

Deirdre of the Sorrows Tarot Deck

A Detailed Study of the Symbolism



Deirdre of the Sorrows Tarot Deck
By
Deirdre O'Donoghue

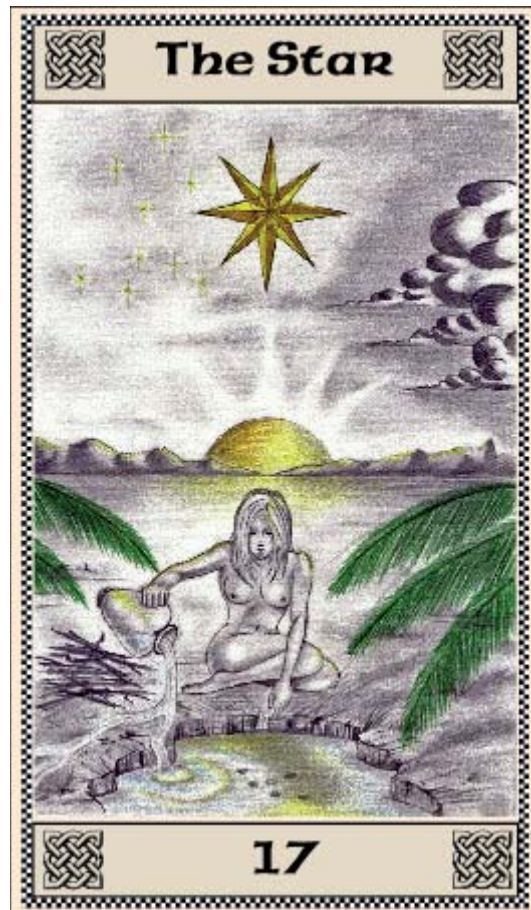
A Detailed Study of the Symbolism
by
Davina Powell and Alec Smith
with advice and guidance from
Deirdre O'Donoghue.

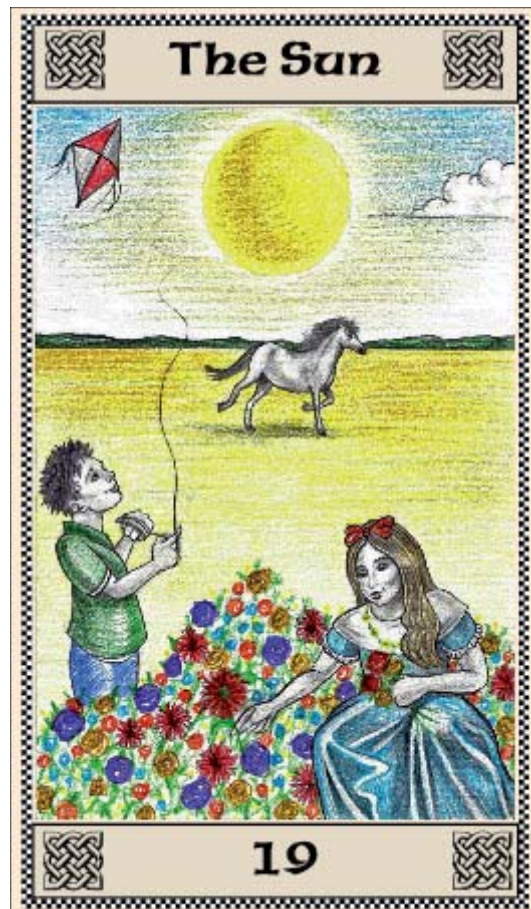
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Minor

Suit of Wands



Ace of Wands

Deirdre has chosen to begin the journey through her tarot deck with the wands instead of the Major Arcana cards, as shown in most books. This pleasant surprise is a sign of what is to come – many unique insights as the cards reveal themselves one by one.

The foreground sheep is the most prominent in the picture. Here we see a young lamb barely tall enough to see over the long grass. This as Deirdre has said, is an indication of new beginnings. The elderly ram behind him, watches intently, monitoring his progress and growth. He is keeping his distance, but we can assume he will challenge anything or anyone that dares to interfere with the progress being made by the lamb. Those horns will certainly make the intruder aware that his presence is not welcome.

This change indicated may well be inevitable, and if it does reflect a new opportunity or new beginning, look to see how that can be embraced, particularly when you consider how quickly lambs grow. As spring turns into summer then autumn, it is not as easy to identify the new-borns as they gradually resemble their parents and older siblings in appearance. Therefore the moment should be captured and valued for what it is/what it represents. There is strength of character to really follow through, and to make the most of the opportunity as it unfolds. The builders initially responsible for the fortification would have felt they had an uphill battle in order to complete the build. Carrying the stone etc up a steep hill would have been back-breakingly difficult, yet they persevered and came through. They overcame the odds and were successful.

Therefore there is an acceptance the going may not always be easy, but if you keep a hold onto your self-belief and determination, you may well be surprised at what could result.

If the wind turbine is operating, it signifies that there is an indication of energy or activity at play. It is up to you to decide whether you see the wind as being behind you or against you. (Other cards may also indicate how this could alter the energy of the card or overall reading). If behind you, you may find the task is completed quicker than was anticipated, or that you have been supported in a way not apparent to you. If you feel the wind is against you, it may indicate delays but certainly the overall message of the card is of success, so do not give up hope.

Two of Wands

This card has appeared more than any other in readings, and each time has thrown up a different interpretation or energy.

Deirdre has indicated a mutually beneficial partnership, with both farmer and wife working together for their common good. Sometimes the role of the female in the farming community could be overlooked or underestimated by those who are not actively involved.

With this card, we see the farmer striding purposefully towards the pen, a ram secured tightly under one arm. His wife is at the entrance, ready to remove the barriers so the ram can be contained before replacing them again. This task would not be easy for the farmer to do on his own, particularly if the ram was intent on wriggling its way to an opportunist escape. When looked at holistically, the overriding message of teamwork, and co-operation. When this course of action is done unconditionally by both sides, there can only be benefits for both parties.

I think the best way for me to look at how this card could perhaps bring up other interpretations is to use some snippets from readings where this card has appeared. I have based my judgements purely on the imagery and how I felt it related in a spread or with a question being asked.

THE FARMER

It is this character we see taking his investment or gains and is looking to protect them in some way. There may have been concerns that adequate protection has not been available. It is down to you to look at the pen and its entrance to decide if it is secure enough. If not, what would you need to do? How would that relate to your current situation? If there was a question of confidence tied in with the issue, this shows you would be supported by somebody who has your interests at heart. More importantly, the support could be mutually beneficial to both parties.

This also showed a shift of focus. If you had not read the book accompanying the deck, at first glance, it could appear as though somebody is trying to block your way. If the querent actually comes out with this, it may well be worth looking at the card from that angle. Is the person who they perceiving to be 'blocking' them someone they know well? Could it show there has been a misunderstanding of what is actually going on here? Certainly it could appear at first glance as though the woman is actually putting up a barrier. If they want to follow this theme, you could look at the height of the barrier. Is it possible to overcome it? How strong is the barrier – could it be

broken through? (I use the reference to the ram in this case – it could lower its head and force its way through!) In this case the partnership would be between the ram and the farmer.

THE WAND ACROSS THE PEN

I think this has already been referred to above. It is a barrier, and can be seen in one or two ways: protective or as an obstacle.

THE FARMER WIFE

In short, she is seen holding the fort. Waiting for the farmer and ram to arrive whereby she can then allow access before securing the entrance once the ram has been contained. If you associate with this character, it could show you are being asked to leave your current tasks in order to help somebody else. This may only be temporary. If you were asked to do this, how would you feel about it? Do you feel you are often being called away from your normal role? How have you personally benefited from doing this? You have been given a position of responsibility in this card. If you fail to secure the pen adequately, the ram could escape, thus leading to a possible loss of investment (time, effort, financial etc). Do you feel comfortable with the level of responsibility you have been given?

We must remember that the overall, the card had a positive energy associated with it. The trust and co-operation between the parties is for the common good. Some of the above thoughts may well not be applicable in all readings, but should a querent identify with any of the above, it would be worth examining further.

THE RAM

One particular reading guided me to look at the issue from the viewpoint of the ram! Rather unusual but I didn't question this, and ran with it.

If told as a story, we could believe the ram has escaped and is being returned to its pen. The farmer is holding it rather tightly, thus preventing any further thoughts of freedom – at least for now!

If this does apply, it could show that you are not willing to be penned in with something, but find others are doing their best to create this confinement. What is it you are resisting and why? The fact you are continually brought back to this issue may be significant – what could that significance be? What does this card tell you about your actions and effect of those actions?

If this is deemed a strength of the querent it can show they are proactive in trying to create their own path, particularly if others are not supportive. However, it could also indicate a stubbornness, of the fact they are unwilling to accept a situation.

This is how it was typed in a reading:

Areas of strength to be developed is covered by the 2 of wands. This card has appeared more than any other in readings, and I swear this deck is well and truly shuffled between them!!

We see a farmer walking towards a pen with a ram under his arm (a different ram from the previous one!) his wife standing at the entrance to the pen with a staff across the entrance, as if stopping entry to anyone else. Now for the first time, I have been guided to use the sheep as representing you. This shows that you will not allow yourself to be penned in. I reckon you have escaped a couple of times, and they keep bringing you back, but you won't have it. As we are looking at a strength of yours, we do see this as a positive. It shows that you will not allow yourself to be restricted by the actions or intentions of others. They may feel they are acting with your best interests at heart, but for you any form of restriction is stifling. It may be they cannot understand what your needs are, and so they try to instil what they believe are your needs. However, they may well be very different to how you see things.

Three of Wands

When I was taught the basics of the tarot, many years ago, this card was associated with a successful outcome, but also indicated there was still more to do to really capitalise on this initial success.

Certainly we can see how this card follows that line of thought. Our farmer from the 2 of wands has done well to protect his ram from harm or danger and is now ready to reap the benefits of his work. The ram will no longer be of use to him, but the monies raised could be re-utilised in either purchasing more livestock, or through investing in machinery. Thus his endeavours continue, hopefully leading to a further successful phase, therefore continuing his cycle of success and investment.

As Deirdre has said it is not a time to rest on your laurels. You have built up a momentum which must be continued. If you do relax too much, or think you have pinnacled, you may well find yourself right back at square one. Wouldn't it be a shame to let all that initial outlay and energy go to waste? We should note that the tractor is behind this group of men, and therefore does not play an active part as yet. It could be a representative of an idea only at this stage, something at the back of the mind of the farmer selling the ram.

Bearing in mind the above is the overall message of the card, we may find each character tells their own story.

THE FARMER SELLING THE RAM

He has rightly tethered the ram to the wheel, so as to ensure it does not escape. If we look at his eyes, he is rather unsure of the guy and dog next to him. Does this mean you have to keep a careful eye on the opposition? You may need to be careful if bartering on something, and make sure you have all the facts at your disposal. If someone is out to pull the wool over your eyes (note the sheep reference there!) it may be worthwhile having drawn up in writing, whereby you can obtain professional advice if needs be. Either way, you have done well and should be in control should negotiations be indicated. Just don't take your eye off the opposition though. You know your worth so be prepared to stand your ground and be firm with what you are asking for in return for your time and investment.

THE SHEEP DOG AND OWNER

Aahh, we also see he has his eye on the owner of the ram. It does appear as though there is a degree of mistrust here. If you can relate to this, where does this stem from?

What might you need to do in order to overcome this mistrust? If the farmer was to let go of the dog's leash, what could happen? What does the body language of the dog tell you? The dog is not actually 'straining at the leash', so it could indicate any perceived threat is not as bad as initially thought. It could also indicate a sense of constraint is called for, even if this is going against your instincts. Is there something you need to show constraint over, even though inwardly you would rather be more vocal or active? If you did not show this constraint, what could be the outcome?

BEARDED FARMER

He seems to have quite a small part to play in the scene. He is more relaxed than the other two farmers, and does not appear to be displaying anything emotionally or through his body language. What would you say his role is in this scene? How does that relate to what you are experiencing at this moment in time?

THE RAM

It may not be relevant but it is always worth looking at the situation from the viewpoint of animals as well as humans. The sheep dog has already given us food for thought, so how could we view the ram?

Well, he seems somewhat resigned to his fate. Not only is he tethered but he is well and truly the centre of attention. Notice how he is not looking at the men as they discuss his merits and barter of a price. Is there anything happening around you, where you may feel you have been put under the spotlight somewhat? Do you feel you have been the centre of a lot of discussion? If so, has this been in a positive way or negative? I think we should try to see this as being a positive. If you feel you are tied up in a work situation where changes are indicated, you may find your skills and abilities are sought after. Change is not easy to deal with or accept, and it can cause us to become either paranoid or resigned to our fate. If this happens, you may find others around you have come to respect your talents and abilities, and would like you to join their 'team'. This is where the thought of investment comes into play. If you have invested your time and energy into giving 100%, it could lead to somebody wanting to in turn, invest in you.

Four of Wands

This is another card that can speak volumes. Everything about the card is welcoming and positive, from the colourful array of plant life to the overt welcome of the doormat.

There is so much by way of subtle symbolism, I won't break it down, but will précis each aspect and describe how they correlate towards the theme of the card.

The door itself is a solid wooden door, painted red. If you also look at the brickwork itself, the whole cottage appears to be well built by a craftsman utilising the stone and technique particular to an area or given time. (I see evidence of this in counties such as Cumbria or Lincolnshire). The fact the door is solid supports the feeling of being both supported and protected. The presence of the wands/staffs around the frame is further confirmation of this. You just know this house is stable, and will be able to withstand the tests of time as well as varying weather conditions. The colour of the door represents a vibrant life force, red being the colour of blood.

There is a lit lantern to one side of the door, another indication of light and energy around the card and yourself. The light could be there to draw visitors to the house at night, thereby being a welcome sight within the darkness.

The door is ajar, thus offering a subtle invite for us to enter. If we were to feel nervous about going inside, we should take heart from the welcome doormat. We are to be treated as valued guests, not as intruders. It is so difficult to understand this, but that may be due to cultural issues, and also due to the fact we are now in a society which is very suspicious of people or their intentions. No doubt a lot of us will have ancestors who remember times where doors could be left insecure, the thought of crime virtually unheard of. Therefore I believe this scene also indicates a sense of unconditional trust. The hospitality being offered is warm and inviting. I had the opportunity to tour Ireland two years ago, and this really does make me reminisce about the Bed & Breakfast cottages I had the fortune to stay in. Each night we were strangers in different towns and villages, yet the proprietors treated as extended family members.

The cat on the mat is a rather portly feline, sporting a diamond collar. Is it standing guard over the door of the house? Is it there to act as a welcoming party? Or is it a portent of good luck and fortune?

Whatever you associate with the cat, there is no real indication of anything to be concerned about at this stage.

If we look at the plants surrounding the windows and either side of the door, we could assume the owner takes great pride in creating a colourful environment, and is also a person who invests time and care in providing the nurturing required by the life under his control. (Maybe a little too much in the case of the cat!) Do you know of anyone in your life who has this character trait? Are they able to play a part or influence your current situation? This array of colour etc has led to this house turning into something more than just bricks and mortar – it is now a home, thus enhancing the energy of the card. Have you worked on something that has developed in the same way? Or do you have hopes that your current situation will settle and provide stability for some time to come?

Finally, as we move our eyes down the card we come to two hands, the hand on the left showing the soft contours of a female hand, whilst displaying a bright gold wedding ring. The male hand is gently offering support to the fingers of the female, as if to guide her forward. If you resonate with the female in this card it could show you are a little reticent or nervous about moving forward. Your fears are unfounded, so if there is some gentle persuasion at play here, they are acting with your interests at heart. If taken literally (which will not always be applicable) this could obviously signify a recent marriage, and if this train of thought is followed though, could also signify the starting out in a new house together as a couple. If this scenario was to be read in conjunction with the remainder of the card, this new start really does look as though it is being built on solid foundations. Everything is in place to offer support to the couple as they start their lives together.

As Deirdre has said, if a move of house or job is being considered, the signs are good, at least in the short term.

This card could definitely go some way to alleviating any fears or doubts. If a partnership is indicated, the partnership could well be one that blossoms bringing about even more success for the future. The window was one aspect of the card I felt incredibly positive about. The English flag and map of Ireland are both present. The relationship between the two countries has been progressive, and this inclusion in our welcoming cottage really gave me a lift spiritually. The two nations are experiencing a blossoming relationship – one which may not have been thought possible 20 years ago. This window alone can portray a story of harmony and peace and as such, adds to the energy of the card overall.

Five of Wands

Talk about coming back down to earth with a bump. If the previous card in this suit indicated harmony, that has been somewhat shattered in this card. In other words, that honeymoon period is over with something akin to a reality check taking its place. The sun shows at one time everything was fine, but notice how it is now clouded over. Something has crept in leading to fighting, disagreements or quarrels. Let's see how that relates in real terms though.

Deirdre has already stated this situation could occur in many different areas of your life, and if it relates to a work issue, could show the opposition or obstacle should not be underestimated. If a promotion is being sought, you may need to prepare yourself for the fact it is a "dog eat dog situation", with even those you saw as friends becoming overly competitive. This can spill over into out and out hostilities. If you are unsure what I mean, watch an episode of the Apprentice – you may then witness the exact same scenario unfolding.

That in itself is not a healthy situation, but you do need to be especially aware of those who enjoy watching conflict unfold. They are the ones who will not necessarily be involved directly, but are on the sidelines with the sideways comments. You may be able to identify them if you really look at their actions objectively. If they have been passing gossip to you which is rather unsavoury, it is likely they have been saying the same about you to others. Therefore you need to ensure any anger you direct is aimed at the source, not those who have been weaved into this web of trouble making.

Now to see the energies from each of the characters portrayed.

THE WOMAN

If there was ever a woman who wanted to wade in and bang a few heads together, it is the woman in this card. She is obviously fed up with the antics of the men in front of her, and may well be preparing herself for action. If you identify yourself with this woman, is there something you want to break up which is causing you stress or frustration? If so, what may be the best way of going about it? What could be the outcome if you did go in and 'bang heads'?

Her dress is red which often denotes anger. How does the colour of her dress have a bearing on her temperament? If she were able to talk, what would she be saying to the men? How does that relate to what you would like to say, if you were given half a chance to do so?

MAN ON FAR LEFT

He appears to be taking a defensive stance. His eyes betray the fact he is somewhat nervous. If you resonate with him, is there something you feel you need to defend? Where or what is the opposition you feel you are facing? Can it be overcome and if so, how?

MAN SECOND FROM LEFT

He has his staff raised in quite a threatening gesture. He may well be about to use it to assault the other guy, or he may be just gesticulating angrily. What do you think is applicable and why? If we look on the ground to his left (right as we look at the card) we see a broken bottle. What could this signify? If it is the cause of this disagreement, could it show they are actually fighting over something that is really of no significance or relevance?

MAN ON FAR RIGHT

He is obviously being threatened here, but is not defending himself in any way. He has a staff in his hand he could protect himself with, but has it hanging loosely at his side. What does that tell us about his temperament? Is he showing bravery by not retaliating? Or could it be seen as cowardice? There are other reasons as to why he is standing his ground in this way – can you think of any others? If you identify with this man, how does it relate to the situation you find yourself in?

MAN SECOND RIGHT

He is obviously the aggressor in this partnership, his fist tightly wrapped around his opponent's shirt. He is taller and much heavier in build, his facial expression frozen in a grimace. He could be seen as being a bully, someone with anger management issues – the list could go on. How does this character fit in with your current situation? Do you feel there is a bullying issue at play here? If you had to look long and hard at your own actions, could it indicate you are in fact the bully? If so, are you trying to achieve an outcome through unfair tactics, or by mistreating somebody?

This card really does have a lot going on, with many different dynamics being portrayed. You may be up against one of these characters, or you may be the character yourself.

FINAL THOUGHT

With regards the glass jar, I have indicated it could show they are fighting over something of nothing. However, it could also show they are unaware of the effects of their fighting, and that they themselves have caused this breakage through their careless use of anger or violence. If this is the case, it may show there could be repercussions if calm heads are not employed.

Six of Wands

Well, if you feel life has been somewhat of a struggle of late, where you have doubted your chances of achieving your goals this card should go some way to alleviating those fears.

As we see, the jockey is about to cross the winning / finishing line, much to the delight of some of the crowd. (We can guess the others had not backed this particular horse, thus the dejected demeanours!)

Even though he only has yards to go, he is still giving 100%. This is something you may best heed. If you think you are home and dry, it is not advisable to let up off the gas pedal until you have actually passed the finish line – there is still potential to be overtaken, or to be halted in your tracks. Notice how the jockey is looking backwards. This will be discussed shortly, but he is not leaving anything to chance. He wants to make sure that he has opened up enough of a gap whereby victory is guaranteed. The crowd are held back by the wands, so you should find that there is not likely to be any obstacle or impediment at this late stage.

So, having read this, are you still unsure, or do you need yet further confirmation that all is well, and you are very close to a successful completion of a project etc?

If you still have doubts, the only thing which could cause you to come unstuck is YOU! Have faith in yourself, in the same way the crowd had faith in you from the start. After all, if they didn't believe you had ability to succeed they would not have backed you.

THE CROWD

You may find that this card does go a little deeper, and each group of characters may be read in a different way, thus bringing about different energies or different interpretations. The card overall is positive, so some of what follows may only apply in certain situations, depending on the question being asked, where this appears in a spread, and the influence of surrounding cards etc.

As it is a positive card, let's look at the cheering characters to start with. If you relate to these, it can show that you are doing well to encourage somebody who you have had a vested interest in. By being positive and supportive, you have allowed their self confidence to grow, whereby they are now on their way to achieving success. If you are a parent, and have a child who is experiencing aspects of growing up and are experiencing a certain stage of maturity, your support and enthusiasm will stand them in good stead in the long run.

With regards the other characters, I have already indicated their despair arises from the fact they had backed the wrong horse. However, their demeanour could also indicate other issues are relevant. For example, one guy seems to be lambasting the person next to him. Is he blaming him in some way? If you have been given advise which was not sound at the time, yet followed that advise, you may now be realising your mistake. If it was a genuine error on their part, put this down to experience, and learn from it. One guy has his head hung low. He may well have lost more than he could afford. What does this tell you about risks that are being taken? The cost if that risk does not work out in your favour?

Interestingly we see what appears to be a shepherd in one corner of the card, holding his crook whilst looking quite impassively at the scene in front of him. What does his presence signify to you? How does it relate to a current situation?

RIDER AND JOCKEY

This has already been described in some depth. Don't forget – in general it shows you are nearly there and should be proud of what you have done. The fact he is looking backwards could also reveal something different with certain situations. Can it show that there is a tendency to keep looking backwards instead of focusing on the here and now /the future? There does not seem to be any other horse within the immediate vicinity, so we can assume it is unlikely he will be passed at this late stage. What could be the reason he is looking backwards? What does that tell you about his level of confidence or self-belief? How does his posture, and the way he is leaning forward support this possibility? The horse has absolutely no doubt, and is looking straight ahead, ears semi-pricked. If you associate with the horse, it could show that you have kept your level of confidence when others around you have doubts. Stick to your guns and your beliefs – you should come out of the situation quite well. It may mean you have to carry others who are faltering but you have the strength of character to be able to do this. Therefore the team succeeds as well as you.

Seven of Wands

Quite often the 7's do not show a lot of movement or energy, often being linked with the issue of choices or options. It was interesting to read this was the card Deirdre had a temporary 'block' with. I have actually studied the cards in reverse order, so at the time of typing, I only had 8 cards to interpret. My journey had taken some time, and the experience had produced both ups and downs along the way. Some days the words flowed as if taking a life force of their own. Other days the message of the card was hitting too close to home and was difficult for me to confront.

At this stage I feel as though I am in the home stretch. The 6 of wands has really given me the spurt of energy I need in order to finish the initial period of study with a buzz.

We have seen previous cards indicate a challenge is ahead, and this card is no exception. We are not fully aware what form that challenge may take, but the issue of preparation is vital. The card is quite stark in both imagery and energy. The tree is devoid of leaves, the landscape bare and uninviting.

At first glance that barrier of staffs looks quite daunting. It is not one that can be leapt over, nor are the gaps large enough to climb through. We cannot see the other edge of the card, so are not able to see if it can be circumvented.

If this represents a problem you believe you face, how daunting does it appear? What is on the other side of this problem? What would you hope to achieve should you be able to deal with it satisfactorily?

