

Gentle Creatures Wisdom Deck

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Introduction

The Gentle Creatures welcome you to their world. Here in this realm of deep forests and vivid landscapes, you will find a tribe of gigantic bipedal folk who want to walk with you. Commune with each member of this tribe to learn from them, laugh with them, and even rest your head on their soft furry shoulders. Each one is an individual with a heart, mind, and soul of their own. From gray to black to white to auburn and more, their fur color is an autumnal-hued quilt. Each creature sprouts horns that show a myriad of directions. From the youngest creature to the oldest and wisest, all celebrate their individuality by intentionally using non-specific pronouns. Rather than a family of he's and she's, they prefer they and their because it reminds them that they are not separate from one another.

Hold out your hand. A Gentle Creature will greet you with love and honesty. Rather than

abrupt, definitive statements, they prefer to allow your own instincts to have sway. Each card carries a message for you to absorb, then use as you see fit. In the world of Dan May's furry folk, humans are welcome as long as they approach with open hearts and minds.

Emotion is made atmospheric in Dan May's Gentle Creatures series. A quietude fills these spaces—instants that feel like defining interactions for his fuzzy giants—and wisdom and curiosity are in balance. Facial expressions might be hidden from view, but body language reflects the drama of life, and the artist is sure to include a “glimmer of hope even in the saddest of moments.”

May describes his art as “not from a specific time or place; it is surreal in nature and puts forth suggestive themes that can lead the viewer toward a unique story.” In turn, each story is outlined by its setting and often grounded in the natural beauty of northern Michigan, where the artist lives and works.

The Gentle Creatures



When you are worried about your place in the world, remember this Gentle Creature. Standing in the midst of a starry sky, they gaze intently at their own palms. What is contained within the space of two hands? How can any of us capture what the universe truly holds for us? It can be an overwhelming question, can't it? You could journal on the question of "what is all" in so many ways. Perhaps this is a reminder that we are all. Just that. All. None of us are any less valuable than the next member of our tribe. When we consider that our tribe consists of everything, like our friend in this card, we may find ourselves contemplating our own worth. For those times that it seems to be more than we can hold, take a step back. Sit down. Feel your own root extending deep into the earth. Press your spine against something firm like a tree or a friend. See your own head

opening up to thrust up a ray of light that goes on and on and on into the sky. Repeat the following to yourself. "I am all. I am enough. All is all." Chant the words as you feel everything expanding outward. Hold on to the feeling of being one with everything. When that feeling fades, start from the beginning. Look around you, dear one. Who else needs this message? It is your turn to remind another that they, too, are All.

Beacon

Three creatures brave the rising water to make sure everyone has been alerted. They stand back to back knowing that together they can be a brighter beacon than alone. Their patience is rewarded by one lost straggler finally finding its way home. Had they not stood there under that stormy sky, the bird might have been lost. The lesson here is that when things look dark, find friends who believe as you do. Then do the work necessary

to make sure all are safe. Without the sturdy feeling of each other, this trio might have given up. It is not easy to hold your ground when angry clouds loom and the water is surging. A question for you to think about here is, "What must I stand up for? Who will stand with me?" You can be a better beacon knowing that others have your back. Don't despair if you are feeling lost. Look for those who brighten up your life.

Clearing

Sometimes we all need a little help. Our Gentle Creature is getting that help. They have had so many rough spots, so many hurts, that they needed to take the time to rid themselves of that negativity. They watch as a feathered companion removes their burden. Our friend here used a bit of folk magic. They held the egg in the palm of their hand. Taking time to really think about their most recent journey, they spoke to the egg. This card is about

putting your fears, your worries, your anxieties into the egg. Then it can be carried away by you or someone else to be let go of in a caring fashion. Do not imagine yourself broken if you find yourself filled with thoughts that are darker than you like. Instead, let yourself acknowledge that these are things that happen to all. It is necessary to release them rather than let yourself be weighed down. You can always call on your most trusted friend to help you with this clearing of your burden. Do note that you are not always the one who needs to unburden yourself. Sometimes, you are the one summoned to help another as their most trusted friend. This is a notification to go within yourself. See which role you must take on today. It is okay if you sit with a friend as you both clear the air and yourselves.

