, afraid of what lies ahead.



XIV. TEMPERANCE

"The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin
Pairing by Tini Howard



Your calculations are precise. Every equation is balanced. Each resource checked. You're leaving the safety of your orbit with only what you need, no more, no less. It's perfect harmony, as long as you can keep your emotions in check . . .

Upright: moderation, tranquility,
balance, peace, patience



Even in the darkest moment, you must manage to keep your cool. Though it may require a massive sacrifice, the middle path calls, and patience and wisdom must be your guides. Whatever choice you make, your vision is clear, and you are at peace.

Reversed: imbalance, excess,
extremes, discord, recklessness

Something is off-balance in your life. Your calculations crashing, each broken variable throwing you into a stressful situation. Heed this warning and make a thoughtful plan, for your recklessness could make this imbalance even worse.



XV. THE DEVIL

***Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville**

Pairing by Talia Lavin



Let faith oust fact; let obsession oust sanity. For ye, the pull of your desire is stronger than any wave crashing against your bow. But be wary, fair sailor, for the white whale of your obsession may be stronger than you think.



Upright: addiction, obsession, dependency, excess, powerlessness

Look down! See ye feet tangled in your own rope, your desires threatening to pull you down into the deep. If you don't step away from the harpoon, you may lose more than your leg to this mad voyage.

Reversed: independence, freedom, revelation, release, reclaiming power

Awake, my friend, and untie the knot of obsession. From your shattered dinghy, you must wrest yourself free of the dangerous delusions that guide you or you will never find your heart's honeymoon.



XVI. THE TOWER

"The Outsider" by H. P. Lovecraft

Pairing by Victor LaValle



The shadows have always been your home. They are your earliest memory. They cling to you even as you crawl from their depths and approach the tower in the distance. You are drawn to it—it is inevitable. Once you enter, you will never be the same.



**Upright: disaster, destruction,
upheaval, trauma, chaos**

Endless hours of isolation and introspection cannot prepare you for what is to come; what comes cannot be denied, only endured. Your screams join those around you . . . but is it possible you are the root of their terror?



**Reversed: retreat, avoidance,
resistance, denial, rejection**

Refuse to face your fate, burrow back into the earth; put off the terrible wisdom, at least for one more day. Take refuge among the mocking and friendly ghouls, for who else will accept you?

XVII. THE STAR

***Emily of New Moon* by L. M. Montgomery**

Pairing by Amal El-Mohtar



In an old, gloomy house lit only by candles, you shine in the dark, blazing a trail by the light reflecting off your pen. Your spirit calls out to its kin in the world, and when they meet, there's a *flash*, brilliant and extraordinary, showing you beauty, and friendship, and love.



Upright: hope, inspiration, faith, renewal, healing, rejuvenation

Even with the many hardships you've endured, you have a gift that sustains you and longs to be shared, a path that beckons you forward. You need only remain courageous!

Reversed: hopelessness, despair, negativity, faithlessness, despondent

Sometimes it seems like everything, even hope, is lost. But there is truth languishing at the bottom of dark wells. The stars are always there, even when clouds and daylight obscure them.



XVIII. THE MOON

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
by Lewis Carroll

Pairing by Dani Hedlund



With just the power of our imagination, we can conjure a path away from reality, leading us to curioser and curioser worlds. But be wary, dear traveler, for if you choose to fall down that rabbit hole, you might never come back!



Upright: illusion, intuition, uncertainty, confusion, complexity, secrets

As the darkness of a new path falls around you, things might not be as they appear! If you want to know where you ought to go from here, take a page from the Cheshire Cat and allow your intuition to guide you.

Reversed: fear, deception, anxiety, clarity, misunderstanding

Like Alice at the Mad Hatter's tea party, confusion and unhappiness can become too much! Be careful not to be led astray for the threat of losing your way (and your head) is always lurking!



XIX. THE SUN

***Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell**

Pairing by K. D. Edwards



The Sun is an avatar for optimism and vitality. Bask in its glow—for it signals abundance, better times, triumph at the end of adversity, and both physical and emotional stamina.



Upright: happiness, success, optimism, vitality, confidence

Your dear Black Beauty is a bulwark against the emotions that thrive in darkness: your fears, your egoism, your moments lacking inspiration and confidence. Persevere and never give up hope! Take the reins of your life and radiate love all around you.

Reversed: blocked happiness, excessive enthusiasm, pessimism

Beware of the dark clouds that may keep you from seeing the light. If you're feeling down, don't force your chin up with false passion—or by pulling too hard on your reins. Sometimes embracing a down day is both honest and realistic.



XX. JUDGEMENT

Dante's Inferno by Dante Alighieri

Pairing by Faylita Hicks



It's time to make a decision about what you want out of life! This may seem ominous, but in truth, it encourages you to listen to your intuition and take ownership of your journey.



Upright: awakening, renewal, purpose, reflection, reckoning

Just as Dante and Virgil descended through the nine circles of hell, you are forced to reevaluate your beliefs about yourself and the world around you. Take this time to reflect on your purpose—a reckoning is just around the corner!

Reversed: self-doubt, lack of self-awareness, denial, self-loathing

You are the only one who can decide what (and whom) you will journey to hell and back with. If you're ready to heal, release all doubt and self-loathing. Become your own north star!



XXI. THE WORLD

Le Morte d'Arthur by Sir Thomas Malory

Pairing by Lev Grossman



Lo! What is this goodly company, ranged round a table of such peerless circularity? For such as they, we are all joined in one never-ending circle. Everything is possible.



Upright: achievement, wholeness, harmony, belonging, completion

Once upon a time, even King Arthur was but a landless churl—till he drew the sword from the stone and knew himself for the king he was. Once you too perceive your wholeness and that of the world around you, there's nothing you can't accomplish.

Reversed: emptiness, achievement lost, feeling incomplete, unfulfilled

Unhappy knight! You have finished the quest, performed your miracle, and turned for home only to find that your glimpse of unity and transcendence was fleeting. All that is good passes, empires and castles fall to rubble, and that perfect circle is but a zero.



MINOR ARCANA

When it comes to unraveling the mysteries of our internal struggles, we must supplement the bold characters of the Major Arcana in order to focus on our states of being. The Minor Arcana comprise fifty-six cards, making up the majority of the tarot deck. They provide nuanced details and insights.

Broken into four suits, each aligned with the four elements (Earth, Fire, Water, Air), classes (Merchants, Artisans, Clergy, Nobility), and faculties (Body, Creativity, Emotions, Reason), the Minors imbue each reading with important intricacy for the myriad moments of life.