You are shown alone in this card – is there help available to you from a source you perhaps haven't considered as yet? Or is to be a personal journey for a reason?

The guy in the card is obviously considering his options. What would you be saying to him and why?

What do you make of the fact his shoelace is undone?

On the other side of the fence we see what appears to be a bowl with a star motif on the outside. What could this represent to you?

There is also a tiny set of scales. What are the balance of probabilities at the moment? In your favour or against you? The scales in the card are balanced, so there is a good chance you can weigh the scales in your favour if you think things through and take this issue one step at a time, and in a timely fashion.

There is also a large item on the ground in front of the gentleman, this side of his barrier. What is it and what does it represent?

There are decisions to be made here. One choice could be to turn back and admit defeat. The other is to rationalise the issue and consider how the issue could be tackled, looking at potential outcomes for each point of consideration. Whatever you do, please make sure you don't trip at the first hurdle. He hasn't even noticed his lace is undone. Preparation and a checklist might not go amiss!

Eight of Wands

This card has associations with speed, movement or progress. Certainly we get a feel that there is the potential for things to start moving at a certain pace, just by looking at how the water has been drawn.

Deirdre has already aptly described the relevance of each of the people and objects depicted, so there is not a great deal to add.

THE BOAT AND BOATMAN

Here we see a small wooden boat about to be moored, the occupant looking a little nervous and tense. It is interesting to note there does not appear to be any oars. What with the river being quite fast flowing, we can only ask how he would have been able to control the boat. Is this why he is perhaps looking a little tense? In general this could show that you may want to go with the flow of a situation to see where it will take you, but you have some niggling doubts. It can be quite liberating at times to just let things unfold, but if you fail to take any control, you really have to accept you may end up being swept along to an outcome you would not have actively chosen.

MOORER

His friend is in the process of securing our small wooden boat. It is quite intriguing to see the dynamics of the card at play. On one hand we get the feel of fast flowing water, yet the rope securing the boat is quite lax. Why is the rope not stretched taut? What could that tell you about the effect of the water is having on the boat? (Or not having in this case). How does this relate to what you are experiencing? It could show that there is a natural impetus around you, but for some reason you have been stalled and are not actually moving in line with this. Yet there is no obvious indication you have been held back by someone else, thus the lax rope. We assume his friend is actually mooring the rope. How would the energy of the card differ if we reversed our assumptions whereby we realised he is in fact releasing the rope?

COUPLE ON THE BRIDGE

The woman is more focused on her beau, whereas he is watching the boat scene with interest. What does that tell you about how they each in turn view their relationship? They are standing close to each other, arms intertwined behind their backs. There is only a barrier shown on one side of the bridge. How safe would you feel walking across this bridge, and why? What is the significance of the fact only one side is showing a protective barrier?

If this card could tell a story, what would it be? Is the house in the background owned by our couple? Why does the path leading to the house appear to stop? How would you gain access to the house bearing in mind the path does seem to come to an abrupt end?

Nine of Wands

What makes this card different, is the absence of any swirling angry water. Quite often the presence of this maelstrom could cause a sinking feeling for the person receiving the reading – it detracted from the positives. They often would fail to see the calm water, and instead would focus on the waves, even though the waves were behind them, indicating they had come through a difficult period. In this case we do not have that presence, therefore we are able to see ahead as opposed to what has gone before.

In line with traditional imagery, we see a boatman about to moor his craft, having navigated his way to safety between 9 staffs. His clothing and way he is dressed with that clothing does lead us to believe he has been at sea for some time. This is not a pleasure boat trip he has undertaken. In addition we do not see any sign of land behind him. Yet another indication he has been at sea over a period of time. Once again we have no sign of oars or other steering device. How has he managed to get this far unaided?

Quite rightly, Deirdre has pointed out that you are nearly there. Regardless of what has gone before, the difficulties you have faced, your focus should be on the immediate future. The end really is in sight, and may require just one final push or focus. The sun is coming out from behind the cloud, thus supporting the message of the card. Things may have appeared a bit gloomy, but there is a change coming into play, with warmer/brighter times indicated.

I would also go as far as to say that you may have more than one attempt to really “get there”. The sea is very calm, so should our mariner miss with his first attempt at mooring, he should still be in position to have another go. If the sea had been choppy, I would have warned that you may only get the one attempt, but in this case the signs are good.

Interestingly, it looks as though he could have got a little closer though before attempting the mooring. He is still some way from dockside. Could this show that you are reaching for something that you think is not quite within reach, yet if you thought it through, you could actually achieve your goal without having to stretch for it? Surely if he had gotten a little closer, he would have increased his chance of catching the capstan at his first attempt?

In this respect, he may have made life a little more difficult for himself than it needed to be.

What does the ! symbol represent? How does it apply to your current situation?

Overall, this card is one that should help raise spirits, particularly if you feel tired or lethargic. The going may have been long or tough, but you are close to coming through this with the opportunity to recharge your batteries and move forward.

Ten of Wands

If ever there were a card hinting at the fact you may be taking on more than you can handle right now, this would be it.

Whether this is because assistance has not been sought, or whether there is no help available would be open to debate, and could be answered in conjunction with other cards within the reading.

Here we see a lone woman working long into the evening. The work undertaken would have been very physical and demanding. She is in the process of carrying her last sack to its resting place against one of the staffs. The other 9 staffs already have sacks resting against them. Half the field has been ploughed, the other half yet to be worked over. A small dog is sitting by the final staff, a small bowl by its side. This could show the dog has been with her throughout the day, otherwise, why would it need to have a bowl of water at the ready.

On her dress we see a bee in flight, symbolising how busy she has been.

The cottage in the background is lit from within.

Deirdre has already described the energy of this card with eloquence, to the extent there is not a lot I can add. It is certainly interesting to see that the main character portrayed is a woman. Although we have come a long way towards receiving equal opportunities and equal pay to men, there are still professions whereby women have to still prove themselves in a way men don't have to. Quite often this challenge is taken on with dignity and silence. This will have particular relevance in careers where physical or mental strength are required. Could this be one possible reason why she has not sought help in harvesting the potatoes? As Deirdre has said, there is a light on in the cottage behind indicating somebody else was home. On the other hand, could it show a sort of 'role reversal'? Is the female undertaking tasks usually associated with men, with the male of the house undertaking house hold chores? If you believe this is applicable, how does that relate to your situation? Are the parties involved happy within the role they are taking on?

It could be an indication of pride or ego though. A situation where you feel you have to prove a point. If this is the case, it would not be within your character to even consider asking for help. Should this apply to you, be aware that you could be making a rod for your own back. The more you take on, the more likely it is that others will assume you are happy to do this. Before long, you may find you have taken on too much, to the extent you can no longer cope. Learning to say no at this late stage may be more

problematic than if you had refused tasks earlier in the day. If we carry on in silence, there could be an automatic assumption that we are coping okay.

Looking at the card from a positive angle, we can see here woes are nearly over. Her hard work is about to come to an end as he looks to place her final sack. Therefore if you have felt things have got on top of you of late, you may find there will shortly be a period of respite.

With regards the wee terrier, there is no doubt he has been faithful to his mistress. He has a tiny heart on his collar. This could show he would not have deserted her, and was willing keep her company throughout the day.

If looking at his role more laterally, it could show that someone is prepared to watch another hard at work, and is either unwilling or unable to share the workload. If it is someone you care about emotionally, you may have taken a back seat in order to let them learn for themselves.

Page of Wands

Almost every tarot deck based on the tradition of the RWS will associate this page with the delivery of good news. Frustratingly though, there will often be no indication of this news within the card imagery. Our Page has an envelope in his hand, thus conveying overtly the fact you may be receiving correspondence or news, and going by his demeanour – it will be something that is welcomed.

He has a grin which is almost reaching from ear to ear, wearing a white shirt, trousers and shoes. He has obviously made the effort to dress smartly for the occasion, forgoing the trainers and T shirt often associated with his age group, but rather quaintly he has not tucked his shirt in correctly. His hat and jacket match, albeit the hat is rather flamboyant.

In his other hand we see a staff being held aloft, his thumb pointing upwards along the shaft.

The flowers behind him are roses. To his right (our left) they are yellow, with the other side the array being a vibrant red. On the ground by his foot we see a ring of marigolds.

Now, at first glance you may think that is all there is to this card, but take a closer look. See that wee creature on the stem of one of the roses? Could it be a tiny mouse? If so what is it doing in our scene, and how is its presence relevant to your situation?

Okay, so how does this tell us about the possibility of some communication coming our way?

Well the envelope is prominent. We can only see the back, so have no idea of who it is addressed to. Has it been hand delivered, or sent via postal service? Are the contents formal in nature or informal? It really could be either. The fact he is dressed formally could be indicative, but there again his hair is long and tousled, and we do see his shirt has not been tucked in. This could indicate the latter. Whatever scenario applies, take a look at his thumbs up. Deirdre has already indicated this is a good sign.

The ring of marigolds is an interesting inclusion. I have done a little research to try and understand its relevance. It appears marigolds have plenty of symbolic attributes including happiness, creativity and passion. There you go – further confirmation that all is okay.

I have to confess, out of all the Pages, the Page of Wands is the one I have a soft spot for. He is the one who is full of life and energy, and reminds me of what it is like to be a child again, finding excitement in each new experience. They have not yet got to the stage where they experience fear or uncertainty. How wonderful is that. In addition, their faces are a joy when it comes to occasions such as birthdays. How many of us can remember waking up on our birthday and camping by the front door as we wait with exquisite anticipation for those cards to arrive? Although we are assuming this envelope is for us, what about considering something else.... it could be the page who is the recipient? If that is the case, his thumbs up is telling us it was received safely.

Knight of Wands

The knights are the warriors of the tarot deck, each personality full of energy and vigour within their particular suit. If you had every Knight on your side in a battle situation, you would appreciate the skills they possess as individuals for any given situation.

The Knight of Wands exudes an air of strength and self-confidence, but is not overt about it. We cannot see his face or subsequent expression, but his naked torso and tattooed back tell us he follows his own path, and would not really be too bothered about what others think. The tattoo is obviously something he is proud of, and would take any opportunity to display it to the world. His stature/build is one of lean muscle. He may not appear to be particularly strong, but that misconception could lead to you being taken completely by surprise should you dare to challenge him physically.

He appears to have a tight rein on the horse, using just one hand. Yet another indication that he is in tune with his own strength, and knows he does not need the use of both hands in order to steer the horse in any given direction. The horse has its head turned to one side, its ears pricked and alert. The free flowing mane tells us it is not just the rider who is a free spirit – the horse also has a focused and intense personality. In that respect both rider and horse compliment each other very well.

The tattoo itself is that of Archangel Michael, the angel we associate with protection and justice. Is this why he has spurned the use of armour? Does he choose to have faith in his own spirituality to protect him from any potential threat or harm? If this is the case, how does this relate to your current situation? Where are you looking to achieve a sense of protection, and what is it you feel threatened by?

Across the front of the horse we see he has a pair of drums. They could be used to beat out a rhythm. What would that rhythm be, and why would he feel this is necessary?

On the other side of a small stretch of water (possibly a stream) we see a goat has its attention turned towards our knight. They appear to be looking at each other, but it is questionable if they actually see each other. What does the goat represent in this scenario? How does that fit in with your current situation?

Although both rider and horse appear to be moving sedately, there is an underlying feeling they could both take off at great speed with next to no warning. He is more alert to changes than first appears. Just take a look at the horse. If there is anything

on the horizon that needs to be reacted to, the horse will pick this up in an instant, thus preparing the Knight for swift movement or action.

Deirdre has given an indication as to how this Knight could come across within a relationship dynamic. I see this Knight as being a gentleman who would be very protective, but if not controlled, that protective nature could become stifling. He may be a little jealous if attention is given to his partner, and in that respect tension could develop. That protective nature could easily spill over into possessiveness. He would not shy away from new experiences, and if travel was on the cards, be prepared to be taken to places you would never have dreamed of. He may not be the sort to sit on a beach day in day out, so you may find yourself in a new and exciting place for each day of your journey. The more daring the challenge, the more likely he is to embrace it.

Queen of Wands

This lady seems to be doing well for herself, but doesn't seem to focus on the material aspects in the same way as the Queen of Coins appears to do so.

Her diadem and billowing green dress are possibly the only indications we really have of her position and stature in the court system. If you look around at her surroundings, there is not a lot there which gives the impression of luxury or extravagance.

She is a beautiful queen, who could appear quite alluring in some ways. Notice her fullness of figure and flowing red hair. I know it is somewhat of a stereotypical comment, but her red hair really could show she is not someone you would want to mess with. Whereas the Queen of Swords would be quite cutting with words, she would probably see through any ruse before you had the chance to take advantage of her. If the Queen of Wands were to show her colours, you may find yourself having to deal with a mini tornado! Think of how cats can change from being docile to showing their claws in an instant, and at the slightest provocation. Yep, that is our Queen of Wands!

As Deirdre has already said, she may prefer the company of men, but that is not necessarily in a sexual way. Men may be able to stimulate her through shared interests or outlooks. Women who do not understand this trait could see her as a threat or rival, but that may not be the case at all.

As a younger woman she may well have been labelled as being a 'tom boy' preferring the rough and tumble play activities of her male counterparts.

With regards her own parenting skills, she may be the sort of parent who lets her children run free, allowing them to learn about life through experiences. This may well include ups and downs, but those experiences would stand them in good stead. She will not pamper them, but nor would she let them get into any dangerous situation. She will love them with a passion and woe betides anyone who mistreats them. She would have learned how to be independent at a young age, and would want her own children to do the same, understanding how valuable play and socialising at this age can benefit them in the future.

Certainly she would associate more with cats than dogs. Cats are independent, thus reflecting her own personality, yet can be very affectionate. This affection can be turned on or off at a whim, depending on whether they feel like attention or not. This certainly would be how we would view the Queen. She may appear aloof one minute,

and playful the next. Dogs would often be of no consequence to her. In general they are more needy than cats and certainly prefer company to being alone.

In business, this Queen is one who will have a sensible head on her shoulders, and will not be one to underestimate. She is the go-getter and will work incredibly hard if it is something she believes in. If you want a task doing well, and to the bitter end, she may be the one to call on. Quite often she will make a good business partner, and in some cases a good boss. If you want to have someone on your side that will be assertive when support is needed, she may well come through. The only downside may be her temper.

With regards additional items in the card, we do see a bowl with the Roman numeral X on the side. If this were to be equated to the tarot card from the Major Arcana, what would that indicate? Could it show she could change quite quickly with regards temperament? Or could it show she may display some good business skills, whereby she has the ability to pull success out of failure, through sheer hard work and perseverance?

Why is the bowl empty?

King of Wands

Out of all the Kings we have seen so far, the King of Wands is the one who appears to be very down to earth and practically minded. His physique and strong, hard stare really does support the statement made regarding his prowess and strength. His throne is not made of gold, but is in fact fashioned from the wands signifying his suit. I would not be at all surprised to learn that he had created it himself.

He has hung his red cloak over one support of his throne. The bee styled clasp is fairly discreet, but if you look carefully you can make out the shape and readily identify it as being this creature. We have already seen a bee appear on a previous card. Yet again it will signify energy and his hard working nature. Royal jelly is a valued commodity from this tiny winged being, renown for its healing and nourishment. In fact it is used to feed all the larvae in the hive including those who are destined to become workers. The larvae destined to become queen will only feed off of royal jelly in the first few days. How does the clasp reflect the personality and character traits of this particular King? If considering the relationship he has with the Queen of Wands, what would the dynamics within the partnership be like?

As Deirdre has pointed out, this King also has red hair, reminding us that he may be quick to lose his temper or patience. It may be kept under control for most of the time, but we may find he is a natural fighter, and has therefore found an outlet for this energy. If ever a King of the tarot was testosterone driven, it is most definitely the King of Wands. He is down to earth, and would not really associate with people who are full of themselves – he would not have time for the narcissist types at all.

If you ever wanted someone on your side to help get a task done, he would be your guy. Having said that, he would expect anyone to pull their weight, and may show some of that impatience if he felt others were not doing their fair share, or were not up to scratch. If he were to be in a management position, he would lead by example, and would not expect others to do anything he was not prepared to do himself.

With regards other items in the card we see he has some empty bowls under his throne. They display the Roman numerals of 2, 7 and 8. What do they represent and why? Are they linked to the numerology system, or are they symbolic of Major Arcana cards?

What is the reason for the colourfully plumaged bird behind him? The bird is quite happy to be near a human, and does not appear at all afraid. It is looking towards the right of the card. Is there something out of our eye line of significance? Or is it an indication of something that may be coming into play? (Neighbouring cards may shed further light).

Minor

Suit of Cups



Ace of Cups

This can be a real energy boost if you are feeling a little empty emotionally, or have concerns/frustrations with a relationship issue. The water is gushing into the cup as opposed to flowing sedately. Therefore there is the possibility of a real surge in the area being questioned. Stars are dancing intermingled with tiny hearts. Yep, you may just find you are totally swept away with the emotion of it all, or you could even be swept off your feet by the appearance of somebody who has the potential to really get you tingling!

And if you feel your luck has not been too good lately, take heart – you have the lucky horseshoe and the presence of the shamrock. It is not just the Irish who have luck – some of it may well be coming your way.

Overall, there is a lot going on with this card, much more than we realise when we first take a peek.

THE TREES

As Deirdre has already said, one tree is bearing fruit, the other tree is not yet in bud. The tree on the right also has a snake entwined around the trunk, symbolising healing, dreams and prophecy. If ever there was a card shouting out “Stay positive!” this is it. By sending your intentions out with a positive affirmation or attitude, you really increase your chances of it being returned to you as a realisation. Therefore we have a gentle scolding here. If you do not value yourself, and put yourself down, how can you expect to attract that special energy you are seeking? If you have been feeling a little down about yourself, now is the time to start realising you are special, and to start praising yourself on a regular basis. Turn that stagnant emotion/energy into a cascade. It is surprising how healing this could be for you on an emotional level.

DOVE AND NEST

Deirdre has indicated this could represent a pregnancy. The Cup is the womb, and the next looks as though it will not be empty for long. However, she has rightly indicated it could also signify a new start with a new home. I am typing this as the birds are nesting around us, and it never ceases to amaze me how they manage to create such a remarkable feat of nature with the dexterity and skill they possess. Each nest starts with one twig, or one piece of lichen. With incredible patience, they build what is to be what I class as one of the wonders of nature. If you are looking to start a new home life, you will hopefully get the same level of enjoyment and satisfaction from making it your own special place. It may take time, and need some patience etc, but you will be able to look back with pride when you realise you were responsible for how it looks.

Although the dove is flying towards the next in this card, I believe it could also indicate the leaving of the nest. When this happens emotions can be very mixed depending on who we are reading on behalf of. For the person making the move it could be exciting yet daunting. Their emotions may well be cascading as they embrace the new challenges. For the person left behind in the nest (a lone mother or both parents etc) they may feel as though the house is now empty without the energy of their offspring. This could be why one tree is not showing fruit any more – it is as if something is now missing. I believe this feeling of loss would only be temporary. Before long they will realise they can fill their lives again in other ways, and in ways which will bring personal enjoyment, as opposed to doing what is needed for their offspring. Thus, the berries and fruit will once again appear, indicating the start of a new energy or venture. Certainly if this card appeared with a card such as the 7 of coins, they may have the chance to learn something new which will fill the gap left by their offspring. Therefore this change should be embraced. The emptiness will only linger if we let it.

Two of Cups

Here we see the initial energy of the ace of cups has moved into something a little more substantial. Still early days, but a bond is forming. Quite often traditional decks indicate the initial interest between two parties has progressed whereby the relationship has started to take form. There is still no indication of what is likely to be the long-term outcome, but if you are searching or wondering if you are likely to find someone right for you, this card does bode well.

THE TWO CHARACTERS

The man and the woman are the main focus. He is standing very close to her, his head bowed slightly as if gently caressing her head with his own. His eyes are closed, his head turned so we only see him in profile.

She is looking directly out of the card at us, her eyes wide and alert, her mouth slightly open. In her hand we see a rolled up scroll, a question mark clearly defined. The only colour she is showing is in the form of a gold wedding ring.

So, what can we glean from the two characters?

Well, her look could portray many different emotions. As already stated, in the main this is a positive card. We should not lose sight of this. However, there may be readings where it turns up in a position that indicates doubt, or it could even be reversed. If this were to occur, her expression could take us in a different direction.

Is she unsure of the path this relationship is taking? Is she questioning the level of commitment asked of her, as indicated by the scroll and her wedding band?

If there is an affair indicated, could it show she is torn emotionally as to what to do? This could also lead to the relevance of the scroll. It could indicate that it is not a marriage contract contained within, but in fact signifies divorce papers. Is she having second thoughts, and may want to give the relationship another chance?

There is not usually any negative connotation with this card, but her expression could show there is a question mark over it, and if this is the case, that question needs to be explored. Care and diplomacy need to be used when reading this card. If any area of a reading can be misread, it is often that of a relationship. We are not there to offer advice, but to just make people aware of what the energies of the card may signify. It is then up to the querent to make use of that information in a way they feel is

appropriate. It would be so easy to jump in and speak of offers of marriage, but that could be taking us in an incorrect and subsequently, dangerous direction.

So, what can we say about the gentleman?

He may be totally oblivious to how she is feeling, thus his closed eyes. If he were to open them, what do you think he think he would be saying to the woman? What would her expression be telling him about her feelings for him? For the relationship in general? Sometimes it can show that "love is blind". When we find ourselves totally immersed in the intensity of the feelings we experience, we lose objectivity, or perhaps miss some warning signs that the other party is not experiencing it in the same way.

If you associate with this gentleman, is there a situation you have misread?

Who would you say is the character most immersed in the energies of the relationship? What makes you think this?

OTHER SYMBOLS

Well, having taken a precautionary look at the card as well as the positive aspects, we are reminded that there is still a lot going for this couple. The gold of the cups as well as her wedding band brings about brightness to what could otherwise be a grey card. The two cups are tipped towards each other, the liquid contained mingling as it flows towards the greenery. This could be seen in a sexual context as replicating the exchange and mingling of bodily fluids. Or it could be seen to indicate the meeting of and merging of compatible energies. The energies are definitely in tune with each other, and are showing the relationship as flourishing in the form of the rose blooming to the left of the card.

The tiny terrier is interesting. Is it there to protect our couple from outside influences or interference? Does the rocky outcrop at the top of the hill remind us that it is not always likely to be a bed of roses – that at times the relationship may be rocky? If this is the case, a stable relationship can overcome such eventualities. Thus the rock should be seen as being a surmountable problem, and one that can only act to make the relationship stronger in the long run.

Three of Cups

This is a card we can see does reflect the traditional meaning, in as much as we have 3 female characters involved in what appears to be a celebration.

All 3 have dressed up, as would be the norm if attending a party. Deirdre has shown there could be a couple of reasons for the celebration. On one hand the Church could signify a wedding or blessing. On the other hand it could even be a baby shower, celebrating an imminent birth.

Certainly this would be a welcome card if you have been feeling more than a little low of late. Overall, we are reminded this card is positive. Energies are high with friendships being cemented as a joint celebration takes place. There is nothing more uplifting than laughter, particularly if it is a laughter that is shared. The overturned bottle is empty, so we can assume champagne has been flowing freely and enjoyed. (Although I suspect the pregnant lady could only imagine what the champagne tasted like, bearing in mind her predicament!)

THE THREE LADIES

Each could be read in a slightly different way, depending on which of the characters you feel represents you at this moment in time.

The pregnant lady looks very happy and is probably excited at the prospect of becoming a 'mum'. She is holding hands with the woman to her right, her eyes making contact with her. She does have another person in front of her, but is not including her so much in the conversation or scene. Why could this be? Are you perhaps unaware that you may be leaving somebody out of your celebrations? It could be a genuine oversight, but the card may be pointing this oversight out to you in a gentle way.

On the other hand, this card is asking you to choose who you share your happiness with carefully. We will discuss the woman in the foreground shortly, but you may find she is not the true friend she professes to be. She is reaching out to the woman on the left. This could show if you need support at a time of uncertainty, that support will be there for you. It may be a case of requesting that support, but in general you have people around you who will act instinctively with your intentions at heart, particularly at a time of need.