Conjurer

Under the full moon of the seventh moon, the Conjurer waits. They have taken up the

prayers, entreaties, and pleas from the people. Now they must send those requests up to the sky to be answered as the Universe wills. Our Conjuror knows a secret though. As much as they pass along this ancient knowing, most never take heed. So they must commune with the owl, nature's messenger. This bird helps by taking up each application for benediction. It returns time and time again until all the hopes and wishes are dispersed. Now it returns to the Conjuror, the village holy one, to share a meal and a warm fire. When you see this card, the message should be clear. When you have need of someone to hear your worship, your wonderings, your worries, remember this one key thing. Once you have done your asking, hush. Be silent. Remember that you have two ears and one mouth so you can listen twice as much. Many of us never allow the Universe to answer us. We keep talking right over the messages. Or we deny the answer. This is where just pulling another card is not the best thing

to do. Sit with the image. Stay in the moment of the message. Do not allow your self to get in the way of what the Conjuror brings you. Magic is yours. Be silent and listen for a while.

Connections

Our Gentle Creature has taken a moment out of their crazy day to just sit for a while. They have been rewarded with a visit from a delicate denizen. These two are old friends who have not had the time recently to just stop and connect. Or maybe it would be more honest to say that neither of them has made the time for their friendship. This pause to check in with each other is as necessary as watering a houseplant. Nothing thrives without intentional moments of caring. So they will spend this interval catching up. Maybe over laughter...maybe over tears. Either way, they are honoring the work that it takes to nurture their personal bond. When this card shows up, remember those friends you haven't heard

from lately. If you haven't heard from them, have they heard from you? Connecting with others is a two-way street. Never waste your energy on those who are not willing to do this work with you. You are worth the time it takes to build real connections.



Our gentle friend asks a simple question. "Where is my place in the cosmos? Who am I?" The winged messenger doesn't bring an answer. Instead, it brings a key on a red cord, which represents the circle of life. The key is what will unlock the answer. The key doesn't unlock any specific mechanism of iron or steel. Instead, it unlocks the mystery of all parts of the cosmos showing where each of us fits in. Each of the cosmic orbs represents a place of learning that our creature must visit. The lesson here is that there is no one place where the creature or any of us belongs. We are all made up of multiple and complex

potentials. We are all complicated varieties of a set of skin and bones that can miraculously hold space in more than one realm. The question is not so much 'where' as it is 'how many wheres?' The beginning of the quest of the cosmos is also the end of the quest. It is a circular riddle that continually answers itself.

Create

Sometimes you must create your own fire. This Gentle Creature was in need of flame. They had to cross this river on a dark night with the moon hidden by the clouds. This was a journey they couldn't avoid taking. Belief in the power within is the message they carry. Even when they are at their lowest, they have a clear knowledge that this ability to make things is always within them. You may feel as if your own talent to bring forth your imagination has lapsed. Trust in your own internal flame, seeker. It may be that you need this time of living without that flame. It teaches us what

life is like when we are disconnected from our authentic selves. This creature is willing to share their igniting spark with you. Reach out. Let this card jumpstart you. Embody that creative flicker within. Pick up pen, paintbrush, potting tools, or pans. It's time to execute that complex series of steps that is your unique dance. Make it known to the world that you are here to give birth to those wild and free ideas within your soul. Create a beautiful moment. Then create another and another. Remember that your own sparks will leap out to ignite another who feels like you do. That is the gift of creating.

Curiosity

Curiosity woke up this Gentle Creature. For too long they had meandered through life without purpose. One day they came upon an unusual plant. No one else knew anything about this plant. Our friend took it upon themselves to learn everything they could about this green

denizen of the woods. As they worked with the first plant, they became aware of another and another until suddenly their life was full of growing things. They learned so much that others came to them to be taught. By simply being curious, our Gentle Creature moved from a life of wandering aimlessly to one of work, knowledge and teaching. You are being given the opportunity to learn something new right now. Let your own inquisitiveness find those unexplored areas. Pack up your notebook, your pen, and anything else you might need. This is a call to satiate that thirst for knowledge. Feeling like a refresher course? Needing to go deeper? This is your time. Join our friend studying their plants by setting up your own lab or field station. Indulge your inner student by buying a book on that particular subject. Can't find that book? Maybe it is time for you to commit to paper and share with others what you have discovered from following your curiosity.

