

WORLD OF DARKNESS



THE MAGE TARGET



The Mage.



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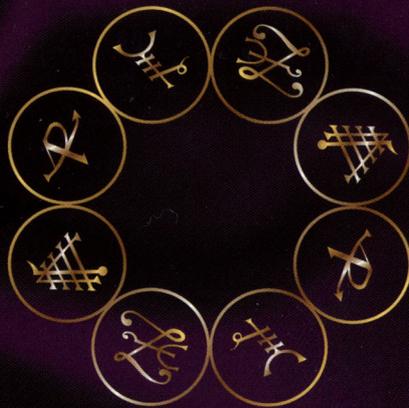
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GAME STUDIO



THE MAGE TARGET

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*Let us call now for the makers of strong images,
Let them come to us now carrying their quills and sharp razors
Let them gash their arms for ink and let them limn.*

— Neil Gaiman, "The Song of the Audience"

To Joan Friedman for that summer in Berkeley when we all reveled in intuitive Tarot readings and to Herman M. Cassada, Jr. for giving me my first Tarot deck and opening my eyes to the possibilities therein.

Special Thanks to the wonderful artists whose talents made the designs immediate and striking, going far beyond what we had conceived.

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Due to mature content, player discretion is advised.

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Introduction

The Dance that is... everything... You'll see. Earth, air, fire, water — and the Greater Trumps. There's a way to all knowledge and prophecy, when the cards and they are brought together.

— Charles Williams, *The Greater Trumps*

For those who seek a greater awareness of their place in the universe, the Tarot is said by some to be the bridge between conscious perception and unconscious wisdom. The **Mage Tarot** is a deck of destiny. Within the compass of 78 cards lies a Path from sleep to Awakening. Its symbols are the signposts which mark the journey of the soul through the World of Darkness into a realm of greater possibilities.

A Bit of Common Sense, Please

Although its symbolism concurs with many traditional forms of Tarot imagery and association, this deck is not intended to be used for true readings. It is not a starter deck for would-be magicians; it is novelty item only.

Tarot cards, whether traditional or modern, are not toys. Though we hope that you will find their use as a tool for Storytelling exciting and inspirational, the Tarot traditionally functions as a tool toward self-discovery. Many accounts credit Tarot readings with insights beyond those of "normal" perceptions; others say the cards simply allow you to access those parts of the subconscious that we miss in our daily lives. Whatever the truth may be (assuming there is only one truth), we do not recommend using a game deck for real-life concerns, nor do we condone the use of tools by those who don't know what they're doing with them.

Believer or not, have some respect and common sense. Please.

History of the Tarot

Although Tarot decks first made their appearance in the 14th century, the ideas and symbols they embody stretch much further back in history, embracing the knowledge and philosophies of ancient Egypt, Greece, China, the early Roman church and the teachings of Talmudic scholars. The striking visual imagery of the Tarot served as a means of communication despite barriers of language and culture, so that seekers after hidden truths could share their discoveries through an understanding that transcended cultural barriers.

Tarot cards have gone through many permutations through the centuries. Used as vehicles for telling fortunes by Gypsies

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throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, the attractive and compelling cards soon became popular items in noble households. The French transformed the Tarot into playing cards, discarding the Major Arcana and changing the suits from Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles to the more familiar spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs of the modern 52-card deck.

Although a few students of esoteric lore still used the Tarot as a mnemonic device for preserving ancient truths, it was not until the mid-19th century that the resurgence of interest in theosophical studies led to a rediscovery of the cards and an attempt to restore them to their original purpose. Eliphas Levi, Israel Regardie, Helena P. Blavatsky, William Butler Yeats and Aleister Crowley all made vital contributions to the modern Tarot. But they were only the first wave.

The Rider-Waite Tarot deck, designed by Arthur Edward Waite and William Rider and illustrated by Pamela Coleman Smith, is by far the most popular and inspirational of the standard Tarot decks in modern use. In recent years, interest in the Tarot has spawned a wealth of variant decks, reinterpreting the ancient symbols to fit feminist, holistic and multi-cultural paradigms. For the most part, the images have survived in translation, a testimony to the underlying resiliency of the truths the cards encompass.

The Cards

The **Mage Tarot** is intended primarily for use with games set in the World of Darkness. Our purpose is not to teach you how to use the Tarot (you can learn that from any deck), but rather to provide you with a deck that reflects the imagery of our dark fantasy world. Several possible game uses are discussed later. Although slanted toward **Mage: The Ascension**, this deck can be used with any of White Wolf's Storyteller System games.

Symbolism

Many of the symbols familiar to Tarot aficionados can be found in this deck, but several have been modernized or replaced by more Gothic-Punk counterparts. Though the cards can be used alone for readings, they become even more meaningful when compared with a traditional deck such as the Rider-Waite deck.

The Text

Each card has a few meanings ascribed to it for both the upright and the reversed positions, and each has a paragraph or so of text which comments on the card. Unlike more traditional

decks, the paragraph does not describe the card and give a possible interpretation; instead, it creates a mood or paints a picture reflective of the World of Darkness. Some feature characters from various **Mage: The Ascension** books. Those resources might provide more references for the user, but they're not essential for understanding the cards.

The Suits

While they're analogous to the normal Tarot suits of Wands, Swords, Cups and Pentacles, the suits of the **Mage Tarot** correspond to the various sorts of Essences that color mystic Avatars. Each Essence is in turn associated with one of the four factions of mage society. The suits thus have the following correspondences:

Suit (Essence)	Faction	Element	Tarot Suit
Questing	Traditions	Fire	Wands
Primordialism	Nephandi	Water	Cups
Dynamism	Marauders	Air	Swords
Pattern	Technocracy	Earth	Pentacles

Suggested Readings

Books on the Tarot abound, occasionally taking up entire walls in occult and specialty bookstores. The following titles represent a sampling of the various approaches to the subject of the Tarot. Consider this a place to start.

The Tarot: a Key to the Wisdom of the Ages, by Paul Foster Case. This extended essay on the Major Arcana provides a wealth of detail on the symbology of the Greater Trumps.

Mastering the Tarot: Basic Lessons in an Ancient, Mystic Art, by Eden Gray. Written by one of the most prolific popularizers of the Tarot, this book offers a user-friendly approach to standard Tarot interpretations.

Tarot Lays: Reflective Patterns of the Tarot (Salamander Series #2). This slim pamphlet presents numerous unusual spreads useful in exploring the relationships among the cards of the Tarot.

Tarot For Your Self, by Mary K. Greer. A user-friendly (if a bit shallow) guide to basic Tarot symbolism and use. Includes mention of many different modern decks as well as the more traditional ones.

Chapter One: Using the Cards

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

— T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

Over the centuries, Tarot decks have become popular tools for fortune-telling, and in many minds the two are inextricably linked. Serious-minded students of Tarot look down on using the cards for such lowly purposes as predicting rising and declining fortunes in love, business and other personal affairs. Randomly shuffling and dealing out the cosmic secrets contained within the cards borders on blasphemy. To these aficionados, the Tarot is a key for unlocking universal truths hidden deep within the subconscious. In much the same manner, a mage searches within herself for the definitions of reality that mark her progress toward Ascension.

Tarot decks are meant to be used. Their very form — distinct cards placed in a precise hierarchy in relationship to one another — demands their use in visual displays as the best method of studying their contents. Cards, like books, can be read. Unlike books, however, their pages can be arranged in a variety of ways. Each arrangement of the cards unfolds a new awareness of the meanings of the images. By rearranging the cards, either randomly or by intention, the building blocks of reality are themselves re-ordered. The world around us, reflected in the cards, becomes a very different place. Attempting to understand the meaning of these reassembled chunks of possibility is the true work of fortune-tellers, philosophers, mages and Storytellers.

Reading Spreads

Tarot readings usually involve laying out the cards in arrangements called *spreads*. Before doing a reading, one card should be selected from the deck to represent the person or question under consideration. It is customary to use one of the "Court Cards" of the Minor Suits to represent the subject of the reading, but any card which seems appropriate may be chosen. This card should be removed from the deck before it is shuffled.

The Celtic Cross

The most popular Tarot spread, called the Celtic Cross, consists of 10 cards, and focuses upon the short- and long-term pasts and futures of the reading's subject. Most standard guides to the Tarot contain directions for how to use this spread. Although it is recommended that the full deck be used with the 10-card spread, it is also possible to use only the Major Arcana for this purpose.



Example:

• Joel's character is a young Verbena named Angelo. In a prior game, Angelo encountered other Awakened beings (vampires, faeries and werewolves) for the first time. At the time, he found that he needed to cooperate with them to fulfill his mission, but has since wondered whether he acted correctly and what he should do in the future. His question is "How do I proceed in dealings with other Awakened beings, especially since we may be at odds with one another at times?" The Storyteller, in the guise of Angelo's mentor, Crispin, head of his Chantry, performs a reading for him.

The initial card, which is not counted with the rest, is laid at the center of the spread. This so-called *querent card* represents the seeker who asks the question. Because he is a young, male Tradition mage, Angelo chooses the **Page of Questing** to represent him.

The first card is placed atop the querent card; this covers the seeker and represents the forces now at work within the querent's life. The card is **The Hanged Man**. Crispin tells Angelo, "You are faced with a situation that could potentially upset all your prior conceptions. You hang suspended in a moment of choice, to accept or reject the possibilities presented to you."

The second card is laid across the querent and covers the cards, forming a cross. This card, **The Mage**, represents conflict. Crispin states, "The Magician is will. That will, which makes you a mage, and which insists upon fashioning reality to fit your vision, may prove an obstacle both for yourself and for the creatures whose existence you've discovered."

The next card goes below the crossed ones. It is **Gaia, reversed**. "This forms the basis or the short-term past," he says. "It indicates that you have had a basic misunderstanding of the world around you."

The fourth card, the **Six of Primordialism**, is placed above the crossed ones. "This crowns you," Crispin announces. "It represents your immediate future and means an end to an old way of thinking. The Primordial nature of the suit indicates that you must seek your answer in the depths of your passions, your instincts and your unconscious mind."

The Fool is placed to the right of the crossed cards. "This one is the recent past. It refers to things which have just happened. It's a card of possibility that has yet to be translated into action. You have recently risked yourself. Its position in relation to the querent card indicates that you, Cosmic Fool that you are, have just taken that step that is hinted at in the figure's position."

The sixth card, the **Queen of Dynamism**, is positioned to the left of the crossed ones. "This is the long-term future. With the exception of the final card in the spread, this is probably the most important indicator in the reading. You'll keep an open mind in continued dealings with Awakened creatures. The Dynamic association of the suit means your future will be subject to change without notice. It may even be that a specific person, a mentor or seer, perhaps a woman, maybe even a Marauder, will open your eyes."

"The next card is your inner concerns, your fears or cares. It forms the bottom of a row of four cards which will rise beside The Faerie. It's the **Three of Questing**. This indicates that your deepest concerns are that you will somehow compromise your purpose, that these Awakened beings may draw you away from your path to Ascension."

"Next we have the outside influences, friends and society. The card is placed above the prior one. This is the **Knight of Primordialism, reversed**. Many people will see you as being deceived. Your fellow mages may think you work against them by trafficking with other Awakened creatures."

The ninth card goes above the Primordial Knight: **The Hermit, reversed**. "This reveals your hopes and ideals, what you want out of all this. It seems that what you want is *not* to lead, but to be led. You're hoping to remain in an immature, childlike state, that you won't have to accept responsibility for forging a new path."

"Finally, we come to the sum total of the reading." He lays the final card above the Hermit. "It is **Luna**, and indicates an encounter with your subconscious. Your path lies in following the call of your inner nature, of listening to the voice of your Avatar. Do what you feel is right."

The Circular Spread

Another possible spread involves laying a predetermined number of cards in a circle around a central card. A circle of 12 cards might be used to suggest a course of action or a state of mind which will cover the span of a year, while a seven-card circle might indicate a week.

Example:

• The cards are arranged in a circle around a querent card. Crispin chooses the **King of Questing** to represent himself, as he leads the Chantry. He lays out seven cards (to represent a week) face down and starts at the upper right hand card for Sunday.