The woman on the left is obviously pleased for her friend, and is showing this through her non-verbal communication. (Eye contact, holding of hands etc). If you associate

with this woman it shows that you are showing loyalty and being there for somebody you care about, particularly when they need a helping hand.

The woman in the foreground is possibly the one who is of most interest. We do not see her face, but we do see she has one arm to her side, and one arm behind her back. She appears to be a part of the group, but at the same time is retaining a sense of distance. So, what can we make of the masks? Well, I had a couple of things that came to mind.

Firstly, she may be hiding her own feelings through not wanting to spoil the party. If she is having a rough time of her own, she may realise it is not appropriate to bring her woes to such a time of celebration. This is something we can all associate with at times. How often have you been asked "How are you?" to reply with an instinctive "I'm fine", knowing full well that is not the full truth? Quite often we do this because we do not want to bring down the energies of the other person, so our feelings, fears etc remain hidden. Or is she hiding her feelings, conscious of the fact she is being left out a little? Could it be she is childless, and therefore feels the bond is stronger between the other two women? If this is the case, I do have more than a little empathy with her. Friends of mine who have children will often chat animatedly about their offspring without realising I am not able to take part in the conversation in the same way. (I don't have children). It is not intentional, but can lead to one person feeling a little left out of the conversation.

Secondly, she could be being "two faced" which brings me back to a previous comment. I think if you associate with this observation, somebody may be being rather deceitful. They may be saying one thing to your face, yet behind your back could be saying something else to other parties. Remember this card is usually positive, so this scenario needs to be considered carefully, and the context of the reading evaluated before heading down this route. Certainly worth bearing in mind though.

Four of Cups

The energy of this card couldn't be more different to that of the 3. Often this card is associated with key words such as dejection, stagnation, boredom or lethargy. As we observe the youth, it is easy to understand why.

THE YOUTH

He is the key figure in the card, and as such may indicate how the situation is affecting our emotional or mental state. He sits with his back against the tree, his shoulders rounded, head resting on one hand. He appears to be looking towards the cups, but I am not sure he really even knows they are there. His thoughts are turned inwards, and from his posture, they may not be positive right now. If you associate with this man, what is on your mind at the moment? How does that link in with the outward show of inactivity?

THE WOMAN

She is only a small background figure, but should not be overlooked with regards possible importance. She is striding purposefully towards the seated figure, a lantern in one hand. It is still daylight, so what is the significance of the lantern? Could this show she is about to shed some light on the way forward for him? Or is she acknowledging he needs his own space for some time to come, and is preparing him for nightfall? Who knows – it may be the presence of light in his inner darkness is what is required right now. He may need to find his own path or answer as opposed to relying on somebody else to provide this for him.

THE TREE

The tree is shedding golden leaves, indicating this could be autumn. I often associate this season with the preparation for long winter nights ahead. The buzz and exuberance of summer are passing, albeit temporarily. Therefore he should not give up hope totally on his situation – time does pass and seasons will return, once again providing us with fresh opportunities. He may well need this time to reflect, but this reflection should not be allowed to spiral downwards where it could turn into a depression.

THE CUPS

The cups are there to remind him that there is so much by way of positive energy available to him, and it is also within his reach. He needs to identify what is holding

him back from picking up one of these cups, and realising it is not just half full – it is positively brimming. All 4 are upright, providing yet another positive sign to take heart from.

SPIDER WEB

The spider web indicates he may have been here for some time. However, it could also indicate the stagnation he has allowed his mind to develop. Just think of all those books etc you may have gathering dust somewhere. Quite often a spider will set up home, safe in the knowledge it is not likely to be disturbed. Is this what has happened to the emotions of the youth? They have been dormant for so long, a spider has had time to spin a web and settle there?

KEY IN THE JAR

I showed this card to my partner recently, who has never looked at a tarot card in his life. His first instinct was “that is the key to his heart”. If so, could it show he has been hurt at some stage and is now choosing to be alone with his thoughts? He may be reflecting on what has happened, and is considering what can be done in the future to prevent such hurt occurring again. Could this link in with the presence of the cups? He should be celebrating something, but that celebration may have turned sour on him. If this is the case, it may be of relevance the main character is a male. This may be somewhat generalised as a comment, but in the main it is true – men tend to bottle their emotions up instead of openly talking about them. If this feels as though it is applicable with your situation, the jar is telling you this is what you have done. However, that jar is not going anywhere, and each time you glance at it, you are reminded you have some unfinished business that must be dealt with. Locking it away inside your mind is not the most appropriate long-term answer.

Deirdre has indicated the key could represent opportunities he has available which he has chosen to lock away for now. Is there something you could be doing but have opted to put it to one side? If so, what would it take for you to pick the key up and try it out? What is stopping you from doing this? We should take heart from the fact the key is in plain sight, and could easily be retrieved from the jar. Therefore it would not take much effort to actually set it free. If anything, the main thing needed is just good old-fashioned ‘desire’.

WATERMILL

This is not the first card we have seen with an inactive watermill but it does show his emotions have been stilled or stifled. If that mill were to be activated, it could well allow him to release the hold he has over his emotions. I guess it is a chicken and egg situation though. What does he need to do first: release the water in the mill, or crack open the jar to retrieve the key?

Five of Cups

It is not possible to view this card totally dispassionately. I remember when I first learned the tarot, I was taught that the card represented a loss of sorts, one that came with regrets. The card I remember learning showed a male figure running from a room, the female chasing after him. The card indicated a regret over actions or words exchanged.

The loss contemplated in this card is one that really does reach out on a profound level. In designing the card, Deirdre has captured a moment and emotion with immense power. Anyone who has witnessed a loved one suffer illness or pass away having endured an illness will immediately resonate with this card. However, caution has to be shown when interpreting. If ever there was a card that reminds us as tarot readers that we shoulder a lot of responsibility when giving guidance, this is it. We must be fully aware that the card could very well be symbolic and should not automatically be read as indicating the loss of a loved one. Such a statement could be devastating, and more importantly, inaccurate. If however we are aware that such a loss has occurred, tact, diplomacy and care needs to be used communicating this issue with a querent.

I would hope this statement is borne in mind as I go through each aspect of the card and give my thoughts. If it is representative of another aspect of the querent, the message conveyed would need to be put into context accordingly.

THE WOMAN IN THE BED

Here we see an elderly woman lying under bedcovers. She is positioned in the centre of the bed, 2 pillows supporting her head and shoulders. The ray of light coming through the window appears to be emanating from the star we see through the doorway. Could this show that she is about to enter into the light, something spiritual followers would accept as being associated with the final stages of life? The light is not quite covering her, so she has not yet departed, although the indication is that this could be imminent. (The clock is showing 11 o'clock, so midnight is not too far away). If we were to see this as a symbolic reference in another way, what it could it indicate? The position of the cups could also support this. She is still with us, as represented by the 3 upright cups. However 2 are overturned, a standard portrayal for this particular card. Therefore we are reminded that all is not well. The gentleman certainly has mixed emotions reflecting the mixed state of the cups.

THE MAN AT THE TABLE

It is not possible to view this card without sympathy for his plight. He has a photograph of a woman in front of him, possibly that of the woman in the bed from a time where she was young and healthy. This will be a memory he will want to cherish, but he has his eyes closed. We can only assume it is too painful for him to look at, bearing in mind he is fully aware that she will never be able to be that person again.

I tried to imagine what I would be telling him, should I be able to step into the card. From personal experience, I wanted to guide him to go over to the bed and be with the woman during her last moments. At the moment they are both so alone, yet could be of comfort to each other. I would not want him to shoulder feelings of guilt after she is gone, wondering if he could have done more, been there for her etc. However, this is easier said than done. We all cope with loss in different ways, and it is entirely possible this man is dealing with it in the only way he knows how.

If you resonate with this man, is there something in your life you feel is slipping away from you, whereby you have no control over the issue? Bearing in mind we do have 3 upright cups, there is still something there that can offer hope. If you were to break down the issue into smaller components, is it possible you would be able to identify the positives? If so, how can they help you once the heartache period is over?

OTHER SYMBOLS

The pot plant underneath the table shows signs of neglect or old age. We have seen similar in a previous card. If it signifies neglect, that will be totally understandable. After all, his focus and energies are on something more important for now. Once again, this could be a reminder that time passes for all living things, and there does come a time we have to accept life is not forever. As life ends, it brings about many changes, but for many of us it is still something we find difficult to cope with. These plants have also come to the end of their days. However, the pot could be re-used to start afresh. This may not be what the man wants to hear right now, but in time, as he comes to terms with his loss, he may consider how he can make fresh starts. For now, he is facing the stark reality of the ending of his relationship. The photograph will always be there as a reminder of the good times, and will be something to cherish.

The candles are unlit, the only light provided coming from the star outside. The fact they are unlit could be significant. How would this apply to your current situation? How different would the situation appear should you choose to light the candles?

The gavel is an unusual item to see in this card. What does it signify to you? Is it linked with the rolled up letter/scroll we see as also present on the table?

Overall, the energy and feel of this card is very stark. I would not underestimate how painful the loss experienced may be. There is also no easy solution, nor would I want to be seen as giving advice right now. Time may well be needed to help heal this situation. This is a huge turning point for the querent, and as Deirdre has said, difficult though it may be, it is important to hold onto the positives where possible. That star is there to remind us of this. The other cards in the spread may help the querent understand the way forward, and certainly the positive cards should be discussed with due care and consideration.

Six of Cups

This card follows quite an intense and emotional situation, (as shown in the 5 of cups) reminding us that time can heal, and positive reflection can be the next stage of your journey.

Quite often this card has been associated with the reliving of/memories of the past, but when we take this reflection and put it into context it should be used to help us pave the way for the future. It is a fine line between reflecting on the past, and living in the past. This card could show you have reached a stage where you need to look at what has gone before, and if supported by a card such as the 4 of swords, indicates it is what is needed right now. However, if supported by cards of action, you may need to be aware now is the time to move forward before the hold of the past tightens its grip.

TOP LEFT SCENE

With this card we see two very different scenes. To the top left we see a scene which could be set during Halloween. A lone elderly woman is sitting in front of an open fire, a shawl hanging loosely around her body. By the side of the chair we have the only indication of colour in the form of a jar partially filled with coins. Deirdre has linked this card with a period of poverty and want, which could very well be applicable. If she is a pensioner she may have to watch how every penny is spent. However, there is also something else to consider and in this respect, I see how it could be read slightly differently. I believe she is going to give the coins to any trick or treat visitor, thus embracing the energies accompanying the children. For a few short hours each year, some sunshine and happiness is bought to her door in the form of smiles and laughter. Whereas for some Halloween is not a welcome time of year, for our elderly woman it could be a rare chance to have contact with the outside world, thus bringing back memories of her own childhood. She has not seen that period of her life for many years, and this one day of each year may help remind her of what it was like to be a child celebrating Halloween. Just take a look at the picture on the wall, of a baby crawling across a floor – does this support the above possibility? She seems to be lost

in thought as she looks into the flames of the fire. What could she be thinking? If she is feeling the cold, why does she not have any covering on her feet?

MAIN SCENE

Here we are brought right up to date in the form of a woman lazing in a hammock. There is a hint that the moon is starting to make an appearance, so it is possible she has been there for some time. She has been lost in her own thoughts, but shows no sign of preparing for the night ahead. Could this show that she should now be leaving the past behind, and concentrating on the future? If she continues to brood or reflect on the past, what may she be missing out on with regards the present?

Is there anything you can relate to with what you see in her actions/inactions? What is the significance of the apple she appears to be gazing at?

OTHER SYMBOLS

The present under the hammock has a question mark and heart on the wrapping. As Deirdre has already stated, this could show she is about to receive an inheritance or legacy. Yet if we look at how she is relaxing in the hammock, she is totally oblivious to this possibility. If she continues to do nothing, is there a chance this 'present' may pass her by and not come to fruition?

All 6 cups are upright (very positive sign) and are brimming with various forms of plant life. This can show one of two things:

- 1) She now has so much by way of opportunity open to her, and now may be the right time to take hold of that opportunity. The flowers will only be blooming for so long after all! If she waits too long, they may have withered and indicate a great opportunity has passed.
- 2) She has been sitting here for so long now, some seedlings have taken root and have grown within the cups. Therefore this can be another indication that she has been inactive for quite a long time now. When she first took up her position the cups were empty.

There is something hanging from the tree, but it is not easy to make out what it could be. What are your first impressions when seeing this object? What could it represent to the woman? What could it represent to you?

Both women are lost in thought. They are from different backgrounds, of different ages and may have different circumstances, experiences etc. Which of the two characters do you associate with and why?

When I had this card appear in a reading it indicated a different focus being shown depending on which character you associated with. The elderly lady appeared to be focused on the past, whereas the woman in the hammock may have been guilty of daydreaming of the future, not realising she had all at her disposal underneath the hammock to turn some of her dreams into reality. If you believe it does indicate general daydreaming, the focus of the card could shift slightly, but I would see this as being more relevant with the 7 of cups.

Seven of Cups

Well, if any card really did indicate a sense of losing yourself in a make-believe world, this is it. Quite often it will indicate a choice needs to be made, possibly of a romantic nature. However, we should not pigeon hole this as being the only option, just because we are in the suit of cups.

Here we see a woman relaxing on a grassy area, her thoughts turned skywards. Her thoughts are represented by various cups shown clouds, 3 of which are being supported from a hot air balloon. The fact the cups are on clouds shows these are just images from her mind. They may or may not yet be reality. If they are indicative of her current situation, she may be considering changes. If they are just daydreams, she is best reminded to focus on what she really needs and take the necessary action to make it a reality.

Some of the symbols are a little hard to make out, but it is possible to see some details. She has a lot on her mind for sure, and may be looking at the pros and cons of each option as opposed to just daydreaming. The surrounding cards and the question being asked will hopefully point you in the correct direction.

However, it is apparent she may be trying to consider too many options. With that many choices she runs the risk of not choosing to do anything. Have you got many possibilities open to you at the moment? If you could narrow your options down to just 2 or 3, what would they be, and what process of elimination would you use?

SYMBOLS WITHIN THE CUPS

Two of the clearer signs are shown on the cups at ground level. We have a T junction shown on one of the cups. She has followed a path and now is faced with two directions she could take. There is no clear indication which path is preferable. Indicated on the cup at her feet is a house. Could she be considering a move?

The cup behind her head is showing two overlapping hearts. Maybe a romantic liaison is being considered.

The other symbols are not quite clear, but one of the cups does show something inside it. Is it a book, or a pile of bank notes?

What is the significance of the differing heights of the cups? (some being ground level, some being carried away by the balloon).

IN A READING SITUATION: (AS TYPED FOR MYSELF WHEN ASKING HOW I WOULD WORK WITH THIS DECK)

Why did this deck come into my life: It realises I have been dreaming of what could be the right deck for me, and also shows my ideals and visions have perhaps been a little all over the show, as depicted by the fact there are cups on so many clouds, and yet I am not really focusing on any of them. Will this fulfil my dreams? Will it allow me to maintain a clearer focus? Or will it open up yet more dreams so to speak?

Certainly my instinct is I need to be a bit more proactive. Yes I am grounded, but my emotions and thoughts aren't necessarily as grounded. This could be due to the fact I have such a large tarot collection, many never get the use or attention they deserve, and are there as part of a collection, but remain redundant. (I have intentions to address this, but for now am aware that is not really what tarot should be about – they are there to be used or studied, not just bought because at the time they looked nice decks!!)

Eight of Cups

This is probably the cup card most readers have no difficulty in identifying key words for. Invariably it shows a female walking away from something, the sky usually depicted as dark and desolate. In this case we see the sun in the sky indicating each time we move away from something, we are in fact striding towards something else.

In this case, we see the woman is leaving two large houses behind in the distance. The path she is taking is somewhat winding, 8 cups lining the route she climbs the gentle gradient of the hill. Each cup has a symbol shown on the side. In addition, two of the cups appear to have objects within. Whether the other cups are full or empty, we can only surmise.

When this card appears it shows that the inevitable decision has been taken. There is no further mileage to be gained with a current situation, thus the reluctant decision to move on. This will not be a decision that has been taken lightly. It may well follow a lot of sombre consideration, and at the same time, will leave a feeling of emptiness or sadness. However, if a situation has run its course, or is no longer relevant it would be pointless to hang on any longer.

Only when we put a distance between us and the issue can we look back with more objectivity and realise the warning signs may have been there for some time.

It is also only by walking away do we create a space where something more positive or fulfilling can come along. Whether this applies to a relationship issue, a job concern or a house move, it is meant to happen for a reason.

The symbols on the cups are a little difficult to make out. I can see the head of a bird on one. With regards its presence, I will leave this to Deirdre to explain. Another of the cups appears to be showing a human face with either a cigarette or a thermometer in the mouth of the figure depicted. There also appears to be a thermometer resting in this particular cup. (It may well be something completely different, but that is what it appears to be after some scrutiny).

Surprisingly, this card does not really lend itself to much more by way of consideration. If a querent asks should they move on or not, this card could well indicate they know the answer already, but may be just looking for confirmation before going ahead.

Nine of Cups

This card can often signify that you have been wishing for, may well come to fruition. I also see this card as signifying personal growth, whereby you are comfortable with your emotions and position as part of a union or family unit. A sense of self-honesty and respect which can play a positive role in an equally balanced or healthy relationship. In other words, if you were not content with who you are, how could you find true fulfilment with another? If you can find contentment by yourself, it should bode well for how you respond within a relationship.

In this card we see a woman sitting on a small outcrop, her attention fully focused on the letter she is reading. The heart does indicate it is from a loved one. Deirdre has rightly pointed out the need to be careful of what you wish for. What you may find, is what you actually want in your life, whether it be a relationship etc, could very well be different to what you actually need. Therefore this card could show you are romanticising an issue, and not really keeping your feet firmly on the floor. If this is the case, we do eventually get a wake up call – hopefully sooner rather than later so the issue can be rectified.

If we learn from such an experience, it can really help us avoid making similar mistakes in the future.

How many of us have had teenage romances we thought were the real deal at the time, only to realise later in life it was never destined to last? I am sure most of us cringe when we look back at how unrealistic our expectations were, but as a life lesson it would have been beneficial. It is only through hindsight though we realise this.

Deirdre has also indicated a situation, whereby what you give out could be returned in kind. Therefore if you are asking why you are finding it hard to maintain or become involved in a fulfilling relationship, this card may be asking you to look at what messages or signals you are sending out. You may find what you are attracting is not what you want, but your body language or other signals are indicating otherwise. If you are lucky enough to have found who you consider to be your soul mate, congratulations! When energies are so compatible, it is something to cherish and give thanks for the fact you have been brought together.

SYMBOLS ON THE CUPS

Once again, some are a little difficult to make out. The cup immediately to the left of the woman shows a wishbone. Yet further confirmation of what has already been said – what you wish for could well come true for you.

The central cup in the line of 7 appears to show a pregnant woman. Again, if you have been trying for a baby, this may show that pregnancy is a real possibility. Once again we see a butterfly net. This could show the chasing of dreams. The two hearts could show a relationship cementing, and finally the shamrock can also indicate that good luck and fortune are coming your way.

Overall, a really nice card with some calm but exciting energies.

IN A READING SITUATION:

This cropped up when looking at a relationship issue, where the querent was not sure what was going on, where the relationship was heading etc. I used this card to look at what the other party was wanting from the relationship, to see if there was in fact a conflict of expectation. It showed there was the willingness to make a commitment, but the other party also wanted their own space at the same time. They had sort of put up an invisible fence in the form of the lined up cups, but not a tall fence. In this respect, he was sort of torn as to what he really wanted, and was sending out mixed signals. The letter was interesting, and could have indicated he found it difficult to actually talk about his feelings, but may feel more comfortable writing them down.

Ten of Cups

A lovely family scene, showing 3 generations all celebrating together and enjoying the company of each other. We see one of the members planting a shamrock, thus indicating the possibility of new generations or further growth to come. It really does show that all is well.

THE MOTHER

She is standing up, facing her two children with arms stretched out as if to welcome an embrace. She is wearing an apron, indicating she has been working hard to prepare the bountiful food we see on the picnic table. This may show you have worked hard to achieve this feeling of contentment, and long may it continue. If you relate to this, your efforts have paid off.

TWO CHILDREN

The girl is looking at her mother, her back to us as readers, whilst the young lad is watching his dad as he plants the shamrock. Could this subtly indicate the dynamics at play within this group setting? If so, what are you picking up from the focus of the girl? The focus of the boy?

ELDERLY RELATIVE

This could be a grandparent, an elderly uncle, or even a neighbour. It is really left free for us to associate with him as we see fit.

He has a walking stick, which is propped up against the seat behind him. How much of a 'prop' are the other members shown in this card? Does it indicate total acceptance and support of those who may not be as able-bodied as we are? If you feel he reflects your current situation it is to be taken as a positive sign, that in no way are you being left to fend for yourself.

FATHER FIGURE

He has prepared the ground, and is now planting a shamrock. If watered and cared for, it will continue to flourish. This shows the love and care he has put into bringing up his children, and the way he has provided for the well being of his family in general.

The cups remind me of how champagne glasses are often stacked at a celebration or party. Therefore I see this as being a celebration of a successful family unit. The house behind them is solid and robust, providing them with a sense of security. The smaller annexe to the left may even be an indication of what is often called a "granny annexe" (an awful term I know!), indicating the elderly person in the card is also provided for. Therefore, if you feel somewhat vulnerable and are worried about being left out of a situation, this should alleviate your fears.

The rabbit is feeling totally unthreatened by the humans around it. The ears are alert but relaxed as it chews away on a cabbage leaf. This should indicate there is nothing on the horizon which is likely to unsettle this situation, at least in the short term. Therefore, there is no need to look for problems, because for now, they don't exist.

Yep, as Deirdre has said, it really does not get any better than this!

This young character always puts me in mind of a gentle young soul, the type of child who is very sensitive to change, or the emotions of those around him/her. They may be seen with their heads in a book as opposed to partaking in boisterous playground games. The child who will avoid conflict wherever possible. The child who would be bringing home injured birds or other small animals in an attempt to save them.

In this deck, we see a young child dressed in so many ruffs and feathers he is in danger of being overshadowed by the clothing he is wearing. It is almost a caricature or stereotypical image of a child who has raided his mother's wardrobe and has donned half of the contents in one go. If his mother has dressed him this way, she is in danger of stifling his development as a child, and perhaps asking him to miss out on an important period of his life without realising this is what she is doing. Our page would not want to hurt her feelings and would therefore go along with this, putting a brave face on throughout.

His face indicates he is not entirely comfortable with his situation, albeit he is standing nonchalantly with one foot on a rock. This pose is very untypical of a lad of this age, and makes me wonder if he is trying to appear more grown up than he really is.

We see he is holding an apple in one hand (perhaps signifying his willingness to please) and a chalice in his other hand, the image of a bird clearly displayed around the side of the cup. What does the bird symbolise? How does that relate to your current situation?

A tiny white dog is standing close by, gazing up at him with an outward display of loyalty in a way very special to dogs and their owners. What is the significance of the dog at this particular time?

Certainly, I can relate to how Deirdre links this in with a possible courtship or romance. It can indicate a lack of confidence, or uncertainty over such a prospect. Certainly if this is a new relationship, or comes at a time where previous experiences have not been good, it will be usual to experience these concerns. There is a natural inclination to hold back, but this card does indicate things will go okay. If you feel the page is not being his 'real' self, this card could be gently asking drop any act or facade, and act naturally. In other words, try to avoid a situation where you feel you have to go out there and impress someone. If the mutual attraction is already there, nothing will be gained by putting on a false image.

Overall, a positive card which can underline the sensitivity of an individual who may be hiding their nerves at the prospect of becoming involved in a relationship.

Knight of Cups

If ever you would want to be courted in style, by someone who is a true romantic at heart, it would be by the Knight of Cups.

I guess this guy is somebody we could identify as being a male in touch with their feminine side. In other words, somebody who is willing to reveal their sensitivity and emotions without fear of being classed as weak or ineffectual. But is that always the case? There is a particular symbol discreetly portrayed on this card which could indicate otherwise.....

