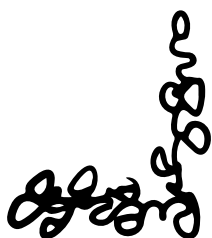
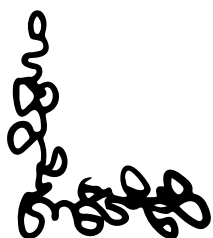


# IFLNTRT

Card Interpretation Guide  
by Thomas of Hermit's Mirror

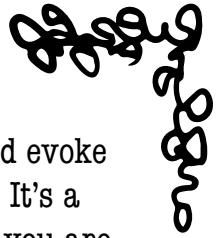


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You can learn more about me and my practice on my website ([hermitsmirror.com](http://hermitsmirror.com)) and follow me on Instagram ([@hermitsmirror](https://www.instagram.com/hermitsmirror)).





**Life Line Tarot** was designed to have gaps and evoke meanings that exceed its creator's intentions. It's a deck for gut checks, scrying, and analysis, so you are invited to create your own interpretations of these cards. To help you get started, I recommend using a few primary strategies:

- How does the card make you feel? What is your initial impression of the card? How does it make you feel? What is your intuition trying to communicate on a subconscious level?
- What do you see, there in ink or hidden in white space? What do you see that isn't there? What is explicitly depicted in the line art, something you think you glimpse from Pamela Colman Smith's illustrations, or something that you see in the abstract patterns created by the jumbled string of ink? What do these symbols mean, and what meaningful associations do they offer?
- What structural analyses can you bring to the card? How can numerology, elements, and quick keywords or other correspondences fill in any missing pieces, regardless of the imagery of the card?

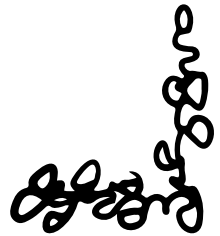
I suggest these strategies because your intuition speaks to you in the languages you can understand, and these are the most common "languages" that I have seen used in tarot reading.

If you're new to tarot or to this way of thinking about tarot, then the final question may require you to broaden your tarot vocabulary, your lexicon, if you will.

So with that in mind, the following pages include a list of key concepts for all of the cards, as well as for ways to broadly analyze the suits, the numbers 1–10, and the members of the court.

This is one person's interpretation of tarot cards in general, so it's not an exhaustive list, and it may not resonate with you, but it can be a useful place to start learning how to read tarot and to either agree or disagree. There's nothing wrong with agreeing or disagreeing as long as it helps you find a way to read tarot better. And I encourage you to start to build your own definitions and meanings from here or any other reference you use for divining meaning from these cards.

In addition to keywords for the standard 78 cards, I also provide some context for the two extra archetype cards, M-S- and L-B-R-NTH. These stem from an oracle deck in progress, so they have meanings that differ from the kinds of keywords that translate across many tarot decks. You'll find an explanation of those cards after the other card interpretations. If you don't like their meanings, you're welcome to create your own. And you're also welcome to remove them from your deck. How you use these cards is up to you (and whatever laws apply in the place where you live).