In order, the cards are:

- Sunday The Tower, reversed
- Monday The Four of Questing
- Tuesday The Queen of Questing
- Wednesday The Three of Pattern
- Thursday The Six of Dynamism, reversed
- Friday The Two of Pattern, reversed
- Saturday The Nine of Pattern

From card to card the interpretation runs thusly: **The Tower** indicates a disruptive crisis that potentially affects the whole Chantry. The **Four** means the crisis may be short-lived, or that there's a reason for celebration despite the crisis. **The Queen** indicates that action is taken; perhaps in response to the crisis, the fight is taken to the foe. The **Three** bodes a confrontation, and may even involve the physical structure of the Chantry itself. The search for a solution is

made in the material world. The **reversed Six** speaks of a journey beyond the boundaries of the physical world, perhaps the need to relocate some aspect of the Chantry, and the obstacles or delays that occur while trying to resolve the problems. The **reversed Two** indicates a real possibility for failure as the situation becomes less clear. Finally, however, the **Nine** indicates the possibility of restoring order, even gaining something material from the prior difficulty. All in all, it bodes a week of struggle with the possibility of failure, but the likelihood of success at the end.

This could be made into a story by endangering the Chantry in some way and having the characters needing to find a creative way to save it.

The Linear Spread

Linear spreads are useful when determining long-range courses of action or progressive influences which affect the subject over a period of time. In a linear spread, the cards are arranged in a straight line. Each card drawn is used to clarify or comment upon the preceding card. The reading can continue until both querent and reader feel that a satisfactory answer has been achieved, or until no further elaboration seems to be forthcoming. Usually, cards placed to the left or above a subject card signify future events, while those placed to the right or below refer to events in the past.

A variation on this method, the three-card spread, divides the significance of the reading into body, mind and spirit. This often involves cutting the cards into three stacks and choosing one card from each to lay in a straight line running from left to right. The first card represents something about either the physical aspect of the subject or its past; the second stands for the mind, or the present state of things; the third suggests its spirit, or future ambitions or plans.

Such spreads are good for suggesting new characters. By applying the card's meaning to some aspect of the character's life, Art or personality, a player or Storyteller can pull together the clues that shape her.



Example:

- Carla's character Mika, a young Virtual Adept, has become fascinated by various new technologies. She is afraid, however, that she might fall prey to the blandishments of the Technocracy because she often trusts other computer-lovers too much. She does a reading to see if this is likely.

She lays out four cards and feels that she has received the answer she sought. The cards are laid out from right to left, indicating that she wants an insight about the future; had she been interested in past events, she would have laid the cards left to right.

In order, the cards are: **The Three of Pattern**, **the Five of Primordialism**, **Strength** and **The Devil**, reversed.

This reading indicates that the potential for flirtation with the Technocracy definitely exists, and her contacts with them will touch on her vulnerabilities as she hopes she can gain something from them. She will have to confront her nemesis or antithesis, and will need to draw on her own inner resources to overcome the challenge. The end result will be some sort of liberating experience, a passage out of a state of self-imposed preconceptions, perhaps.

Ideas for Using the Cards

These cards can be used in a number of ways to enhance your game. Some of these are of greatest use to the Storyteller, but many are useful to players as well.

Character Creation

The cards may be used to aid character creation. Players or Storytellers might draw a random card from the deck and use the text, meanings or picture to suggest an idea for the character. Anything from her looks to her concept, Backgrounds, magical Spheres, Merits or Flaws, Path to Ascension, abilities or even her potential destiny might be constructed by building upon something found in the card. Any of the divining spreads above can be used for character creation, although a three-card linear spread often works best.

Examples:

- Jim wants an interesting character, one with a past. He randomly draws the **Knight of Dynamism** and comes up with the following ideas from its meaning and imagery: The character is a young male mage with a Dynamic essence. He has dark brown hair and dark eyes (associated with this suit), and comes from a wealthy family (the factories shown on the card). He was once a more powerful mage, but he's very impulsive (meaning of the card). Once,

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he performed a highly vulgar magical effect in front of Sleepers. When a Paradox Spirit confronted him, he slipped into a long Quiet. Recently, he has recovered his sanity and returned to the mundane world; most of his previous memories, however, including his knowledge of magic, have been lost. He has been made a clean slate and must start over again. Old friends and enemies, however, may remember him quite well, making his new life an interesting one. Though he's brave, he has a tempestuous nature. His Flaws include Impulsiveness and Amnesia. He may be good with weapons.

- Storyteller Wendy wants to create a troupe character for herself to run; she doesn't want this "fun outlet" to overshadow her players' own mages, so she decides to leave her character concept to fate. A three-card linear spread yields the following: **The Star**, **the Seven of Questing**, and **the Page of Primordialism**, reversed. From these cards, she gets the following ideas:

The spread suggests a female character — two cards have women as the dominant images, and the third contains a womb, albeit a corrupt one. The body card, **Star**, stands for vitality, charisma, creativity and insight. Wendy's new acolyte (she doesn't want her to be a mage — she'll leave that to the players!) is young, magnetic, enthusiastic and probably very physically attractive and fit. She has, however, a very odd past — this card has an otherworldly essence about it. The **Seven of Questing** carries Fall Breeze's likeness; her card suggests courage and valor. Wendy decides to make her acolyte a martial artist, advanced enough in her training to hold her own in a nasty fight. The ominous caul of the **Page** casts a shadow on the character; even reversed, it's a creepy card. The meaning hints at deception, lies and a possible fall somewhere along the line. A **Nephandus** may or may not be involved, but something in this acolyte's future will involve a temptation or betrayal.

Following her instincts, Wendy christens her new character **Cassandra**. The players would be well advised to watch over her. Of course, such scrutiny may drive **Cassandra** to resent the cabal for their distrust, and that resentment might lead her to betray them later...



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Non-player Characters

Just as a card can help clarify a character concept, it can also provide inspiration for a quick non-player character personality. If you need a Technocracy contact, for example, simply flip to the suit of Pattern and choose a card. Naturally, you could also choose to use any other card that you felt more appropriate, or let chance take a hand and draw a random card. You might even ignore the picture and suit altogether, choosing instead to focus on the meaning of the card or the mood created by the text.

Example:

- Wendy needs another NPC to spice up her game. She draws a random card and gets the **Seven of Primordialism**. This suggests a **Nephandus**, either male or female, who is something of a shadowy figure, but who appears from time to time to tempt the characters with promises, riches, favors, sensual pleasures or knowledge, all in the hopes of corrupting them and claiming them for the **Nephandi**.

Later, she needs a Technocracy agent and flips through the suit of Pattern for an idea. She chooses the **Six** to base her agent upon; he's a philanthropic and caring young man, who seriously believes the Masses need the protection and guidance of the Technocracy. He's a blond gentleman in dark, tailored clothing who works with an inner-city charity bringing help to the poor. Wendy calls him **Brother Joshua**. The characters may mistake him for a Celestial Chorus mage — he's certainly a far cry from the stereotypical Technomancer!

Plots and Subplots

You can use the cards to suggest plotlines and subplots, either pulling single cards and considering their pictures and meanings, or by laying out a pattern and divining a direction for your storyline. If the imagery, symbols and meanings aren't what you want, try thinking in terms of the cards' numbers and suits. Should you draw the **Four of Dynamism**, for example, you might consider either using the character depicted, utilizing the number four, tying in **Marauders** or emphasizing a storyline which deals with air. Any or all of these elements can be mined for the nuggets of story ideas.

Example:

For examples of more elaborate plotlines, see the circular and linear spreads given above. Using a single card randomly drawn to suggest plots and subplots to him, the Storyteller draws the **Page of Pattern**. Possible developments suggested by this card include:

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- The characters meet and interact with a female Technomancer. She might be a **Void Engineer**, possibly even **Karen Brewster** (see **Null-B** in **The Book of Chantries**).

- A woman the characters meet introduces them to a strange new Realm or tricks them into entering **Null-B** or some other Technocracy Construct, where they are captured.

- The characters are placed in a position which allows them to help rescue an unhappy **Void Engineer** and flee with her into space.

These are the most obvious ideas. Others might concern the globe in her hand. Could it be some strange new Technocratic weapon? A spying device? An **Umbral Realm** trapped in the crystal and brought back to Earth? And what about the meteor? Is it really just a falling star, or have the **Marauders** broken through? Let your imagination run rampant.

Unexpected Developments

Likewise, the cards can provide quick inspirations for dealing with unexpected developments in the story. They might suggest places the characters can go, a person the characters meet or information about an item they acquire. This might take the chronicle in a whole new direction or allow for a brief interlude, then provide a way back to the main storyline.

Example:

- You thought for sure they'd steal the limo that was idling at the curb. They didn't, and now they're trapped in an alley facing down six **HIT Marks**. Overhead, a Technocracy team in their chopper waits to see if the **HIT Marks** will take care of things. The whole scene is turning into a major fiasco. What do you do? You call in the unexpected. A random card pull yields the **Five of Pattern**.

The obvious scenario suggested by the card is to turn it into a capture scene. For some reason, the Technocrats want the characters alive. While in custody, they may learn something important or meet a helpful non-player character. They can always try to escape.

Another interpretation might be that someone very powerful is watching over their shoulders; she'll make her move to help them when all seems lost. She may, however, require some service in return.

Spirits and Effects

Let the cards give you ideas for creating spirits, familiars and denizens of the **Umbra**. Allow the imagery to determine how various NPCs react to the characters, especially if the players cop an

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attitude. Umbral Realms might be patterned on scenes from the cards, or might contain such scenes within them. The images, symbols and meanings need not be taken literally. Feel free to play around with them and combine them in odd ways.

Example:

• Needing an Umbral spirit, Wendy randomly draws a card for inspiration. She gets the **King of Pattern**, which features a man named Montego Diaz-Quetzalcoatl. She decides that the Umbrood will be some sort of Meso-American spirit that resembles the quetzalcoatl and lives in a Realm of abundant harvests. Because of the nature and meaning of the card, the spirit would most likely act paternalistic and authoritative toward the characters.

Unpredictable Elements

Mages live in a state of constant unpredictability. Allow the cards to create unpredictable effects for them. They might suggest ways a Paradox backlash manifests, or what a Paradox spirit might look like or want. The cards may be used as templates for constructing episodes of Quiet, or as a means of escaping from Paradox Realms or overcoming Quiet.

Example:

• Jane's character Simone has blatantly overused the Sphere of Forces as a weapon, and in front of Sleepers, no less. A Paradox spirit arrives to transport her to a Paradox Realm. Needing inspiration for both the spirit and the Realm, Wendy draws the **Five of Dynamism**. She describes the spirit as a big, tough biker grrrl with a nasty spiked club. Simone gets dragged to a Realm where she must flee foes who overpower her again and again, no matter how weak they appear to be. They're always brutal and direct, chasing her down endless, dreary alleyways. Simone must figure out that she needs subtlety, even trickery, to defeat them. Straight battle will never free her.

Coincidental Effects

This advanced option is best left to highly experienced troupes. The cards might be used either by the Storyteller or the players to create opportunities for coincidental magic Effects. Using a card drawn by the Storyteller or handed to the player at the beginning of the session, the character could take the card's meaning or imagery and utilize that element as a template for a more coincidental casting. Literally, it would be as though the mage "cast about," fishing for ideas on how to make magic less obvious by setting up a scenario in which magic appears coincidental because it fits in with the image on the card. This option is a little harder to

achieve than the others since it requires cooperation between the players and the Storyteller to create the opportunity depicted by the card. Storytellers should feel free to disallow such Effects or rule them to be vulgar if the player goes too far.

Example:

• Fleeing from agents of the Technocracy through the streets of New Orleans, Kathryn, a young Verbena, is running out of options. Sleepers are everywhere, and she can't stop to draw blood or use any sort of effective magic against her pursuers without dozens of un-Awakened witnesses. Still, she must do something. She asks the Storyteller if there anything's happening nearby that might help her. Wendy draws a card, the **Six of Primordialism**. It so happens that this particular card might indeed be useful. Wendy announces that up ahead, in the park at Bayou St. John, Kathryn can see a large voodoo rite in progress. Thankfully, Kathryn rushes forward, grabs a skull filled with blood and begins to sway to the music. The agents rush toward her. She flings the blood in their eyes and employs the Sphere of Life to cause them to go blind for a short time.

Because she used the cover of throwing blood in their eyes under circumstances where the Sleepers expect a few odd occurrences, the crowd has an explanation of why the agents are blinded — if they even notice what happened in the midst of the wild ritual. Did the spirits do it, or was there just something really nasty in the blood? In any case, Kathryn gets to treat the blood-blinding as coincidental magic (rather than a vulgar "I wave my hand, and they go blind" Effect), and makes good her escape.

Rites of Passage

The Tarot is essentially a learning tool whereby we discover things about ourselves. Whenever a mage wishes to raise her Arete score, she must undergo some sort of ordeal. The cards should prove very handy for providing ideas for ordeals, rites of passage, Seekings, learning experiences and other journeys of self-discovery. Full spreads are recommended when using cards for this purpose.