Our Renaming Logic

To saturate every level of our deck in literary splendor, we renamed the Minor Arcana. Instead of having swords, wands, cups, and coins (as is traditional in the Italian and Spanish decks) or clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds (from the French deck), we created our own literary-themed names that correspond with the traditional arcana suits and add a fun literary lens.



Wands to Ink

This suit corresponds with **passion, willpower, and inspiration**. In our tarot, **Ink** represents these ideas swimming in our minds, creating the energy that we can transform into something tangible.



Cups to Light

This suit corresponds with the **inner world: emotions, imagination, intuition**. In our tarot, **Light** is that spark of ideas and “inner light” that guides our decisions from a deeply personal place.



Swords to Quills

This suit corresponds with **how you parse the world**: using logic, conflict, and communication. In our tarot, **Quills** embody how we communicate—the physical object needed to take lofty, complex ideas and commit it to the page—either to inspire peace or war.



Pentacles to Parchment

This suit corresponds with **material concerns**; health and wealth. In our tarot, **Parchment** represents the way our ideas engage with the material world. We commit ideas and stories to the physical page, which is how we sell and buy literature and art.

ACE OF INK

Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

Pairing by Terry Brooks



You've gotta crow! From your lofty position in the cloud, you can clearly see—and even reshape—your Neverland . . . if only you can keep the grown-up world at bay!



Upright: inspiration, creativity, initiative, enthusiasm, energy

Your sheer force of will can enable you to do anything—maybe even fly! Pursue your ideas and creative endeavors with zest. If you're not sure what to create next, start with a single happy thought and see where it takes you.

Reversed: delays, blocks, passionless, lethargy, hesitancy

It isn't easy to stay in the clouds. With pirates—or just growing up—close on your tail, you might feel like you're putting the lost into the Lost Boys. Don't lose faith in your skill and electric intellect. Be patient, take a moment or two, and you'll feel energized once again.



TWO OF INK

The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling
Pairing by Carrie Morgridge



Ay! Thou must chart a path through an unknown jungle. You are being called to make a decision with a brave heart and a careful eye. Start simple and follow your instincts.



Upright: planning, making decisions,
leaving comfort, taking risks

Move swiftly and sharpen your focus on the goal ahead. Leave the cage of your comfort behind and courageously explore possibilities beyond your wildest imagination.

Reversed: bad planning, overanalyzing,
not taking action, avoiding risk

Only a cub's cub never leaves their lair. You've let fear or poor planning keep you domesticated for too long. Set your sights on where you need to go and make haste!



THREE OF INK

A Room with a View by E. M. Forster

Pairing by Gina Chung



Sunlight streams through the open window, bringing with it the sounds of the river and the birds. You contemplate all that lies before you and is to come. Indecision and hesitation dissipate like mist.



Upright: momentum, confidence, expansion, growth, foresight

Like Lucy Honeychurch, you are poised to reach for what you want, to play the song of your life as only you know how. The journey ahead is bright and strewn with violets.

Reversed: restriction, limitations, obstacles, delays, frustration

It's easy to get in a muddle about what you want. Ask yourself what's keeping you from opening the curtains to let the light in. Unexpected setbacks are just temporary—there's no reason to deny yourself joy in the meantime.



FOUR OF INK

The King of Elfland's Daughter by Lord Dunsany

Pairing by Holly Black



Whether your home ought to be in the wonder and wildness of the green deep tarns and honied air of Elfland or among the warm hearths and hearts of the children of Earth, find it in joy, hope, and harmony.



Upright: community, home, celebrations, reunions, parties

This is a time to gather with those you love and dance in the scarlet of downed leaves, because you have found balance and belonging in this golden moment.

Reversed: instability, feeling unwelcome, transience, home conflict

You may feel estranged and spurned by those you have loved best, may feel rootless and groundless, torn between worlds. Your limbs are in one place, your heart in another.



FIVE OF INK

***The Scarlet Pimpernel* by Baroness Orczy**

Pairing by Race Garber



When strife and discord drive the world mad, playing along may let you sail through the mounting conflict. But take care not to fall victim to your own disguise, creating a life for your persona rather than yourself.



Upright: conflict, competition, aggression, tension, rivals

They seek you here, they seek you there! Confrontation is everywhere! Be bold! Accept the adventure! Prepare yourself for competition, but with a jaunt in your step and your wits at the ready.

Reversed: cooperation, agreements, truces, harmony, peace

Your escape from conflict is within reach, but the last few feet can hide peril. If in the company of loved ones, put your trust in them. If facing adversaries, try another face—a bold deception may let you waltz out of the conflict altogether.



SIX OF INK

The Iliad by Homer

Pairing by Stephen Fry



The field of war shines a light on what is best in humankind and what is worst. For those who serve a cause higher than themselves comes the prize of immortal renown. Fate has darker plans for those who set themselves above duty and service.



Upright: success, victory, triumph,
rewards, recognition

Sing of the clash of arms, of warrior princes, their courage and their skill. Sing of Hector, Ajax, Agamemnon, and golden Achilles. From the blood and boil of sacrifice come honor, glory, and eternal fame. Gods and men will praise their names forever.

Reversed: failure, lack of recognition,
no rewards, lack of achievement



Sing of pride, fury, shame, and grief. Of women dishonored and deceived. Of grown men's tantrums, temper, and self-regard. The Fates punish, and history condemns those who put self before service.

SEVEN OF INK

"Bisclavret" by Marie de France

Pairing by Danny Lore



What a sight you've become, Baron Bisclavret! These betrayals and conflicts have turned you into a beast, but will you bare your teeth, or turn tail to lick your wounds?



Upright: protectiveness, persistence, self-defense, averting, prevention

Holding onto success can feel like fighting to protect your wolf pack—whether in business or life. It's even harder when secrets and manipulations make you an outcast. Steel your will to face those whod challenge your station.

Reversed: quitting, defeated, yielding, insecurity, surrender

Sometimes it feels like you should bare your belly and submit to your enemies. The trials are too many! In these moments, you may feel compelled to surrender—to retreat into a more feral (or pajama-clad) form. Remember all you've fought for, and trust that there are allies in your corner!



EIGHT OF INK

Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman

Pairing by Maggie Downs



Allons! The journey awaits! Don't linger on the treacherous trails you've already taken or the mighty challenges you've faced. Those are behind you, and a new, open road unfurls ahead. Earlier hardship has paved the way. You do indeed contain multitudes.