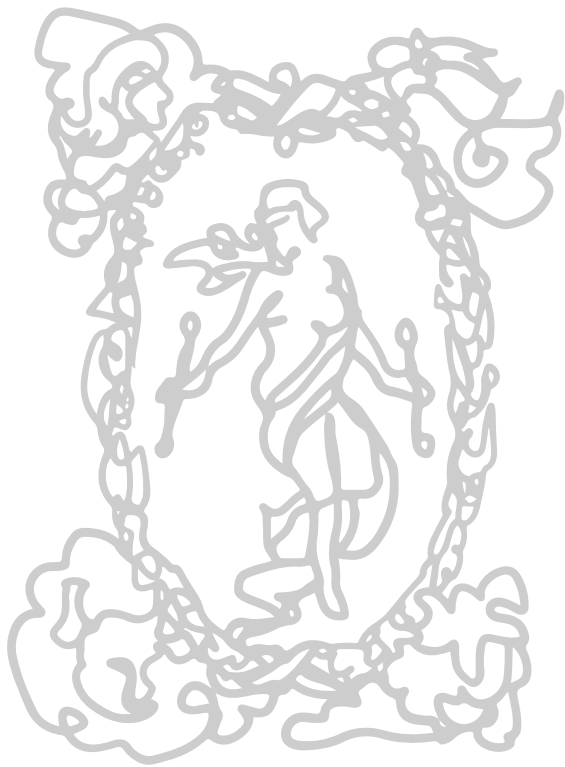


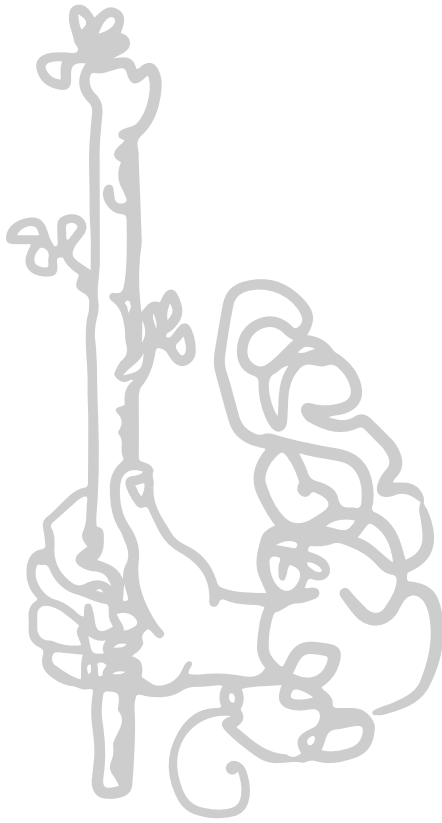
<b>Major Arcana</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
0 F-L	potential, innocence, beginnings, blank slate, risk, freedom, leap of faith, void, air, uranus
I M-G-C-N	manifestation, skill, individualism, early attempts, manipulation, intelligence, will, magic, writing, mercury
II H-GH-PR-ST-SS	intuition, secret knowledge, divination, counterculture, advisor, mysticism, silence, psychic gifts, heterodoxy, the moon, cosmic mother
III -MPR-SS	creativity, femininity, production, organic development, motherhood, chaos, love, nature, luxury, venus
IV -MP-R-R	authority, masculinity, order, artificial development, fatherhood, leadership, logic, structures, aries
V H-R-PH-NT	tradition, maintenance, religion, teacher, ancestor, experience, gatekeeping, hegemony, organization, taurus
VI L-V-RS	romance, partnerships, decision-making, binaries, complementarity, siblings, individuation, communication, gemini
VII CH-R-T	drive, willpower, control, opposing forces, recklessness, challenge, stretch goals, vehicles, protection, ownership, cancer (the astrological sign)
VIII STR-NGTH	resilience, strength, persuasion, training, vitality, passion, hobbies, health, pets, leo
IX H-RM-T	introspection, isolation, guidance, boundaries, mentor, meditation, budgeting, criticism, wilderness, virgo

<b>Major Arcana</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
X WH-L-F-RT-N-	fate, luck, prosperity, karma, cycles, universal flow, destiny, games of chance, taking the wheel, jupiter
XI J-ST-C-	balance, justice, objectivity, analysis, government, law, institutions, official relationships, harmony, libra
XII H-NG-D-M-N	shift in perspective, patience, sacrifice, flexibility, enlightenment, suffering, stasis, strangers, water, neptune
XIII D-TH	endings, death, harvesting, transformation, fears, physical illness, excision, release, ego death, scorpio
XIV T-MP-R-NC-	moderation, refinement, alchemy, blending of opposites, cleansing, full spectrum, holistic wellness, spiritual expansion, baking & cooking, sagittarius
XV D-V-L	materialism, obligations, toxicity, pleasure, addiction, bonds, contracts, bad habits, end goals, capricorn
XVI T-W-R	cataclysm, destruction, ecstasy, course correction, hubris, rebuilding, intervention, violence, physical structures, mars
XVII ST-R	guiding light, hope, clarity, purification, innovation, inspiration, science, astrology, the future, aquarius
XVIII M-N	dreams, illusion, fantasy, the unconscious, psychology, trickery, shadows, movies, oceans, pisces



<b>Major Arcana</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
XIX S-N	joy, light, innocence, positivity, openness, heat, outdoors, the zodiac, children, the sun, cosmic father
XX J-DG-M-NT	revelation, calling, resurrection, assessment, spiritual awakening, purpose, wake-up calls, fire, spirit, pluto
XXI W-RLD	maturation, completion, graduation, self-improvement, evolution, personal development, reflection, old age, earth, saturn