Example:

• To construct a Seeking, Wendy uses a Celtic Cross spread as inspiration. The querent is the **Knigh of Pattern** because the character is a young, black-haired male Progenitor. In order, the other cards come up:

1. Cover: **Three of Pattern** — The quest will involve persistence in order to build something. It may be physical, but equally may not.

2. Cross: **The Mage** — The mage might be his own worst enemy, or someone else may be preventing his spiritual progress. This obstacle must be overcome.

3. Base: **Eight of Pattern** — The reason for the mage's quest. He may feel inadequate or incapable of progress, and is fighting against that.

4. Immediate future: **Nine of Questing** — The mage must be alert and anticipate the challenges he will face.

5. Short-term past: **Queen of Primordialism, reversed** — This can mean a past influence motivating the crossing card and leading to the future. She may be the cause of the opposition, or may represent the mage's own inner perversity and fear of committing himself to the quest.

6. Long-term future: **King of Questing** — An encounter with authority is indicated. Some sort of ruler or leader is an obstacle to be overcome.

7. Personal fears: **The Devil, reversed** — There are two levels here. Personal fears involve not recognizing the time for action, being trapped by indecision. On another level, the mage fears the forces arrayed against him, probably the Nephandi.

8. Outside Influences: **Justice** — Friends or society may demand that the mage act appropriately and make the correct decisions, and that he justify those choices. They may judge what the mage does. In another sense, they are possible helpers; the card suggests that an Akashic Brother may become an ally.

9. Ideals and Goals: **The Emperor, reversed** — The mage hopes to somehow accomplish the quest without assuming responsibilities he feels he isn't ready for. He may be required to overcome someone in authority, perhaps removing him from his throne, to gain in wisdom.

10. End Result: **The Fool, reversed** — The end result is a loss of the mage's innocence and carefree spirit as a price for growing in wisdom. To gain some dreams, you must sacrifice others.

The reading indicates some direct conflict with the Nephandi. Their influence taints someone in authority over the mage. The mage's Construct or Convention may disagree with his actions, and may even sabotage what he's trying to do. In the end, he must have the courage to unseat the authority standing in his way — possibly a teacher or mentor, someone he has trusted in the past — and in so doing, gain wisdom, but lose his innocence.

Chapter Two: The Major Arcana

O sages standing in God's holy fire

As in the gold mosaic of a wall,

Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,

And be the singing-masters of my soul.

— W.B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium"

The 22 cards which comprise the Major Arcana form the heart of the Tarot. Taken together, the cards depict the passage of the soul from unformed possibility to informed awareness. The wealth of symbols these cards portray create a visual tapestry from threads spun by the collective unconscious. The strangely familiar iconography of the cards speaks to the imaginings of poets, dreamers, storytellers, willworkers and truthseekers alike.

0 The Fool

Meaning: Possibility

Courage, Ecstasy, Creative Expression, Risk-taking, Trust, Choice, Adventure

Reversed: Stagnation, Eccentricity, Folly, Thoughtlessness, Indiscretion

Association: Marauders

The Faerie: Clad in the vestments of mortal experience and spiritual awareness, the child of the Dreaming stands poised on the edge of physical reality, open to the embrace of all possibility. The sword of his manifest will rests easily upon his shoulder, for the time of choice has not yet come.

I The Mage

Meaning: Will

Communication, Inherent Ability, Memory, Clarity of thought and feeling, Organization, Invention, Originality

Reversed: Weakness, Indecision

Association: Virtual Adepts

"What is will but the projection of energy into the world of matter?" With an act of conscious thought, Dante grasps the wand of Prime, closing the link between the energy that gives him the power of magic and the tools that lie before him on the table of the world. The building blocks of his desires — the Primordial, Quest-

ing, Dynamic and Pattern Essences — contain within them the remaining eight Spheres of magic; the key to knowledge unlocks them all. The infinite hovers, crown-like, above him. Reality, virtual or otherwise, belongs to him.

II The High Priestess

Meaning: Enlightenment

Intuition, Resourcefulness, Independence, Meditation, Growth, Evaluation, Consciousness, Mystery, Inner Illumination

Reversed: False knowledge, Shallowness, Conceit

Association: Dreamspeakers

Mae Roberts, the keeper of the secret path, sits beside the waters of consciousness. At her feet, the moon's reflection reminds her of the hidden truths visible only to her inner sight. Clasp the symbol of cosmic memory, she guards the passage between light and dark, dream and reality.

III The Empress

Meaning: Fertility

Wisdom, Earth-mother, Prophecy, Love of nature, Spiritual essence, Healing, Nurturing, Emotion, Creation, Cycles, Balance, Fruitfulness, Contentment

Reversed: Sterility, Poverty, Inaction, Disruption, Destruction

Association: Verbena

Heasha Morningglade feels the flow of life-magic within her. It encompasses the water of the stream of life, the blood within her veins and the liquid within the cauldron of birth and rebirth. Enthroned upon the world-tree, surrounded by fertile growth and the deep woods of the unconscious mind, she opens herself through the wand of the moon to the feminine principle of cyclic movement. Through her actions, life emerges, resplendent with variety.

IV The Emperor

Meaning: Government

Leadership, Power, Decisions, Action, Negotiation, Inspiration, Motivation of others, Strength, Respect, Foundation, Self-assertion, Paternity, Mastery, Reason

Reversed: Immaturity, Bondage, Tyranny

Association: Order of Hermes

The lord of reason, Caeron Mustai, grasps the blade which symbolizes the power of his active will, commanding the forces of his

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physical and animal natures. Implacable against the darkness, the light of his intellect warms the stark mountains of logic which serve as his field of battle.

V The Hierophant

Meaning: Morality

Learning, Teaching, Wisdom, the Sacred, Initiator, Challenge, Commitment, Intention, Focus, Spirit, Remembrance, Resolution, Consultation, Counseling, Conformity, Society, Orthodoxy

Reversed: Gullibility, Unorthodoxy, Unconventionality

Association: Celestial Chorus

Clothed in ritual and bound by orthodox traditions, the ruler of conventional faith translates the secrets of the cosmic mind into palatable forms. Enthroned at the balance point between all opposites, the revealer of secret knowledge holds the keys to the powers of conscious and unconscious thought.

VI The Lovers

Meaning: Attraction

Relationship (to be is to be related), Curiosity, Loyalty, Commitment, Passion, Bonding, Duality, Yin/Yang, Sincerity, Openness, Sensitivity, Integration, Equality, Romance, Harmony

Reversed: Repulsion

Association: Cult of Ecstasy

Bathed in the emanations of a higher cosmic power, warmed by the radiant life-giving energies of the solar light, they seek the union of opposites. Self and other, carnal and spiritual, knowledge and mystery bear fruit only in the garden of loving intimacy. Unveiled to one another, the Lovers follow the pathway of the senses to inner and outer harmony.

VII The Chariot

Meaning: Triumph

Change, Movement, Growth, Evolution, Progress, Opportunity, Exploration, Travel, Stimulation, Activity, Promotion, Conquest, Bulwark against temptation

Reversed: Defeat, Collapse, Vengeance

Association: Sons of Ether

Aboard the sky-chariot of his own making, wrested from the welding of science and magic into a unified whole, Jet Boy takes his place among the explorers of the possible. The triumph of mind over

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matter, of the inner will over the outer world, of the power of thought over the boundaries of consensual reality — all these find expression in the work of the charioteer, the Tellurian's eternal traveler. He controls the balanced forces of the worlds.

VIII Strength

Meaning: Strength

Passion, Creativity, Risk-taking, Charisma, Radiance, Regeneration, Expression, Gifts, Taming, Overcoming fears, Lustiness, Strong faith, Trust in own abilities, Confidence, Unconditionality, Intuition, Domination, Harmony,

Reversed: Weakness, Abuse, Discard, Corruption, Rage

Association: Quintessence

The Werewolf: Strengthened by her passions, confident in her spiritual power, she wrestles the bestial and tainted sides of her nature, bringing them into a harmonious whole with her higher self. What is wild and unconscious becomes the wellspring which her creative spirit embraces and tames, even as the roses blossom amidst decay. Fearlessness brings liberation and trust in her own abilities.

IX The Hermit

Meaning: Guidance

Completion, Introspection, Contemplation, Experience, Detail, Revelation, Integrity, Respect, Leadership, Transitions, Discovery, Wisdom, Mentorship, Open-mindedness, Courage, Seeking

Reversed: Immaturity, Foolishness

Association: Hollow Ones

Clothed in the guise of the seeker, he holds aloft the light of truth, illuminating the way for other wayfarers through the bitter night of ignorance. He has blazed the trail to wisdom in silence and contemplation. Now he stands ready to guide the worthy toward the union of will and wisdom.

X Wheel of Fortune

Meaning: Destiny

Opportunity, Breakthrough, Prosperity, Abundance, Expansion, Flexibility, Originality, Pioneering, Fortune, Challenge, Synchronicity, Fate, Chance, Luck, Cycles

Reversed: Misfortune

Association: Euthanatos

The Wheel turns. The chambers revolve. Life and death play out their dance of perpetual motion in the progress toward Ascen-

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sion. Behind the mask of personality, the eternal self expands its boundaries in search of higher, more perfect forms. Cause and effect become one in the circumstantial cycles of existence.

XI Justice

Meaning: Justice

Alignment, Balance, Realignment, Truth, Clarity, Simplification, Order, Authenticity, Visualization, Seeing through deceptions and delusions, Harmony

Reversed: Injustice, Bias, Inequality, Prejudice

Association: Akashic Brotherhood

Framed within the triptych of mind, body and spirit, Raging Eagle holds aloft the two-edged sword of Justice. Guided by knowledge of the balance, the master of the mind seeks first the inner truth, from which outer actions flow.

XII The Hanged Man

Meaning: Perspective

Surrender, Breaking old patterns, Resolution, Freedom from self-imposed limitations, Unlimited life-force, Different postures and perspectives, Awakening, Deep spiritual wisdom, Creativity, Intelligence, Prophecy

Reversed: Preoccupation, Arrogance, Absorption, Indecision

Association: Paradox

The Wraith: He hangs suspended before the doorways that separate the physical world from the Shadowlands of the soul. Severed from all connection to matter, he no longer conforms to the limitations of his old existence. Only by surrendering the trappings of identity can he discover the depths of knowledge from which his new pattern will emerge, transcendent and transformed.

XIII Death

Meaning: Renewal

Release, Detachment (appropriate letting go), Transformation, Irrepressible spiritual essence, Expanded consciousness, Emergence, Midwifery, Restructuring, Cycles, Rebirth, Change

Reversed: Inertia, Transformation

Association: Vampire; Awakening

The game of life and Death is played out before the curtain of mystery, which conceals the knowledge of both past and future. Between the players, the rose of desire arises. Renewal takes many

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forms; both the siren call of the immortal undead and the transforming power of Awakening emerge from the spirit's unquenchable restless sea.

XIV Temperance

Meaning: Adaptation

Integration, Synergy, Balance of paradoxes, Union, Experience, Resolution of conflicts, Symmetry, Combinations, Alchemy, Tempering, Dream, Vision, Actualization, Adaptation, Coordination, Self-control

Reversed: Competition, Mutation

Association: Technocracy

Golconda: He rests at the balance point between the peaks of wisdom and understanding, at the end — or the beginning — of the path. Saul has transcended all conflicting emotions, integrating the unseen and the seen, achieving the synthesis of past and future, spirit and matter. Tempering the essence of life with the flow of conscious and unconscious vision, he resolves all paradox.

XV The Devil

Meaning: Bondage

Materialism, Fetters, Sensation, Bedevilment, Temptation, Degradation, Domination

Reversed: Understanding, Healing, Freedom, Indecision

Mirth, Hedonism, Centeredness, Sensuality, Sexuality, Resonance, Potency

Association: The Wurm; Nephandi

Those who serve the spirit of corruption and those who battle its pervasive influence are equally trapped within its destructive coils. Both animal nature and human intelligence are subject to its myriad temptations, bound by the limitations of their own desires. To penetrate its illusionary domination over the sensate world is the first step towards freedom from its grasp.

XVI The Tower

Meaning: Purification

Ambition, Restoration, Renovation, Change, Restructuring, Awakening, Healing, Expansion, Authenticity, Building, Designing, Alignment

Reversed: Imprisonment, Conflict, Catastrophe, Disruption, Conflict, Upset

Association: The Chantry

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No Tower built upon false foundations can withstand the raw energy of purification. The ivory fortress of the intellect, the prideful Chantry of ambition, the lonely citadel of the isolated self and the paper constructs of the material world become targets for destruction. Cast into the dimensions of uncertainty, those who dwell in ignorance must face a new beginning.

