

ORACLE of Visions

BY CIRO MARCHETTI



*If art serves any purpose other than
simple decoration, it's to bring into
focus, if only for an instance, that which
might otherwise pass unnoticed.*

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Photographic reference has been used as inspiration for many of the characters used in these cards. However, any resulting resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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FOREWORD

Over the previous decade I have been involved in the world of tarot and have created three tarot decks during that period. Despite attempting to add personal touches and variations to those projects, by default they still adhered in great part to the structure and format that define the tarot genre. Nevertheless, as I describe in the latter part of this book, I found the process increasingly restricting and concluded that producing an oracle deck offered a far more flexible opportunity to create a worthwhile tool for divination and meditation. With its lack of established pre-conceived format and structure, it provided a platform for far more personal creative output. This Oracle of Visions is the result of having taken that opportunity.

Browsing through the spirituality shelves of your local bookstore, it is likely that you will find many options for oracle decks that are themed on goddesses, faeries, angels or some kind of New Age system of positive affirmation. Goddesses and angels, with their corresponding attributes, serve as archetypes for certain char-

acteristics, virtues and gifts. But beyond the more commonly known, one is obliged to learn and become familiar with the numerous other goddesses (along with their attributes) that make up the full deck in order to be able to use it. The different qualities associated with each goddess, fairy or themed character is not apparent unless one reads the corresponding explanations provided for each.

My intention was to create a set of images that would speak for themselves and require no supporting text in communicating their possible meanings; a deck consisting of a set of visual starting points on which to base readings from an entirely intuitive level. Additionally, these images would for the most part be neutral; their purpose would not be to provide a consistent 'feel good' positive spin or motivational self-help encouragement (although they can certainly provide that if you, the reader, see them in that way). In and of themselves, these images could be interpreted quite differently, often with contrasting or contradictory conclusions, depending on the specifics of any reading. I hope that this Oracle of Visions fulfills that objective.

Life is a constantly changing maze filled with choices at every turn with consequences for every decision. Making better decisions requires the reference point of experience, intuition and comparison. The best we can do is think our circumstances through, evaluate the possible scenarios, and consider the various factors related to them.

We do this by using our instincts, as well as confirming facts. Where appropriate we consider the ramifications of our decisions and actions both for ourselves and any others directly or indirectly involved. Ultimately, despite it all, we must be cognizant of the fact that despite our best intentions, there are still no guarantees that whatever choices we make will prove to be the correct ones.



The images of the Oracle of Visions are loosely broken into four categories: Situations, Emotions, Actions and Behavior. Initially I had intended to subdivide the deck into only those four groups, but I soon realized that this would be imposing an unnecessary restriction. The images needed to be able to apply to more

than one category, e.g., a card depicting “fear” (an emotion) might equally be communicating “danger” (a situation). Similarly, a card depicting “memories” (a concept) might equally serve to communicate “remembering” (an action). By discarding such categories, each card is free to serve in many roles.

By extension, there is no need for reversals in a reading as the potential for such variations are contained within the images themselves. To this end I have also chosen not to include keywords or titles on the face of the cards. I believe that doing so would only serve as restrictions to their interpretations. By omitting any preconceived meanings, it will be far easier for you, the reader, to interpret them differently for the context of a particular reading. I have included numbers, but that is simply to provide a practical reference point. There is no intended significance on my part as to which numbers were chosen for which cards apart from 21 for Lady Luck. (I couldn't resist.)

Visually there is no one common theme. My personal penchant for jesters, masks, and mechanical devices, along with faux Victoriana costumes

and characters, are shared throughout, and there is no specific significance to which cards they are employed. In general terms the jesters, masks and theatrical performances serve as archetypes. Masked figures and performers can serve as either generalizations or individuals. They are both anonymous and role playing and as such can more easily be representative of whoever is the subject of the reading.

The mechanical devices serve as they do in most of my work (including the previous tarot decks) as metaphors of our partial control in our fate. A Wheel of Fortune may represent the cyclical spiritual and mystical ups and downs of life, but in its man-made mechanical form it also suggests that we have some buttons and levers of our own making that we can adjust along the way. The Victorian feel is a decorative indulgence that visually aligns with the “Steampunk” (or as I have always described it, “Retrotech”) style of my mechanical devices, and gives them a complementary setting. What commonality the images do share is hopefully they all in their own way invite interpretation and ask to be given meaning.