Upright: movement, speed, progress,
sudden changes, excitement

Your momentum has such vigor it deserves exclamation points. Like a rock tumbling down a hill! Or a stream that becomes a torrent! Embrace the velocity, and delight in everything encountered along the way. There's no stopping you now.

Reversed: waiting, slowness,
chaos, delays, hastiness

Every traveler encounters the occasional delay. Have patience, offer yourself a hefty dose of grace, and remember even small steps make progress. Don't be discouraged; goodness exists everywhere.



NINE OF INK

"The Most Dangerous Game"

by Richard Connell

Pairing by Scott Snyder



Mighty, refined hunter, you have survived many trials—your ship cast against the proverbial shore, your spirit and faith tested by beast and man. Stand at the ready, upon the rampart, for the final showdown.



Upright: last stand, persistence, grit, resilience, perseverance

Like Rainsford, you've confronted a series of challenges and may find yourself exhausted even as you begin to taste victory. Take heed that the fight is not over, and while the battle feels overlong, you can still succeed if you believe.

Reversed: stubbornness, rigidity, defensiveness, giving up

After escaping the obstacles in your path, you may find yourself run down, lacking the energy and supplies to survive. This may be a time to hole up, set boundaries, and hide, only taking action with great care and planning, lest you end up your enemy's trophy.



TEN OF INK

The Scarlet Letter: A Romance

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Pairing by C. Spike Trotman



First, you bear a cross foisted upon you by the community, and then you carry the burden of truth. You have come far, but your suffering is not yet complete.



Upright: burden, stress, obligation, burning out, struggles

It's only a single letter made of cloth and sewn upon your breast, but it is heavy. Even as you gain the trust of those who doubted you, finding solace, more obstacles await, ensuring your endless encumbrance.

Reversed: failure to delegate, collapse, breakdown, exhaustion

Reevaluate the things you carry. Though your desire to bear them alone is admirable—even honorable—these troubles are not meant to be yours alone. Reach out to others for help, or face dire consequences to your body, mind, and spirit.



PAGE OF INK

***The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann**
Pairing by Hart Hanson



As you look upon the vast, unknown world, you overflow with excitement and curiosity. So far, the places you've never been, their people and their wars, remain abstract—merely ideas to you—but you are nonetheless called to adventure.



Upright: exploration, excitement, fresh ideas, energetic, fearless

Your curiosity overcomes your fear of the unknown. You can defeat gravity, transform into the true version of yourself, ascend the Magic Mountain. And—crucially—you will find the courage to descend again and live your life fully.

Reversed: hasty, impatient, laziness, boring, distracted

You resist your own dreams! You are tempted to either avoid climbing the Magic Mountain or, once reaching the top, you are tempted to remain, persuaded that life below really is *all hocus pocus*. Stay among the clouds and your soul will wither.



KNIGHT OF INK

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

by Mark Twain

Pairing by Greg Rucka



The adventure embraced is a life of learning, of expectations and recitations refuted, of the awakening of the soul to the truth of the world around us. The adventure lies in the questions life throws at you, and how *you* answer them.



Upright: courageous, charming, hero, rebellious, free spirit

There's a reason people are drawn to you. Your carefree lifestyle belies that a sharp—if untapped—mind is open to seeing what's truly right and wrong in the world, bestowing you with the courage to fight for Good.

Reversed: arrogant, reckless, impatient, passive, volatile

Sometimes, the folks around you just don't see things the way you do. They're hung up on old, vile ideas you know are bad, so you turn to mischief, misadventure, and more. It's too bad you're not in charge . . . at least until you're older.



QUEEN OF INK

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Pairing by Joel Kim Booster



Your quick wit, courageous spirit, and fiercely independent nature set you above the restrictive social etiquette that means to silence you. However, your certainty of mind can give way to quick judgments—don't let your prejudice lead you astray.



Upright: confident, passionate, social, charismatic, vivacious

You have a lively, playful disposition, which delights in anything ridiculous. While the road to love may not seem clear immediately, open your heart and reconsider past judgments. Your Darcy could be right in front of you.

Reversed: demanding, jealous, selfish, vengeful, temperamental

You may be called upon to help someone you love or you may be staring down an obstacle of your own. Remember you are more than your sharp tongue. It may be time to be a rational creature, speaking the truth from your heart.



KING OF INK

***The War of the Worlds* by H. G Wells**
Pairing by Brian Michael Bendis



Our world is being watched keenly and closely by a great intelligence. Perhaps it is an alien force unknown, or perhaps it's your own daring and creative mind. But regardless, you must be ready to put your existence under the microscope to ascertain how you might survive.



Upright: vision, control, daring,
decisive, boldness

To truly innovate, to create entire worlds, you must be dauntless. When you harness this power, there is nothing that can stop you—extraterrestrial or otherwise—and others will follow in your footsteps.

Reversed: forceful, domineering,
tyrant, vicious, powerless

Do not become a battleground for fear and curiosity. Take care because a bold idea—executed without care and compassion—can result in destruction. If others do not grasp your vision, take heart, as all visionaries confront their share of detractors.



ACE OF LIGHT

Carmilla by Sheridan Le Fanu
Pairing by Carmen Maria Machado



Watch for new energy and love. It might crash into you like a carriage accident, thrusting passion onto your doorstep in a meet-cute for the ages. But is it a serendipitous beginning to a romance? Or a harbinger of a terrible fate?



Upright: love, new feelings, emotional awakening, spirituality, intuition

A rush of light, of breath, of blood. This is a card of emotional awakening and creativity. You must be ready for the unseen and unknown; open yourself up to the exquisite, chaotic slurry of birth.

Reversed: coldness, emptiness, emotional loss, feeling unloved



The chill of a tempered fire, footsteps echoing in a gloomy hall. You may feel overwhelmed with emptiness and thwartedness; your mind or body struggling to access love or inspiration.

TWO OF LIGHT

Emma by Jane Austen

Pairing by Ayelet Waldman



Love, be it romantic or platonic, is a bridge between two shores. But like any lasting link, love needs an engineer to match shore to shore, heart to heart.



**Upright: unity, partnership,
attraction, connection, close bonds**

Through keen matchmaking, yours is a union of equals, not identical, but rather forces that complement one another. The bridge between you is strong but flexible; it sways, oscillates and vibrates, but never collapses. You find joy in the very differences that might separate you.