XVII The Star

Meaning: Inspiration

Confidence, Self-esteem, Talent, Guidance, Expression, Innovation, Creativity, Radiance, Manifestation, Charisma, Magnetism, Instinct, Accomplishment, Internal balance, Spontaneity, Vitality, Nature, Hope, Insight, Meaning

Reversed: Stubbornness, Pessimism, Doubt, Overextension

Association: Meditation

The Umbra: Surrounded by radiant Umbral energy, the eternal maiden pours forth the waters of inspiration into the pool of consciousness, and spills the essence of the five senses onto the Earth's body, revitalizing both matter and spirit. The meditative phoenix, representative of instinct and the indestructible soul, rises from the manifestation of vital, spontaneous nature, questing toward the enlightenment of the celestial illumination above.

XVIII Luna

Meaning: Intuition

Femininity, Receptivity, Reflection, Mystery, Enigmas, Romance, Lunacy, Revelation of the true nature

Reversed: Deception, Peril, Madness, Illusion, Deception

Association: Quiet; Inner tuition

She surrenders completely to the lure of the unconscious. The realm of dreams becomes a nightmare. Drowning in the blood of her inner beasts, she sinks into the quiet ecstasy of madness. Or is she rising, renewed by her plunge into the depths of imaginative vision, to traverse the two-fold path created by the swords of matter and spirit towards a higher consciousness?

XIX The Sun

Meaning: Liberation

Collaboration, Teamwork, Partnership, Cooperation, Unlimited energy, Life-force, Generation, Motivation, Stimulation, Exuberance, Organization, Shared visions, Exploration, Revitalization, Creation, Innovation, Attainment, Success, Achievement

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Reversed: Retrogression, Depletion, Draining, Enervation

Association: The Sun

Ascension: Glorifying in his newfound awareness, the enlightened spirit has no further need for the outworn symbols of tradition or the playthings which marked his progress through the material world. Like the sunflowers which turn their faces toward the life-giving sun, the naked child stands, fearless and joyful, in the garden of eternal light.

XX Judgement

Meaning: Reunion

Awakening, Consciousness, Discernment, Judgment, Perception, Insight, Assessment, Integration, Manifestation

Reversed: Death, Disillusionment, Loss, Criticism, Judgmentalism

Association: Avatar

Apocalypse: Liberated from their separate misunderstandings, the children of Gaia unite and transform. Transcending all limitations, the perceptive spirit reaches for eternity. Called forth to a new Awakening, they ascend into mystery, becoming one with the universal consciousness.

XXI Gaia

Meaning: Fulfillment

Reward, Freedom, Wholeness, Totality, Holism, Completion, Integration, Unification, Awareness, Vision, Environment

Reversed: Sloth, Incompletion, Limitation, Restriction, Negation

Association: The Tellurian

The vision has become the reality. Centered within the circle of all that is, the cosmic dance both creates and defines itself. Gaia is never-ending, always-changing, the mirror of the self-aware consciousness of all within and without Her. The promise is fulfilled, and the material world has become one with the spiritual.

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Chapter Three: Questing Wands/Traditions/Fire

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;

— W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The Questing Essence embodies the search for perfection. The association of this suit with the Traditions and their paths toward Ascension reflects the purposeful focus of the individual cards. In the traditional Tarot, this is the suit of Wands, symbolic of the creative ability of the mage to transform reality according to her inner vision. Its elemental attribute is Fire, the ultimate source of transmutation and purification.

Virtues: Creativity, Energy, Diversity

Vices: Restlessness, Pride, Obstinance

Element: Fire (seen as Air by some)

Season: Spring

Ace of Questing

Meaning: Birth

Creativity, Self-realization, Questing, Truth, Uncontainable life-force, Awakening, "Being"

Reversed: False start, Setback

Association: Beginnings; Ahl-i-Batin

All things spring forth from the fires of the imagination. To the oft-forgotten mages of the lost Tradition, the union of the Spheres, the oneness of creation and the perpetual dance of opposing forces are matters of doctrine, not supposition. The burning bush, the ever-renewing phoenix and the celestial explosion that signaled the beginning of the solar system are but echoes reverberating from the flames of the Questing spirit.

Two of Questing

Meaning: Dominance

Rulership, Enterprise, Sovereignty, Power, Unification

Reversed: Submission, Suffering, Sadness

Association: Sphere of Forces; Order of Hermes

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Within her grasp lies a city of light and harmony; outside, all is darkness and tumult. Both cities are her dominion. It is in her power to channel her energy, the Sphere of Forces, to bring illumination to the world around her. Likewise, her Art may plunge the city into eternal night. The power to upset or maintain the balance resides in the twin centers of will and heart.

Three of Questing

Meaning: Virtue

Cooperation, Partnership, Integrity, Consistency, Congruency
Reversed: Treachery, Disappointment

Association: Sphere of Prime; Celestial Chorus

With his blessing, the ships of his people set out across the unknown sea. Now they return, perhaps with news of other lands, other people. He knows their journey was fruitful. Journeys of exploration always bring forth knowledge. The promise of the sun and the flames of his vision are surety of his belief. He stands between the twin poles of life and death, war and peace, past and future. He holds aloft the rod of the Questing spirit, and welcomes what the day has brought.

Four of Questing

Meaning: Celebration

Completion, Peace, Triumph, Happiness, Festival, Achievement, New beginnings, Wholeness, Initiation

Reversed: Prosperity and Harmony of the lesser things in life; some sources interpret this as Repression and Restriction

Association: Sphere of Time; Cult of Ecstasy

The flames of ecstasy rise high into the air, companions to the song of celebration. Atop the arch of perfected work, the skeletons of old ideas merge their essence with the roses of purity and the common flowers of material sensations. The joining of animal and human natures in a paean to spiritual perfection crosses all boundaries of Time and space. Awakening the sleeping world to the possibilities of change.

Five of Questing

Meaning: Strife

Competition, Obstacles, Anxiety, Frustration, Freneticism, Hyperactivity

Reversed: Contradiction, Complication, Competition, Restriction, Restraint

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Association: Sphere of Correspondence; Virtual Adepts

A common goal does not preclude a conflict of wills. Without a clear-cut leader, even the most knowledgeable seekers wander in strange directions to aimless purposes. Who's in charge here? The beams of light illumine only what is in their path. Getting back to the right direction is essential for fruitful achievement, particularly when Correspondence is your goal.

Six of Questing

Meaning: Victory

Success, Advancement, Revitalization, Energy, Expansion

Reversed: Delay, Conquest, Defeat

Association: Sphere of Life; Verbena

He sits astride a metal steed, surrounded by those who would hail his dark victory. The candles of his acolytes light the warrior's path through the darkness of ignorance and superstition. From them, he draws his strength, for they burn with Life-giving radiance.

Seven of Questing

Meaning: Valor

Development, Purpose, Courage, Energy, Perfection, Vision, Value

Reversed: Cowardice, Anxiety, Embarrassment, Indecision

Association: Sphere of Mind; Akashic Brotherhood

To conquer one's self is to win the greatest battle and to show the greatest courage. Fall Breeze contemplates her struggle for perfection of mind, body and spirit. Her mind opens outward, fan-like, to embrace the Questing spirit, and like the fan, she possesses both exquisite fragility and deadly keenness. Her weapon extends her prowess, becoming the focus for her inner strength and the power of her Mind.

Eight of Questing

Meaning: Motion

Journey, Ideas, Actions, Swiftness, Progress, Communication, Transformation, Problem-solving

Reversed: Inactivity, Dispute, Quarrels, Procrastination, Covert communication

Association: Sphere of Matter; Sons of Ether

The secrets of the material world, of Matter in motion, fall to his Questing spirit. He takes flight, fueled by the energy released

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by the death of the old and the birth of the new. Guided by both knowledge and instinct, following the moon's reflected inner light, he seeks the distant stars, symbols of the laws which govern the physical world, at last within his grasp.

Nine of Questing

Meaning: Spirit

Preparedness, Defense, Attainment, Vision, Spiritual and intuitive strength, Conscious and subconscious thought, Unlimited strength, Fortitude

Reversed: Obstacle, Adversity, Opposition

Association: Sphere of Spirit; Dreamspeakers

The vigil of the Spirit warrior is eternal. The guardian waits beyond the barricade erected by those who would conquer the natural and mystic worlds, ready to offer his vision of peace, yet mindful that the war is not yet over. Though the trees of life and knowledge stand burnt and defiled, though the wildness of the world be impaled upon the spear of progress, the power of the eagle's keen perceptions endows him with unceasing courage.

Ten of Questing

Meaning: Oppression

Burden, Trial, Ruin, Disruption, Failure, Limitations, Restrictions, Holding Back

Reversed: Duplicity, Separation, Loss

Association: Sphere of Entropy; Euthanatos

Suspended by the chains of ignorance, silenced by the cruel mask of disbelief, he bears the weight of his captivity. Without the will to break free of the bars of physical limitations and false perceptions, the Questing spirit withers in its own Entropic prison.

Page of Questing

Meaning: Brilliance

Learning, Courage, Beauty, Self-liberation, Release of fear, Spontaneous expression, Freedom, New directions, Adventure, Spring, Nothing to fear

Reversed: Indecision, Unpleasantness

Association: Discovery

The Apprentice stands upon the threshold of a new awareness. Below her lie the bones of past lives, past deaths, past fears and past awakenings. Within her stirs the call to adventure; before her

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and behind her, strange horizons beckon. Clad in the brilliant robes of pure intent, she holds the symbol of her triumph over the limitations of mortality. The evolution of the spirit begins.

Knight of Questing

Meaning: Conflict

Haste, Inspired creativity, Expression, Concentration, Expansion

Reversed: Division, Frustration, Discord, Departure, Change

Association: Impetuosity

The Disciple: Driven by the Questing spirit, John Courage departs upon a journey of self-discovery and inner conflict. For him, the Wheel of Fortune has become a backward carousel of ever-changing circumstances, loyalties and motivations. His only consistency, the axis upon which his pilgrimage to Ascension revolves, is the quest itself.

Queen of Questing

Meaning: Control

Command, Attraction, Honor, Self-knowledge, Transformation, Self-reclamation, Fluidity, Growth, Quick temper

Reversed: Opposition, Jealousy, Chastity, Enterprise

Association: Aspiration

The Adept: She rules. Above her, transcendent reality emerges from the fires of her imagination. Below her, desire lies nascent in the half-tamed depths of her subconscious. The symbol of her rulership rests easily in her hands, its weight no longer a burden but a comforting presence. The harshness of her metal crown, like her "Bitch Queen" façade, exerts its own attraction. Just as the sunflower must follow the sun, so must others follow her.

King of Questing

Meaning: Authority

Leadership, Fatherhood, Inspired direction, Vision, Intuition, Evolution, Spiritual growth, Energy, Arrogance

Reversed: Severity, Honesty, Subordination

Association: Purpose

The Master: Herein lies the culmination of the quest. Surrounded by the outward trappings of his power, Porthos rests secure, conscious that all he sees is under his dominion, yet mindful of the price that he has paid for his knowledge. His fatherly authority

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arises from the total acceptance of all that he has been, all that he has learned. Experience, distilled through lifetimes of inner searching, lies within his grasp. He awaits only the fires of inspiration to embark upon the ultimate Awakening.

Chapter Four: Primordialism (Cups/Nephandi/Water)

*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?*
— W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The raw materials of existence are present in the Primordial Essence. Attributing this suit to the Nephandi emphasizes the turbulent and often violent outpouring of unrestrained passion and instinct. The traditional Tarot assigns this suit to Cups, the vessels which contain the vital fluids of life. Water is the element represented by these cards, reflecting their multiple meanings and their source as the wellsprings of desire and fertility.

Virtues: Imagination, Love, Birth

Vices: Excess, Lasciviousness, Bad Temper

Element: Water

Season: Summer

Ace of Primordialism

Meaning: Breakthrough

Life-force, Open heart, Trusting heart, Spiritual heart, Expression

Reversed: Instability, Nourishment, Abundance, Mutation
Association: Feeling

Thrust forth from the Primordial ooze, the hand of creation and destruction grasps the vessel of the mind. Substance without form, life without cohesion, motion without direction, the fertile spawning pool awaits the birth of self-awareness.

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Two of Primordialism

Meaning: Reflection

Carnality, Passion, Love

Reversed: Passion, Union, Partnership

Association: Symbiosis

Alone before the mirror of her instincts, she confronts the depths of her desires. Her passions flow in two directions, merging inner lusts and outer ambitions, forming the watery basis of unconscious knowing. She contemplates the self, joining with her carnal nature in an unspoken pledge to rapturous sensation.