THE KNIGHT AND HORSE

Here we see a troubadour, his *vielle* slung across his back. We get the impression he is a travelling spirit, but has the natural ability to bring happiness and joy through his music. Should this person come into your life there is a possibility you will be serenaded. Whereas most cups in this suit have been gold in colour, this cup is blue with a gold rim. Does the blue symbolise water, and in turn his sensitive nature? What do you make of the foliage sprouting from the cup? Could it indicate the growing of a relationship? How about the coins falling from his purse? Could this show this is one opportunity or person you don't want to let slip away?

The horse is standing at the edge of a stream, one foot raised as if in hesitation. His pricked ears could indicate he is wary of something. As Deirdre has indicated, he could be unsure of the water's depth. If this is something you can resonate with, what are you hesitant about? What is it you know you should be 'testing out' but are holding back from? The crazy thing is, this horse could easily just jump over the stream, thus missing the water entirely. Why is he not considering this? Is there something you could avoid by just stepping over it?

Are you seeing something as an obstacle which isn't really insurmountable at all? Or does the water signify a reluctance to acknowledge feelings or emotions?

THE WATERLILY

This is a beautiful plant, one that is often danced around by dragonflies at certain times of the year, bringing about a wonderful sight of intermingling colours and shimmers. Our Knight is presented a large pink blossom. As Deirdre has said, they are usually anchored very well to the floor of the pond or stream. This can show regardless of how others may be losing control emotionally, you have it in you to stand firm. If things

around you are becoming unsettled, you may be advised to stay calm and let it wash over you.

THE BOTTLE.

Yes, it is there but subtly hidden at the base of the trees. We see it contains a lot of tiny hearts. Whereas the water could indicate a reluctance to acknowledge emotions, this could actually show emotions have been bottled up or contained in some way. If you are aware this is happening, you may need to look at why. Quite often we do this out of fear – fear of being hurt, or fear of being let down. If you are entering a new phase of a relationship, it could show you are getting cold feet. What is it you are perhaps afraid of? If it is something linked to a past or previous experience, how about putting that bottle in the water, and letting it flow away?

Queen of Cups

This particular Queen is one who we can identify as having similar qualities to that of the Empress. She will be a natural nurturer and someone you feel drawn to when a shoulder is required to cry on.

Not only does she have her crown to remind us of her position, she is also sitting beneath an oak tree – a symbolic tree with royal connections. In addition the oak tree is one that exudes reliability and solidity. Deirdre has already indicated how this tree symbolises protection. Yet another indication of her position is in the form of the monarch butterfly on the trunk of the tree, its wings spread displaying its full beauty and colour. It may well be about to take flight but it could also be absorbing the heat and energy from the sun, totally relaxed with its surroundings.

Around her neck we see a delicate crucifix and rosary beads, signifying she has spiritual links, beliefs, ethics etc. We have seen a child on a previous Queen card, but in this case she is focused on her child as opposed to her possessions or money. Therefore this child is obviously the central focus of her life. The pale blue colour of her dress and rosary beads really does have a calming affect on the scene overall. She is the type of mother who will be able to sooth away the tears of any small child with kind words and a gentle hug. Her calming nature will there for anyone who needs it, not just the child in front of her.

THE CHILD

In comparison to the child on the Queen of Coins, this child is dressed appropriately for play. He may well get his clothes dirty or muddy, but we can see from the rapport between the two of them, he is encouraged to be a child, and take part in childlike activities. His natural curiosity for the world around him will be encouraged by his mother, who sees the world of nature as being the best playground he can grow up in. If he can appreciate and respect the wildlife around him, he can grow up to show the same respect for all living things.

For now, he is fascinated by the gold cup. It is not a toy that he can play with, but he is fascinated nevertheless.

If reading this card from the viewpoint of the child, it could be showing you need to put aside expectations, and just enjoy the simpler aspects of life for a while. If play is needed, really get into it and be prepared to laugh along with the experience. Really, it is okay to let your hair down on occasion! I remember my first paint-balling outing. My trainers were new, and blemish free. Why, oh why did I expect them to remain in this

state! We were all covered in mud and fatigued after 8 hours of crawling through woods, yet we all had beaming smiles and twinkles in our eyes at the end of it. The whole experience made the following morning at work more than bearable. Become a child for a while. It really is quite liberating.

OTHER SYMBOLS

This card really does subtly hint at the fruits provided by nature. Not only do we have fruit in the real sense, we have the dove in the top left of the card once again reminding us of the peace and serenity that pervades the scene. The bird on the branch to the right of the tree is not one I have been able to identify but it is also relaxed in the Queen's presence. This sort of brings to mind a scene from a Walt Disney animated film, where the animals gathered around the Princess. They would only do this if they felt safe and unthreatened, thus underlining the character and approachability of our Queen of Cups.

The water in the background is understated, but we can see it is calm on the surface.

Basically everything about this card indicates love, respect, serenity and being at one with your surroundings. You can be rest assured, if this Queen comes into your life she will have the ability to settle your emotions, and be of support to you as you tackle the situation at hand. She may not offer the practical advice as would the other Queens, but that is not necessarily her role. Sometimes we just need someone to be there who will listen and understand.

King of Cups

This particular King is one who has the interests of his realm at heart. He will move heaven and earth to protect those he cares about, often putting himself in risky situations in the process. Instead of wearing his heart on his sleeve, he wears the heart on his crown, signifying the responsibility he willingly bears, and his passion in ruling with both heart and spirit, as well as his head.

The symbol of the suit is held bold and proud in his right hand, his hand firmly gripping the stem of the cup/chalice. He takes his responsibilities seriously and will not willingly relinquish the hold he has. If he is passionate about something he truly believes in, he will not be easily shaken from this belief. Therefore he should not be underestimated. He may well appear to be the easiest going of all the Kings, but that should not be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness.

Due to his kindly nature, he will be wise counsel in cases of uncertainty, but may soften the blow when a direct approach is called for. Due to his loving nature, he will not be a natural fighter, and will instead avoid conflict where possible.

Thus if met with 'naughty' children he will ask his wife to be the disciplinarian, not wanting to see them upset in any way.

All in all, a person who will be gentle when offering counsel, but will also have a wise head on his shoulders – therefore what he says will have credibility.

OTHER SYMBOLS

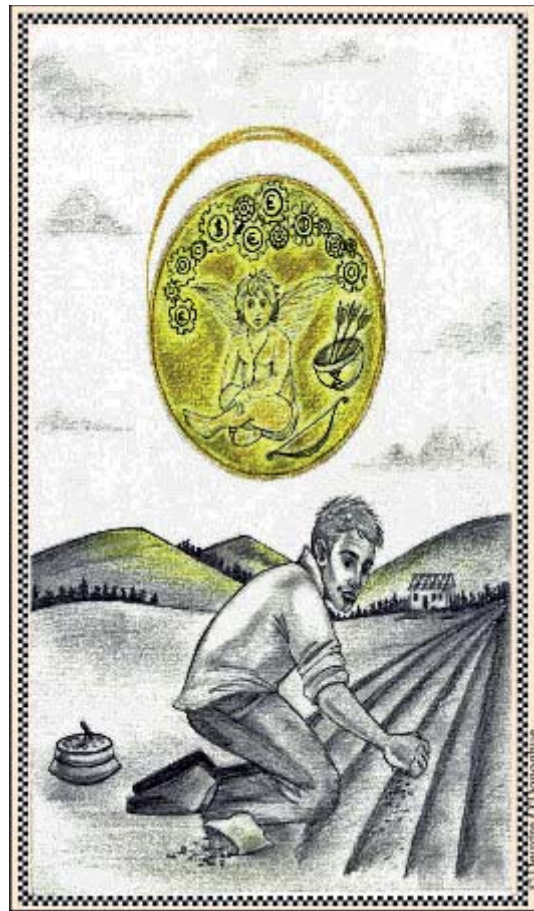
The clasp of his cloak is something musicians would associate as being a G-clef. What does this signify to you? Is he an admirer of the arts, particularly music? How does this fit in with his personality?

To the right of the card, in front of the fountain we also see a lantern. This symbol has appeared before, most notably with the Fool. In this case it is a peripheral item barely noticeable in front of the fountain. What does it signify to you? How does that relate to your current situation?

If this King has come into your life in a romantic sense, he will openly display his affections. He is also quite sensitive to the dynamics of a relationship, so be observant of his moods – they will be a good indication of how he feels the relationship is developing. If he is there to offer support, take heart from the fact he will offer this unconditionally. He may not be able to offer practical help in the way other Kings would be, but the emotional support he could offer is worth its weight in gold.

Minor

Suit of Coins



Ace of Coins

Once again we see an illustrated ace card. We are aware of the new beginnings it advises us of, and that is clear with the actions of the male figure who is central to the card.

He has tilled the earth up to a certain point and is now sewing the seeds. The sundial to one side of him may give a clue as to the timing of his actions. My first thought when I saw the unfinished house, and the half tilled ground was that he was good at starting projects, but may never follow through to completion. In other words, lots of good ideas and good intent, but they never quite come to fruition. He would always be finding something else that would seem a good idea at the time, but energies and focus would fizzle out. Then I saw the sundial and had a rethink. Timing is so important when involved in the cultivation of crops. Sow them too early and you run the risk of frost killing off the germinating seeds. Leave it too late and you run the risk of losing out on the best weather at the growing stage. He is aware of this, and the sundial may be a subtle hint that he has to plant the seeds now if he is to get the full benefit of his efforts. So we are aware there could be two aspects to this card: either failure to follow through with projects, or starting a project at the right time where it is likely to produce the most benefit in the long run. He has done the groundwork, which may have been arduous, but the pay off could be more than worthwhile. Remember this is only the start of something – there could be many more steps to take before the end result can be seen in all its glory.

THE SYMBOLS IN THE DISC

The figure in the disc could be classed as a cherub. He certainly has a smiling face as he sits relaxed and cross legged. He has a bow in front of him and 3 arrows in a small bowl to the side of him. The bowl has the Roman numeral X shown. Could this be a reminder of a card from the Major Arcana showing this symbol? If so, what could it symbolise and why? What is the significance of the cherub? The bow and arrows? What do you suppose he is thinking as he watches the farmer? We see some cogs above his head, some of them displaying different monetary signs (Euro, dollar, pound etc). I believe this shows that his crops may be of benefit not just to him, but to a global community. It is possible the grain is to be sold overseas, thus bringing sustenance to others. The interlocking cogs are of interest. If one moves, it will create an opposite movement on its neighbouring cog, and so on. To this effect I see the farmer as being a cog in his own right. As an arable farmer he is playing a very important role in feeding many, many people. He is aware of this, but for now is focused on doing what is necessary to ensure he gives his crop the best chance of germinating and growing. Can you associate with this farmer? Is there something you either want to do or feel the need to do? If so, what steps should you be taking now as

you begin this process? How important is the aspect of timing for you? What delays could you foresee that need to be dealt with now so as clear the way ahead? If take note of the monetary signs, there is a chance that if you follow through, there could be financial reward or gain. However, it will not happen unless you do something to start working towards it.

THE HALF BUILT HOUSE

As stated previously, it could indicate somebody who starts projects but doesn't follow through. However, this card should where possible be seen as positive. In this case, it could show that he has wisely used the money he has earned from his farming and is in the process of building a house. It is a process that is obviously taking time and may be going up in stages. Each time he sells some of his produce, he can complete the next stage of the building. Who knows – once he has sold this particular crop, he may have raised enough money to complete the build. Therefore this can also show a wise investment where new beginnings can take shape. A wise re-investment.

Two of Coins

Here we see a gentleman dressed in what some may consider to be similar to a court jester's outfit. His red shoes look very oversized, his suit showing many coloured diamonds on both the trouser and upper body parts. He is standing in front of a small copse of trees, balancing a narrow yoke across his shoulders. In one of the scales (to our left as we look at the card) we see a golden orb or bubble containing a set of books. Some coins are falling from this particular scale. In the other scale (which hangs slightly lower than the previous one) we see another golden orb or bubble containing a house. The house itself appears to be at a waters edge, with the reflection of the house clearly visible. Below and outside this orb we see a tiny red heart.

Above his head is the symbol for infinity, but more interestingly in my opinion, we also see arrows engraved on a tree behind him, on arrow pointing to the left, the other arrow pointing to the right. He has his left arm stretched out and appears to be trying to bring down the scale containing the books. In fact it is the books he is focused on, with his facial expression showing he is either not happy or is in deep concentration.

Deirdre has indicated this as showing he has taken on too much responsibility and is struggling to cope. Certainly we can empathise as he tries to balance his home life with perhaps an issue of study, or a returning to education. When I saw this I thought how some university students must feel when they consider their future as such – do they stay at home or near home where there is security, or do they follow their ambitions and attend university, where there is a real risk of incurring debt or financial constraints? I believe if this scenario does ring a bell, our young man is showing favour towards the latter, but is fully aware of what may be at stake. For now he feels as though the balance is tipped in favour of taking the security home can offer.

I also like how this card is linked with learning how to say NO. Certainly if this appears with the Queen of Swords it is an approach that should not be shirked away from. Otherwise you may find you are trying to balance not only your own life, but also the demands of others. No wonder you are not looking happy with your lot, and yet there is potential for such happiness if only you could put your own needs first for a change. Just look at the heart on the right hand side. It is not linked to anything, but is there to show there is potential. Is home where his heart is? If so, should he perhaps change his focus towards this instead?

The falling coins can tell so many stories in their own right. It can show that money is being frittered away, or allowed to fall through out of negligence or poor investment. With the balancing act he is trying to maintain, there is nothing he can do about it – he is forced to watch on rather helpless. If he is to retrieve the coins that have been

dropped he needs to drop the balancing act. This may not go down too well with some, but he may need to give up trying to balance an issue here before the loss becomes damaging.

So, what can we make of the arrows. He is certainly met with choices. He can go either way, but it is not apparent in the card which way is preferable. Other cards may indicate what is at stake and show the possible outcomes for each direction. I also see this that he is sort of in limbo. The left arrow could be pointing to an issue of the past that has relevance to his current position. Could the right arrow be there to show there is no going back, tempting though it may be? Either way he has a choice. His path is his to take, but certainly he needs to start focusing and prioritising before he becomes too frustrated or resentful of the demands he has on his shoulders. They may be of his own making, or they may be caused by others. Either way he can do something about it.

Three of Coins

This card certainly has a calmer and less stressful energy about it compared to the 2 of coins.

It is usually associated with progression, or achievement. However, we are best to remember it is early in the suit, so we are aware we are on the right track, but have not necessarily reached a pinnacle as yet. A pat on the back is appropriate, but we must not lose sight of the goal or what we want to achieve. The signs are good though – so well done for getting this far.

Our artist is very focused in this card, and we can see he has great enthusiasm for his work. We can see there are 4 further canvases on the floor propped against the table. Has he already formed some ideas for follow work, and has the canvases ready for when he completes his current project? If so, can you associate this with anything you are involved with? The fact the canvases are blank is excellent. It means there is nothing already set in form. You are free to create with a totally blank canvas at your disposal. If you could paint your dream or goal on the canvases what would it be?

ARTIST AND PAINTING

The potter and wheel does show that you may need to consider undertaking some further training, or you may need to consider bringing another skill into the mix. Yep, remember this card is about progression. Sometimes that progression is in the form of drawing in something new which will enhance what you already have at your disposal. Although a different skill it will not be totally alien to you. Don't forget the potter and painter are both artists. The only difference is in the choice of medium used. What I like about this artist is that he is neat and tidy in his work. There is no paint anywhere than on the palette, brush or canvas. To this extent he does not see the need for protective clothing. What does that tell you about his approach? How does it compare to your approach?

BLACK CAT

This cat does seem to be out of place in this card. Deirdre describes it as staring defiantly at the scene in front of it. What could it signify? Cats are associated with either good or bad luck depending on what tradition or superstition you connect with. How would its relevance differ accordingly? For example, if you associate it with good luck, it may well show his work could be sought after thereby proving to be financially viable as a career. If it is associated with bad luck, could it show that his efforts may

not pay off in the way he hoped they would? Or that his work will not be accepted in a way he hoped it would? The black cat is an enigmatic inclusion in this card. It could be looking this way because it is feeling neglected. The artist has obviously been working away for sometime, and may have inadvertently shut out the needs of the cat for a while. Its symbolism may be of importance, but again surrounding cards may also help in identifying its role.

TABLE OBJECTS

These are numerous and varied. The apple and cheese could be his choice of lunch or snack, but he is so focused on his work he may have forgotten to eat. The thermometer is also an unusual object. We usually find use for such an item when establishing the temperature of something. How does this correlate with what we see on this card or its meaning? We have the book with the cover depicting a sunflower. In this case it partially obscures an unopened letter. Why is the letter unopened? How important are the contents? Is there something you have chosen to ignore, or put to one side with which may be of importance? If so, you would be wise to investigate sooner rather than later.

Alternatively, is this a letter he has written himself but has not yet got round to posting it? Is there somebody you think you should be contacting but haven't got round to it yet?

BACKGROUND MILL

The mill in the background is in working order, and we can see the water is flowing freely. As the wheel turns it grinds down the grain. Without the water, activity would stop. If this does relate to your ambitions, or creative flowing of ideas keep going. If the flow is good, make use of it whilst it is there. Writers will often find they hit a block where nothing flows, but at other times they feel as though their fingers are on fire as they try to get the ideas out and onto paper before they disappear. You may be experiencing the latter, so make the most of the opportunity. However should the wheel stop it is reachable via the steps. A little bit of tinkering would hopefully be able to get it moving again.

Four of Coins

This card is traditionally associated with being a miser, but I have also read this as just being careful and not frivolous with money in certain cases. Sometimes though, the line between being a penny pincher, and being sensible can become blurred.

We have moved away from the traditional portrayal of a rich merchant or nobleman, hunched over a chest, coins being held tightly to his body. In this case, we have a woman associated with the card, albeit there is a hint of male figures in the background, these to be discussed shortly.

THE WOMAN

She is dressed in a tight red dress, a parchment held close to her chest. She is striding purposefully away from the rest of the card and appears to be headed towards us. How do you feel when you see her approaching? What emotions come to the fore, and why?

She gives the appearance of being a woman of substance or position. Her dress is cut well, her shoes showing she may not be in a role which requires standing on her feet for long periods of time. Due to the fact her dress is cut tightly, she cannot swing her legs freely, thus the cross over style of walking. Does she appear approachable to you? If she were about to speak what would she be saying to you right now? Does her whole demeanour give the impression of control and power, and if so is it in a negative or positive way?

What could the parchment signify?

THE HOUSE AND TOWER

She seems to be heading along a path away from a substantial house. If this is indeed hers, it may be a clear indication she has done well for herself. However, her demeanour does not show that she has gained particular enjoyment through her status or financial situation. Can you think of anyone who appears to have all the trappings of fine living, yet does not give the impression of enjoying themselves or their possessions?

The house does have a picket fence running round as well as an abundance of climbing ivy. Is this to send out an invisible message to others of "keep out?" Or is it symbolic of what she has put up around herself, to perhaps protect herself from outsiders or freeloaders? Which of these two possible aspects do you associate with and why?

Certainly with the latter it should not necessarily be seen as negative. You may be quite within reason to take such action if there is a risk somebody is looking to take advantage of what you have. If you have worked hard to get where you are, you should not feel guilty if you decide to keep it for yourself - as long as the line is not crossed whereby you become miserly as opposed to careful.

The tower is a stark contrast to the house. It looks in ruin and neglected. Could this show what she is afraid of? A subconscious fear of losing what she has achieved to date, or could it show this is where she came from before she attained her current status? One of the shadowed figures is pointing towards the path. His resultant shadow appears to be pointing towards the house. Is he perhaps saying she is forging down the wrong path or going in the wrong direction for now? If this is the case, I really do not think the woman would actually take any notice of this. She is focused and determined to go where she wants to go and will not necessarily take on any guidance or suggestions otherwise. If you associate with this gentleman, what would you want to say to the woman right now?

OBJECTS IN THE SKY

Deirdre has pointed out the objects are: an hourglass, a wheel, a mortarboard and book and a zigzag arrow.

Once again these are symbolic. At the time of writing I did not know the reason behind their inclusion but my thoughts are this:

At some stage the hourglass sand will run through, with the hourglass to be turned over again. When this happens, what will happen to the coins balanced on top of the hourglass? Does it show that she has to make the most of her current situation, as fate could show a hand and turn it all around for her? This I believe is backed up the presence of the wheel. At the moment she may be doing well for herself, but it would be crazy to take this for granted. The wheel could turn as time goes by, thus putting her in an entirely different situation with regards to finances etc. We only have to look at the economy as it stands at the moment to understand this. Those home-owners who have struggled to get a mortgage in recent months now may find their homes drop in value, leaving them in a vulnerable position. Yet only a year ago, the story was a very different one indeed.

The zigzag line is similar to a line we often see in boardrooms indicating projected figures, sales to date etc. the line shows there has been some ups and downs, but currently the arrow is pointing upwards. This can be seen as positive. However we are reminded there is a possibility of a down turn at some stage. Therefore, can we blame her for holding on tightly to what has been achieved to date?

An interesting card, with some interesting energies all at play at the same time.

In a reading: (as typed for the reading)

Action to be encouraged / attitude to nurture positive way forward: The next card is the 4 of coins. In it we see a woman walking away from a house surrounded by a picket fence and covered in ivory. We also see a tower next to the house. She is holding a folded document close to her chest. Is this indicating the having to walk away from something that had offered a sense of refuge to you? The tower I think is interesting here. Quite often, the Tower in its own right does indicate the falling apart of something, and throwing us off balance where we have to regroup or start again. Are you walking away from this situation, or are you striding purposefully towards the fresh start that is needed? Somebody by the tower is pointing, but not in the direction you are taking. Are you walking in the wrong direction somewhat? Are they trying to get you to follow a different path, and if so why? You need to really just pause for a while and see where it is you are heading at the moment, and try to rationalise if it is the right course for you. If you know in your heart you are moving in the right direction, then stick to your guns. This lady does know her own mind. However, if when you do take stock you realise you have reacted instinctively but don't feel this is how it should be, try to see if there is a different path you could take.

Five of Coins

usually this card brings about a stark meaning of hardship. Certainly when looking at this with a financial concern, it does show that we may have to tighten the money belt so to speak. If we look back at how the 4 of coins is traditionally portrayed in many decks, we can understand why there was an indication of being frugal for a while. A sensible approach in the lead up may negate some of the effects of this card.

In this card we see a bare-footed woman walking down a path away from a house, her body bent over as she tries to battle against the strong wind. We can see her hair and dress are blown back behind her, so the wind is quite powerful. Under her arm we see a book being held tightly to her body. Her eyes appear to be closed, her free hand held to her chest. Everything about this card in the main shows difficulties of sorts. If the wind was not enough we even have very stormy skies and a stormy sea behind the house she has come from. Why on earth would she want to venture out on such a miserable day, particularly bare-footed? What could cause her to leave the comforts of her home at this moment in time? Whatever it is, must be quite important, or cannot wait until the storm has cleared.

This card certainly could tell many stories, but my initial thoughts are as follows: The fact she is barefoot is significant. The ground may well be wet or stony. However she is on a spiritual path or journey, and knows she must endure whatever terrain she finds herself on. By being shoe-free, she will be able to truly feel the energies of the earth below her, even if at times those energies are sharp or rough. Due to the fact she has her eyes closed and has her hand close to her chest/heart chakra, I really do feel she has turned within and may not even be aware of the wind or cold around her. She has chosen this path and is preparing herself for the challenges or lessons ahead. However, Deirdre has hinted that she may be turned towards the past and may have issues from that part of her life to deal with. It is interesting to note that the bottom left coin holds a book and a cross, possibly signifying a holy or spiritual book. If associated with forms of healing, could it show that some past life healing could be beneficial?

With regards the house, it could show that there is something there which can provide stability or comfort, and that things are not as bad as you perceive. You may need to just hold on to what you have for now, and wait for the difficult time to pass before venturing out. The house is almost protected by some trees. Yet another subtle reminder that there is some solace and protection from what is happening. However I am under no illusion here – you may have to leave this comfort zone and brave the elements. If you do, the going may not be easy for you.

SYMBOLS WITHIN THE COINS

The book and cross I have already given a possible meaning to. They are spiritual in symbolism, and underline what Deirdre has already stated – the hardship or journey is more spiritual in nature than material or physical.

The other symbols are a little more difficult to interpret, and may well come into play when other cards make the whole issue clearer. The red rose for example, could show that you need to follow your hearts desire. Is this what the woman is doing? The empty bowl and food may show times are tough, and that you may need to concentrate on ensuring the necessities of life are provided. The need to cut away anything that could be classed as a luxury until such time your situation changes.