**Reversed: separation, rejection,
division, imbalance, tension**



Built on faulty foundations, love's balance is broken. The differences between mismatched partners do not attract each to the other, but rather repel. Despite the matchmaker's best intentions, disconnection and discord threaten to undo a smart coupling.

THREE OF LIGHT

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum

Pairing by Mel Hilario



Rejoice! You're surrounded by friends and loved ones who support and uplift you. You can watch your worries melt away.



Upright: friendship, community, celebrations, gatherings, social events

No matter what road you travel—be it yellow brick or otherwise—the journey is always lighter with trusted companions. Spend time with those you hold dear, whose mind, heart, and spirit see you clearest. Together, you can brave what's ahead.

Reversed: isolation, loneliness, solitude, gossip, scandal



The whirlwind of life can leave us isolated and lonely, as if we're stranded far from home. You might need a return to balance and harmony (though it's not always as easy as a click of your heels).

FOUR OF LIGHT

"Bartleby, the Scrivener" by Herman Melville

Pairing by Tara Laskowski



Ah, humanity! So dreadfully inescapable. Life continues to happen around you, whether tiresome, troubled, or joyous, and yet you prefer not to partake.



Upright: apathy, contemplation, melancholy, boredom, indifference

As the lawyer without an office or the man forgotten, you feel cheerless and imprisoned. Someone or something is trying to offer you comfort that you cannot see—or choose not to take. Remember life is short, and, alas, regret can be very long.

Reversed: clarity, awareness, acceptance, depression, negativity



Whether you feel trapped in a tedious and intolerable career or frustrated that you can't seem to move or inspire the people around you, the fates suggest (gently, if they may) that you should now seek out other roads in life than Wall Street. But only, of course, if you prefer to.

FIVE OF LIGHT

***The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Pairing by Erin Morgenstern



What you wanted slipped through your fingers, toppled like a dropped champagne coupe. Now it's only a green light on a distant dock, trapping you ceaselessly in the past.



Upright: loss, grief, disappointment, sadness, mourning

You may be having a Gatsby moment: oblivious to the glittering possibilities around you, dwelling on the past, haunted by what might have been. Whether your green light is missed opportunity or dashed hope or lost love, don't drown yourself in it, see what remains.

Reversed: acceptance, moving on, finding peace, contentment



Spilt champagne cannot be un-spilt and sometimes a green light is just a light. You know it's time to toast the past and let it go. Turn around and join the party, old sport.

SIX OF LIGHT

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

Pairing by Damian Barr



With your smile upturned like your straw hat, join Tom as he boards the raft which will carry you down a vast river of memories. But be wary not to get pulled under!



Upright: nostalgia, memories, healing, sentimentality, pleasure

As you float down, playing pirates on the wide Mississippi, you will flow into your past, finding comfort in people and feelings you'd forgotten while paying too much mind to Aunt Polly and chiding time.

Reversed: stuck in past, moving forward, independence, growing up

Tom is forever getting into scrapes—he knows very well the pain-pleasure of picking at a scabby knee. You do too. And you know you must eventually leave it be. So, have adventures, get up to no good, and wear your scars proudly: just be sure they're all healed. Only you know when it's time to stop picking.



SEVEN OF LIGHT

A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare

Pairing by Ellen Azevedo



By some illusion, thou art entranced! The fairies have bewitched your sight, and now all you see before you is but a dream. Be wary of getting lost in this wood where that knavish sprite Puck makes mischief!



Upright: choices, searching for purpose, illusion, fantasy, daydreaming

What flower has 'nointed your eyes? Deception makes it difficult to see up from down, and to find a sense of direction. Dost thou know the difference between delusions and attainable goals? Follow your intuition. Wishing is easier than taking action, but a choice must be made.

Reversed: disarray, confusion, diversion, distractions, clarity

Thou wak'st. The charm has been taken for your sight. Manifest what you seek and commit yourself. Be as thou want to be. Create your own fate!



EIGHT OF LIGHT

Paradise Lost by John Milton

Pairing by Samuel Sattin



O, Angel of Light, turn thine back upon the past! As you fall, so do we all, forced to walk away from eternal splendor by quarrel or by choice.



Upright: abandonment, walking away, searching for truth, leaving behind

An important transition confronts you. You may be seeking radical knowledge. Or perhaps you're turning your back on your former life. As you leave the old comforts of someone else's paradise behind, seek to create a new one that you find richer and fairer.

Reversed: stagnation, monotony, avoidance, fear of change



Where once you had clarity, now you feel unsure. You may feel stuck in a world that no longer brings you joy. While you wish to rise up against your creator and remake reality itself, change is a frightening prospect, indeed.

NINE OF LIGHT

Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery

Pairing by Ezra Claytan Daniels



Isn't it a positively wonderful thing to desire something?
If not for the ecstasy of a wish granted, you may think
you could live forever in the hope of it being so!



Upright: wishes coming true,
contentment, success, achievements

And when you finally receive the thing you've
dreamt of, it's as though the future itself glows
bright as the first sunny day of spring; in that
moment you are a butterfly stretching free of
its cocoon!



Reversed: unhappiness, arrogance,
disappointment, underachievement

But there is no greater depth of despair than
a dream dashed! It almost makes you wish
you never dreamed at all. It's so very selfish to
wallow in your sorrow, but you can't help the
way you feel, can you? Sometimes it's nicer to
be miserable!

TEN OF LIGHT

***Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf**

Pairing by Lidia Yuknavitch



This life you've built for yourself is all that you'd ever hoped for. And at tonight's party, you will show it off to London society!



Upright: happiness, emotional stability, security, domestic harmony

In finding a stable partner—if not the most exciting—you've secured comfort and harmony. You need only step out into the city streets or look into the past to see the contrasts between your idyllic life and everyone else's.

Reversed: unhappy home, separation, conflict at home, disharmony, isolation

Perhaps an unexpected visitor from your past, a bit of tragic news, or your own keen observation of the state of the world has shaken your sense of domestic bliss. Is it all a lie? Find a way to appreciate what you have, or you too might tumble from the high window . . .



PAGE OF LIGHT

***Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens**

Pairing by Cassandra Clare



The world is spread before you, a blank canvas of potential. Let intuition guide you as you decorate it with your dreams, ambitions, and wild hopes—yet also remain receptive to unexpected inspiration.



Upright: idealism, sensitivity, dreamer, naivety, innocence

As you forge your way, delight in the possibility of your prospects and your creativity. But this journey may be thorny. Remember that which is of great worth to you, take heart, and remain persistent!

