

HEART & HANDS TAROT

By Liz Blackbird

SAMPLE



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INTRODUCTION

In a reading, the Fool represents both the beginning of a journey and the enlightened return home. I began this project with the Fool's ambition, crafting the mysterious and powerful Major Arcana cards in my early twenties during a period when I was at my least enlightened, but also at my most confident and attuned with my own creativity. I drew the court cards as I graduated from college and set out to travel and learn about the world. As I experienced my first love, I drew the Cups, and I worked on the Pentacles as I adapted to the responsibilities of my first full-time job. When my relationship ended, I distracted myself by drawing Swords piercing hearts and hands. As a new relationship blossomed and I transitioned to a career with more room for self-expression, I drew the Wands, and felt the fires of neglected creativity and confidence rise within me.

Throughout the years, working on these cards nourished my spirit and kept me rooted in a creative practice even as the distractions and necessities of life vied for precedence. I completed the deck as I turned 30, and entered that decade feeling reborn. I hope that this deck will aid all who use it to look inward and reconnect with their own creativity, confidence, and love.

THE MAJOR ARCANA

0. THE FOOL

A figure walks a road lined with flowers, accompanied by a joyful dog. They set off on this journey oblivious to its hardships; eyes blocked with blossoms, they see only beauty. As the dog trusts the Fool to guide it and care for it, the Fool trusts the road to lead them where they need to go. The Fool's optimism may seem naive, but naiveté can be a kind of wisdom; sometimes enlightenment requires unlearning. A hero's journey ends where it began, and the road in this image loops back on itself, suggesting that these travelers may already possess what they seek. This card indicates that a journey is beginning, and it's time to take a leap. Your perspective is fresh and your passion is keen. You have within you what you need to find your way; don't be discouraged by setbacks or derailed by others' influence. Trust your instincts and follow your heart.

Reversed: You're playing it safe and holding yourself back. You may be afraid of what others think, or you may not trust yourself. Perhaps you don't feel ready to take that first step; there's always more to learn or do to prepare. But you won't progress until you hit the road.

1. THE MAGICIAN

Though the Magician's tricks seem spontaneous, his sleight-of-hand conceals the cleverness behind them. The Magician holds all the aces, and has a few more up his sleeve. He is an artist; he wields a palette and brushes, and a canvas behind him awaits his inspiration. He has mastered the tools of his trade and deploys them with skill and creativity. The Magician has the power to make the ordinary extraordinary, and the charisma to make you believe in him. This card suggests that you have the intelligence, ingenuity and talent required to accomplish your goals. You're well trained and well equipped, and your confidence sets you up for success. Your skill is compelling; don't misuse it.

Reversed: You don't have a clear sense of your own abilities. You may not be as skilled as you think you are, or you may lack confidence in your true talents. This can undermine your endeavors and cause you to mislead those around you, whether you mean to or not. An impartial assessment may help you recalibrate.

2. THE HIGH PRIESTESS

A priestess stands in a yonic mandorla, a crescent moon at her feet. Her hands are clasped reverently, wrapped in a string of prayer beads. While her flowing hair obscures her eyes, a third eye opens above them, showing that her insights rise from inner vision. Her garments swirl in circles that dissolve into the flowers around her, as her meditation connects her to the cycles of nature. This card suggests that feminine wisdom is present. Insights arise from intuition, emotional intelligence, and a respect for the rhythms of nature and of one's own body. The High Priestess perceives that which is invisible to others and can provide transformative shifts in perspective. She may not always be able to explain how she knows what she knows, but her guidance is trustworthy.

Reversed: Emotions and gut feelings lead you astray. Your intuition may be distorted by unprocessed trauma, internalized misogyny, or experiences, activities or individuals that estrange you from your body, your feelings or your natural rhythms. Solitude and soul-searching may be necessary to reconnect with your deeper self.

3. THE EMPRESS

A regal woman radiates confidence and calm. Her body is blooming, and she is proud of its beauty, its bounty and its strength. The Empress uses her authority and charm to create harmony all around her. She enriches, propagates and nurtures. She cultivates relationships and sees things to fruition. As a maternal figure, her power grows from love and creativity. This card suggests that beauty, abundance and wealth are possible for you, but require loving cultivation. Nurturing harmonious relationships will be the first step toward creating the life you want.

Reversed: Your environment is going to seed, possibly due to lack of care. You may be conserving your emotional energies or insulating yourselves from others, stunting your personal growth. This card may also indicate rejection of a caregiver role, or maternal pressure to grow in a direction that feels unnatural.

4. THE EMPEROR

The Emperor stands firmly before an iron fence, his hair and beard curled like a ram's horns. The Emperor sets boundaries and defends his sphere of influence. He creates

order and stability in his environment by establishing rules and hierarchies. As a leader and patriarch, the Emperor initiates projects, takes responsibility, and governs with reason and fairness. This card suggests you take charge of your situation. Define the problem and organize your thoughts; your knowledge, expertise and analysis will reveal the best course of action. This card may also represent the protection of a paternal authority figure, or the act of setting and enforcing strong boundaries.

Reversed: Attempts at control are disorganized and ineffectual. You are not applying your energies wisely. You may seek to dominate rather than to lead, or you may cede too much power to repressive authorities. This card may also represent a rejection of hierarchy or traditional masculinity.

5. THE HIEROPHANT

The Hierophant leads a placid bull, raising his hand in benediction. Though the animal is restrained, the blooms on its body suggest beauty and growth. The Hierophant is a scholar and religious leader whose authority is rooted in tradition and institutions. Though his knowledge may be arcane and his thinking

rigid, he commands wisdom that has withstood the test of time. This card suggests that established institutions or faith traditions have something to offer you. Appealing to experts may spur your development or help you avoid reinventing the wheel. Laws, traditions and taboos often exist for good reasons, and now may not be the time to break them. Despite his conservatism, the Hierophant holds knowledge that can shift your perspective.

Reversed: Question authority and received dogmas. Attachment to institutions or outdated ways of thinking may hold you back. Discarding false idols may be necessary for growth. This card may also represent disillusionment with authority figures or an inability to conform to external norms, ethics or customs.

6. THE LOVERS

Two androgynous figures are entwined in an embrace, bodies perfectly aligned. The eyes of one have slipped closed, while the other points the way forward. The bold patterns on their bodies suggest the balancing of binaries. The Lovers attract and influence each other, undoing inhibitions and encouraging self-love. Their union is absorbing, transformative and selfless.

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