Interestingly, I had a thought as to how this could apply to somebody who was concerned regarding a weight issue. Could the fact they are walking away show they need to look at their past (possibly their childhood) as to why they have gained excessive weight? The need to look within on a psychological or spiritual level? Could the rose show they need to turn away from what has provided comfort by way of inappropriate food choices? In other words, give up what has been their hearts desire for so long? The empty bowl and presence of nutritional food in the form of the bread and chicken may show they need to change their habits. This will not be easy for them, and they may find it feels an 'uphill battle' but by enduring such hardship and turning their focus within instead of on what provides a false sense of comfort, they may succeed.

Interestingly one of the coins is blank. I believe this is there for us to picture for ourselves what could be included as a relevant symbol. If you were to become this woman, whereby you closed your eyes and turned your focus inwards on a subconscious or spiritual level, what item could include which symbolises a difficult time you are experiencing?

Six of Coins

Yet another card that could tell so many stories. The two main characters are so in contrast to each other, yet for this special moment in time, they are sharing a link or bond. The link of giving and receiving.

The woman is obviously pregnant but is offering some money to the vagrant sitting on the pavement. He is sitting on a green blanket, his cap on the pavement in front of him empty. We see a hint of a bottle in a paper bag to one side of him. I think these two characters deserve to be looked at before mentioning any of the objects in the shop window behind them. Ironically the scene is set in front of a charity shop.

I had to really look at my own prejudices and beliefs when looking at this card and realised I had a lot to learn about what true charity means. I am sure many of us have walked past vagrants in the street before now, and pretended not to notice them. If they are a regular part of your environment, it is almost possible to become immune to their presence, as we just associate them as being the 'norm.' If you visit London regularly and use the underground system you will be aware of what I alluding to. Thousands of commuters will hustle past them without giving as much as a glance in their direction. If it is not something you are used to, it can be quite unsettling. Yet if you saw them every day twice a day, would you just class them as being a natural part of the scenery, forgetting they are people of flesh and blood? With regards our vagrant, it would also be easy to think he is an alcoholic or that he would spend any donated money on drink. This in itself can be a reason why people do not spare change. They feel it is money wasted as it would only be put towards purchasing yet more alcohol. In other words, we become very judgemental of what is right and what is wrong, but would not think anything of spending a lot of money at a weekend on alcohol ourselves. When we do this we run the risk of becoming hypocrites. In this case, this vagrant may use the alcohol as a way of numbing his mind to his difficult existence. It is not the right way to deal with this, but he may not feel he has any other way available to him. I believe we can associate the shop itself with ourselves. We have the means to be offer some charity, but often choose not to. His cap is empty, so can we assume the shop behind has turned its back on his plight, symbolising how we often react ourselves? Thankfully the woman is showing genuine charity here. She may have her own personal needs to consider in the form of providing for her unborn baby, yet she has chosen to offer some change to the vagrant. She is not judging him, or lecturing him on what it should be spent on. How many times can we say hand on heart we have offered support with no strings or ground rules attached?

If you associate with the vagrant, it may show that an offer of support may be forthcoming. Therefore the hardship you feel you are experiencing may be alleviated. The support may come from an unlikely source, but will be valued nevertheless.

If you associate with the woman, it could show that you need to give something of yourself with genuine intent. You may find you have to overcome any prejudices when doing so, and give from the heart. If looked at on a Karmic level, what you give you may well find you receive back in a different form. This woman may be passing this caring trait into her unborn baby, trait so that in turn he or she can grow up prepared to offer in the same way. She has one hand on her stomach as she offers the coins with her other hand. She is aware of how precious life is, and may be making a link between the vagrant and the life developing inside her.

ITEMS INSIDE THE SHOP WINDOW

In some respects I believe they show the history of the vagrant. Although he is aged now, he would have experienced childhood and youth, as shown by the painting set and school book. The heart and rose are interesting, and may show at one time he was in a relationship. Has that relationship been broken in some way? If so, how did it then lead to him being homeless etc? He had high aspirations at one time as depicted by the star. Yet his aspirations did not come to anything, or if they did they are now lost. On the other hand the star could show that he doing his best to stay positive, and does have hopes of finding his feet again.

The ball and chain could signify how he feels right now – that he is imprisoned in his plight. What would he need to do to break free from the ball and chain, whereby the star could actually be within his grasp? How does this relate to your situation? The gold medal shows he was a 'winner' at some stage. In other words, he had achieved something. What was it, and why is the medal in the shop window? Does it signify previous successes, or does it show he has had to exchange this medal for money or food?

The overturned medicine bottles are of interest. They could show that he needs to pay attention to his health and possibly seek medical advice or have a check up. If he has been homeless for some time, and has not been eating adequately, they could be there to show he needs to pay attention to any possible medical issues that are present. If you associate with these bottles, and have concerns you are advised to certainly to follow them up. If you associate with the woman, it could indicate you are ignoring your needs and putting others first. If this is the case, make sure that you don't ignore anything your body is telling you. Yes it is good to be supportive of others, but it should not be at the expense of yourself.

Overall, this card can tell so many stories. Whatever the theme is, it does come back to the issue of being charitable, or receiving help from a 3rd party.

As a final note, if this were to appear with the Queen of Swords, I would be led to say something like "stop feeling sorry for yourself - there is always somebody a lot worse off than you!".

Seven of Coins

In traditional decks, this has had a variety of interpretations associated with it, perhaps more so than any other card. I have seen key words assigned as being patience, choice, more work needed, dilemmas etc. It is interesting to note this card has led to many scholars and students disagreeing on what is the right interpretation.

I will use the card imagery and Deirdre's thoughts to elaborate on how it applies to this particular deck.

The card shows a farmer sitting on a three-legged stool milking a cow. However the milk appears to be flowing even though he is not actually massaging the teats, the milk flowing through his fingers into the bucket below. His head is turned away from the cow, and if we look closely, the cow seems to be looking in at the same thing as the farmer. Whatever has caught their attention appears to be outside of the card and therefore out of eyeshot.

In addition to the interpretation given by Deirdre, it can show a level of complacency is setting in. The farmer would have gone through this many, many times to the extent he feels he can milk the cow without having to look at what he is doing. He is going purely on instinct backed up by previous experience. Can this signify you have attained a level of ability whereby it is now second nature to you? Or could it show that there is a danger of becoming complacent? The cow looks amiable enough, but should it decide to kick a rear leg, what would happen to the bucket?

The cow has its tail rigid and away from its body. Can we read anything by this body language?

Also, what can we assume from the fact the milk is flowing freely? Does it show that we have to be careful not to let something precious slip through our fingers? Or does it show you have thought ahead and have taken precautions to prevent the loss of such a precious commodity?

SYMBOLS WITHIN THE DISCS

There are some interesting symbols within this card. Each may mean something different to each of us, but these are my thoughts accordingly:

The telescope.

Usually utilised to see detail in objects far away. Can this show that you need to take a closer look at something that may appear on the horizon in the not too distant future? If so, how does that relate to what the farmer/you are doing right now?

Stopwatch

Are you against a time constraint of sorts? If so, do you feel you are on schedule? If not, what does this card indicate you may need to consider?

Butterfly net

This makes me visualise childhood summer days where we feel we are able to catch these wonderfully colourful yet elusive creatures. I can never remember actually succeeding, but many an hour was spent flitting between plants as I tried to capture that special insect. Does this show you need to capture the moment before it slips through your fingers, never to be retrieved again? Or could it show what you are trying to capture may actually be elusive?

Pair of dice

This may show there is an element of chance at play. It is down to you to decide whether you gamble and take that risk, or play it safe. In this case the top two numbers add up to 6. Is this a number you feel shows the risk is worth taking, or is it something you feel may go against you?

You may well have a lot to lose, and perhaps a lot to gain. Other cards you're your own intuition may show which way is advisable.

Shaking hands

Will you benefit by going into a partnership of sorts as opposed to going it alone? Or could this show a deal being made, a contract being agreed? Certainly another person or parties may be relevant to what is being undertaken or considered.

Rosette

Not quite the medal we saw in the previous card, but it does show recognition of sorts. Whereas a medal may indicate personal achievement, rosettes are usually associated with prizes given to animals or livestock. This may therefore be linked to the cow as opposed to the farmer. If so, what could it signify with your current situation?

Cogs

Cogs have appeared on a previous card, but in this case they display numbers as opposed to monetary symbols. All three numbers are odd numbers. What do they

relate to? (In the Major Arcana we would be seeing The Empress, The Chariot and the Hermit – are these significant on a subconscious level?) Cogs indicate movement of an industrial nature. If they are not oiled or maintained, the failure of one can have a knock on effect on everything else in the sequence. What do the cogs mean to you in conjunction with this card?

Certainly a lot to consider, and when reading back over these notes it is clear there is no defining message or advice. There is a lot of diversity by way of meaning and symbolism, which takes me back to my opening statement. This card has a certain amount of fluidity to it, and its interpretation can be applied in different ways to different situations.

One or more of the symbols utilised can really show the permutations possible are quite varied.

How this came across in a reading: (typed as it appeared in the reading with a relationship issue being examined)

I think the energies may just be showing you how you feel about things at the moment, but this card is one that we need to see as important. Whatever relationship you are involved with in the future, we can see there can be some positive. The farmer is milking a cow and although he has his head turned he knows from past experience the milk is flowing into the pan below – he does not have to see this to know this is happening. This shows belief in his own ability and also belief in the cow. A valuable and appreciated partnership by both involved. There is also a cog in a disc above him. What do cogs mean to you? Does it show action or movement will cause another opposite reaction and movement? Does it show when interlinked, they work together yet in opposite? I think if the relationship is to be healthy for you, there will be acknowledgement of it being a partnership, with both parties offering support to each other. Just as the farmer relies on the cow for milk, the cow relies on the farmer to prevent a build up of fluid thus causing distress. A mutual friendship and relationship. Yet I feel you may be different in character or personality, yet compliment each other well.

ADDITIONAL FROM DEIRDRE

By goodness in trying to simplify the card I appear to have caused a great deal of confusion.

OK, first thing we notice is that this is a coin therefore we are likely to be looking at money or daily job/work. Second thing to notice is that the number of the card is seven, an uneven number, also quite a high number so the matter should not be treated lightly. Sevens also indicates a cross-roads which means a decision has to be made. Before we begin to interpret this card on its own - as you know its significance

will alter slightly depending on its place in a spread - let us take a look at the querent's character.

Why did I use a farmer, besides the obvious fact that I live in a farming community. Well farmers are hardworking, responsible self-reliant individuals. The nature of their work means that they are also gamblers, when planting crops they are dependent on the vagaries of the weather. Caring for livestock can throw up all sorts of challenges, price of feed, health and market fluctuations. They know that their success is very much dependent on hard work and buckets of luck and yet they persist year in and year out never knowing whether or not they will have a good year or a bad year.

What does this mean regarding the querent? It means they have all these wonderful qualities and they are not going to fall at the first hurdle. However, they are at a cross-roads and a difficult decision must be made - do they continue as they are or do they start something new. Unsurprisingly that question has surfaced for some farmers who come for readings - some of them are switching to bio fuels crops - apparently bigger subsidies (bit mistake I think - but then what do I know). Will this venture be a success - yes provided they continue to work hard and have endless patience - impatience leads to imprudent actions which in turn leads to unwise investments and loss of money (reversed card).

So the querent needs to take stock of their situation and in order to do that they need to take a breather. Will their action require they make lifestyle changes - look to other cards for clarification. The other cards should tell you whether or not they will regret letting this opportunity slip through their fingers.

Their intuitive powers are good but are they good at this time - you will need the 9 of Cups and the Wheel of Fortune before you can give them a resounding yes. Be cautious if the 2 of Swords, two or three 7s, Moon etc. accompany this card - they will need to consider the matter carefully before making a change.

I would advise any reader to take three deep breaths and relax before drawing cards even when drawing cards for their own readings.

I hope this clarifies aspects of the 7 of Coins. You are on the right track with the items in the coins just tweak them a little and they will make more sense particularly in a live reading.

Regards

Deirdre

Eight of Coins

When looking through traditional decks, we usually see a man hard at work, manual labour being very prevalent. It will often show that you have done well to build on your skills and experiences, and are now at a stage where the learning process has moved into a state of natural competence. Becoming a master of your trade as opposed to the apprentice.

With this deck, we see that learning never really stops. If we use the tarot system as an example, we will never be able to say we have learned all there is to learn. Each deck brings new experiences, each time we use cards in conjunction with each other the permutations increase accordingly.

The card is again unusual in as much as there are 4 characters portrayed, all involved in different activities. The boy on the left is involved in a form of exercise. He may be stretching prior to undertaking his main activity, thus preparing his body and muscles for the work they are about to undertake.

The central character may be the class teacher. She is reading from a book, a further pile of books on the desk in front of her. The character to the right is playing a violin. The female student is shown in the foreground of the card sat at a desk with a book open in front of her. She is looking directly at us with a smile on her face.

As usual, each character has their own story to tell, and should be looked at in their own right. Each may well link in with the theme of the card I have typed above. They could all have come through a period of learning, and are now putting their skills to use. Notice how none of them are focused on the teacher. This I believe does show that they may now be ready to become self reliant with the knowledge they have been given by the teacher. When we break away from formal learning (school etc) a new type of learning takes place. That could be in the form of learning independence, learning self-belief, application of knowledge etc. However, the teacher is still on hand to offer words of support or encouragement.

BOY STRETCHING

He really does seem lost in his own world. His eyes are closed as he stretches out the side of his body. I am a qualified gym instructor and see this stretch as either being preparatory or a cool-down. If preparatory it shows you are preparing yourself and your body for some serious work ahead of you. Failure to do this could result in injury or muscle strain. Is there something you feel you should be preparing for? If you see the stretch as being literal, does it show you need to stretch yourself and your abilities

a little more? You may be capable of more than you think, but will never really achieve all that is possible unless you push your limits a little further as you progress on your journey.

VIOLINIST

He really does seem to be caught up in his own private world here. If the story could be told to us, he may well be responding to the emotion and words as the teacher reads from the book, and is accompanying her with suitable music. In this respect he is in harmony with the teacher. Is there something you could be doing with someone else whereby your joint efforts can bring about great reward? Both the teacher and the student are utilising different skills here – the spoken word and music, yet both synthesise really well. If you associate with this, it shows you have great ability, but think how that could be enhanced if joined with somebody else who shares your common goal.

TEACHER

With the pile of books in front of her, we can see how Deirdre has classed this card as indicating further learning may be needed, or there is a requirement to return to training. The students may not be aware of this at the moment, but those books show there is possibly a lot of work ahead of them before they can really leave the classroom and go it alone. All the students look relaxed so the learning should not be arduous in any way.

I think we also need to remember that the teacher is also a student in their own right. Each group of students will bring with them different life experiences which when shared, lead to learning for everyone including the teacher. If you associate with this latter statement, what can you learn from people around you?

GIRL READING

We can see her in at least two different ways. On one hand she is obviously enjoying the experience in the classroom. Yet another indication that any return to learning will be enjoyable and fulfilling. On the other hand it could show that she is distracted from her work. She is looking up and laughing. Not disruptive by any means, but could it show that you are not getting your head down right now when you should be? Are there tasks there that need tackling, but you are choosing to find merriment instead? She has good intentions as shown by the fact she is sitting at the desk with the book open, but may need to concentrate on the task at hand.

BLACKBOARD ITEMS

The coin and the dunce hat remind me of two approaches that can be taken when teaching. Either positive re-enforcement can be given through the issuing of a coin (reward), or negative re-enforcement can be given through the issuing of the dunce hat. Do you find you respond better to praise or criticism? How does this apply to your current situation?

Overall, this card is both positive and active. You can expect to find yourself involved in something that has potential to bring about a sense of achievement or reward. If it is something you have already been working on, give yourself a pat on the back – you may have broken away from the apprentice label whereby you shine with natural ability.

Nine of Coins

On a positive note, generally I associate this card with personal achievement, as opposed to a joint achievement sometimes shown with the 10 coins. This is supported by the fact we only have one character in this card. She appears to be quite content by herself, with her dog as company. However, when we look closer there is a lot more by way of depth and story telling ability, which can sway us in different directions.

Deirdre has already alluded to the 'yet' which hangs over the card in a subtle way.

SNAIL

The snail does not move at anything close to lightening speed, so could indicate that the journey has been slow at times, or that more patience is needed before you find yourself where you want to be. If this scenario does apply, be warned there is nothing to be gained by forcing an issue at a pace which is not suitable.

The snail seems to be quite comfortable amongst the foliage, and gives the impression it has found its ideal habitat. A positive sign that all is well in this garden.

PIGGY BANK

This can show there is a wise head on shoulders with regards to finances. She seems to have done well for herself, but the presence of the piggy bank shows she is still saving for any possible 'rainy day'. Quite a sensible course of action, and shows she is aware that circumstances could change unexpectedly. This year we see her flowers have bloomed beautifully. However, it would only take a period of unusual weather, or for insect infestation for the whole scene to change drastically. If you had unexpected misfortune, have you put enough by to ride out this difficult period? Are you assuming this period of good fortune will last, and if so, could it indicate a sense of naivety on your part?

The piggy bank could also indicate slow growth, but with the growth coming from investment. In this case it is through time and the correct application of nutrients needed to ensure a bountiful crop. Usually the piggy bank will hold coins, and when seen from a child's point of view, the build up of the coppers is slow, but how their faces light up when they realise how much they have saved over a period of time. Not a fortune to us as adults, but to children - they have become rich. Therefore we need to appreciate our efforts may be taken for granted by some, but to others the end result will bring about great reward.

THE DOG

If this card were animated I reckon would be able to see its excitement as it burrows into the foliage. How fast would that stubbly little tail be wagging? What is it rooting for? What has it seen we are not privy to? Is there a danger it could dig up some roots, unseen by the woman? We hope not. She has obviously put heart and soul into cultivating the flowers – it would be a shame if these were destroyed through the innocent over-exuberance of the terrier. As Deirdre has already stated, this dog can show that you are missing what is right in front of you.

HIDDEN NUMBER (310)

Talk about not being able to see the wood for the trees...lol. I knew this was here but it took me quite a while to spot it!

I am not sure what the meaning of the number itself is (this I will leave to Deirdre to explain) but its format bought to mind two things:

This sort of approach/imagery is often used when detecting colour blindness. We see a lot of colour in the flowers, and it could be possible to not really see what is within the colour. (The texture, the smell, the individual petals etc) The number and how it is portrayed is asking us to look closely so as to differentiate within the foliage, and truly appreciate the finer elements which make up the beautiful array we see. (Also gives us the opportunity of spotting early signs of greenfly which could have a devastating effect if unnoticed!)

In addition I see this type of number when asked to verify entries on websites, so as to avoid spam entries. Could this be asking us to verify something in order to confirm honest intent? (This aspect would be very dependant on the reading, question asked and position within a spread, and would not be relevant in many cases).

Overall I do see this card as being positive, but can understand why there may be a sense something is missing. She may well be somewhat of a loner. She may well also be searching for that missing 'something' but may not be aware of what it is. Does she therefore chose to lose herself in caring for the plants around her, not realising there is some sadness or emptiness in her home life? (Just take a look at the darkness over her house to understand where I am coming from). Also, the coins are devoid of any symbolism which has proved unusual as most cards to date from this suit have had something within. Is this yet another indication that she has done well for herself, but still needs to consider what she needs to do in order to bring about TOTAL fulfilment? Their emptiness can speak volumes, yet in a subtle way. After all, this card is the 9 of

coins. We still have one more to consider, indicating there could be a little something extra needed in order for her to feel totally content.

Ironically, the 'missing' part may well be in full view yet she has not realised it. The dog is burrowing into the foliage ignoring the apple. You may not need to dig too deep to actually find what is needed.

HOW IT WAS USED IN A READING: (AS ORIGINALLY TYPED)

what you see:

In this case I think it does show you have had to leave a comfort zone of sorts in order to see something come to fruition. You have worked hard at something which may have taken you away from where you felt totally comfortable, but the effort has paid off. However, you are not letting things go to chance, and you know you still have to maintain this otherwise risk things becoming undone and taking you back to square one. It has been something of a lone venture, but you have felt happy with that, and have not wanted to rely on others to get you where you are now. I will leave it with you as to what the dog signifies, but he seems to have found something of interest out of your site deep at root level. Just be careful over exuberance doesn't disturb the foundation you have created.

Ten of Coins

Whereas the previous card indicated personal fulfilment and material security, this very much concentrates on the family set up.

We see three generations of existence within this card. The house and coat of arms indicate there has been something that has been passed down from generation to generation, and looks to be continuing with the recent arrival to the family. With this in mind, it does indicate the newborn may grow up with financial stability, courtesy of his birthright.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

He is shown as sitting by the fire, away from the other characters depicted in this card. The fire he is in front of is not lit, so this could indicate there is a sense of cold detachment on his part. This could be his natural demeanour bearing in mind the time period in which he was born. It is unlikely he has ever really displayed much by way of emotion. The typical "stiff upper lip" demeanour. However, his could also show that he feels he is no longer central in the family unit. However his place by the fire does show that he is still very much the patriarch, but the main focus of attention of the other adults is on the newborn. This gentleman still has his dog for company though, and is on hand should he be needed.

Can you associate with this gentleman? Are you part of a secure unit, but feel your role is no longer seen to be as important as it once was?

YOUNGER COUPLE

The other two characters are in the foreground of the card, the woman holding a newborn child, the man reaching out to support its head. The male may not often hold the infant (I feel with the time period indicated his role would have been minimal) but he will always be there for support whenever it is needed.

He may be relieved to know that the bloodline has been continued, the family name to be passed on to another generation.

Usually this card exudes warmth and stability. It is indicated in this card, but in a more controlled and understated way. We don't see the 'ooh'ing and aahh'ing' over the baby. The people portrayed do not seem to be the type to openly display their emotions. Even the chairs look stiff and uncomfortable, but do fit in with the time period of the scene.

It is a refreshing change to see that stability and strong family ties are shown, but not in an overly flashy or excessive way. Some decks can go over the top with how they portray this sense of unity etc. Here it is understated. Therefore there is no chance of raising hopes of massive windfalls, only to find the windfall came in the form of just 4 numbers on the lottery. A sense of decorum is very much in evident.

As with the 10 of coins, we seem to find ourselves in a bygone age. That was my first thought, but having considered it a little more, I realise we still have schools in the UK whereby the uniform is something associated with the Victorian era. With this in mind we need to consider this card is applicable to all of us, regardless of our background, upbringing or education.

Certainly the whole scene may relate to a public school of some standing. We see the founder is proudly displayed in the middle of the square. It would be very difficult to ignore his presence due to the fact it is so prominent and central with the scene. Two people are walking past the bronze statue. On closer inspection we may find they are tutor and pupil, or two pupils from different year groups. In the foreground we find a young student deep in study, an open book in his hand, his rucksack over one shoulder. A previous card of this suit indicated a possible return to the classroom, so how do the cards differ? In this case there is a serious intensity, whereas the 8 of coins was more relaxed and light-hearted. Therefore the learning indicated on this card will be more involved, and could also be more challenging.

THE FOREGROUND STUDENT

As we are in the suit of coins, we need to bear in mind there is going to be a link with finances or our material side of life. In this case he is very focused on what he is doing, and is ignoring the coin beside him. Could this show that you need to look at the long term here, and do what is needed in order to bring about material stability? Does it show a wise head on young shoulders – he is prioritising and not allowing himself to be distracted by the trappings of materialism?

He does have one shoelace undone. For now he is standing still, but should he start walking, with the level of focus he is showing, what could happen? Is there something that could trip you up if you are not careful? The untied shoelace is really out of place when we see how sharply he is dressed in general. It is admirable that he is intent on his studies, but concentration must not be lost in other areas of importance.

His rucksack seems to be positively overflowing with papers. Could this show there is a risk he could be trying to take on too much? If so could this curtail his enjoyment of other areas of life. (The saying of “too much work and not enough play” comes to mind).

Going back to what Deirdre has mentioned in the first book, we can see that there is an opportunity for him to benefit from the hard work he is putting in now. He could very

well be setting himself up for a worthwhile or well-paid career. How many of us look back on our own school days with a little bit of regret over the fact we didn't put the work in when we had the opportunity? If you were passing on advice based on your own experiences, what would you be saying to our young Page?