Three of Primordialism

Meaning: License

Pleasure, Overindulgence, Abundance

Reversed: Pleasure, Liberty

Association: Carnality

Unhampered by the dictates of convention, three weird sisters (?) revel in their wanton sensuality. Beneath their feet, the twisted form engendered by their gross imaginings gropes mindlessly for sustenance amid the barren wilderness of their ruined glory. The nurturing fluid of unfulfilled creativity festers within the broken shells of self-indulgence.

Four of Primordialism

Meaning: Dissipation

Contemplation, Emotional luxury, Satisfaction, Apathy

Reversed: Novelty, Contemplation, Wonder

Association: Ennui

The pleasures of the world remind him only of his own mortality. Entrenched within his own dissatisfaction, the sated wastrel shuns the proffered cup of secret knowledge, immune to the headiness of its bestial temptations. He has drained the sensate realm of everything it has to offer; neither mind nor spirit provide respite from the bleakness of his aimless destiny.

Five of Primordialism

Meaning: Disillusionment

Disappointment, Sorrow, Loss, Fragility, Depression

Reversed: Hope, Return, Inheritance

Association: Vulnerability

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Bitter with experience gone to waste, the Primordial spirit gazes in despair upon the gutted ruins of expectation. Having tasted loss and drunk the wine of unfulfilled dreams, the prospect of unsampled pleasures holds no temptation for him. The river of subconsciousness has been forded, but the barren landscape beyond is devoid of promise.

Six of Primordialism

Meaning: Initiation

Pleasure, Regeneration, Revitalization, Memory, Ecstasy

Reversed: Retirement, Ending

Association: Opportunity

Ripped from his unthinking, Primordial past and thrust into the heart of an alien existence, Jubuka offers sacrifices for his initiation into a world of new opportunities. Surrounded by the familiar trappings of his old life, scarred by the transition, yet hungry for new sensations, he seeks revitalization from the blighted flower that falls from civilization's twisted tree of knowledge.

Seven of Primordialism

Meaning: Temptation

Selfishness, Illusion, Debauchery, Addiction, Over-everything, Promiscuity

Reversed: Determination, Realization

Association: Indulgence

Overwhelmed by illusionary possibilities, unable to choose between desires, temptation's victim loses his sense of self in the contemplation of dreams and phantasms. Responding to the forces pulling from all directions, his awareness has transformed itself into a glutton for sensation. Like a black hole in the universe, the dreamer exists only in the definition of his dreams.

Eight of Primordialism

Meaning: Abandonment

Rejection, Misery, Indolence, Inertia, Limits, Depletion, Exhaustion, Aimlessness, Retreat

Reversed: Joy, Merriment, Acceptance

Association: Stagnation

Past achievements have lost their meaning, but abandonment brings with it a sense of liberation. The Primordial spirit turns its back upon the skeletal remains of knowledge sought, savored and

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set aside. Grasping the distillation of the essence of experience, he sets forth upon an uncharted course, following the jagged road that leads to the unknown.

Nine of Primordialism

Meaning: Attainment

Success, Happiness, Health, Opportunity, Expansion, Fulfillment, Well-being

Reversed: Imperfection, Overindulgence

Association: Completion

Devoured by the fulfillment of her wishes, she slumps before the fruits of her attainment. The desired traps of material comfort — sensual pleasure, abundance, well-being and happiness — all now depend upon the black tide of her continued success. Opportunity is assured, but satisfaction lies elsewhere.

Ten of Primordialism

Meaning: Satiety

Emotional Contentment, Vitality, Expressiveness, Energy, Enthusiasm

Reversed: Wanting, Need, Lack

Association: Satisfaction

They dance, O how they dance! They have plunged themselves into the depths of their desires, surrendering to the serpentine rhythms of the *danse macabre*. Entrapped by their sensations, ravished by their transformation into vehicles of consummate passion, their Primordial journey is complete.

Page of Primordialism (Caul)

Meaning: Rebirth

Emotional objectivity and detachment, Controlling, Bears messages from dreams

Reversed: Deception, Obstacle, Inaction

Association: Possession

Within the womb of Primordial emotion, a new awareness comes into being. Nurtured by the blood of countless sacrificial offerings, the child of raw sensation finds herself transformed into corruption's willing servant. Mindless energy coalesces in the uterine darkness, waiting for the moment of its emergence.

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Knight of Primordialism (Beast)

Meaning: Emotion

Desire, Tantric practices, Passion, Bliss

Reversed: Subtlety, Fraud, Rivalry

Association: Bestiality

The Beast rides upon the waves of its own emotions, submerging all thoughts of its distant humanity in the roiling seas of Primordial subconsciousness. Both messenger and message, it carries promises of bliss within its cup of dreams and nightmares. Loosing the thrashing remnants of former desires into the hearts of all who hear its call, it clears the way ahead for future bestial visions.

Queen of Primordialism (Barabbi)

Meaning: Imagination

Emotional integrity, Self-reflection, Unconscious, New form, New identity, New life, Expressing oneself without blame or judgment

Reversed: Perversity, Dishonesty, Immorality

Association: Perversity

Jodi Blake, imagination's queen, salutes the riot of her cacophonous visions. Her perversity is the key to her freedom from all limitations. In her hands, the instrument of pain becomes the doorway to deliverance from mundane constraints. Through acting out her desires, she makes them real, and her goblet is filled with the distillation of these unhampered dreams.

King of Primordialism (Gilledian)

Meaning: Power

Emotional loyalty and commitment, Spontaneity, Ego, Generosity, Responsibility

Reversed: Violence, Scandal, Injustice, Weakness

Association: Vanity

From his throne room deep beneath the seas, Galarius, Master of the Labyrinth of Drachus Vachor, watches the ripples of his power roil throughout his watery domain. For him, the sea of the subconscious is the font of all creation and destruction. Crowned with the symbol of the ocean's insensate life, he holds in one hand the scepter of his power to influence the world of thought. His other hand supports the reflection of his subtle rule.

Chapter Five: Dynamic (Swords/Marauders/Air)

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

— W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The Dynamic essence represents constant flux and restless activity. This suit is assigned to the Marauders, whose unfathomable goals challenge the boundaries of perceptual reality. In the traditional Tarot, this is the suit of Swords, symbols of aggressive action whose blades sever connections and change circumstances for good or ill. Air is the mercurial element assigned to these mutable cards.

Virtues: Courage, Power, Vitality

Vices: Fear, Tyranny, Chaos

Element: Air (seen as Fire by some)

Season: Fall

Ace of Dynamism

Meaning: Knowledge

Conquest, Victory, Clarity, Inventiveness, Originality

Reversed: Disaster, Tyranny, Ignorance

Association: Innovation

Emerging from the storm-filled skies to ground itself in the rippling sands of knowledge, the taloned hand of chaos and instability grasps the sword of activation. Driven by no quest save its own unmotivated energy, impelled by no emotion other than the desire to carve a mark upon the universe, the keen-edged symbol of the power of change severs the veil that hides the secrets of the world.

Two of Dynamism

Meaning: Precariousness

Treachery, Blindness, Decision, Peace, Integrative mind

Reversed: Balance, Stalemate, Impotence, Truce, Release

Association: Resolution

Poised precariously upon the shaky structure of a divided consciousness, Miss Zhao has chosen the path of inner sight. Rejecting a world she no longer recognizes, she holds aloft the twin swords of creation and destruction. An unguarded movement by either

sword will cut the cord from which depends the lantern of illumination, plunging it into the murky depths of the unconscious.

Three of Dynamism

Meaning: Sorrow

Upheaval, Negativity, Triangles, Limited view, Focusing on the past, Jealousy

Reversed: Compromise, Disorder, Confusion, Delay

Association: Separation

Severed from all save the anchoring rope of Dynamic flux, the abused consciousness suffers the threefold agonies of its loss of connection to spirit, mind and body. Limited by its ruptured viewpoint, the dangling awareness can focus only on its past sorrows and future upheavals.

Four of Dynamism

Meaning: Reality

Convalescence, Quiet, Conflict resolution, Truce, Rest

Reversed: Solitude, Repose, Economy, Precaution, Circumspection, Exile

Association: Repose

Doomed to an existence in which he perpetually defends the constructs of imagination's realms, the self-appointed counselor of the damned and the forgotten seeks his repose after strife. Above Barrister Martins' quiescent form, the swords which symbolize the rigors of the law hang suspended. He rests upon the bier of his own reality, built — stone by stone — from his private vision. In solitude, he keeps his lonely vigil.

Five of Dynamism

Meaning: Defeat

Degradation, Unfairness, Constriction, Fear, Distortion, Empty victory

Reversed: Conquest, Threat, Menace

Association: Dishonor

Her victory is a hollow one, gained without honor. Smiling in malice, she surveys the tokens of her conquest, the weapons of her departing foes. Some inner urge compels her to wallow in the degradation of her enemies. The uncontrolled hostility she embodies takes no thought for consequences.

Six of Dynamism

Meaning: Passage

Journey, Travel, Rationality, Objectivity, Consideration of the whole

Reversed: Stalemate, Failure, Obstacles, Difficulties, Delay, Blockage

Association: Synthesis

Steering a path between the choppy waves of activity and the calm waters of contemplation, Stephen of Warwick sets forth upon a journey of deliverance. His charges, too frail to exist inside reality's constraints, seek a new sanctuary beyond the world's horizon. The Dynamic spirit moves upon the surface of the waters, seeking passage to an understanding of the balance.

Seven of Dynamism

Meaning: Instability

Futility, Unreliability, Helplessness, Hopelessness, Sabotage, Negativity, Lies

Reversed: Counsel, Instruction

Association: Betrayal

She walks the tightrope of Dynamic change, uncertain of either starting point or destination. Unsteadiness prevents her from recovering the knives of stolen knowledge she hoped would assist her on the Path to her soul's development. To cease her forward motion is to plummet into futility, while turning back leads only to failure.

Eight of Dynamism

Meaning: Crisis

Indecision, Restriction, Censure, Doubt, Mistrust, Over-analytical mind, Confusion, Interference

Reversed: Triviality, Censure, Freedom, Relaxation, Origins

Association: Captivity

Surrounded by the weapons of violent change, captured in the twisted bonds of convoluted thought, she has become the victim of her own demented Inquisition. The mask of indecision blinds her. Although her mind has analyzed her options, doubt and mistrust undermine her escape. Overwhelmed by the crisis of her dilemma, she cannot break free of the constraints of her fevered imagination.

Nine of Dynamism

Meaning: Despair

Misery, Desolation, Disaster, Self-criticism, Mental cruelty

Reversed: Suspicion, Doubt, Shame, Imprisonment, Desolation, Misery, Death

Association: Suffering

Nightmares of disaster haunt her sleep. Awakening, she faces only further intimations of her desolate existence. Without hope of respite or surcease, she rests uneasily upon the bed of her mortality, burdened by the violent demands of her Dynamic calling. The way of the Marauder leads as easily to despair as to enlightenment.

Ten of Dynamism

Meaning: Ruin

Pain, Fear of ruin, Mental despair, Paradox

Reversed: Advantage, Profit, Impermanence, Delusion

Association: Failure

The ruined carcass of delusion, pierced by the destructive instruments of change, surrenders to desolation. Overseen by the mountains of wisdom and understanding, fallen beneath the storm which will break down its outworn forms and failures, the mind forswears its illusions. Paradoxically, the end of one reality betokens the beginning of another.

Page of Dynamism (Gibberer)

Meaning: Aggression

Activation, Ferociousness, Practical tangible thinking, Acting upon ideas

Reversed: Naïveté, Unreadiness, Laxity, Slackness, Illness, Unforeseen

Association: Battle

He stands as a buffer between the world of the mind and the concrete structures of external reality. Ready to do battle with those who would threaten his cherished beliefs, he grasps the Dynamic symbol of his aggression. He is imagination's sentinel, the vanguard of active expression rather than passive thought.

Knight of Dynamism (Dragon)

Meaning: Impulsiveness

Courage, Intuitive thinking, Unrestricted mind

Reversed: Extravagance, Braggadocio, Romance

Association: Wrath

Descending from the cloud-filled sky, the Dragon of Dynamism visits destruction upon the pitiful fruits of prideful creation, bathing the mundane world in the flames of its purifying spirit. The mighty serpent does not always temper its impulsive nature with the wisdom of forethought and planning. Instead, it rushes headlong into conflict, heedless of the consequences of its actions.

Queen of Dynamism (Sibil)

Meaning: Perception

Confidence, Rational, Objective, Consulting intelligence

Reversed: Narrow-mindedness, Intolerance, Bigotry, Artifice, Prudery

Association: Observation

The visions of her bloody past merge with her perceptions of the future. Crowned with the symbols of immortality, Medea sits upon her skyborne throne surrounded by her airy messengers of thought. Made wise through suffering, tempered by the knowledge of her imperfections, she observes the world below her through eyes maddened by the clarity of her penetrating mind.