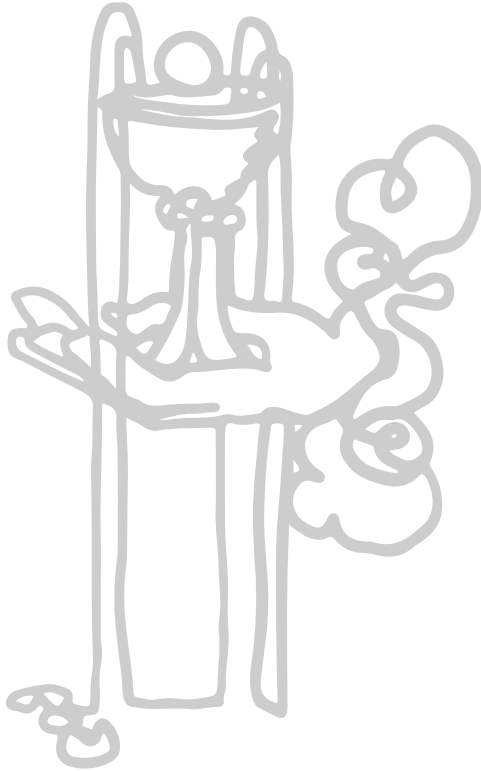




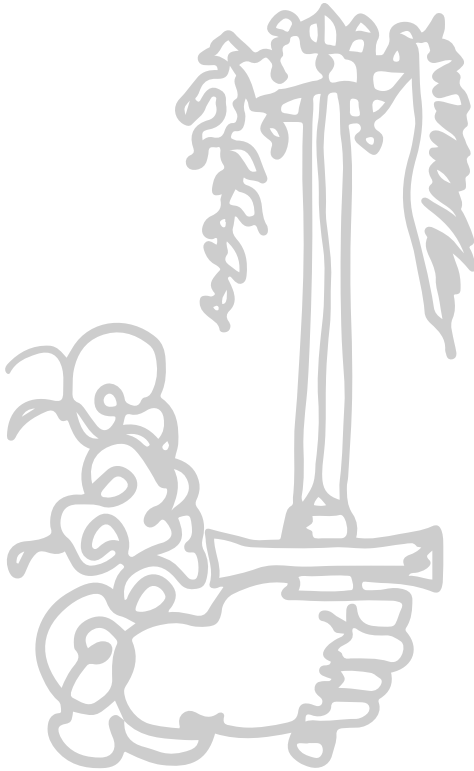
<b>Wands</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
1	the gift of energy, excitation, and sparking passions
2	balanced distribution of energy, assessment, inspired planning, mars in aries
3	expansion of energy, adventure, creating new directions, sun in aries
4	sustaining passions, restorative exercise, pause in activity, venus in aries
5	disordered activity, experimental efforts, struggle, saturn in leo
6	victory, earned credit, inspiring presence, jupiter in leo
7	revolutionary spirit, independence, standing one's ground, mars in leo
8	fast movement, influx of energy, brilliance, mercury in sagittarius
9	staking claims, setting boundaries, perseverance, moon in sagittarius
10	overwhelm, energy grown stale, establishing healthy habits, saturn in sagittarius
P	someone who is willing to take creative risks and who enjoys an adventure, the earth of fire
Kt	someone who rushes in with vitality, excitement, and passion, the fire of fire, sagittarius
Q	someone who leads through persuasion and inspiration, the water of fire, aries
Kg	someone who excites through bold ideas and a charismatic presence, the air of fire, leo



<b>Pentacles</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
1	the gift of strong roots, sustenance, and growth
2	juggling opportunities, balancing spiritual and material needs, matter in motion, jupiter in capricorn
3	building on foundations, collaboration, blossoming, mars in capricorn
4	comfortable terrain, paused growth, protecting body and soul, sun in capricorn
5	material worry, spiritual imbalance, focus on health and wealth, mercury in taurus
6	body and soul in harmony, generosity, financial flow, moon in taurus
7	hard work, slow growth, reaping rewards, saturn in taurus
8	striving for perfection, service, labor of love, sun in virgo
9	prosperity, material and spiritual maturity, reflecting on desires, venus in virgo
10	inheritance, preparing the next generation, transitioning into spirit, mercury in virgo
P	someone who is eager to create new opportunities for themselves, always learning and growing, the earth of earth
Kt	someone who works tirelessly to reap well-deserved rewards, the fire of earth, virgo
Q	someone who invests in their area of influence to nurture and stabilize what is in their care, the water of earth, capricorn
Kg	someone who knows how to achieve and enjoy physical comforts, the air of earth, taurus