Daybreak

Daybreak dawns as the adventurers prepare for another day. Birds take off to show them the way for today's journey. It is time to face a new set of challenges. They understand that the way they begin isn't actually the way they must end. For them, they avoid locking themselves into someone else's patterns. Should they have an argument in the morning and hold onto that until nightfall? No, this group understands that our days are not run by hot words. Rather, the way they go forward offers them chances to grow even more. So they welcome the soft glow of this new day. Promising one another that the most urgent thing is to tackle obstacles to move beyond rather than lug more baggage around. Challenge yourself to start each day as a promise rather than a problem.

Directions

Here are two creatures whose paths have crossed on this starry night. The crescent

moon doesn't offer a lot of light but the stars lend their own glow. The barn owl has asked the Gentle Creature a question of direction. The Gentle Creature crouches down to listen closely. When someone asks for guidance, it is often good to know more about the individual. Does the owl wish to fly there as many would assume? Or is the owl planning to travel in short hops, remaining close to the ground? Once those matters are clarified, then directions can be given. In return, the owl offers the Gentle Creature answers to their own questions about the road ahead. Directions can be funny things. Sometimes they place us on the direct path. But often they offer us a chance to explore more. And that extra path can mean the difference between a destination and an adventure. What do you want when you ask for directions? Are you looking to reach the end or to discover something new?

 **Drift** 

Two Gentle Creatures relax as the waves carry them along. They lean against one another secure in the knowledge that the support they need is there. They've been paddling hard for so long but they know that rest is as important as the work. The red sail is full with a leading wind so they are confident that they are going somewhere. The butterfly is also drifting along behind them. Sometimes it lands on their face during the hardest times just to remind them that a chance to drift is coming. Of course, they can't always drift can they? But this is not the moment to worry about that. Indulging in the quiet warmth at their back, each creature ponders the joy of doing nothing at all. They are in the moment. And that is harder than one might think. This card asks you how you are drifting right now? If you are constantly struggling and not making progress, it may be a good time to let the elements take over and do their work, while

you simply breathe. Maybe a butterfly on your nose would help you realize when it's okay to just drift along for now.

Effort

Every now and again, you just need to put out the effort. Our lovable creature holds up a small umbrella. It is evident that this umbrella is not going to do any real good in terms of the falling rain drops. The yellow slicker the young girl wears provides more protection. But the fact that the umbrella is offered shows that the creature cares. They themselves are not bothered by the rain, but know their smaller counterparts can sometimes be adversely affected by too much cold and wet. So, as they say, "Mama tried." Or in this case, "Creature tried." Here is a reminder that we need to keep trying to do the right thing. Even when it is too little, it is noticed. The need to be kind is the most important thing. This card is a reminder to ask ourselves, "How can

I show someone I care today?" Reach out in good faith. Help someone whenever you can. Your efforts will be noticed.

Family

Family is a funny thing. It is not always chosen, but it is always a matter of love. Here we see a couple welcoming a newborn into their unit. The two younglings tugging on the branch demonstrate that togetherness doesn't mean we all pull in the same direction all the time. Being a member of a core group brings you the best and worst of things. You always have someone there to stand up for you and with you. Their loyalty is a thing of true endurance. However, you will also have those who know you well enough to call you out when you mess up. The blessing is that they won't abandon you after they tell you what you did wrong. They will be there as you work to correct your mistake. Family goes both ways. Whether it is chosen or blood fam-

ily, take a moment to honor your own community. As you have been there for them, they will be there for you. Ask yourself what family looks like to you.

Friendship

In troubling times, it's hard to remember that we are not alone. Here our creature contemplates the moon. They are feeling so lost in thought that they have not heard the soft booted footsteps of the small person beside them. But once that connection is made, that hand to hand contact, our creature is gently pulled back to the here and now. They are reminded that they have a friend. It is this commitment of companionship that returns them to a more balanced way of thinking. Now, they have someone to talk with. It is that gift of quiet listening that we all need. For this card, ask yourself, "Who do I need to talk to about this?" or "What point of view am I missing here?" Never fear that you are alone