King of Dynamism (Prankster)

Meaning: Judgment

Counsel, Wisdom, Focus, Intention, Concentration,

Reversed: Cruelty, Injustice, Barbarity

Association: Determination

Sheltered in a world of his own imaginings, Robert Davenport dwells within a happier time. The spirits of his past tantalize him, while the sylph of knowledge whispers of his intentions. In his domain, his will is absolute, his authority unquestioned. Crowned by the roses of his desires, he contemplates immortality within his own mind, wherein he holds command over life and death, for he has judged reality and found it wanting.

Chapter Six: Pattern (Pentacles/Technocracy/Earth)

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

— W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"

The essence of Pattern is stability and formal structure. This is the suit of the Technocracy, whose vision dominates the physical world. In the traditional Tarot, this suit is assigned to Pentacles, symbolic of earthly progress and material gain. The element of unyielding Earth finds its representation in these cards.

Virtues: Stability, Knowledge, Strength

Vices: Inflexibility, Greed, Intolerance

Element: Earth

Season: Winter

Ace of Pattern

Meaning: Prosperity

Inheritance, Success, Production, Practical organization

Reversed: Corruption, Excess, Surplus

Association: The Syndicate

Breaking free from the aimless flux of change without direction, order imposes its Pattern upon the world. Material prosperity becomes the center for a new beginning, stamped with the imprint of stability and measured attainment. Hidden forces tighten their grip on reality, casting their shadows on the shape of things to come.

Two of Pattern

Meaning: Balance

Change, Harmony, Yin/Yang, Stability, Adaptability

Reversed: Opposition, Flux, Fluctuation, Vicariousness

Association: Speculation

Without balance, Patterned existence falls prey to inner corrosion. The lightning flash of inspiration, harnessed by the willworker's determination, maintains spiritual and physical manifestations in delicate equilibrium. Only constant motion provides the appearance of static harmony; one false step, one hasty speculation, and the dance of power dissolves into chaos.

Three of Pattern

Meaning: Effort

Persistence, Tenacity, Priorities, Commitments, Focus, Intention, Direction

Reversed: Mediocrity, Pettiness, Confusion, Obstruction

Association: Construction

Superimposing a new vision upon the traditions of the past, the artisan of order directs her talents to the mastery of her environment. The guardians of material progress keep vigilant watch over her painstaking effort. Under her skilled ministrations, the construction of a threefold utopia of body, mind and spirit comes into being.

Four of Pattern

Meaning: Inheritance

Greed, Solidity, Miserliness, Power, Vitality, Forcefulness, Empowerment, Possessiveness

Reversed: Setback, Loss, Poverty, Legacy

Association: Direction

From his perch at the center of his universe, Void Engineer Ambrose Channing seeks to fathom the secrets of the cosmos and unlock the mystery of the physical world. As the inheritor of the twin powers of logic and reason, his mind perceives the subtle forms within the Grand Pattern of perceivable reality. It is a vision worth sharing only with those worthy of receiving its overwhelming legacy.

Five of Pattern

Meaning: Impoverishment

Destitution, Loss, Loneliness, Worry, Concern, Preoccupation

Reversed: Companionship, Success, Spirituality

Association: Anxiety

Impoverished in mind, body and soul, the victim of the chains of spiritless reality stands before the face of pitiless intellect within the dark circle of his own making. Preoccupied by his physical limitations, lacking the inner illumination that would lift him to Ascension, he merely endures, rather than seeking to understand.

Six of Pattern

Meaning: Philanthropy
Charity, Attainment, Accomplishment, Productivity,
Tangibility

Reversed: Avarice, Unfairness, Envy, Debt

Association: Gifts

Seeking to share the benefits of his Technocratic vision, the devotee of Pattern whets the appetite of others with the fruits of his own material success. Caretaker of the Sleepers, endowed with a sense of justice and the desire to uplift the ragged Masses, the concerned Technomancer acts as philanthropist both for the benefit of the recipient and for his own sense of self-worth. His actions are the proof of his attainment.

Seven of Pattern

Meaning: Re-evaluation

Indecision, Failure, Fear of success, Delay

Reversed: Impatience, Uncertainty

Association: Stress

His work all but complete, momentary indecision leads to the partial loss of Chain's precious stores. Constant re-evaluation of the forces surrounding him forms a necessary part of his drive toward completion of his goals. The fear of success is as costly as the fear of failure, and in the heat of the moment, one can be mistaken for the other.

Eight of Pattern

Meaning: Skill

Artistry, Prudence, Attention to detail, Organization,
Centeredness

Reversed: Ineptitude, Inability, Lethargy, Chaos

Association: Employment

Centered upon his appointed task, enhanced by the grafting of technological precision to the creative mind, the artisan of Pattern focuses on the precise replication of his orderly designs. Awaiting completion, the object of his perfected efforts is nothing less than the total blend of matter and spirit.

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Nine of Pattern

Meaning: Gain

Prudence, Benefit, Balance, Order, Organization, Unification

Reversed: Loss, Roguery, Dissipation, Imprudence,
Incompletion

Association: Profit

She extracts the vital essences from the lushness of her material surroundings. Within her protected environment of abundant growth, she rests secure in the knowledge that all she surveys is under her control. Through prudence and discernment, she has gathered the material benefits of a Patterned existence.

Ten of Pattern

Meaning: Stability

Riches, Abundance, Prosperity, Enrichment

Reversed: Misfortune, Robbery, Risk, Gambling

Association: Wealth

Raising his glass in a toast to the success of his vision, the autocrat of Pattern sees the culmination of all for which he has so zealously striven. His patriarchal rule ensures the material well-being of those who embrace his orderly philosophy. Under his ministrations, animal instinct is harnessed to the will of the mind. Stability is assured.

Page of Pattern

Meaning: Perseverance

Diligence, Creativity, Mutation, Incubation

Reversed: Prodigality

Association: Void Engineers

Despite the barrenness of her surroundings, Void Engineer Karen Brewster draws sustenance for her belief in the cosmic order from the radiant energy of the stars above her. In one hand, she holds the secret to the Pattern of the universe. Her other hand is filled with unanswered questions. She stands upon the brink of a new awareness; her diligence awaits its reward.

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Knight of Pattern (Cyberknight)

Meaning: Reliability

Patience, Methodicity, Lack of imagination, Physicality,
Architect, Reform, Solidity

Reversed: Carelessness, Inertia, Idleness, Stagnation

Association: Iteration X

Within his cybernetic spirit, the reliability of the machine enhances the ingenuity of the man to form a dedicated guardian of Pattern. The Cyberknight of Iteration X rests patiently upon his mechanized steed, ever vigilant and ready to assume his duties as the enforcer and messenger for the Technocratic will.

Queen of Pattern

Meaning: Creativity

Talent, Fertility, Health, Nurturing, Stability, Fulfillment

Reversed: Neglect, Dependence, Lack, Misuse

Association: Progenitors

Creation is the task at hand. Crowned with the mask of enlightened sight, intimately connected to the throne through which her power flows, the Progenitor Queen of Pattern manipulates the structure of life itself. Her fertile imagination conceives of possibilities as yet unperceived; her disciplined will brings those visions into being.

King of Pattern

Meaning: Industry

Solidity, Prosperity, Harvest, Abundance, Practicality, Finances, Diagnostician

Reversed: Perversity, Misuse, Speculation, Waste

Association: New World Order

At rest upon a throne carved from the ruins of the past, Montego Diaz-Quetzalcoatl oversees the progress of the New World Order's dominion. Crowned by his technological achievements, the King of Pattern monitors the interplay of wealth and industry. Protected by the twin guardians of knowledge and power, he has no need to step outside his sheltered enclave. All the information he needs is at his disposal; his rule is absolute.

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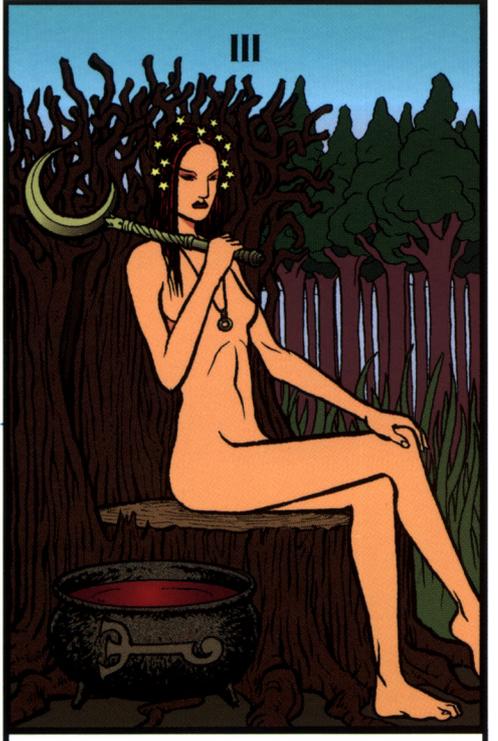
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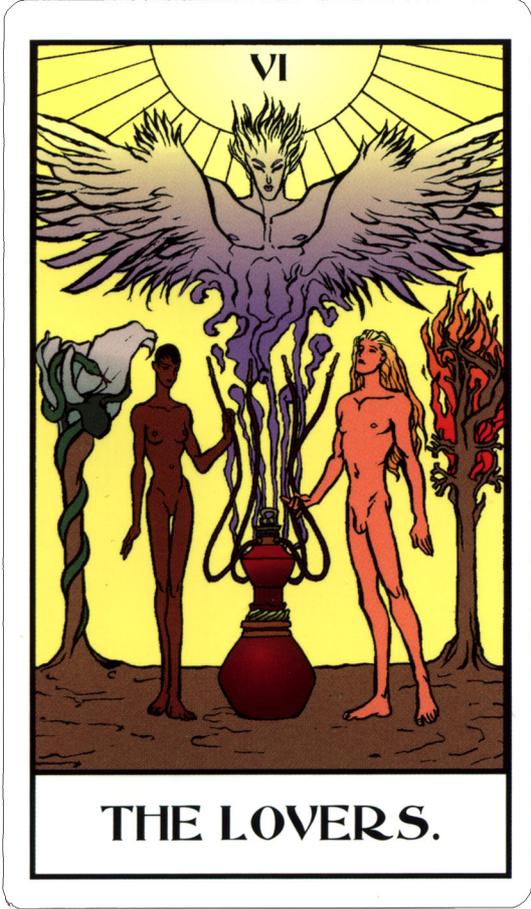
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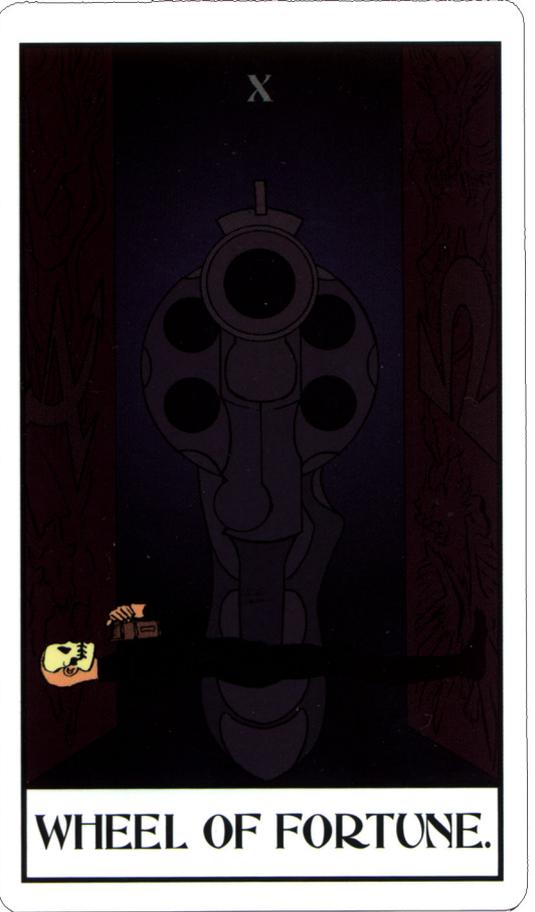
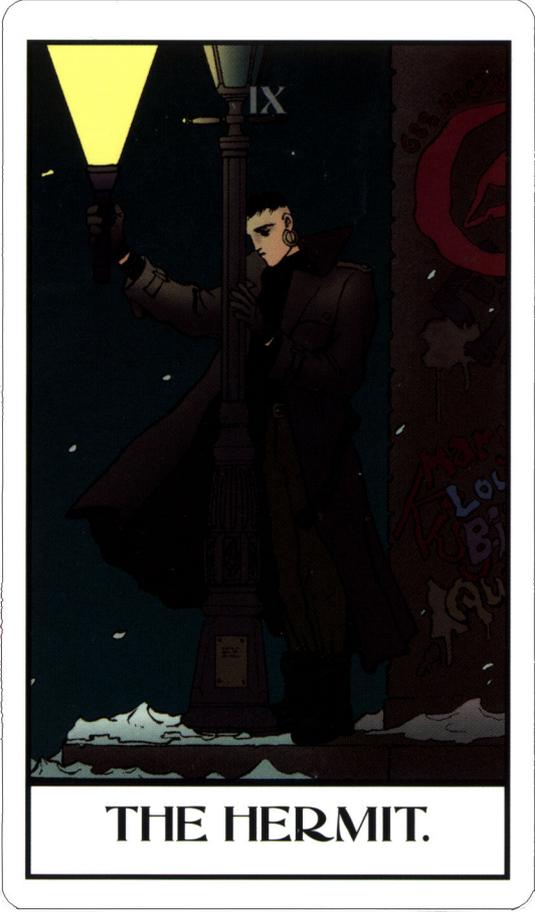