<b>Cups</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
1	the gift of communion, connection, and profound experiences
2	shared affection, give and take of emotion, union of souls, venus in cancer
3	celebration, friends and loved ones, expansion of community, mercury in cancer
4	calm, emotional stagnation, sacred pause, moon in cancer
5	emotional unrest, intense feelings, moving on, mars in scorpio
6	exploring psychological depths, exposing secrets, past memories, sun in scorpio
7	daring to dream, intoxication, selfish desires, venus in scorpio
8	realignment, repressed emotions, chasing dreams, Saturn in pisces
9	emotional fulfillment, expansion of joy, dreams achieved, jupiter in pisces
10	reinvesting in relationships, sharing love, mars in pisces
P	someone who is emotionally open and unafraid of murk if it allows for growth, the earth of water
Kt	someone who passes through life as if half-dreaming, ready to turn fantasy into reality, the fire of water, pisces
Q	someone who easily empathizes and finds themselves at home in the unconscious and psychic realms, the water of water, cancer
Kg	someone who easily negotiates the conflicting needs of head and heart, the air of water, scorpio





<b>Swords</b>	<b>Key Concepts</b>
1	the gift of clarity, ambition, and determined genius
2	deliberation, balancing inner and outer forces, intuition versus logic, moon in libra
3	worrying about others, conflicted thoughts, intense commitment, saturn in libra
4	peace of mind, waiting to strike, mindfulness, jupiter in libra
5	miscommunication, shifting goals, dangerous insights, venus in aquarius
6	innovation, future planning, mental flow, mercury in aquarius
7	cleverness, fickleness, opportunism, moon in aquarius
8	overthinking, mental distractions, self-limiting beliefs, jupiter in gemini
9	anxiety, the price of ambition, putting words into action, mars in gemini
10	breakthrough, clarity of hindsight, preparing new goals, sun in gemini
P	someone who looks for practical new ways to engage with the world around them, the earth of air
Kt	someone who pushes the limits to achieve goals and expand their influence, the fire of air, gemini
Q	someone who clearly sees underlying motivations and can pinpoint areas of weakness, the water of air, libra
Kg	someone who is fascinated by ideas, often testing boundaries and thinking three steps ahead, the air of air, aquarius



## **Methods for analyzing suit and number**

You may have noticed some patterns in the minor arcana key concepts, and that's because there's a pattern to their number and suit associations. Playing with and learning from the structures inherent in these associations can help you quickly get to know and expand upon cards in any tarot deck and any tarot tradition, regardless of how they were intended to be used or what imagery is seen in the cards.



**Wands** are tools used to exert one's will, to express what is inside and bring belief into reality. Wands are externally directed, and in that way, they can become weapons if wielded unwisely—sticks with which to beat people, as seen in some illustrations. Wands are elementally associated with fire and, by extension, Wands can represent one's inner fire. This leads to activity and excitement, as well as spiritual fervor, creativity, and boldness. But passion and excitement can lead to primal urges as easily as creative genius or magical expression. Sex and violence are both expressions of fire.

**Pentacles** are metal disks of magical protection. In other deck traditions, this suit may be Coins, and those attributes carry into the Pentacles, but the decision to engrave a five-pointed star on those metal disks carries more than stylistic embellishment. It's a reminder to balance the material world with spirit. So while the Pentacles are associated with earth and materialism—wealth and health—they are not only coins. Like the rock of elemental earth, Pentacles protect, and like soil, they (like Coins) allow for establishing roots and for growth. But let matter take over, and body and soul can become weighed down.



**Cups** are vessels in which to hold that which can't be held in the hands. Yes, cups are meant for drinking, but they can hold more than liquid. Cups hold what is tangible but unwieldy. In this case, they are a good match for the emotions and intuitive insights with which they're associated. These are felt strongly, but they can be hard to grasp. Yet cups can be shared, and with them emotional connection. Because of their association with water, Cups also offer the potential for losing oneself and murkiness. And of course, depending on what's in the cup, it can be easy to become intoxicated.