Reversed: emotional vulnerability, immaturity, escapism, insecurity

You may attain great things, but if you lose sight of that which brings you joy and your success is artifice, it will ring hollow. Return your attention to the passions that originally inspired you.



KNIGHT OF LIGHT

Tom Jones by Henry Fielding
Pairing by Charlie Jane Anders



Good nature is always ascendant in your mind, and you are touched with the tenderest, nay, the kindest of sentiments for others.



Upright: idealist, charming,
artistic, tactful, diplomatic

Your passions and sympathies for others, and most especially for those in Distress, may lead you into such excesses as the soberest of philosophers may deplore. Yet when prudence and honor fall away, the God of Love will be with you and guide you to happiness.

Reversed: disappointment, tantrums,
moodiness, turmoil, vanity



In truth, at times your emotions may cloud your judgment. The prudence of the best of heads may often be defeated by the tenderness of the best of hearts, allowing your inferior understanding to overcome your superior. Reason is often a stranger to the secret spontaneous emotions of the soul, which may carry us into lasting dismay.

QUEEN OF LIGHT

***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë**

Pairing by Margaret Atwood



You might not possess rank, costly dresses, and outer beauty, but you illuminate from within.

Upright: compassion, warmth,
kindness, intuition, healer



Despite unjust relatives, a meager education, and unbecoming clothes, you persevere. Your intuition guides you like a lamp, piercing locked attics and revealing shameful secrets. Emotion triumphs over cold logic, an inner voice calls you, and love heals the scorched heart. Your beloved's lack of sight does not dismay: you have vision enough for two.

Reversed: insecurity, overly-sensitive,
fragile, dependence, martyrdom



Bitterly do you reproach yourself for it: you are prone to tempers and fits of tears. In extremis, you become your own dark shadow: a madwoman consumed with jealous rage, escaping from confinement to burn it all down.

KING OF LIGHT

The Odyssey by Homer

Pairing by Vita Ayala



Brave Odysseus! You will need your mind, body, and heart to find your way home. By mastering both your emotions and logic, you will finally succeed through turbulent times and tides.



Upright: wise, diplomatic, balance between head and heart

Choose compassion toward others. Though you will find glory through wisdom and emotional control, your devotion to kin and crew—helping them prosper—is what makes your odyssey epic, rather than tragic.

Reversed: cold, repressed, withdrawn, manipulative, selfish



Facing many challenges, you may feel inclined to withdraw, turn away from others, or become self-protective. Resist these inclinations. The balance between emotion and logic—and your deep love for your companions and family back home—make you stronger. Your clever mind is best matched by a wise heart.

ACE OF QUILLS

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Pairing by Mark Millar



The game is afoot! With a sharp mind and keen senses, everything is elementary to you, my dear. As a practiced truth-seeker, you cannot be deceived, no matter what tricks Moriarty—or others—might try.



Upright: clarity, concentration,
vision, focus, truth

Your intellect makes you powerful, enabling you to see through the fog on the Moors, to unravel the facts in any situation. Focus on the clues and remember: it's your job to know what others do not.

Reversed: confusion, hostility,
miscommunication, distraction

Something, or someone, has left you confused. Your muddled thoughts are making big leaps difficult, and even a pipe, or soothing violin playing, won't fix it. Focus not on the dreary, dismal, unprofitable world, but instead on what you can control within it.



TWO OF QUILLS

Antigone by Sophocles

Pairing by Alec Nevala-Lee



Are there any woes that Zeus has not brought to pass? By defying the powerful, you might suffer the most of all. If this is what fate has decreed, what can you do—or undo?



Upright: stalemate, difficult choices, denial, hidden information

You might feel like armies are clashing at your gates and your fortunes are caught in the middle. Your actions will show what is in your heart, but you are forced to make an impossible choice.

Reversed: indecision, hesitancy, anxiety, no right choice, truth revealed

You want to do what is right, but you fear that a hopeless quest should not be made at all. Will you decide to help those who are already lost, even if it is forbidden to all of Thebes?



THREE OF QUILLS

"The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs

Pairing by Stephen Graham Jones



You may sometimes wish you could erase the painful aspects of life, perhaps with a horrific, magical artifact. But remember that loss is necessary for healing, that heartbreak is necessary for forgiveness.



**Upright: heartbreak, sadness,
grief, sorrow, loss, trauma**

There's been a rupture in your life, and through this rupture the shadows can seep in, fill the room. You must now stand with your back to the wall. Do not fear your pain, for it is the prelude to recovery and a natural part of life.

**Reversed: healing, forgiveness,
recovery, reconciliation**

Your circle is closing again, at long last. Don't take this to mean there won't be a scar, but understand that if there were no scar, that would be erasing the past, and you need that, to move forward.



FOUR OF QUILLS

Walden by Henry David Thoreau
Pairing by Valerie San Filippo



Sanctuary: a noble thing! Rest, too, is a moment of vitality. Those who live well return to their silences to remember what they labor for. This is the essential restoration. Humankind must sleep to truly be awake.



Upright: pause, relaxation, tranquility, renewal, refuge

You sense the moment of retreat: do not hesitate. You are a human animal, mortal, temporary, and you must honor rest as well as action. Seek sanctuary. Be still until you are restored to face the fullness of life.

Reversed: kindle, exhaustion, agitation, disquiet, recuperation

There is, within all humankind, a restlessness. Be wary of impatience. Remember that idleness too can be a virtue. Sit, listen, rest, and only then step deliberately outward.



FIVE OF QUILLS

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Pairing by Kieron Gillen



Conflict. Reason fails. The devil helps. An axe is a bloody solution. The question is: are you a monster or a victim?



Upright: arguments, aggression, intimidation, conflict, hostility

A monster. You return to your dilapidated bedsit, heavy with your bloody gains. You are victorious but pursued. You will find there is no escape from what you have done. Your conscience is your punishment and your prison.

Reversed: resolution, compromise, revenge, regret, remorse



A victim. There is no escape, and that itself is an escape. The truly great must experience great sorrow on this earth, and it takes more than intelligence to act intelligently. You grow. You may consider this the start of a new narrative—and the end of the present one.

SIX OF QUILLS

The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

Pairing by Jeff VanderMeer



Oh dear . . . This isn't right at all. You've up and changed overnight and nothing will ever be the same. Whatever you used to know is over now, for better or for worse. No need to question it.