BACKGROUND CHARACTERS

We cannot really glean much from the two characters as they are walking away from us and the Page. The statue is surrounded by a fence of sorts. Is this to protect the statue from damage etc? Or could it show that the founder was held in such reverence, it is not desired that he be touched in the bronze form he is now portrayed? This is somewhat of a puzzle. I find it hard to believe that the students at this school would be of the mind to cause damage. Besides, the fence is very low and could easily be climbed over should somebody be that way inclined. I believe the latter may be applicable. What does that tell you about the level of respect shown and expected by all who attend the school? Is there something you should perhaps be looking after a little more? Could it be something that if damaged, may well be irreplaceable?

Knight of Coins

This knight is very different to that portrayed on the suit of swords. He is calmer, and not focused on taking up a battle or arms. Certainly his physique does show is enjoying the finer points of life – possibly a little too much at times . We could not imagine the Knight of Swords showing this lack of self- discipline, yet we can see there is a lot more here which is of relevance.

The horse is a large Shire horse – the gentle giant of the horse world. My grandparents used them to till the land, and it is sad to see with the onset of modern technology their role has diminished. He has forgone a saddle, using a golden fleece instead. We so see some rather sharp looking spurs, but my gut feeling is that he rarely has to use them. The horse will be quite temperate and responsive to gentle persuasion. They are there I believe as a gentle reminder to show us who is actually in charge here, but that power may not need to be used. Does this show that you can regain a sense of control without the need to impose yourself on others?

We see has halted his journey temporarily, and is gazing at the large disc in the sky, the disc reminiscent of the sun. The sky to the left is rather dark with grey clouds dominating that part of the skyline.

The flowers in the foreground are wild growing, very different to the cultivated plants we have seen in previous card. The whole feel of the card is that of nature at one with the knight, and the knight at one with nature.

Deirdre has given a very eloquent interpretation for this card, and there is not a great deal I need to add by way of insight.

MAN ON HORSE

He certainly does appear very focused on the disc in the sky. Has he been through some hardship, whereby he can now focus on the positive as it reveals itself in its full glory? (As depicted by the grey clouds moving to the left). Or could it show that the clouds are in fact coming into to play, thus indicating he may need to ride out a difficult time, but should not lose focus on the positive – the grey clouds will eventually pass, once again revealing the gold disc in the sky.

Whatever scenario you feel is appropriate, he has his feet firmly on the ground and I believe he will be fully prepared and not at all unsettled by events unfolding. Even the horse underneath him does not look as though it is about to startle. A good, down to earth approach being shown here. You just know you can rely on this Knight should

you need some guidance with your home life or finances. He will give serious thought before giving his insight.

With regards the spurs, it could show that you need to give yourself a bit of a nudge to get moving again. It is okay to take stock of situations, but there does come a time where you need to then bring about some movement in order to progress. In other words, don't just stand there gazing at the disc – move yourself and go and get it!

THE HORSE

This really does indicate stability and support. His strength is apparent, yet understated. He does not need to flex his muscles to prove his worth, but will show what he is capable of day after day. Thus reliability is also represented. Are you in need of this in your life right now? If it is something beyond you at the moment, who can you call on who may be able to offer these skills?

If you associate with the horse, how would you want to respond should the spurs be used? Do you feel that you are always carrying someone? If so, how does the relationship benefit you? Benefit the pair of you as a unit?

With regards the wild flowers, I believe they show a natural sense of harmony, one that does not have to be cultivated in order to flourish. Therefore this character does not offer his advice with any ulterior motive. He is just being himself, in his own way and probably in his own time.

Queen of Coins

Well, she is certainly a contrast in many ways to the previously discussed Knight. Whereas his attire was plain and practical, our Queen is showing a love for the finer aspects of life. Not only is she well groomed, she relishes in a sense of luxury around her. You just know she will scrutinise everything within her palace, and will ensure it is of the best quality available. This Queen would not have a common breed of cat – oh no. She will be seen with the exotic species such as Persians or Siamese. She wants people to be aware of her status and this will extend to how she shows off her pets and children.

We are reminded of her status by the presence of a throne. Once again, it is not an 'ordinary' throne. This particular item of furniture is made of gold, and is cast with beautiful lines and design about it. You just know it is one of a kind, and that she had involvement throughout its development/creation.

As there is a lot to be witnessed in this card, once again it is worth looking at each character or aspect in detail.

THE QUEEN

She would be offended if we did not look at her first!

Her clothing exudes style and grace. Yet when we look at her collar area, we see it is rather stiff and stifling. Does this indicate she will put style over comfort? How often have been guilty of this ourselves when we insist on wearing the latest fashion or shoe, even though it is incredibly uncomfortable, and may cause us fatigue or injury? If you associate with this, you may have to consider the repercussions. It may get you noticed, but at what cost? Why do you feel you have to make such an impression, even though it is not something you feel comfortable with?

On the table in front of her we see coins piled neatly in 3 piles. Does this show that she is aware of the importance of keeping an eye on her financial situation? (The saying of "watch the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves" comes to mind). Or does it show she has frittered away a lot on her extravagant lifestyle, and is now down to just a few coins from what was once a substantial amount?

If you believe this is true for you, what does it tell you about what you should be doing if you are to avoid total ruin?

She is holding a sceptre in her left hand. If she is not careful she could upset the piles she has so painstakingly arranged. On a subtle level she is pointing to the pile of coins,

as if to say "look what I have got!" Is she trying to bring our attention to the fact she is doing well for herself?

Or is she asking to you to pay attention to your own financial situation?

When looked at from different angles, we see she may be offering some sound advise as opposed to just showing off her fortunes.

THE CHILD AND CAT

The child has a red cape draped over one arm, a pile of fruit balanced precariously in his hands. In comparison he is not dressed in finery. If anything he is underdressed in comparison to his mother. What does the presence of the fruit signify to you?

He is looking up at his mother, but has his back turned towards her. What does this tell you about their relationship? He is holding onto a large amount of food here. Could it show he has been bought up in an environment where over-indulgence is the norm? It is interesting to see he is not fully clothed. Could this show neglect of sorts by the Queen? Instead of providing what is needed for her child (nutritional food in the right quantities, adequate clothing) she is focused on her own pleasures. Where do needs and pleasures in your life overlap or show there is something lacking? What does it tell you about your priorities?

The cat is very aloof, and is looking out of the card directly at us. Such breeds are not easy to care for. They require a lot of attention and regular grooming. Is this a reflection of how the Queen considers grooming to be of importance?

This queen is so different to the character we saw on the 4 of coins. In this case she has perhaps been born or married into wealth and status. The lady on the 4 of coins gives the impression she had worked hard to get where she was. Both display their wealth and possessions in very different ways.

In a reading situation: (as typed by Deirdre in follow up to a reading we discussed)

So how does the child feel? OK let's try to see things from the child's perspective. The security aspect was very important to this child, food, warmth, shelter, etc. If they felt their environment threatened then they would react by over-eating or holding on to their possessions. Look at the child in the Queen of Coins card - half naked, too much food and clinging to the fruit. They were also very keen to please (notice the child's big smile). However, they were conditioned to think in a certain way probably because the mother made their decisions for them. This would have caused problems in adulthood as they would continue with their learned helplessness - trying to please everyone and ending up pleasing nobody. Frightened to cut ties with people and situations and clinging to things for way too long.

King of Coins

He certainly appears to be happy with life doesn't he? A half smile on his face, relaxed posture, and an array of goodies on the table in front of him support the fact he does not seem to have too many worries for now.

Although the consort of the Queen, he does not feel the need to be as flashy, although we still have a reminder of his status and wealth in the form of his gold throne. Note however, the throne is not as ornate as the one supporting the Queen. In addition we may be led to believe that he does not show off his wealth in the form of fashionable clothing. Instead he chooses to eat and drink well. You just know the wine is not from the bargain bin at his local market – he will partake only in the finest there is to offer.

(As a quirky aside, facially he reminds you of Sean Connery a little, when he portrayed King Richard in the film "Robin Hood")

So what can we make of the scene in general?

That gold disc he is holding on his lap is quite substantial, and would be rather heavy. The way he is holding it reminds me of how women in the late stages of pregnancy would gently hold their stomachs. Does this show he regards his fortune as his 'baby' – something he is proud of? Certainly if the status has been achieved through hard graft and wise investments through his adulthood, he would have every reason to be proud. There are a lot of smaller gold coins falling from him. Does this show he is not as careful with his money as the Queen was? Or does it show he does not see it as being the be all and end all, and does not pay obsessive attention to it? If the latter does apply, he certainly does not mind if he loses a few coins here and there – he had more than enough to start with.

Yet what can we make of the abacus? Does this show he is more shrewd than he is letting on? He may give the outward appearance of being somewhat blasé, yet in his own mind he knows exactly what his incomings and outgoings are. Therefore it would not be wise to try and pull some sort of ruse or manipulate him where money is concerned. He has his finger on the pulse a lot more than you think. Besides which if something was attempted, you would not only have the King to deal with but also, his faithful terrier.

He will be generous in offering advice and support, particularly of a financial nature. The red rose does indicate if you are involved in a relationship with him, you will want for nothing. He will be as generous with his affections as he is with his money. Believe me, if he throws a party you will not have to suffer sausages on a stick and a record

player struggling in a corner of a room – he will make sure everyone enjoys themselves to the fullest, and will spare no expense in doing so.

In a reading situation: (notes as they were typed at the time of the reading)

where this relationship has led you for now: The next and final card is the King of coins. This is one again that can be a puzzler, as it usually indicates material and financial stability. In this card we see the king sitting on a gold throne with a large pentacle on his lap. I think you are okay and have come out of things relatively well, but you do have your back to a large castle on the hill. Are you looking to salvage what you can and take what you know is rightfully yours, and what you have worked hard for? I can also relate this to your emotional state. I think you are really doing your best to hold your head up high and keep a sense of pride and dignity.

Minor

Suit of Swords



Ace of Swords

It is so refreshing to see a properly illustrated ace card. Oh so often in decks we see a statutory sword indicating it is the first card of the suit, with nothing else to really get our teeth into when interpreting it in a reading. For this reason alone, I can understand why those new to tarot occasionally struggle with the aces.

In this card we see Alexander the Great. I will not go into detail as to what this would symbolise as Deirdre as already covered this in her first book, but it is worth looking at how it could apply in a reading situation.

THE KNOT

This could indicate there are complications in your way. Obstacles can usually be overcome by going round them or by utilising a lateral approach. In this case that approach may not be enough – the issue is too complex and may be asking you to use some heavy brain-power by way of solution. That knot and rope are fairly substantial for sure. However if you look at the knot it does appear to be quite complex – could this indicate the issue is one that may be beyond your natural abilities? If so, you may need to take away your focus from the knot and move it towards the rope itself where there may be weakness you can exploit. The rope is wrapped around a solid tree. Certainly the approach not to take would be to tackle the tree itself. Yes you could bring it down but do you have the time and energy to do this?

THE MAIN CHARACTER

Here we see Alexander the Great and he does not look as though he is going to give up with this issue. He has his sword raised, and it is easy to believe he will be able to cut through the rope with one swing. Look carefully though – is he aiming for the knot or the rope? If he is aiming for the knot itself what does that tell you about his determination? It could indicate you are prepared to aim directly for the problem and not pussy foot around. If you are aiming for the rope, it could indicate you are taking the easier path to deal with the same issue. The main colour on the card is shown with the crown he is wearing. Why do you think this is the main colour in the card, and what would it signify to you?

BACKGROUND

The two main things to consider as Deirdre has pointed out are the sea and the lamb. The sea is behind Alexander. Could this indicate he has already dealt with hardship and overcome that hurdle, ready to face the second challenge of the knot/rope? Or is it

something that will need attention once he has wielded his sword and dealt with the obstacle in front of him?

We cannot see any boat or other vessel. Therefore we are not sure if a journey is indicated. Other cards in the reading may shed more light on the significance of this stretch of choppy water.

The lamb is so out of character with the energy of the card, so therefore must be given a lot of significance. It could indicate that you need to just calm things down a little and think things through with more objectivity before wading in with decisive actions. If you feel you are depicted as the lamb in this card, could it indicate you are prepared to take a back seat and let somebody else take the decisive action? Or is it an acknowledgement that your strengths and approach may come into play once the path has been cleared for you?

Two of Swords

This card certainly does bring about an image of being caught in a stale mate situation. There is no movement, but if there is to be progress something or someone must give.

TWO MAIN CHARACTERS

Both characters are in an "on guard" stance, with both ready to react instinctively should the other make a move. However, it appears neither is prepared to make that move in case they leave themselves vulnerable, thus the stalemate. However, depending on your situation and emotional state, it could be possible to associate one as being in an aggressive stance and the other taking a defensive stance. If this is how you associate the characters, which do you associate with and why? Both are wearing the colours we see on a chessboard. However, if we took it slightly deeper, we may inadvertently associate each of the characters with how "goodies and baddies" are portrayed in some aspects of the media. For example, when stereotyping in films, the "baddie" would often be wearing black. If this was a thought you had, how does it affect how you see the roles of the characters? Which do you associate with and why? Who may represent the other party in your life and why?

We do see the crossed swords which Deirdre has indicated means a crossroads of sorts has been reached. It can also indicate you have crossed swords with somebody, and there may be a need for one of the parties to appease the situation by lowering their sword. However if both parties feel they are in the right, this situation could go on for some time.

THE BACKGROUND

The stretch of water appears calm, but we are under no illusion it is totally safe. The jagged rocks remind us that calm can come out of this situation, but it may not be easy – there is always potential for stress to rear itself, possibly when we least expect it.

Deirdre has said the sun is rising, yet the moon has not quite left the sky. If read as such, you can take heart – the sun will lighten the situation, or make the way forward that bit clearer. This can also be looked at in reverse: I could also see this as the sun setting. If this is the case, we may be reminded to not let the sun set on an argument – try to deal with it and start the day anew instead of carrying over hurts and harsh words. My Grandparents lived by this philosophy and had many happy years of marriage. I have already explained how I see the storm clouds in a previous card. If you see objects to the right as being in the future, it could indicate this stalemate situation could worsen if positive action or communication does not take place. If you see this as a signifier of the past, the issue may well be in its final stages. Look to see what the new day could bring.

Three of Swords

This card certainly has the ability to pull our heart strings. Each character in the card is experiencing distress for a variety of reasons. The despair is plain for all to see. There are two different groups as well as a shadowed third character.

FOREGROUND CHARACTERS

Here we see two ladies leaning towards each other, their body language and posture showing all is not well. The woman in white is holding a letter which is out of its envelope. We can only assume the contents of the letter has either led to her despair or has added to it. Is she looking for a shoulder to cry on in the form of the woman dressed in blue? If so, and you associate with her, is there somebody close to you who you can confide in and share your sadness with?

What do you make of the woman in blue? She is leaning towards the woman with the letter, but her arms are not giving any indication that she is able to offer comfort. Why could this be? It is interesting to see that their foreheads are almost touching each other. I believe this could show that some emotional sharing is taking place, as if energy is being passed through the brow chakra. This could resonate on a much deeper level than if she was offering comfort through an embrace. Some people are not tactile, but nevertheless it is still possible to be there at a time of need.

I also saw this as possibly showing there is something that cannot be discussed openly (it may be too painful) but the woman in white may be about to whisper something. Is there an issue in your life that is causing you distress and heartache you feel you cannot talk about openly? If so, what would you want to whisper to the woman dressed in blue?

BACKGROUND CHARACTERS

I believe Deirdre has covered the significance of their presence very well. I can certainly resonate with the child, as I was about that age when my parents split up. As a child of that age it is not really possible to understand what is happening or why. Therefore the emotions and fears of the child will be very different to that of the woman. Thus the appearance of bewilderment on its face. The child is holding something close to its chest but it is hard to make out what this could be. With the presence of the red rose and the three swords it is very easy to see why this could indicate a separation or divorce. If you associate with the child, what is it you feel you have been separated from? How will this affect your actions in the short term? The

long term? If you associate with the woman, how could you placate somebody else who has been caught up in the situation with you?

SHADOW FIGURE

This figure is somewhat enigmatic – all we see is the shadow to indicate their presence. Could this be the estranged partner of the woman with the child? If so, is he leaving the scene or walking towards the room? How would the interpretation differ according to the direction he is taking?

If he is not the estranged partner, could he represent a supportive presence who is discreetly holding back until such time they are needed? (Perhaps a spirit guide or friend etc). His presence could also remind us on a subtle level that we may not be alone for long, even though at the time we may feel as though that is a likely long term outcome. The sun is rising in the distance behind him. When the time is right, somebody may appear in our lives to once again lift our spirits. For now, they are in the shadows as we deal with and work through the pain we are feeling. Whenever this card appears it is worth following through with whichever character we associate most with, but this shadowed figure also has a part to play in the reading. He should not be ignored. His presence could signify many different things depending on circumstances, with only a few possibilities being described above.

In a reading:

I did see this card in a face to face reading with a colleague of mine. She identified with the woman in blue, but I saw that she was hurting herself in some way, but felt she had to offer support to somebody else who was involved in the same situation. At the time she was going through a difficult separation, and it had particularly affected her 20 year old daughter. She had met somebody else who was offering a lot of support and keeping her self – esteem up, but he was not a big part of her life. Having just experienced a separation she was not ready to embrace another relationship, and in this respect she understood why he was shown in the background as a shadowed figure. However, I also saw this as being her Spirit Guide. (she is a clairvoyant medium and understood why I believed this was the case). She was having to deal with this by way of a life lesson, and the Guide was taking somewhat of a back seat so as to allow her to work things through for herself.

Four of Swords

As with traditional decks, we see a figure lying down, and in this case the swords form part of the supporting structure. Sometimes, readers (particularly those new to the path of tarot) struggle to understand the difference between this and the Hermit. In this case there is a need for a 'time out'. Swords do reflect on mental stress or turmoil, and if this is applicable to you right now, you would do best to heed this card. The Hermit on the other hand is seeking solitude for a different reason. Maybe they want to contemplate an issue. In that case there is still some mental activity whereas with this card, there could be mental exhaustion. Our own bodies are our best guide when it comes to needing a break. If we ignore the messages it is giving it can possibly lead to a situation where we are forced to do so due to illness etc.

Let's take a closer look at the imagery in this particular card.

The lady concerned is wearing a white dress with a silver breastplate. Can we take any assumption she may have been a warrior of sorts, due to the presence of the breastplate? If so, has she returned from an intense battle of sorts and is now in need of recuperation? She has been able to protect her vital organs and chest area, but it could indicate it was not possible to protect her emotions and thoughts which would have been vulnerable to what she has been through. The fact the figure is female as opposed to male could support this viewpoint. We are more aware that there is a sense of vulnerability.

She is letting go of a lily to the left side of her. What does this signify to you? As you are taking this 'time out' what are you able to let go of? How could this lead to a less stressful future for you? The ground below is stony, so we can take heart if we are prepared to let go, there is no way it could re-seed and grow.

As we can see the swords are buried in rock offering some stable and firm support for the woman. A couple of the rocks have subtle imagery of down turned faces depicting sadness. This could be an indication of the what the woman is feeling right now, albeit there is no emotion shown on her face. Her position in society may mean it is not appropriate for her to show her emotions – it could be classed as a sign of weakness, so it is portrayed through the rocks instead. Could you identify with this – is there something you have been keeping hidden from the outside world? I think this is also supported by the presence of the breastplate. Although I have given one possible meaning for its presence, it could also signify she has kept her emotions contained within. If this is the case, it will only be a matter of time before we discover this is not necessarily a beneficial thing to do. Bottled up emotions can sometimes lead to illness and when that happens we are forced to take that break.

In the background we see partially blue sky, and partially cloudy sky. This could indicate time is needed. The grey clouds could be moving away, but we still have to wait before we see the full emergence of the blue sky. Whilst this is happening, use the time to re-charge and allow yourself to recover on whatever level is needed.

Five of Swords

This card has appeared frequently in readings of late. Deirdre has eloquently described how each character could be identified with, and that has certainly applied to my readings where it has appeared.

When I first started on the path of tarot, I was taught the basics, and was advised this card meant you needed to be aware of what you were saying and to apologise if you knew you were in the wrong. Therefore there was an issue of hurting others or trampling over what they were doing in order to further your own cause. Deirdre has taken a slightly different approach, and one that many would associate with as being the more appropriate meaning for this card – that of victory or defeat.

So, who do you associate with? Let's take a closer look at each character in turn.

FAR LEFT CHARACTER

Well, we don't really think of him being victorious that's for sure! Notice his clothing compared to the guy on the right. The rags are just about hanging off him. He has certainly been through a lot. His hand covered his eyes, his head is lowered and he is about to let go of his sword. If there was ever a character who needed to take some time out as shown on the 4 of swords it is this guy. He really has had enough and we just know he does not have any fight left in him. If you associate with this person, you may have to accept there is nothing more you can do. You have tried your best but there does come a time where we have to admit defeat. Not a nice thing to do, but sometimes we have to be realistic and accept situations as they are. Dropping of the sword signifies the fight from you is over.

2ND LEFT CHARACTER.

He too is dressed in rags and the length of his hair and beard show us he has been involved with something over a long period of time. Notice how his brow is furrowed. Is he signifying anger and defiance? If so, how much longer can he really continue like this? Will his defiance eventually pay off, or will he become like the guy on the far left? Could the furrowed brow show he is reflecting on the issue and may change his opinion or approach when he realises what the possible outcomes could be?

2ND RIGHT CHARACTER.

I spent a fair while looking at him through the book image, and I really did not know what to make of him. He left me feeling a little wary, and then I realised why. His

glance backwards but his posture contradict each other. His clothing is slightly different in as much as only the sleeve appears ragged. My instinct led me to think he has betrayed one side or the other, or may be changing his allegiance. Which way will he go though? Will he side with the two previously mentioned characters and therefore over throw the victor? Or has he realised he will not be successful if he stays with these two characters and is about to align his energies with the victor? I really do believe either case could be possible. If you associate with this person, does it show you may be about to cede a point and change your allegiance? If so, what could be the benefits to you? The disadvantages?

1ST RIGHT CHARACTER.

This is obviously the victor. His clothes are intact whilst his physique underlies his physical power. He is the only one holding his sword at the ready, his stance showing he is prepared for action. He has his back turned to the other three characters. Is this because he does not see them as a threat? Or are these the characters he has defeated? Could this show some arrogance on his part, whereby he could be underestimating those who oppose him? If they were his own colleagues, it could even indicate the inclination to go it alone as opposed to making use of others who could be of support. (In this case though, it is understandable why he would not want to call on them for assistance) If you feel this does apply, why are you preferring to go it alone? What are the benefits of tackling something by yourself?

Deirdre has pointed out he has notches on his sword, indicating previous victories or successes. Could this show he is a natural survivor and one who will always strive to win? Or could it indicate he sees fighting as a sort of game, one where he relishes in keeping a tally of his successes? Can you identify with anyone with this character trait?

BACKGROUND

We see that there are some ruins on the hill behind this group of men. Is this something they are responsible for, or are they guarding what they have left?

In a reading: (text as it was typed for an online reading)

With regards what you cannot see, you may find you have to take a defensive stance at some stage. This may have caught you by surprise, or may catch you a little unawares if it relates to future events or actions. You seem to be more than ready to do this, but others may not have the same confidence or belief. Not only will you have perhaps have your own interests to defend, but also the interests of others who may not be as able or as confident as you. They seem to have a defeatist attitude which is not what you would expect. If you were hoping for some support from a quarter, don't be surprised if it is not there.

Six of Swords

This is the first of the swords we have seen which has an imagery of movement involved. Therefore some heart can be taken from its presence in a reading.

I do like the way Deirdre has chosen to leave the swords imbedded in the bank. It really does convey the issue of leaving an issue behind as you leave with the possibility for better times on the other side.

Will it be plain sailing though? I don't think it will be. The boatman is working hard to move the boat towards the other shore, but take a look at the position of the sail – the wind may be working against him. If this is something you really do feel is important be aware that you may feel at times as though you are taking two steps forward and one step back. Progress may be frustratingly slow for you.