**Swords** are carefully crafted weapons designed to establish power. Using them effectively benefits from years of training and can result in precise strikes, but when swung by a novice, they are likely to leave a trail of collateral damage, possibly even harming the wielder. How fitting then that Swords are the suit of thoughts and communication, aspects of the realm of air! Because of their ability to claim and maintain power and as symbols of status, Swords are also associated with ambition. Often what is shown with the Swords is not the intangible nature of air but the aftereffects of thoughts and words when driven by a desire to dominate.

10

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## **Numbers**

**1:** beginnings, potential, purity

**2:** balance, opposition, union

**3:** expansion, creation, variety

**4:** stability, protection, order

**5:** experience, unrest, midpoint

**6:** harmony, balanced expansion, beauty

**7:** wisdom, experimentation, independence

**8:** striving, building on foundations, movement

**9:** completion, abundance, reflection

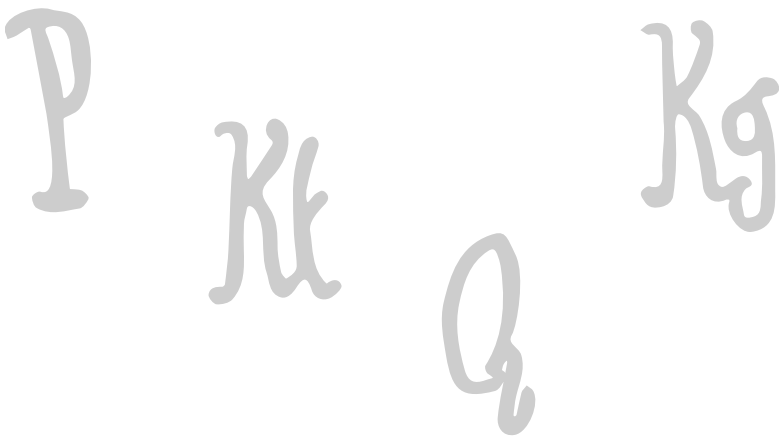
**10:** legacy, transition, regeneration

## **Court cards**

Interpreting the court cards can be as complicated as you want to make it. For that reason, I suggest looking at three broad strategies for interpreting court cards:

- What does the hierarchy of court positions, from youthful Page through Knight to Queen and King say about the card and the role that the court member takes on within a suit? You can use gender and age of the cards, but I encourage you to also think about them in terms of social functions.
- What elemental associations do you have for these personages? How can that help you characterize the nature of that member of court and see resemblances across suits? I personally use the Golden Dawn associations that map the Page to fertile earth and the Queen to receptive water, and I associate the Knight with frenetic fire and the King with thoughtful air to help categorize and characterize their natures. But you may find other patterns more to your liking.
- How can astrological associations help characterize the personas these cards represent? You can use the Golden Dawn attributions for these cards that I use loosely in the key concepts, some other system, or you can make your own attributions. You might even keep the qualities general to the signs that share the same element.

You can get deep into any or all of these as needed, but they're just a starting place. Explore and play around with the court cards. These quick strategies limit them to caricatures, but a real person may eventually form from those structured interpretations. And if they're people, they can have all the gifts, problems, and nuances of people. It can take a lifetime to learn them, so don't feel rushed to know them anymore than you would feel rushed to know a new friend.





## **Bonus cards from an oracular tradition**

The **Labyrinth** and **Muse** are major arcana in that they are archetypal, but they exist outside of the realm of the standard major arcana. They're not better or worse than the 22 standard majors; they just have a different kind of message for you when you pull them in a reading, something that speaks to you as the reader and where you are. Because of that, you may find that they aren't appropriate for every reading (or any reading) that you do, and in those cases, I encourage you to remove them.



## **L-B-R-NTH**

Look at the big picture. Take the bird's eye view to find your way out of any problems you're in. And if you can't, take comfort in knowing that there's a systematic way to get out of any maze you find yourself in. Stick to that plan and you'll be set. Stray from it and you'll feel as if you're starting over from scratch, but that isn't always the worst outcome.

## **M-S-**

There's creative genius within each of us. It can feel uncomfortable to admit that, so the Muse offers a way to externalize it. She's the reason for your brilliance when you can't bear the weight of such a gift. But she holds mirrors out before her to remind you that it is and always has been you. If you question whether that genius is within you, it's because you haven't found the right form for its expression yet. Find your outlet and embrace it.