I hope that these images can be equally applicable to the bigger issues as well as the everyday nuances of our lives. If there is a common thread, it's that they mostly deal with the theme of choice. Choices made, choices to be made, their timing and the influences that go into making them. Our lives are filled with decision making and its consequences. These images may help provide a perspective as to how we might arrive at those decisions and consider their consequences both to ourselves and others. How we evaluate our options is influenced by a myriad of factors, including personal self-interest, moral issues, fear, anticipation, value of rewards and consequences of punishment.

Historically, images of tarot acknowledged this element of choice, albeit reflected heavily through the iconography and agenda of church doctrine on how best to live one's life. This was encouraged with the corresponding promises and threats offered in the afterlife, but despite that there was also great emphasis on the role of fate. The battle between good and evil forces

vying for our souls was often a conflict played out by the deities on our behalf and beyond our mortal control. From that viewpoint one can almost see humans as merely bit part players in a grand theatrical performance of life, following a predetermined script.

Today, we are aware of having greater choices in our lives compared to the past. Clearly, this can be an overgeneralization and regrettably, this might not apply to the majority of people even today. But for the vast majority of those who are likely to be using this deck, it is applicable. We enjoy many freedoms of choice that simply would not have applied to less complex times in the past. Where we live and work, with whom we choose to share our lives, how many children to bear and when, what religious beliefs and political opinions we hold; these are just some of the options we experience that would not have been the case in earlier times. The images on this deck reflect those freedoms of choice we may now have along with considerations and responsibilities we have to apply when making them.



In the following pages I have provided a brief summary of my personal description and meanings for each card, along with some occasional opposing suggestions where applicable. These can serve as a starting point from which you are welcome and encouraged to deviate. You as a reader will take it from this point. What will the Oracle have to say? Your journey with these cards will be your own as mine has been; but I am confident that you will have a wealth of images to accompany you.

THE CARDS

SAMPLE



A New Beginning Release from the Past

*You may have a fresh start any moment
you choose, for this thing we call "failure"
is not the falling down, but the staying down.*

–UNKNOWN

– CARD 1 –

To move on from failures or simply to expand and explore new horizons, we make choices to leave the past behind. Whether it is in the form of treasured objects of material or symbolic value, relationships, careers, familiar surroundings or even personal ideals, at some point we may have to discard them like a tree shedding leaves in order to liberate ourselves and allow for future growth. On the floor are three discarded cards, each a Fool from my three tarot decks. From the box their spirits are released as doves for a new beginning.

Ensure that the time is right to move on. Has your present circumstance been truly fulfilled, or is it being abandoned prior to its completion?

See additional interpretations of this particular card on pages 117-121.



Belonging Acceptance Assimilation

*The primary joy of life is acceptance, approval,
the sense of appreciation and companionship
of our human comrades.*

–JOSHUA LIEBMAN

Our sense of belonging and acceptance by others requires affirmation. Peer recognition and acceptance is a compelling motivation and reward for our participation. To that aim we may have to demonstrate, to some degree, our allegiance. Some communicate their allegiance and commitment through body marking, others by more transient expressions such as dress code and fashion, and still others by their conduct or mannerisms. Whatever the form, all are variations of the same basic objective, namely a confirmation that “I am this and I belong”, and in turn “you are this and we accept you.”

The flamboyantly coiffed female modifies her appearance with a disguise in order to assimilate. The masked beak transforms her visual persona, and her poise and means of posture further confirm her spiritual transformation. She is at one with those she has joined.

In our enthusiasm and desire for acceptance, we must be careful to stay true to ourselves. Are we really comfortable with the “me” we are claiming to be or is it strained, forced and ultimately unsustainable?



Dreams Meditation Spiritual Escape

Some colors exist in dreams that are not present in the waking spectrum.

–TERRI GUILLEMETS

Our dreams provide us with an alternate reality. Limitless and unfettered, we are free to soar with angels or sink to the depths of demons. To imagine, to create, to escape the norm, to wonder and ask “what if” and to awaken refreshed, and question “why not?”

A jester rests atop a magical box prop, her costume a nightcap and slippers. It is a time now for rest and escape. Around her float magical dream catcher nets, which capture her drifting elusive imagination. Climbing up the adjacent pole are a variety of creatures, each symbolically associated with dreams in different cultures.

Be wary of dreams and interpreting them falsely, they may be true visions or merely mirages of the truth that will send us further from reality.

SAMPLE