On the left of the boat (from the woman's perspective) the water is bluer and choppier. I associate the left side with our emotions. Could this be a reflection of how you are feeling at the moment? Compare this to the calmer waters on the right. Have you been able to rationalise something, whereby your thoughts have become calmer as a result? Could this explain why she is removing her wedding ring? On one hand she has thought something through and is taking decisive action, yet emotionally she may still be in some turmoil. Certainly something that can be empathised with by those who have experienced the end of a long term or steady relationship. With her demeanour we can believe she is not about to converse with the boatman. She is contemplative, whereas he is allowing her the respect of silence. If you were to associate with the boatman, what do you think your role is? Yes you are helping her on her journey, but do you feel you play any other role? What words of wisdom would you offer, should she decide to discuss things with you?

We also see the ram, which has a hint of a red ribbon tied round its horn. It is focusing on the rougher waters. She has chosen to take this ram with her for when she makes a fresh start. What does the ram signify?

On the side of the boat we see what could have been considered as Roman numerals "TXIV", yet T is not something associated with the Roman numeral system. We also see a wheel on the rear of the vessel. Is this a reminder of the wheel of Fortune, thus an indication fortunes have started to take a turn?

In the background we see some dark clouds to the left and what appears to be a church on the hill. Due to the fact I see objects to the left indicating the leaving of an energy etc, I would be pleased to see this as indicating some dark times are passing. With regards to the church, I believe this is a place of sanctuary for the woman. Once she arrives at its doors she may feel at last she is safe and protected as she contemplates what to do next.

Seven of Swords

quite often this is the card we draw when asked to be on our guard about something. Quite often decks portray one character who usually has a shifty disposition about them. Therefore it is interesting to see this card has two characters, each showing a very different focus.

CHARACTER TO THE LEFT

Before discussing him, it is worth noting that there is a line of swords separating the two competitors. This does bring to mind how the two competitors in a jousting tournament are separated by a barrier. It appears as though they have been well matched in the race they have been running until this point. It is as if we have been watching a film which has been frozen with this frame now telling the story. How it ends will be down to us to visualise accordingly. He has stopped to pick up a rather nice looking gold lamp. Will this suffice instead of the winning prize I wonder. I did have this card once appear in a reading where my instinct took me in a different direction. I saw it that this character was actually planting the lamp, as if to try and distract his opponent, but may have left his actions too late. It is questionable whether this technique will be successful, but it did fit that particular reading. Deirdre has interestingly given another slant – that the person in the lead has left the lamp for his competitor to see. In this case it appears the distractive action has been successful, assuming the finishing line is not too far in the distance.

If this is the case, you may be reminded that you need to maintain your focus and not allow yourself to be distracted. The short term benefits may be appealing, but you need to weigh them up against the possible long term benefits.

CHARACTER TO THE RIGHT

It is easy to see that he is the more focused and determined of the two runners. As long as he can ensure his feet and legs do not trip over one of the swords, he has a good chance of reaching his goal. However, the other guy is still in the picture, so he is not quite in the clear as yet. If you were watching this scene as a still from the film, what warning would you want to be shouting to the guy in the lead? What makes you think this would be appropriate?

There could also be another issue that could apply. Has the lead person been so narrowly focused he has actually gone sailing past the prize, only for the person behind to take advantage of this oversight?

OTHER FOR CONSIDERATION

We do see there are a couple of pieces of jigsaw puzzle in view. There is a lot of the puzzle missing. How could this correlate with your situation? What pieces may be missing – what would you need in order to complete/see the whole picture?

In the background we see a group surrounding a camp fire which is well and truly ablaze. They seem to be playing no part in the foreground scene. What do they signify?

Eight of Swords

This is possibly the second card in the suit after the 3 which indicates a sense of despair or despondency. Deirdre has indicated this is a cell, but has also led us to believe it is a cell of his own making. The only colour we see in the card is that of the bird. The bird certainly does remind us that it is possible to escape from our confines or mental bars. However, the main character here gives the impression he has given up hope. He is sitting huddled in a corner to one side of a table. He really could not squirrel himself away any further could he?

Whereas it is possible to have sympathy with the characters from the 3 of swords, when this card appears we really must consider giving ourselves the proverbial kick up the backside. If we continue to wallow in self pity, we cannot expect others to stick around with us in the long term. It really is down to us to look up at the bird and take flight in some way. I do acknowledge this is sometimes easier said than done. When we are rock bottom we really can lose any objectivity or the will to be positive. If there is a glimmer of hope though, it is worth following through – who knows that glimmer could turn into something bigger and brighter if we are willing to take that chance. Instead of looking into the dark shadows, take a look up and absorb the vibrancy of the bird.

TABLE OBJECTS

There are some interesting artefacts on the table which can add further insights.

The bible could offer some words of comfort or guidance. It is not as if he is busy doing anything else, so why not open it and read a few pages?

If guided by his higher energies he will be drawn to the most appropriate chapter for his current predicament. What does the gavel signify? We usually associate these with courtroom judges or auctioneers. Which do you think applies and why? If neither really come to mind as being significant, could the gavel be there to get his attention, and thus pull him out of the despair he is feeling and refocus his attention on the here and now?

The stethoscope is an unusual object, so its presence here should not be ignored. He may have lost contact with who he is within – his heart and soul. Could this be there to remind him that he is very much alive in body, and therefore in spirit? That he has a vital life force through a beating heart, therefore only his will has died for now?

There are two more books on the floor, one with a capital Y on the cover, the other with a capital S on the cover. What do they signify, and why are they on the floor instead of the table?

Nine of Swords

When I first saw this card I had a mental flashback to when I was a child living with my grandparents. I remember as a 5 year old running downstairs screaming that there was a monster under my bed. My Granddad fetched the torch and went up to investigate for me. He reassured me there was nothing there, and I went back to bed safe in the knowledge he had a look to make sure there was nothing lurking in wait. I think most of us have gone through times where we thought there was something waiting in the darkness for us, and pulled the duvet that bit higher over ourselves as we wished sleep would come quickly. Yet in the morning, with the comfort of daylight to rid the shadows, we realise how foolish we have been. We tell ourselves that monsters don't exist, and do a good job of convincing ourselves – until night time returns and our imaginations again creep up and over ride any rationality we had built up during the day.

As with the previous card of this suit, there is some colour in the form of the bedding and flowers. Why is this the only part of the card to show colour – what could it mean? The bedclothes do not look dishevelled in any way. Therefore there is no indication she has been tossing and turning etc. From this state, I am assuming she has not yet been asleep, so it is not likely she has had a troubled dream wake her up. If this is the case, her mental state may actually prevent her from falling asleep in the first place. This could lead to a catch 22 situation, whereby lack of sleep can make us more prone to being out of sorts. The more out of sorts we are, the more irrational we can become, and so a downward spiral could start. If you identify with this, what could you do to break that cycle, and thus achieve a period of restful sleep? The woman is sitting up in bed her eyes reluctantly drawn to something that is outside of the card. Yet the real issue of her nightmare is actually on the floor by the bed. Could this indicate there is something that could catch her unawares, particularly if she is jumpy at every sound or shadow? Or does it show she has really let her imagination run wild somewhat and is in danger of losing true perspective?

On the table we see a book with positive and negative symbols on the spine. What could this indicate about the contents? How would the contents relate to your thoughts or situation at this moment in time?

The vase by the bed looks rather forlorn. It holds only 3 flowers which all look as though they are in their last days or have been neglected. Has her mind been elsewhere, whereby she has forgotten to keep them watered? Or are these the only three remaining flowers from a bunch which has previously been put in a vase?

The other form in the picture is that of the troll. Notice its tongue and long/sharp nails. It looks as though it is about to touch the woman. Is there a troll in your life which could be holding you back? Can you think of anything you are worrying about unnecessarily?

Ten of Swords

This is one card that most people automatically see as signifying issues such as pain, suffering and possibly death, although with the latter we have to be careful to remember that the tarot is symbolic in its approach.

Here we see 9 bloodied swords surrounding the victim (in this case we are led to believe it is Julius Caesar) with one final sword embedded in his chest. If we see this as indicating a pierced heart we can assume there is some emotional pain of some significance.

There is a strong feeling that he has been wronged, with the perpetrators long gone from the scene. He has accepted his fate and has pulled his robe over his eyes. Therefore we are spared the sight of seeing his anguish through his facial expression. As if to really drum home a point, we see his laurel wreath has also been pierced by a sword. Whoever was responsible were perhaps trying to make a point – the status of power has been removed and treated with disdain. This really does bring it home that even though he was a ruler of standing, when stripped of his power he is still as vulnerable as the next man. He is trying to maintain a sense of dignity with the way he is covering his eyes, but his vulnerability is laid bare for all to see.

Once the issue and background to an issue has been discussed, I always try to show the recipient that there is only one way from here, and that is upwards. Things have got as bad as they are likely to get. It also signifies that this may be the right time to lick your wounds so to speak. Animals do this in all realms of the animal kingdom, and it has proved to be a good healing technique. They have been through the wars and need to do nothing for a while whilst this healing is allowed to take place. Once the wounds have healed they are ready to then fight another day. This is signified in the background of the card. We may see a sun setting on an issue which has run its course, and possibly a difficult one at that. However, the sun will rise again. When it does it can bring about a new day and a new start, albeit at the time there may be a feeling that all is lost. We see running water in the background also. It would be worth seeing this as something that can cleanse and wash over his wounds. The water is calm – another positive sign to take solace in.

BLACK BOTTLE & CRAB

The crab is an interesting symbol to have in this particular card. Does the hardened exterior belie the fact there is still a soft interior? Does it show there may be a need to take on a form of protection or to 'don a hard shell' to prevent a similar fate occurring in the future?

It is also a Christian symbol for resurrection – could this give you an insight that there is the opportunity to come back from what has happened?

The black bottle is a little more difficult to understand. It appears to be empty, its stopper on the ground nearby. What would you want to put in the bottle and why? How significant is the colour of the bottle?

Page of Swords

This is one card that has the ability to tell a story, and gives another dimension to what can all too often be portrayed as quite a plain card.

The character really does appear quite young and does appear to be more than a little nervous. We are led to believe he is a Page masquerading as a Knight. We can see his sword is almost as tall as he is, so there is still some growing to be done on his part before he will be able to wield it with any ease.

He is on a stage but we do not see the audience at all. However, his demeanour and expression may indicate he is taking part in a performance of sorts. We can only imagine how the audience is receiving his performance.

I often see swords as linked with communication. In this case our young Page may not have the skills to communicate in a clear and concise way, particularly if the role he is undertaking is one that a little daunting for his tender years. Think back to a time where you have had to put yourself across in a strong and positive way, but did not quite carry it off. How many times did you go over and 'rehearse' what you wanted to say in your head? Yet when it came to it, the words did not flow in the way they did when you were mentally verbalising to yourself. If you felt yourself become a little tongue-tied, you will have sympathy with the Page.

OTHER ITEMS

I just love this little cat washing itself behind the Page. Is it totally oblivious to his plight, or is it being rather dismissive? Could it show that just when you feel you are doing something of importance, somebody or something comes along that brings you down to earth somewhat by taking some of the spotlight away? We could also ask why the cat has chosen that place and time to conduct itself in this way. Cats usually clean themselves just before they settle down for a nap. It obviously feels unthreatened out here in full view of us all – can you associate with this at all? Luckily our Page hasn't seen it yet. Hopefully the calm demeanour of the cat will rub off on him, and he too will relax into his role.

The walking stick is propped up against the table. I think this is a positive sign, and shows there is an attempt to try something without receiving support from elsewhere. He may have made use of that support in the lead up to the performance, but now is the time to put it to one side and try to get by without it. The walking stick is still in eyeshot should he need it, but we can hope he gets through the performance without having to call on it. Is there something you have used by way of a crutch? If so, what

do you think would happen if you left that crutch to one side and tried to stand on your own two feet for a while?

The empty chest under the table is quite puzzling. Is it just a prop and therefore part of the act, or is it something more than that? The lid is up, and although we see there is a keyhole, we do not see a key. What was in the chest?

And what can we make of the fox on the backdrop? It is looking alert yet relaxed – its gaze turned towards our young Page. Can this be the warning Deirdre has alluded to? Should we be careful of being complacent in the presence of an animal that is linked with sly or devious behaviour? What could his intentions be towards our young Page, or even the cat? If there is a sense of a hidden threat symbolised here, then it is easy to understand why Deirdre has said to double check anything of legal significance. If you are purchasing that new car, make sure the small print is examined closely. If you don't, you may not be able to communicate your way out of a binding or difficult situation!

Knight of Swords

As soon as you set eyes on this card it is possible to feel positive and uplifted, that anything is now possible.

You really do believe nothing is going to get in his way, his determination shining through as clearly as his armour shines in the sun.

Unusually I want to start with the background here, particularly with what appears to be a mountain below him and the horse. We know horses cannot fly, so we certainly need to understand what this is possibly symbolising. In my mind it shows that any obstacle we believe is too large or too daunting can be cleared if only we hold onto our self-belief. In this card the horse is clearing the summit with ease. Therefore we can take heart that the issue we feel we are facing is not as daunting as it would seem. We may need to take a run up to clear it, but it can be overcome. Once we have done this, we may find ourselves looking back and chiding ourselves for doubting this could ever be the case.

The Knight on the back of the horse certainly has faith in the ability of the animal beneath him. If you notice, he does have hold of the reins but is not having to exert any control over the horse. On one hand it can show trust and faith, but on the other hand it could also act as a warning not to go into something without first being prepared. Perhaps some slight over confidence? If that horse does decide to take off, or follow a different course, are you confident enough you have the reflexes to take back that control? If you look at the horse again, her head is turned to the right. Has she seen something we are not aware of? Or does it indicate she may be distracted from the task at hand? The energy of this card overall is positive, but the other cards in the vicinity may indicate if there is a warning that needs to be heeded.

When looking at this with regards the traditional meaning associated with the Knight of Swords, we do get a feeling that he is ready to do battle, and if this relates to a communication issue, he may not have any thoughts of being sensitive or tactful. Sometimes this is needed. I am sure we have all been in a situation whereby the other party does not take subtle hints, or maybe they have refused to listen. If this the case, the Knight could indicate there is a need to get to the point. However, it could also indicate something slightly different – that you yourself are guilty of being less than tactful. A sense of speaking without necessarily thinking things through. The Knight is young and still relatively inexperienced in the matters of the battle or communication but one thing is certain – he will certainly give 100% and show no fear of repercussions.

In a reading:

I had this appear once with what the other party could bring to a relationship. Well, it was something that could excite or cause despair, depending on how adventurous you were! Certainly it indicated a very energetic character, and one who may well be quite talkative. However this was also accompanied by a sense of unpredictability. This person can be fun to be around, but could also invite trouble without realising it. They would be relatively fearless, and in that respect would have no qualms about holding their own in a debate.

Queen of Swords

I have to say, if you ever asked this Queen the inane question of "Does my bum look big in this?" you may not like the answer you get! She will be blunt, honest and to the point.

Deirdre has her portrayed as sitting on a throne of ice. Do we need any other reminder that she is not going to be the emotional or comforting type as perhaps the Queen of Cups would be? Her presence may not always be welcome in a reading, but believe me if she has appeared it is worth sitting up and taking notice. You may need to hear something direct and unadorned right now.

Her hair has been drawn back in a dark and tight bun. Just think of how the old-style school ma'am looked and you will understand the symbolism. She will not find amusement in idle frivolity, particularly if she is trying to tell you something you need to be taking on board. The crown of icicles remind us that she is sharp minded. There is absolutely no point in trying to put one over on her – she will see through it in a flash. The two crossed swords over her chest are an interesting inclusion with regards the symbolism. How does this link with the 2 of swords itself? Does it show that there is no easy way to her heart – the swords bar any thought of entry? Does she keep her emotions hidden within for any particular reason? Could it remind you there is no way you will get her to open up emotionally, or any point in trying to get an emotional response to an issue?

If we take a look at her sword, we see it actually sharp and pointed. Slightly different in appearance to the sword carried by the Knight. This sword appears to be ready for piercing through something as opposed to slashing through something.

Once again we see a chest. This had appeared only two cards ago. Is it the same chest? If so, why is it closed and why does our Queen have her feet on it? I believe it shows that she is not willing to reveal anything of herself. Not only are her emotions locked away, she also uses the chest to rest her feet on. If anyone dared to try and remove the chest, she would know immediately. Can it also indicate disdain for anything to do with emotions? That they are placed below her feet to show that she has no regard for them? The chest is obviously a key symbol and one that could be relevant in at least two ways as indicated above.

An object that needs careful consideration if it is deemed to have a degree of significance in any given reading.

BLACK ROSE

The Queen is shown as releasing a black rose. The stem has thorns, yet we do not see that they have injured her or caused discomfort. Again, does this show that she is quite hardened to outside influences which may otherwise affect emotionally? What is the significance of the colour of the rose?

I believe it can show the willingness to let go of something that has been negative in some way. She is doing this dispassionately and is not even looking at what is being released.

THE BASKET

Our Queen is not one we would usually associate with maternal instincts. Could this therefore show she is childless? If so, is that by choice or circumstance?

In summary, I believe this character is one who will show that a direct method of communication may be needed. If you see yourself as the Queen you may be asked to drop any niceties and get straight to the crux of something. It may be out of character for you, and yes it may mean others are taken aback but sometimes this approach is needed, particularly if you know deep down you are being taken for granted. If you are against this character make no bones about it, she is a tough one. Any thoughts of using tactics to get round her may well be discovered. If that is the case, be prepared for some verbal backlash.

A strong willed lady indeed, and one who will always stand out in a reading.

King of Swords

The king certainly looks a little more approachable than the Queen. There is still a sense of indifference or haughtiness, but not on the same level as that of the Queen. He is quite thoughtful, and in this respect you know any answer he gives will be honest, but with some deliberation applied beforehand. He has the same valiant qualities of the Knight, but with age and experience he has lost some of the brave abandon which could at times have bordered on recklessness.

Once again, he is dressed ready for battle, his sword tall and proud in his right hand. In his left hand we see a rolled up scroll. What does this symbolise?

If there is a situation where a cool, clear head is needed to lead the way, our King will fulfil that role more than adequately. Not only does he have good communication or tactical skills, he will also be brave and lead from the front. The person who will definitely be prepared to “walk the talk” so to speak.

He does appear to be from a time where the Kings of the realm did go into battle themselves, and would often lead the charge.

Just as the Queen was sitting on a throne of ice, we can see that the King of Swords also does away with any thought of comfort or luxury. His throne is made of stone.

Therefore any advice you get will be to the point, and factual in content. If you are seeking legal or professional advice, he is the person you know you can give credence to. He will not have any ulterior motives behind his words, and can usually be deemed as trustworthy. If you are looking for honesty and objectivity, the King will usually be your advisable port of call.

A reversed card however, could show otherwise but again it is worth noting the presence of surrounding cards. Alternatively a reversed card could show you are ignoring sound advice, which could be to your detriment.

With regards to other symbolism included we do not there are objects painted or engraved on the side of his throne. There is a cup or chalice with what appears to be the number 9. Does this have a link with the Hermit from the Major Arcana? Can we assume our King is not one that would usually welcome company, but prefers to be alone with his thoughts? The other objects shown on the throne appear to be a red rose and a green apple. What do they signify to you?

With regards the sun in the background, this can show that any advice or judgement you are given by the King may help your current situation. The sun is an indication of light and energy. It may therefore point towards a breakthrough of sorts.

Major Arcana



At the time of typing, this has not yet appeared in a reading, so these are musing based on a general study of the card.

HIS POISE

The first thing I noticed was the almost ballet like poise of the Fool. This indicates a sense of balance, and also an awareness of the body and how it can express itself. How the muscle and skeletal structure have the ability to display true elegance. The fool is expressing himself well, albeit we cannot see his facial expression. A sense of freedom is indicated.

THE KNIFE

The knife on his belt is interesting in as much it is hanging loose, and may appear to be rather dangerously carried. Could this get tangled between his legs once he has made his leap? For me this shows he is not really aware of dangers he could face and may take risks not realising there could be serious repercussions.

THE FALLING COINS

We can see he is not really giving much attention to his material possessions. Money may flow through his hands without as much as a thought. Also we see he is travelling light. Does this show carelessness, or a healthy attitude towards what is really important in life?

THE DOG

I have such a soft spot for small terriers! Great characters, very loyal and very intelligent. Usually we associate this wee one with a warning, but I am not sure here. His foot is raised in a way I associate with pleading or submission. Is he pleading for him to not jump or to take care? Or is he showing us he is aware he is his master's servant and does not have the ability to make the leap himself? In this respect is the dog waving farewell with a doggie wave of his paw?

THE SKULL

Mmmmm not often seen on cards, and certainly not on this card. Look at how it is positioned – right on the edge and facing our Fool who is totally oblivious to its presence. Again, does this show he is not aware of the danger? Does he choose to

ignore it, or is he just so naïve he has not really registered its presence? The context or position in a spread could bring either aspect into play. The skull does not look threatening. We can also let our imaginations run a bit wild. How long has it been there? How did it get there? Where is the rest of it?

KEY ON CHAIN & LANTERN

Our fool does not need illumination to see where he is going. He knows his mind, and also has the moonlight to follow. His inner light is more important than artificial light from the lantern. He has thrown away the keys on the chain which to me signify being tied down, or restricted. This takes me back to his poise – it is of freedom! Thus the circle has been completed, taking into account all the symbols and attributes of this card. How many of us would love to be this Fool. To be able to shake off the chains of modern life and the stress it brings, and just experience life with total joy and freedom.

Here we have the next stage of the Fool's journey through life. He appears to have experienced more than a few years judging by the lines on his face, but what does this tell us about his journey? Have the experiences been ones of learning leading to wisdom and understanding? Or has he faced and dealt with hard times? The area behind him and shows many flowers of varying colours in full bloom. Yet the plant around the pillars indicate a different species.

On the table in front of him we see the Aces of the 4 suits on show, each facing away from our Magician. This means they are there for your benefit, and as such should be read by you. What is he trying to tell us through these cards? Note how he is not looking at the cards, but is looking directly at YOU. He really wants to pass this information or guidance to you as he is aware it is very relevant at this moment in time. Are you drawn to his eyes and face or the cards he has in front of him? Which of the cards do you feel is most relevant to you at the moment? He is the master of all the suits, and by having the aces present may show the journey is about to begin for you. However he is there to indicate you have all the skills at your disposal to increase your chance of succeeding on this journey or path. Note how his hands are openly on show with fingers spread out. He has nothing to hide. Yes he is the Magician, but he is not necessarily here to create a sense of illusion or trickery. So, what do you think is indicated by his nightcap? It does not really fit with the rest of his attire. Has he been up during the night? Does he find that is when he is at his most creative? There is an air of silence with this card. He does not need to speak – the information is there in front of you in the form of the cards. They say all that is needed to be said for now. Other cards will in their own way add more by way of relevant information.

In a reading:

The card position was "what is on your mind at the moment". The reading had an overall feeling of having low energy, and when I came to this card I actually felt the querent did not have the heart or drive to really tackle any changes head on. There was a feeling of fatigue or tiredness (taking into account the lined face and nightcap). They felt as though they were not in the position to control and would have been happy for someone else to take this role. They would have been more than capable of succeeding, but there was no will or self belief. They had seen the aces on the cards, but had turned them away as if silently willing somebody else to acknowledge their message or energy.

In a lot of decks this would have been a possible scenario for a reversed card but in this deck that came across even from the upright position. When looking at this card in

isolation, this would not be your first instinct, but when read as part of a spread with this particular issue under the spotlight, it did appear very apt at the time.

Here we see the first obvious feminine character, although the Fool I believe could be either female or male. The blue cape draped over one shoulder and her left side has a design of what appears to be a creature not easily identified. We see what could be a lion or cat's head but the body is that of a reptile. Does this indicate she herself is also perhaps of an alternative world, where such creatures do exist outside of our imaginations? Her expression is somewhat placid, but it is difficult to deduct anything by way of actual emotion. Her lips are pursed and she gives the impression she will not be speaking, yet her eyes may be the method of communication. They are large and soulful, really demonstrating they are the windows to the soul. The book is closed, and judging by the size of it, we can gauge a lot of esoteric or spiritual knowledge contained within its many pages. Is she in effect a "closed book" choosing to keep secrets to herself? Or is she about to hand you the book so that you can read and take on board the guidance for yourself? I feel she would never impose herself. She is there ready with guidance if it is sought. Her years of wisdom have recorded over a great expanse of time. As Deirdre has indicated in the first book, her age is indeterminable. Compared to other cards in the deck, there is not a lot of obvious symbolism, perhaps indicated simplicity is the key here. If she were about to speak to you, what do you think would be said and why?