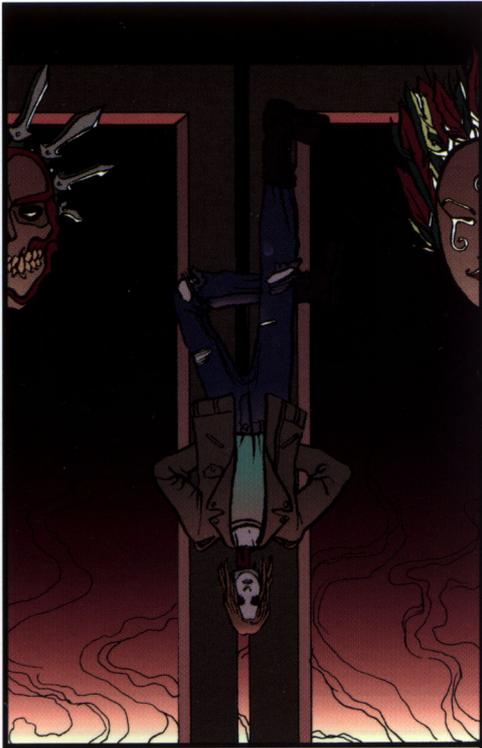
THE HIGH PRIESTESS.



THE EMPRESS.







THE HANGED MAN.



DEATH.



TEMPERANCE.



THE DEVIL.



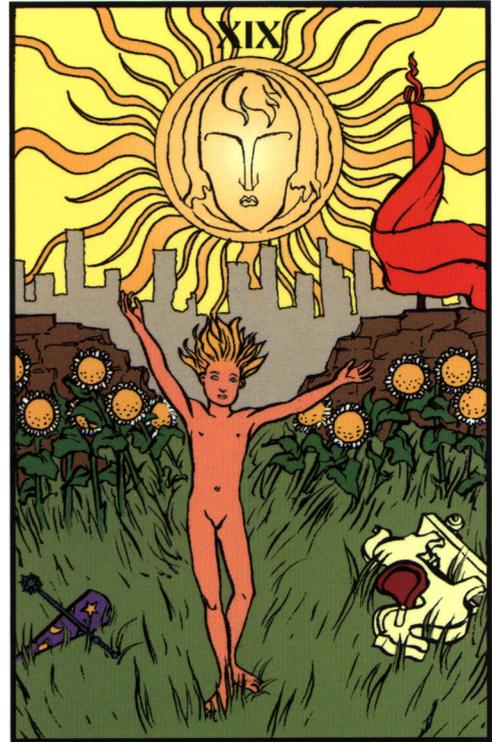
THE TOWER.



THE STAR.



LUNA.



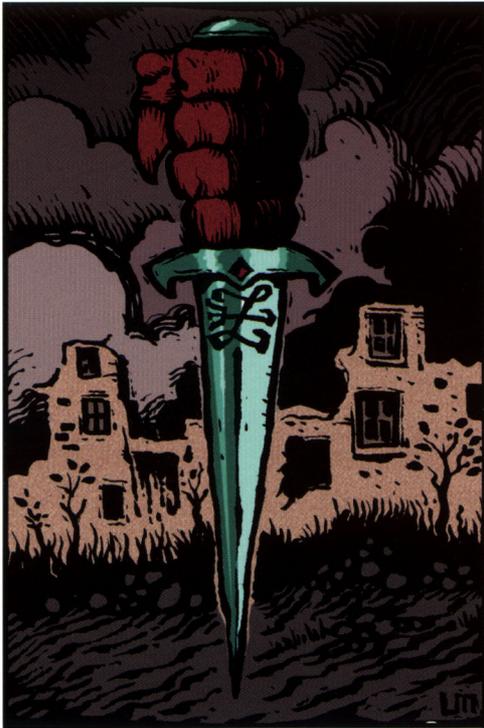
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JUDGEMENT.



GAIA.



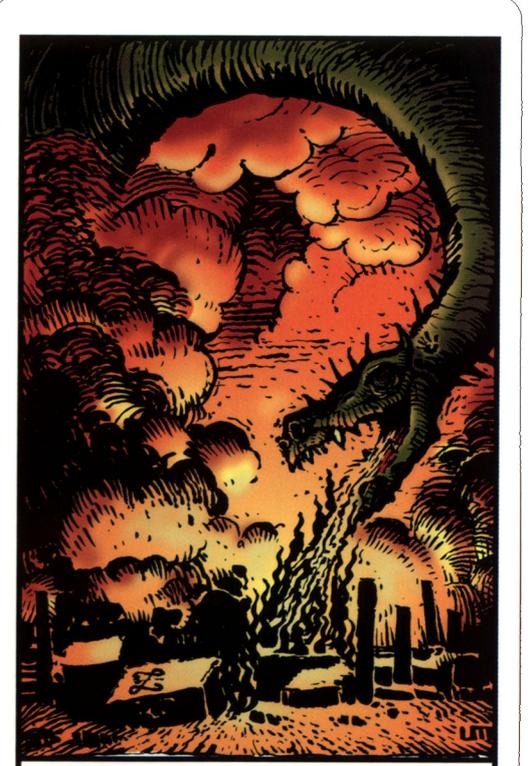
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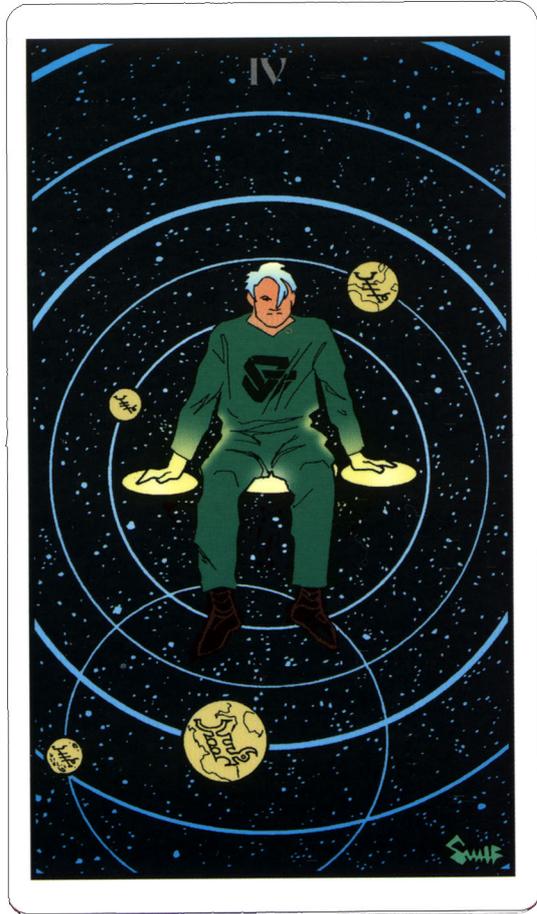
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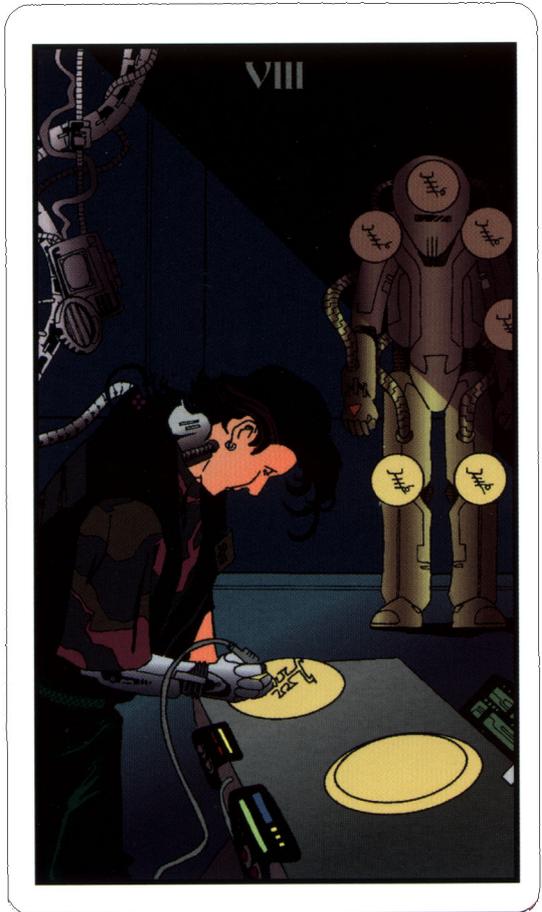
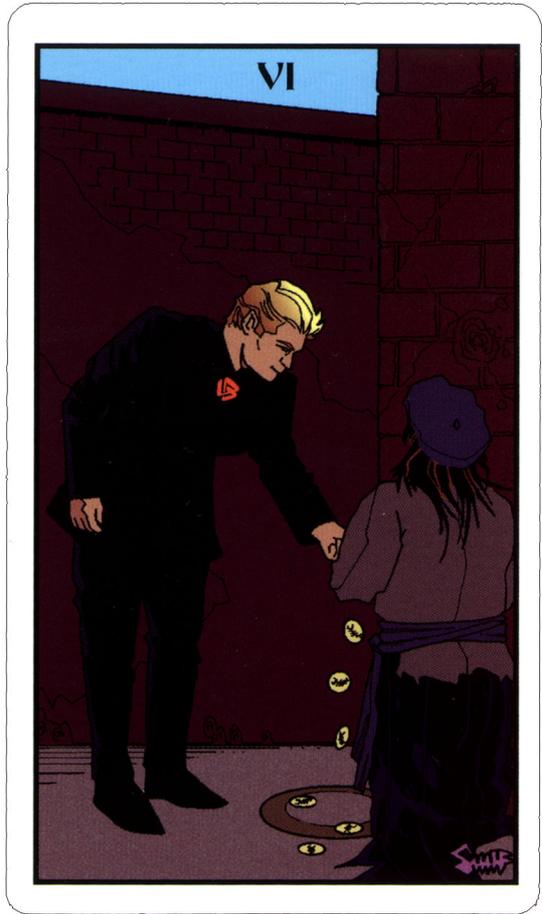