Upright: moving on, departure, leaving behind, distance, accepting lessons

It's time to move on, to let go. While you may regret losing the life (and the human body) you once had, this metamorphosis is good for you. It will release you from the struggles and false loves to which you've grown accustomed.

Reversed: stuck in past, running away from problems, trapped, obsessing

Maybe you've been hiding, or someone or something is making you feel locked away, scorned by those you love. Focus not on what you lost, but on what you learn by leaving.



SEVEN OF QUILLS

"The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe

Pairing by Benjamin Percy



Like a clever black cat, you can sneak out of the way of trouble, but there's a limit to how many lies you can tell. Beware your swiftly unraveling deceptions, or you may become a victim of your ugly impulses.



Upright: lies, trickery, scheming,
strategy, resourcefulness

You're cunning and smart, weaving a careful and intricate web of lies and deceptions that you think will finally free you from your mountain of unfair burdens. But be wary: you can't keep all your secrets walled up forever.

Reversed: regret, maliciousness, truth
revealed, confession, conscience

Despite your best efforts, you're coming undone. You're haunted by the screams—or is it meows?—of buried deeds. Don't let your deceptions eat away at you. Tear down those walls before it's too late!



EIGHT OF QUILLS

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Pairing by Charlie Claire Burgess



What is this grotesque wallpaper that contorts and confines? You feel trapped, persecuted, powerless. Perhaps if you could get free of the pattern of your thoughts, or get rid of that paper . . . but what is one to do?



Upright: victimization, helplessness, imprisonment, feeling paralyzed

What false beliefs do you swallow like cod liver oil, supposing them to be cures? This prison is one of perception, so do not succumb to helplessness and other foolish fancies. Take hold of the bars and shake them hard.

Reversed: freedom, survivor, empowered, control

Behind the pattern of your thoughts, the dim shapes get clearer every day. Now take control and rip the vicious paper from the walls! You have the power to free yourself of this optic horror, even if you have to creep.



NINE OF QUILLS

***Macbeth* by William Shakespeare**

Pairing by Laura Miller



What have you done that makes you bolt upright in your lavish bed, in the dead of night, to cover your face in shame and guilt beside your wall of blades?



Upright: panic, worry, terror,
anguish, gloom

Sooner or later, we all have to face up to our past. Whatever you told yourself about why you had to do what you did, if you aren't honest with yourself, you can't be forgiven and move on.

Reversed: survive, healing, humble,
remorse, self-realization

Despite the ghosts at your banquet that keep you up at night, morning is on its way. Though your troubles may seem as immovable as the trees and your hands feel as if they'll never come clean, you've taken the first steps toward setting things right. Tomorrow can be a new day.



TEN OF QUILLS

***Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad**

Pairing by Jonathan Hickman



Your great endeavor—or even an expedition into the depths of the African jungle—has fallen apart, leaving you ruined, lost, and on the brink of collapse.



**Upright: ruin, failure, bitterness,
exhaustion, betrayal**

You put your trust in someone—a friend, or a well-known leader—and now you find yourself betrayed. You must learn that you cannot control everything, much less harness an unknown continent, for your great intellect does not set you above the world.

**Reversed: survival, improvement,
healing, lessons learned, despair**

After a long and arduous fight, you have lost. The mistakes born of hubris have combined to lead you to this point, and there is no turning back now. Accept this ending, learn from it, and you can return home—to Europe, or elsewhere—with valuable wisdom learned.



PAGE OF QUILLS

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

Pairing by Mark Waid



Wit is the most valuable tool in your possession. With wit, the quick-minded can elevate a lover into shattering paroxysms of joy as easily as they can eviscerate a rival, leaving them cowed like a scolded Pekingese.

Upright: curious, witty, chatty,
communicative, inspired



The sheer dexterity with which you command language would cause Roget himself to question his depth of knowledge. You are a spirited debater (and, frankly, an incurable chatterbox) whose questions are many and pointed and whose answers are doubly so.

Reversed: cynical, sarcastic, gossipy,
insulting, rude

That same attic salt you command, however, is quite skillful in twisting fact into gossip and truth into deception. Regardless, your utterances can at times be so exaggerated and pretentious as to be as beautiful as a soap bubble—and equally as substantive.



KNIGHT OF QUILLS

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles

Pairing by Rachel Pollack



O, sweet hero! Your mind is as sharp as your blade, and no danger—however boldly prophesied—will turn you back from your goals. But take care you do not grow blind to your own secret history. Do you know who you really are?

Upright: direct, impatient, intellectual,
daring, ambitious



Your obsessions and ambitions drive you, and because of your keen mind, you've risen to every battle, and every challenge—relishing each opportunity to prove yourself to those who admire you. Even the most complicated riddle is no match for you!

Reversed: forceful, aggressive, vicious,
ruthless, arrogant

Beware! Your unstoppable ardor to succeed may blind you to a dark truth you do not want to recognize. Do not become the villain you seek to destroy!



QUEEN OF QUILLS

Beowulf

Pairing by Marjorie Liu



Boundaries are being tested, a challenge issued! Grendel's mother, warrior queen, invites you to call upon the mother-blood of dragons. You are not alone.



Upright: honest, independent,
principled, fair, objective

Now is the time for resilience and compassionate strength. Stand within your deepest self, honor honest wisdom, do not be quick to judge. Cultivate curiosity, and the truth will be revealed.



Reversed: malicious, spiteful,
cruel, manipulative, bitter

Beware the impulse to abuse your power or make excuses for revenge. Clear your heart of bitterness, for that is the poison that will deform your potential. Be merciful in anger, humble in strength. Gifts should not be used to harm others. Doing so will lead to your downfall.

KING OF QUILLS

***Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius**

Pairing by Kelly Sue DeConnick



The King of Quills asks you to lead with reason, honesty, courage, and temperance.



Upright: reason, authority, discipline, integrity, morality

You are the sole monarch in the dominion of your mind. All thoughts therein are yours to order and observe. To hold your throne as a just lord, let reason and moral integrity be your guide.

Reversed: irrational, oppressive, controlling, cold, ruthless

A tyrant fails to see that leadership is service. If you succumb to pettiness, dishonesty, and self-aggrandizing you have given sovereignty over your mind to the tyrant called Ego. Unseat him; resume your proper path.



ACE OF PARCHMENT

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Pairing by Leigh Bardugo



Sometimes opportunity is kind enough to knock, but other times you must be the one to seek it out and nurture it. Find the door in the wall, the right key to unlock it, and you never know what magic may be waiting on the other side.



