



MOTHER
MORT'S

CARNIVAL
OF
SOULS

SAMPLE

By Matt Hughes

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Introduction

Come one, come all to Mother Mort's Carnival of Souls! There's a new attraction that's appeared overnight at the edge of town—and scores of people are making their way toward the colorful tents, the delicious smelling food, and the entrancing music. You've seen plenty of wandering fairs come through your area before—but this one seems different, somehow. The lines are long, though, so whatever's hidden within those tents must be good.

Carnivals have long allowed the people of your community to set aside their humdrum, everyday lives and—through costume, acting, and play—access a deeper level of connectivity to the earth, the universe, and their place within it all.

These festivals create a unique space where those of lower social status, those often downtrodden by the burdens of life and work, can fight back against the establishment without fearing punishment. Much like the incredible high-wire acts that grace the soaring heights of the festival tents,

carnivals function as society's balancing act. Through satire and theater, they distribute a sort of karmic justice that's often absent from societal life the rest of the year.

Mother Mort's Carnival of Souls, then, is an especially poignant type of circus, where a magical type of cleansing occurs.

Each booth has a way of attracting its own audience. You notice that while everyone enters each tent with a smile, no person leaves the booth with the same expression on their face as the one they wore while entering. In fact, if you count closely, you notice that some don't leave at all.

Guided and governed by Mother Mort—a powerful three-formed goddess who, throughout the years, has gone by such mythological names as Hecate, Trivia, or Ereshkigal—this Carnival of Souls is a magical space where cleansing, both good and bad, can take place. You and the other fair-going attendants might meet terrible ends. You might leave being cursed or with knowledge of your ill-timed fate. Or, if

Mother Mort and the performers within each booth decide, you might just find restorative karmic justice for the traumas and wrongs you've experienced over the course of your life.

These sorts of magic and miracles exist together—both kindness and redemption dancing in paradox with pain and consequence. So, are you willing to face the horrors of the carnival, if it means you might find your deepest desire rewarded among the booths and performers? Are you brave enough to shed the armor and defense mechanisms of your daily life, and enter a carnival so enchanting you might never leave? Do you dare test your luck?

into impossible shapes, slicing fruit with ease to test the blade's sting before swallowing the ornate, razor-sharp sword before an astonished audience.

Interpretation

Often, things do not go our way, which can be difficult for us to accept, but our refusal to do so can hinder our personal growth. This card means accepting something you have been struggling with, even if it is unpleasant (hard to swallow.) Doing so allows you to move on emotionally and find happiness and peace beyond the immediate. The sword swallower is also a contortionist, able to twist and bend into seemingly impossible shapes and positions. If you have been bending over backward to accommodate others at the expense of yourself, this is your sign to stop. Your health and happiness are just as important as that of others, and it is ok to prioritize your own physical and mental well-being. If the things you are doing go unappreciated, then stop doing them.





LIGHT BRINGER



Backstory

The lamp is so beautiful and elaborate that you stare at it, completely transfixed, finding

new delights and shifting shapes within its form the longer you

look. Suddenly, inside the fire itself, it appears that there's a

woman. She wears a glowing white gown and sits cross-

legged, serene and at peace.

Atop her head is a wreath of candles, all of them

alight. As soon as her

calming figure becomes clear,



it disappears with a flicker of fire.

The Light Bringer provides illumination for the carnival-goers, guiding them along their journeys among the booths and tents. Much like fire itself, a light bringer is neutral to human endeavors—it can provide warmth and comfort, provide destruction, or provide cleansing, rebirth, and the opportunity to rebuild.

Interpretation

The Light Bringer represents illumination, energy and epiphany. Like fire, this light can take many forms, shifting from positive to negative or somewhere in between. Are you in a situation where you feel doubt about your past choices? The Light Bringer card reveals that you are on the correct path and should continue trusting the course you've laid for yourself.



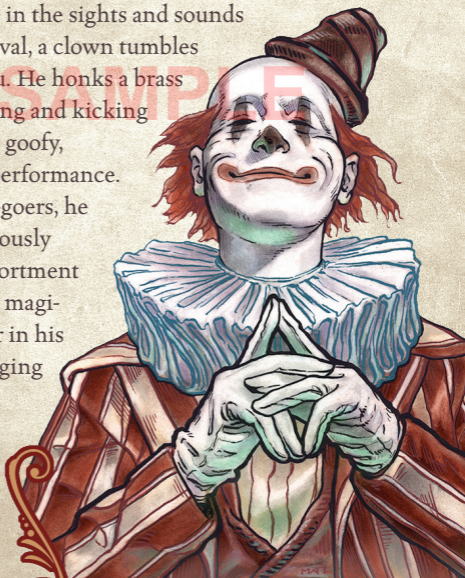


LUDAS THE WAG



Backstory

As you take in the sights and sounds of the carnival, a clown tumbles towards you. He honks a brass horn, dancing and kicking his feet in a goofy, charming performance. To carnival-goers, he gives generously from an assortment of gifts that magically appear in his hands, bringing laughter and joy.



Interpretation

This card represents generosity and kindness, giving to others, and generosity towards ourselves. Be kind to others; the karma will be returned, a reminder to 'pay it forward.' It also represents fun and joy and the need sometimes to stop, kick off our shoes and play. It is a reminder to be silly and laugh often, whether singing out loud or dancing like no one is watching, playing a game, or being creative, have fun. Life is meaningless without pleasure. Embrace your inner child.



About the Creator

Matt Hughes is a self-taught traditional artist focusing on the aesthetic approaches referred to today as “The Golden Age of Illustration.” His style combines inspiration from the Art Nouveau movement, the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and the Symbolist movement to produce an artistic expression all his own. Matt also created the *Ethereal Visions Tarot*, *Dreamscape Oracle*, and *Ethereal Visions Tarot Luna Edition* published by U.S. Games Systems, Inc.

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