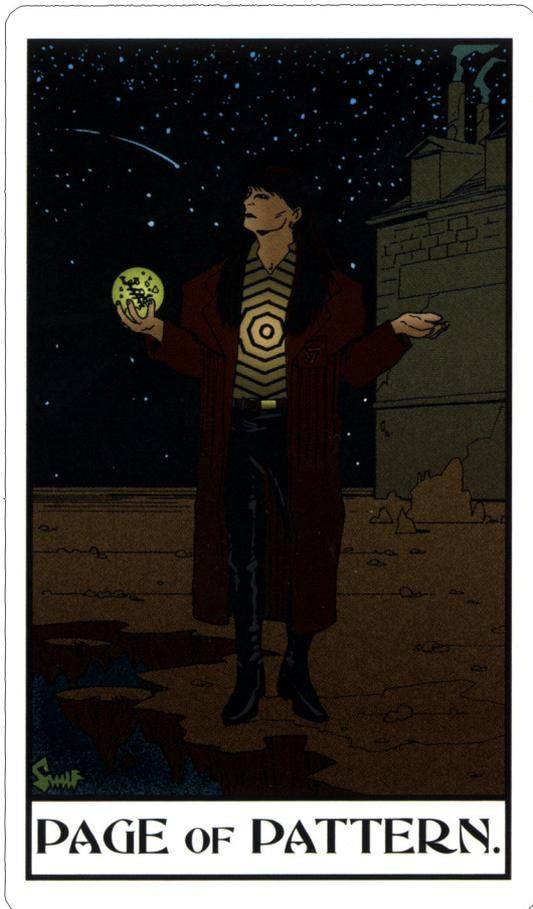
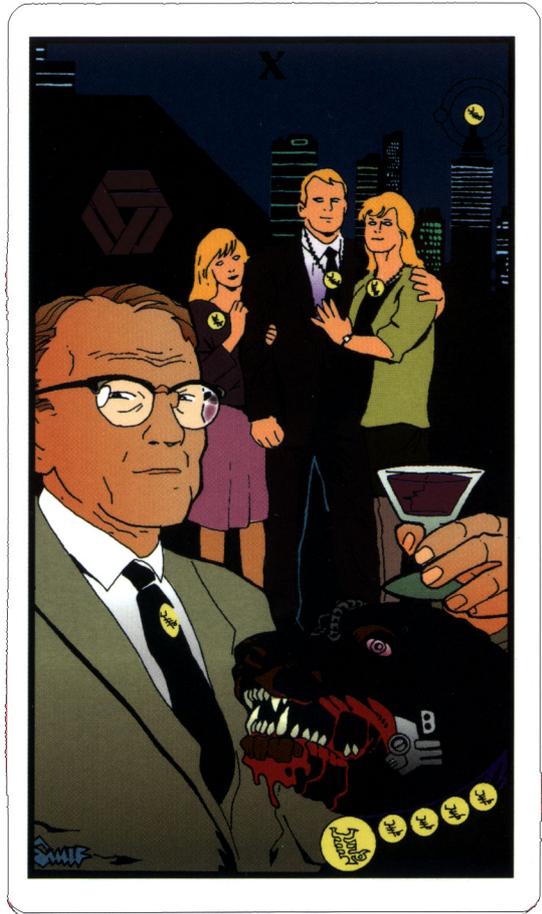
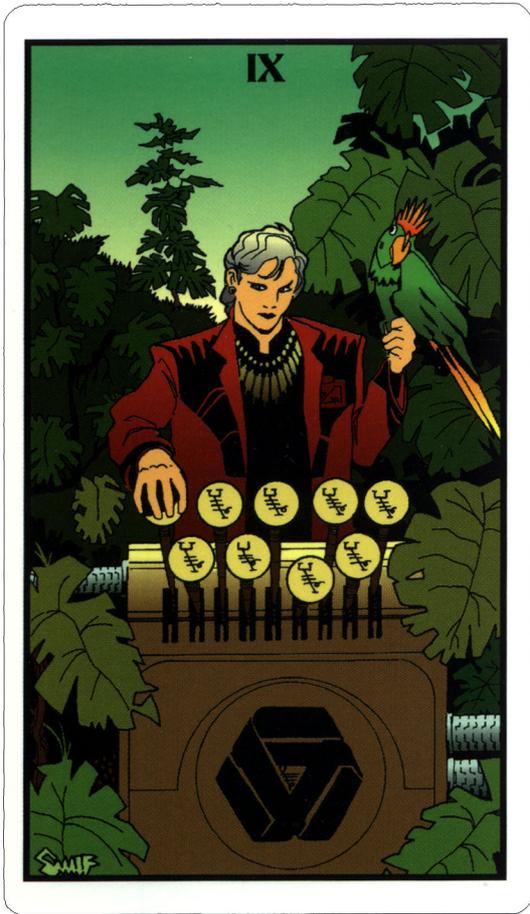
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KING OF DYNAMISM.





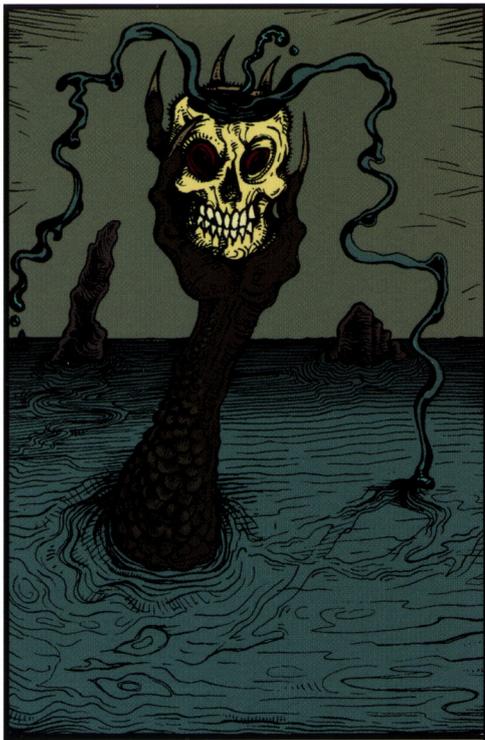




QUEEN OF PATTERN.



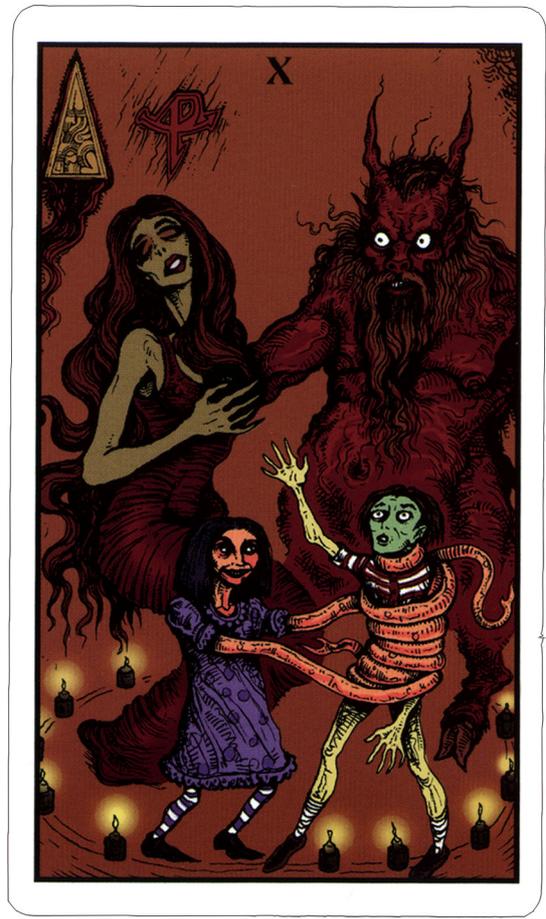
KING OF PATTERN.



ACE OF PRIMORDIALISM.









QUEEN OF PRIMORDIALISM.

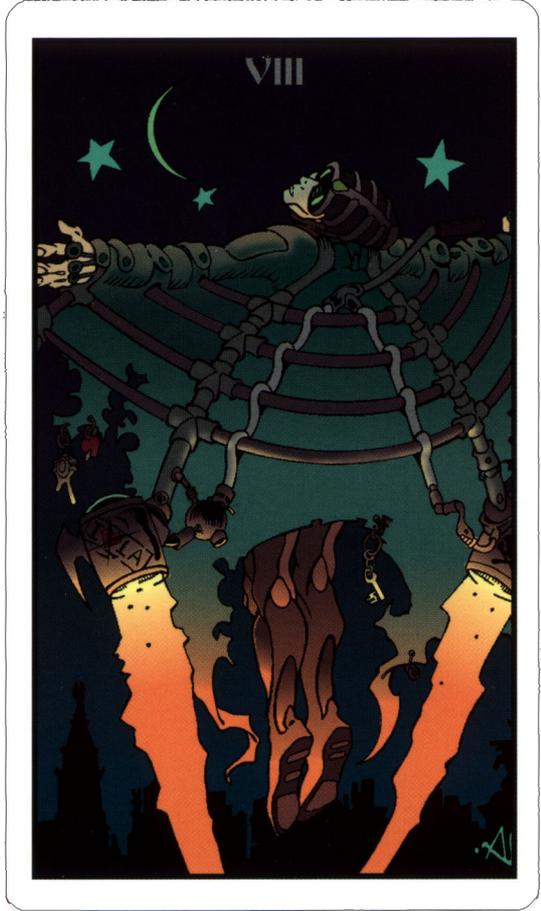


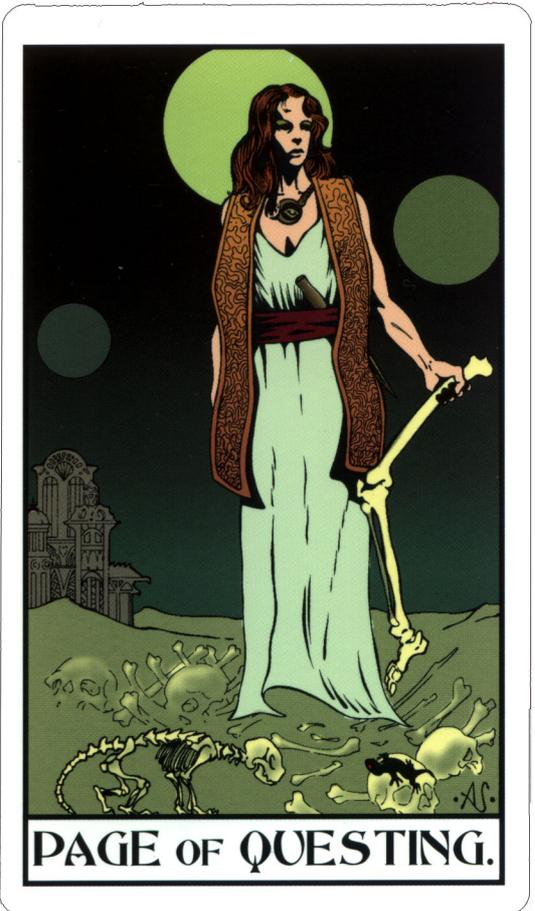
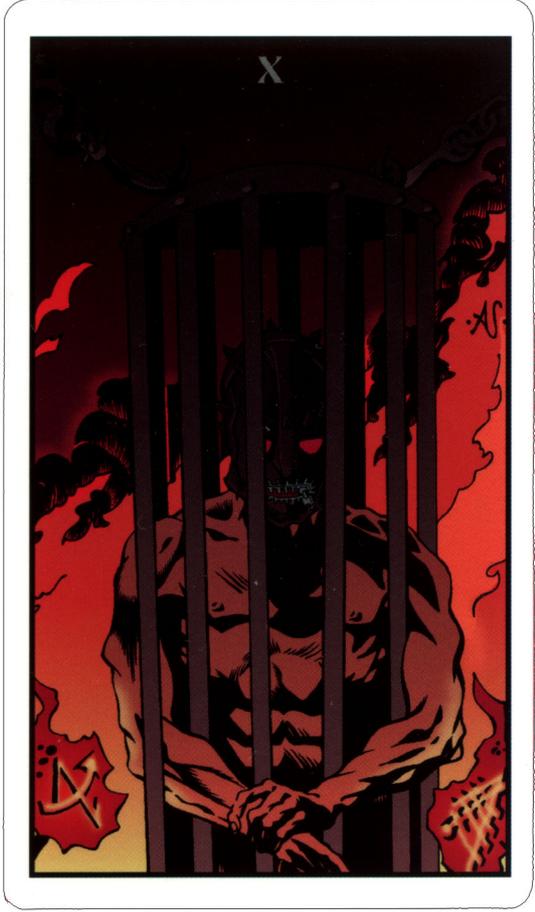
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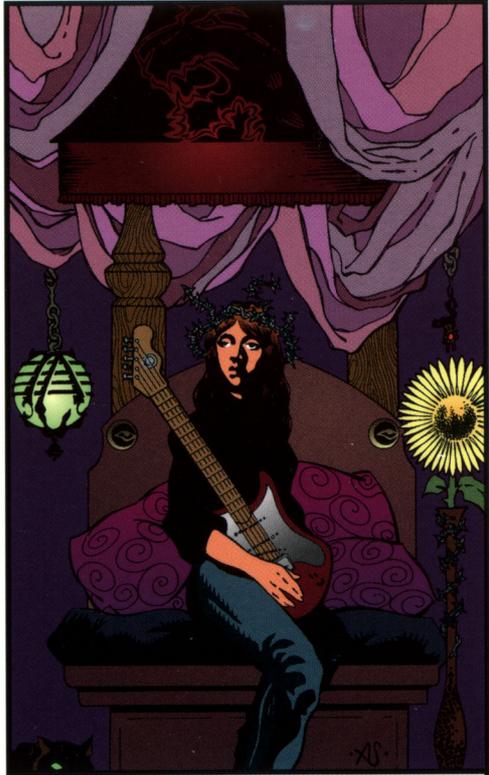


ACE OF QUESTING.









QUEEN OF QUESTING.



KING OF QUESTING.