Upright: new opportunities, resources, abundance, prosperity, security

Even in the midst of a long, bleak season, the garden survives, waiting for someone to see its potential, and bring it to life again. This is your time to cultivate new growth, to find something that challenges and delights you—maybe something that others have overlooked—and devote yourself to it.

Reversed: missed chances, scarcity, deficiency, instability, stinginess

The garden will not grow on its own. Hope requires tending, like any other fragile thing. You may stamp your foot and demand more. You may stay locked in your old habits like a miser in a once-grand manor. It's easy to be stingy, but don't expect to be rewarded with abundance.



TWO OF PARCHMENT

Lud-in-the-Mist by Hope Mirrlees

Pairing by Kelly Link



You live a prosperous life at the conjunction of two rivers. One river is prosaic, and the other has its origin beyond the Debatable Hills in dreams, song, and fairy fruit.



Upright: balancing resources, adaptation, resourcefulness, flexibility

You balance your obligations to family and community with equal attention to what nourishes you, even when it comes from a place of strangeness. Music and poetry, romance and eccentricity are given space within the constraints of society.

Reversed: imbalance, unorganized, overwhelmed, messiness, chaos

Too much indulgence in fairy fruit or any other obsession will overwhelm your ability to live in this world. But too much attention to the marketplace, or to only one task, and everything else will run out of bounds and over the banks of your life.



THREE OF PARCHMENT

The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas

Pairing by Patricia A. Jackson



The merits of a life can only be measured by the difficulty of the obstacles you overcome. Remember, you are never alone on your journey.



Upright: teamwork, shared goals, collaboration, apprenticeship, effort

Despite your unrivaled skills, you would be wise to embrace the value of friendship, joining swords with those who share your talents. Remain on the path, no matter how narrow it becomes. Seek allies and work together to surmount the impossible!

Reversed: lack of cohesion, apathy, poor motivation, conflict, ego

Like Milady de Winter, calamitous choices have driven you to lose your head. Having pursued opportunities for selfish reasons, you abandoned others to suffer the repercussions of your actions. In the end, you, too, will come to grim shores where an executioner awaits to bury you in the cold waters of fate.



FOUR OF PARCHMENT

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Pairing by Joe Abercrombie



Christmas! That time of spending and hoarding, of charity and greed, of plenty and of want, not to mention visits from reproachful spirits . . .



Upright: possessiveness, insecurity,
hoarding, stinginess, materialism

There is nothing so hard as poverty, and you have worked to earn the wealth you have. But beware lest you forge a chain of greed and, like Ebenezer Scrooge, become a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone.

Reversed: generosity, openness, giving,
reckless spending

Mankind is your business! If you can say humbug to the pitfalls of recklessness and extravagance, there is nothing to lose and everything to gain by opening your shut-up heart freely and staying generous all year round.



FIVE OF PARCHMENT

Persuasion by Jane Austen

Pairing by Mariah McCourt



Prepare yourself for youthful betrayal, regret, and melancholy. These are all parts of life. Be thoughtful, but do not let your spirit be trapped in the past by potential unfulfilled.



Upright: hardship, loss, isolation, feeling abandoned

You may be feeling an ache of longing or the bittersweetness of memories. Separated by the persuasion of family, unjust circumstances, or the whims of fate, you may be haunted by what might have been. The mistakes of youth are holding you back.

Reversed: positive changes, overcoming adversity, forgiveness

Love will be rediscovered, reconnected, reborn. Time and patience have made it deeper than it might have been without trials and heartache. While there have been difficulties and doubt, you are reuniting with those thought lost. Appreciate what you have and never take it for granted.



SIX OF PARCHMENT

Les Misérables by Victor Hugo

Pairing by S. T. Gibson



What do we owe our fellow human creatures? Forget not to love your neighbor, not just in feeling, but by sharing your wealth and dignity . . . lest you promote the tide of inequality and resist the Revolution.



Upright: generosity, charity, community, support, sharing

An act of charity can truly save a life—like Jean Valjean's, degraded during his imprisonment and restored with kindness. If you have been blessed with wealth, share it lovingly. If you are in need, accept the generosity of another gratefully.

Reversed: abuse of generosity, strings-attached gifts, inequality, extortion

Offer your wealth with care, and know that sometimes it will never be repaid or returned. Should you ransom the soul of another, like the Bishop did for Jean Valjean, do so free of expectations and selflessly.



SEVEN OF PARCHMENT

***The Lost World* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

Pairing by Christopher Golden



The seeds are sown and the plans laid, hard work done and speeches made. Now is the time to reap rewards! Determined effort has brought you here, and with patience your labors will at last bear fruit!

Upright: harvest, rewards, progress, perseverance, patience



Like Professor Challenger facing doubts and mockery, betrayal and monstrous dangers, summon your courage and the confidence born of labor and hard-won knowledge. Obstacles may delay the rewards for your effort, but persevere as the Professor does, and you will reach your goals!

Reversed: procrastination, waste, lack of growth, setbacks, lack of reward



Obstacles continue to mount. A wise person weighs the expended effort against the potential reward, and with the latter diminishing and danger rising, you must know when to retreat from this adventure and pursue another.

EIGHT OF PARCHMENT

Le Fantôme de l'Opéra by Gaston Leroux

Pairing by Dan Chaon



You work feverishly, steadily, to master your skills. You have even made your home among your precious labor. Your tricks and traps and legerdemain will grow ever more astonishing, but do not let your obsessions overcome you!



Upright: skill, talent, quality, expertise, mastery, commitment

Your work sings to you constantly, like *Le Fantôme* for whom music is the sole sustenance for weeks at a stretch. But beware the intensity of your devotion. For as your masterpiece forms, the notes threaten to bleed red, written in your own blood.

Reversed: lack of quality, bad reputation, mediocrity

What stands in the way of your great project? Is it lack of skill or motivation? Is it bitterness, self-loathing, some ugliness you cannot mask? If you fail to confront these phantoms you—and your masterpiece—may never emerge.



NINE OF PARCHMENT

The Pillow Book by Sei Shōnagon

Pairing by Damian J. Rogers



Elegant pleasures await you. Perhaps an inkstone case with a gold lacquer design, perhaps a robe of fine brocade, perhaps praise from the Empress. Your unique discernment ensures your position.



Upright: success, achievement, leisure, material security, self-sufficiency

After much hard work and dedication, you have succeeded in delighting the court with your sharp wit and eye. Take time to enjoy the spoils of your labor. Trust the value of your perceptions, and protect the priceless treasure that is your detailed observations.

Reversed: being guarded, living beyond means, reckless spending

Don't be a snob. Don't outspend your purse trying to keep up with the ruling class. True refinement is reflected in the ability to appreciate the beauty of the autumn moon or the delicacy of a sparrow's song.



TEN OF PARCHMENT

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes by Anita Loos

Pairing by E. Lockhart



Don't waste your time with good-looking people and tennis champions. Invest in your financial situation until you can buy your own champagne cocktails, or whatever else brings you joy and comfort.



Upright: legacy, inheritance, windfall, privilege, affluence

When you have become educated, it is very likely that diamonds will come your way. And the good thing about diamonds is: they always look new. Relish all that sparkles.

Reversed: bankruptcy, debt, fleeting success, conflict over money

Your luck has turned! Say you have a headache and cannot come to dinner. Not even at the Ritz. Write in your diary and devise a strategy to get your life in order. Otherwise, you may end up pulling a plow in the Eastern of Europe with no one to help you but a cow.



PAGE OF PARCHMENT

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Pairing by Chloe Gong



It's never easy to draw out the future, and the line between unwavering dedication and doomed fate is as thin as a happy dagger.



Upright: ambitious, diligent, loyal,
goal-oriented, consistent

Dare to love. It's wonderful to be ambitious and faithful toward the task that you were put onto this world for, no matter how arduous it is. This loyalty is your grounding force: lean into it to see what your future holds.

Reversed: foolish, immature, missed
chances, irresponsible, lazy

There is a beauty in tragedy. As things fall apart, you cannot focus because of demands from all sides. It feels easier to blame the messenger than to admit you were moving so fast you didn't think to send a second letter.



KNIGHT OF PARCHMENT

A Princess of Mars by Edgar Rice Burroughs

Pairing by Chris Roberson



Whether stranded in the red wastes of Mars or one of life's many ruts, commit to your obligations, take each step as it comes, and you can reach your goals.



Upright: practical, reliable, efficient, hard-working, committed

Like John Carter, stranded on another world, you ought to devote yourself to the people you care about. Be fiercely loyal and face each new challenge with determination but know when to fight and when to stand down, when to speak up and when to remain silent.

Reversed: laziness, no initiative, non-committal, irresponsible

You may feel aimless, like John Carter before being transported to the red planet. Do not be a fighter without a cause, or a wanderer in wild places. Discover new purpose and make new steadfast friends.



QUEEN OF PARCHMENT

The Snow Queen by Hans Christian Andersen

Pairing by Margaret Jameson



The Snow Queen has whisked you away to her shining palace, far beyond the land you know. Freed from the shackles of your ordinary life, will you ride the winds of fortune and fly among the stars?



Upright: prosperous, luxurious, productive, nurturing, stability

Gaze into the Mirror of Reason and reflect upon your art. Solutions will crystalize and bring your work to glittering completion. Your name shall be etched upon the diamond surface of eternity.

Reversed: selfish, envious, greedy, materialistic, isolated

Your yearning for success has left you cold to the needs of others. Alone, trapped in a frozen tower, you have only your warped reflection for company. Let tears of truth wash the splinters of distortion from your eyes. Open your heart to the warmth of others' love, and your ice prison will melt.



KING OF PARCHMENT

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Pairing by Roxane Gay



Certainly, provision and protection are the noblest of pursuits. Spend each moment of your life in service of that nobility.



Upright: prosperity, security, ambitious, safe, kind, patriarchal

There are no bounds to your generosity and kindness. You dream expansively for yourself and those in your care. You believe in the pursuit of excellence, the humility of hard work, the jubilance of celebration, and the excesses of indulgence.

Reversed: greed, materialistic, wasteful, chauvinist, exploitative

But oh, the price you pay when blinded by venal arrogance and all-consuming need. When the bright stars you reach for are just within your grasp, you will turn to ash; what remains of you will be lost to a great void, for eternity.



ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

To learn more about the seventy-eight amazing authors who donated their time to make this deck a reality, please check out our site to read their bios and peer at their lovely faces. You can also meet the creative team that brought this deck and guidebook to life:



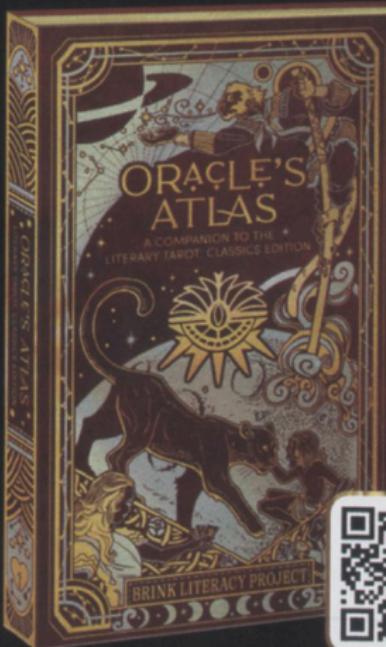
ABOUT THE NONPROFIT

Learn more about the Brink Literacy Project and all the rad programs that sales of this deck funds here:



WANT MORE TAROT?

Learn more about how each beloved author created their pairing in the *Oracle's Atlas*, a companion art guidebook that provides an extended look at how each pairing and its meanings came to life.



This vegan leather-bound collector's tome features 280 pages of gold-foil splendor and gilded edges, including:

- Full page artwork for each card
- In-depth pairing logic for each author's contribution
- Creator essays and how-to guides
- Art process (including alternative concepts)

WANT MORE STORIES?

At the heart of Brink, we publish another rad product that merges bestselling authors, gorgeous art, comics, and brand new, diverse voices. Check out *F(r)iction* and use the code TarotGuide30 to discount your socks off.

FrictionLit.org/store



Copyright © 2022 Brink Literacy Project

The Literary Tarot, *Oracle's Atlas*, and accompanying materials, content, packaging, pairings, and other related creations (including classic literature derivative work) are published by Brink Literacy Project. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used or reproduced without prior written permission from the publisher.

Created and Designed by Dani Hedlund

Cover Artwork by Ejiwa Ebenebe

Interior Illustrations by Isabel Burke

Card Art by Shan Bennion, Isabel Burke, Bradley Clayton, Sam Dow, and Ejiwa Ebenebe

Original colors have been modified for printing purposes.

All written work by Margaret Atwood © O.W. Toad 2022 | All written work by Damian Barr © Damian Barr 2022

Brink Literacy Project
www.BrinkLit.org
info@brinklit.org