In a reading:

I have had this card appear many times now, and on occasion it has hinted that something is being hidden from you, or there is a reluctance to acknowledge the truth of a situation. The answers were there in front of the querent, but they were choosing to look outwards instead of inwards whereby they could have actually been the masters of their own destiny. I did not see this as a negative, but more of a confirmation that we often fail to trust our own inner guidance.

From Deirdre:

I will focus on The High Priestess and the watermark on her dress. The 'creature' is in fact a Chinese Dragon and although we tend to associate dragons with fire the Chinese dragon's element is water. So instead of a water symbol in this card I have used the dragon, by doing so I have not cluttered the card with too many symbols. You will notice that the dragon has a kind of wavy, watery look to remind you of this important element in this card.

The dragon serves two functions and the second one is very important. The Chinese dragon has unrivalled power, knowledge and wisdom - very important attributes of the High Priestess. You will have noticed that I have left out the crescent moon and for a

very good reason. I believe the crescent moon allies this card with The Moon a completely different card. For although the High Priestess is the keeper of secrets she is not a deceiver - unlike The Moon. All knowledge is secret until it is revealed and it is not always handed to us on a plate sometimes we have to actively search for it - we don't always know we are ignorant until we need information. Aristotle said (when told that he was the wisest man in Athens) 'if that is the case then I am only wise because I know I am ignorant'. Think about the wisdom of this remark! He was also showing sound judgement and a lot of common sense - other attributes of the High Priestess that are lacking in The Moon. This paragraph also tells you the significance of the two pillars - one light and one dark - wisdom and ignorance.

Here we see the 3rd consecutive card to show flowers blooming in the background. In this case the blooms are more prominent, and really add to the energy of life in abundance. Our Empress is a beautiful woman, yet she does not give the impression of being vain or egotistical of her beauty. We have a hint of her position through her head-dress as well as the sceptre and orb, but the general appearance is understated. If she did not have these items, we would be totally unaware of her standing and position as Empress. A lady who has stature and position, yet at the same time is very approachable and at ease in simple surroundings. She has the symbol of fertility on the chaise longue but she does not appear to be showing signs of pregnancy herself. The whole energy of this card is positive and harmonised. It is as if she has found a favourite retreat or serene space amongst the flowers, with the added backdrop of the mountain scene and river/lake. She really does make you feel as though you want to curl up at her feet or sit beside her to share in this feeling and atmosphere of being at one with nature. Whenever the Empress appears you just get the feeling that everything is okay, or will turn out for the better. It may not have the overt vibe or energy associated with success as depicted by other cards, but it is still there nevertheless. The type of success or achievement that does not necessarily come with a fanfare!

In a reading:

I once had the Empress appear as a final card in a spread, with the issue being "what does spirit want you to know right now". The other cards did indicate a sense of being isolated or alone with an issue, but this card allowed the reading to finish on a positive note. In this case our lady indicated to me some healing was needed on an emotional level, and I took the presence of the flowers to indicate a vibrational form of healing (flower therapy, colour therapy, Bach Flower therapy etc) might be appropriate. The Empress is always going to be there as a nurturer or shoulder to cry on should the need arise, and in this case I really felt her presence was cathartic. A reminder that we do not need to be alone during those times when we feel we are at our most vulnerable. In this respect the fertility sign proved to me that she is there as a potential mother/guardian/carer for us all.

Well, this card is sometimes one that can cause some head scratching. How do you differentiate between the Emperor and one of the Kings? After all, they are all associated with being a ruler or leader in some way. In this respect, they are often similarly portrayed. In this deck, I believe we do not see any indications that he represents any one suit in particular and in this respect, he is independent in thought and deed. His position in relation to other cards can certainly indicate a proactive energy, but that is hinted at quite subtly in this card. He appears to be quite elderly, and his furrowed brow may show he has at times had to give serious or intense thought to a situation.

Our Emperor in the Deirdre of the Sorrows is seen as a prominent figure indeed. He exudes a sense of power, but it seems he does not have to demonstrate it in order to be shown respect. His throne appears to be of stone or other hard material. Therefore there is a sense he is 'hardened' to the realities of life, and would scorn the idea of having softer trimmings by way of cushions etc. Certainly a character to have on your side when you want a no-nonsense approach to a situation. You just know he will not let emotion get in the way of reasoned or objective thinking. Imagine you have approached him for some guidance on a given situation. What is he about to tell you? What is it about the Emperor that makes you sit up and take notice of his presence?

From Deirdre:

Your question regarding the Emperor as to whether he is higher than a King or of similar power and authority. A King rules a Kingdom which could be a region or a country. An Emperor rules more than one Region or country which could contain several Kings therefore he is much more powerful and when he makes an appearance in a spread his position tells you that he had the power and the influence to grant your desires. Alternatively, the querent could be the person in a position of authority or will soon be offered more responsibility and a greatly enhanced salary.

As can be seen, the tradition of the card has been retained, with the figure having more than a passing association with the Catholic church. However on closer inspection, his gestures seem to confuse somewhat. His right hand is raised indicating a blessing, yet he seems to have exerted some force in order to bury the prongs of the spear into the ground in front of him. We have no real indication as to how hard the ground is, so we can only guess at how much force has been used. It also begs the question of why this has been done in the first place. What is the significance of the spear being shown in this way? He appears younger in years than the Emperor, yet there is still the aura of wisdom and knowledge about him. In this respect he has highlighted something quite important – wisdom is not necessarily something that has to be linked to age. Many times I have heard young children come out with quite profound statements that belie their age, and yet we often pay scant attention or patronise them. With our Hierophant you sense that he is giving his blessing to something. Is there a course of action you have hesitated to follow? Have you had a crisis of conscience? You may find you have been given permission or authority to follow your heart. In a different context you may also find you are being offered forgiveness, but this will perhaps be indicated by other cards within the reading.

Certainly his words of wisdom will perhaps be of a more spiritual nature than that of the Emperor.

On an interesting note, I do not feel he is the consort to the High Priestess, as often shown in many decks. This may well be due to the strong Roman Catholic link we witness with this particular Hierophant. Regardless of this, his compassion will show no bounds, and he will be there for each and every one of us, regardless of race, religion or creed. If you have any doubt about this, remind yourself of how he has his hand raised to bless YOU right at this moment. If we take this further, in certain situations he may be asking you to consider whether you are demonstrating this exact same ethic – or is it a trait that may be lacking for whatever reason? Are you finding it difficult to forgive someone or yourself?

Our first card where we see more than one character, so there is certainly more of an unfolding story here. Each character could be read in it's own right, and I have chosen to do for the purpose of explaining how I see this card. Then reading it as a whole adds the final dimension and harmonises all energies into one possible interpretation (or more as the case may be!)

THE WOMAN

She is shown sitting on the left side of the card, the position associated with the feminine energy. (Note how the bride is always on the left in church during the marriage ceremony). She is holding a large red rose in one hand but has her arms crossed over her chest in what could be seen as a defensive manner. Is she trying to shield her heart from the suitor, and consequent thoughts of heartache? What does the rose signify, bearing in mind its contrast to the colour of the roses around her? She is holding it quite tightly around the stem – can we deduce she has thorns digging into her palm, and if so, why is she allowing this to happen? My thoughts are that she is hurting inside, in some way, but has become numbed to the pain. This is backed up by the look of emptiness in her facial expression. Her eyes are not on the suitor, but elsewhere, as are her thoughts. I could not help but notice the roundness of her abdomen. Is she expecting a child? Is this what is on her mind – could the father be somebody other than her partner or husband? Is this man offering support for her instead of his affections?

I also noted the fact she has two fingers raised over her shoulder, but does not appear to be pointing in this direction as such. What could this mean?

With the situation you have at the moment, if you associate with the female in this card, what is going through your mind right now?

THE GENTLEMAN / SUITOR

Here we see a gentleman with a much more open and welcoming pose, in total contrast to that shown by the seated woman. He has one foot raised on a small rock, as if about to kneel. I also see this that he is trying to lessen his height or size, so as not to appear intimidating or threatening to the woman. If this is the case, it does indicate genuine sensitivity and awareness on his part. His hand is outstretched to the woman. Is he asking for her to reach out to him with her own hand? Is he reaching out to take the rose from her, aware that it is symbolic of some emotional heartbreak? Or is he about to make some sort of proposal? Is he reaching out asking her to trust him? Any

of these could apply, but with his fingers slightly bent it is more of a beckoning gesture. He seems to have his eyes closed. What could this signify?

If you associate more with this man in your current situation, what is it you are hoping to achieve? What may be the barrier to this being successful? What is going in your favour which shows with patience, your intentions could be rewarded?

THE ANGEL

We see the angel above the couple with its wings outstretched, a large heart held to its chest. It has its gaze turned towards the woman, and the expression it is showing appears to be that of empathy and support. The Angel knows in this case the gentleman is not in need of support at the moment. The woman's needs are more important. Is the angel symbolising the comforting of the woman's emotions, as shown by the way it is gently holding the heart? Is the angel about to take an active role in the situation, or is it going to let the situation unfold without intervention? I have a feeling the angel could almost be seen as the woman's guide. He knows it is not within the spiritual laws to intervene, but will be there offering the support and comfort needed until such time the woman is able to move on from what she is experiencing.

OVERALL

So, how could this card be seen as a whole. We do see different energies at play here, with each character interacting to create or weave the story. It could indicate the woman is holding onto to her heart at the moment through lack of confidence or belief in this possible liaison or relationship. On the other hand, we may have a scene whereby this gentleman is aware of her vulnerability, and could be trying to take advantage of this situation. Other cards around this would be needed in order to show some clarity, and dictate which direction this story is following. The black or dark coloured roses could definitely come into play.

In a reading:

This card has indicated to me in a reading, the lack of willingness to open up emotionally to somebody, even if they were genuinely offering help. Holding emotions in can be unhealthy in the long run, but it is a case of knowing who you can trust to share your most inner most secrets or concerns with. This is an additional angle to that we usually associate with the Lovers – complications in a relationship or having to make a key decision in this area.

This card is perhaps one we could readily identify as being the Chariot. We have our Charioteer in charge of two powerful steeds, one black and one white. These two colours demonstrate a clear meaning of opposites of energy or polarity, and certainly in this case, they seem to be steering in different directions. Both horses are reared up, and the presence of stones flying indicates quite a fast pace. Has this card paused before we see what happens next? Is the chariot about to become unstable as the horses lose control and momentum? Somehow I think not. Just take a look at that Charioteer. He is incredibly focused on the path ahead, and I really do believe he will regain control of the horses very quickly. However, in other circumstances it could indicate complacency. These horses do need to be reined in otherwise there is a possibility they could steer the Chariot off its desired course. With this in mind it would be assumed the Charioteer would be holding a tight rein, whereas in fact he has allowed the horses to have their heads. Will he regret this, or is this signifying he has total confidence in his own ability to steer the path of choice, without the need to exert unnecessary energy? If anything he does appear nonchalant. How many of us would have been able to steer such strong opposing energies with just one hand? I can certainly understand Deirdre's warning for this character. He must not lose his focus, and should do all he can to regain control before forging ahead with his plans. Otherwise there is a risk the journey may not be straightforward. There is even a chance he could be totally detracted from his intentions, thus missing a golden opportunity. The horses have so much power yet it is wasted when used contradictory to each other. In effect any momentum is cancelled out. Just think of what could be achieved if they were working towards the same common goal.

Deirdre has conveyed the associated meaning with this card with eloquence in her book, and I would be doing a disservice if I tried to add anything different. Certainly we are reminded how we can call on inner strength to deal with a given situation, and in this respect it could indicate all is not lost. Sometimes that is easier said than done. It is when we feel our back is against the wall we believe we have no will or strength to continue. Sometimes calling on our strength from within is just too difficult or draining, but this card shows it is possible to do this without utilising energy we feel we just don't have. It is a case of having that belief that we can overcome or prevail. After all, in real terms there is no way a woman (or man for that matter) would be able to subdue a lion in this way, but it shows if we do retain a sense of self belief, anything is possible.

I do like to see how a card would read from the viewpoint of all characters portrayed, and in this case it would be worth seeing things from the lion's point of view. When we do this, we may see things very differently and our interpretation may shift away from the norm. Do we see an issue indicating submission may be needed? Does it show you need to hold back and not use the power you know you have in abundance? After all, this lion could easily crush her hand but has chosen not to do so. I have seen this shift of energy in two readings which I share below.

In a reading:

On one occasion I was led to definitely read the card from the point of the view of the lion. This was showing me how the querent felt at that moment in time, and the overriding emotion was that of losing a battle of wills. They wanted to roar straight back but their spirit had been dampened. They were still able to stand tall and proud but it did belie they felt broken spiritually and emotionally.

Another time this card appeared was when answering the question of "What do you bring to your relationship". My first instinct was to read it from the viewpoint of the woman with a comment of "You are no quitter!" She had stuck to her plans, even when it was proving difficult and eventually the other party acquiesced. Certainly the action of the lion was unexpected and this did support the thought that there had been a shift in the control of the relationship, albeit in a subtle way. However, the lion should not be underestimated. At some stage, he may well realise he too has inner strength to call on! Should that happen we would see the harmonies reversed.

This card is often associated with inner reflection or the seeking of solitude. The energy indicated should not be mistaken for being lonely, as the solitude usually indicates a personal choice. Maybe time is needed to reflect on something, away from distractions or influences of others. The 'time out' indicated is different to the energy shown on the 4 of swords. There may not be a need to recharge batteries or recover from a stressful incident. Instead, the Hermit is choosing to make use of quality time alone for whatever reason he or she feels is needed. This will perhaps show patience is required. There will be no sense of rushing things when this character appears. In fact if something is forced to progress at a hurried pace you may find you end up back to square one, where you will definitely find you have to reflect on what went wrong and why! In this card we see what appears to be a monk holding a lit lantern in his right hand, and a hefty book in his left hand.

THE LANTERN

The card indicates we still have plenty of daylight, so what is the significance of having a lit lantern at this time? Is the flame itself of significance as opposed to the lantern? I believe it could be something that brings comfort or solace, in the same way a traveller in the wilderness may feel protected if sleeping by a lit fire. It is pointing to the left, which Deirdre has indicated could relate to an aspect of his past. Is he trying to shed light on something from the past which needs to be understood or dealt with before he can move on? There may also be something out of eye-line to the left of the card which the Hermit can see, but we cannot. Is there something you prefer to class as being "out of sight, therefore out of mind," yet knowing full well it will always be there niggling away until such time it is faced up to? Is this flame his form of protection from the effects of this issue from the past?

THE BOOK

We don't really have any indication what this book is about, but judging by its size and heftiness it is significant. Is it a holy book, and therefore the one item he would carry everywhere with him, particularly at a time when he is need of guidance of a spiritual nature? Is it a diary where he has recorded his inner most thoughts throughout his life? Is he now at a stage where he can reflect on those thoughts in order to create a gateway to the next stage of his being? If you were to spend some time contemplating your life or an important issue, what reading material would you find would be beneficial and why?

In a reading:

When I had this appear in a particular reading it indicated the querent was focusing too much on the past instead of welcoming the challenges of the future. There is nothing that can be changed from the past, but we can learn from it. Yes, it is healthy to evaluate and take stock of past actions or events, but once this has happened we need to turn around and then forge ahead. Otherwise we find ourselves almost stuck in a rut, whereby the thought of actually facing the future becomes a little too daunting. When this happens the past seems to offer comfort because we have experienced it and know what to expect.

A further reading occurred where the general question was "where do I go from here?" The querent had lost both parents at an important age, and she was feeling vulnerable and lost. I saw this card also had what could be perceived as a shrine or gravestone in the background. Again, there was a feeling she was living in the past and cocooning herself from involvement from others. Her parents meant the world to her and when they died she felt as though she had lost her best friends. I gently pointed out that she should always cherish and keep memories as being special, but there had now come a time she had to turn around and embrace what the future could offer her. She held a light that in the form of the lantern that could illuminate the way forward.

This is one card that can readily be identified with in general terms. Fate is playing a hand and things may be about to change. You may not have as much control over this as you would like, but don't forget – the wheel does not stay in one position forever, so if you think things are not going as well as you would like, there will be a time where the wheel will turn in your favour again. If it has been a bit of a rocky road to this point, take heart that you may be turning the corner so to speak.

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER

In this deck we see quite a few characters, but there is one central character – a blindfolded woman wearing a long wrap-around dress. At her feet we see two serpents, and from the position of their bodies it can be deduced they are moving away from her. Is she aware of these serpents bearing in mind she is blindfolded? I believe she is. I also believe she knows if she stands still and does not startle them, they will move away without hurting her. Again, this does support the message of this card – action is not needed or desired on your part, yet if you wait a while, things will change, possibly for the better. In this case the change is in the form of the serpents moving away. This standing still on her part may go against her natural instincts when faced with a potential threat, but by making no movement, she will allow the wheel to turn in her favour.

SHADOWED FIGURES

The two shadowed figures are on either side of the wheel. One is on the downwards cycle of the wheel, and it looks as though he is falling. Does this indicate the wheel has turned against him for now? If we look closely we will see he will not actually fall off. Therefore any feeling of facing a total loss may be short lived. Once the wheel turns a little more he may find he can regain a sense of control. This will show that regardless of how bad things may seem, you will not be faced with total disaster. The wheel is cyclical – not linear. There is always going to be the opportunity to find yourself on the up end of the curve, albeit you may not feel at the time that this is going to be possible.

We can compare his fortunes to that of the other character. He has come round / through a difficult time and is now reaching out for something that is within his grasp. His position on the wheel is much more positive. What is it you could be reaching for right now? If it is slightly out of reach what is needed to bring it within your reach? Is it just a case of waiting for the right time, or do you now need to take that step for yourself in a more proactive way? If action is needed, do you think the wheel will offer you purchase if you try to take that step?

ANUBIS

My first reaction when seeing the head on the top of the Wheel was that of Anubis. There has been a lot written about the significance of Anubis in Egyptian mythology. What does the presence of the Anubis signify to you?

In a reading:

This card once appeared when looking somebody's fears with a situation they were facing. I read it that they were either resistant to, or did not like to acknowledge change. They had their arms outstretched and holding onto the wheel. It was as if they were trying to stop it from moving, thus preventing change from taking place. They were blind to the consequences of this action, and were also blind to the opportunities they could be met with if they accepted and embraced change instead of resisting it.

Justice can mean many things depending on the question being asked. On one hand we can associate it with the legal definition, and on the other hand it can be as simple as acting with the most honourable of intentions. As with traditional decks, Justice here is depicted with a woman holding the balanced scales in her left hand and an erect sword in her right hand.

Her white dress does indicate the purity of action, thought or deed, thus supporting the ideal of acting with honourable intent.

When we look closely we see the scales appear empty for now, which could explain why they are balanced. If you had to "weigh up" an issue at hand, which way would the scales be tipped and why? What would be needed in order to restore a sense of balance? How much of this would be within your control?

She does have a firm grip on her sword. Is she looking defensive or offensive in her stance? Is there anything you feel you would like to wield the sword at in order to bring about a change or enhance progress?

If we looked at this card slightly differently we can may be able to correlate the fact the scales are being held in the left hand. That side of the body is associated with our emotional state. Is there anything here that is out of balance? If that is the case, the sword held in the right hand may indicate a firm and reasoned approach is needed to restore the balance in some way.

In a reading:

I had this appear in a reading where the querent was questioning how her current relationship was likely to progress. I picked up the fact the other party was already involved in a relationship, so honesty and integrity was brought into question. I read the other party as holding the scales quite close to their chest, whereby they felt they were in control of where the relationship was heading. In his mind, the balance was just about right. His own personal needs were being met quite adequately, but if looked at from the point of view of the querent, they were not quite as happy with the balance that had been created within the relationship. The sword gave the impression he was a little defensive and was not as willing to discuss how he saw the relationship progressing. It was a subtle defensive stance but the querent did not want to upset the status quo by bringing the issue up for discussion. There was a fear this would have caused him to withdraw and possibly end things. When looked at as a whole, it was clear her partner was in possession of both items, and therefore had control. She knew everything about the relationship was not as it should be. She wanted more from it, but he was not willing or able to give more. She therefore understood why the Justice card appeared when it did. She had been experiencing the "It's not fair" emotion but

did not know what do about it. Eventually she realised there was no likelihood of commitment and the relationship ended.

Over time this card has been given so many possible interpretations, it is understandable why it can be confusing to the novice reader. Some teachings indicate a form of sacrifice is to be made for the greater good in the long term. Others may state it is about seeing things from a different perspective. Deirdre has indicated it could indicate a change in the way you think is needed, whereby it is not advisable to just hang around and wait for something to happen.

Here we have a man suspended by a rope tied to his right angle. His hands are behind his back. Are they tied behind his back, or has he taken this pose of his own accord? If they are tied, it may show his options could be a little limited for now. If that is the case, it may be better to do nothing for now and to wait until a time where he is less restricted. If they are not tied, why is he not making use of his hands in order to untie his ankle? Does he not realise he can actually release himself from this sense of inverted inertia?

We can also see a large star in the sky to the left of him, with some dark clouds moving away to and beyond the right of the card. Or are they coming into play? On the ground to the right we see what appears to be a brazier of sorts with flames coming out the top.

It is not clear what he is suspended over. Is it a pool? Or is it bare ground? How would the reading differ depending on what it is he is suspended above?

I believe the presence of the star and brazier can portray a sense of synchronisation. The Star is burning bright and clear in the sky. It is asking you to be positive and look at what can be done to bring about the associated change for the better. The brazier could be there to ask you to burn away your doubts and fears, which can only hold you back. At the moment you are hanging around between the two. Only you can decide to actually galvanise yourself into taking some positive action instead of waiting to see what will come your way. Remember the clouds? If you do something positive they could clear away totally. If you dither or focus on the past, they may come into the card and really cloud the issue even further. I guess it does show the choice is definitely yours to take!

Therefore, this card may not always be negative. The context of the reading and position in a spread may steer the reader in one particular direction.

In a reading:

This did appear in a spread looking at what was on the querent's mind. There was a sense that they needed to make a sacrifice of sorts, but they were hesitant to actually make that leap. They seemed to prefer hanging around to see what would happen, not realising this course of action would only take them so far. If they did not have a definite plan of action or idea of what they hoped would follow, they would potentially end up hanging around for a very long time. There is a danger the longer you leave things the harder they could become to deal with. The hesitancy was through fear of making a mistake so they took the easy option of doing nothing and hoping for the best.

Once again we find different characters on this card. I think most of us associate this card not with physical death itself, but with the letting go of old habits or lifestyles. It can often indicate a key change in a person's path whereby there is often no going back. Whether this is embraced or feared is down to the querent, and in this card we do see both aspects being portrayed.

DEATH

Obviously the main character in the card. He appears to be wearing quite a threatening looking mask and is wielding his scythe in his right hand. There are three skulls across the breastplate area of his outfit. They could be actual skulls or they could be illustrations. All of them seem to have the common theme of having some sort of damage to them, and in one case we see what could possibly be red horns projecting from splintered bone plates.

So what can we glean from this mask? Does it make you a little frightened or uneasy? If so, why is this? Is it indicative that Death is an unknown quantity, but something that a lot of people have a deep-rooted fear of? Does it support the fact we are often afraid of something we cannot see, i.e. future change?

The raised scythe could indicate something is about to be cut through. Is there something you know you need to cut away in order to allow change to take place? Or is there something negative or detrimental you are holding onto, even though you know deep down it is halting progress? If the scythe is used, have no misunderstandings – whatever is in its way will be dealt with or dismissed, so prepare to move on. The Death character will not take time out to listen to the "Yes but" concerns or arguments. He has a job to do, and he will make sure he carries out that task. It is then down to each of us to decide how we then approach the subsequent changes that will have occurred following this action.

RELIGIOUS FIGURE

To the right of the card we see a man dressed in holy garb. He is standing some way away from Death, so it could indicate the change that is about to occur may not affect him directly. Is this why he is not looking at all afraid? Or does his teachings allow him to have a belief that something good can follow the action of this card? If this is the case, he will be prepared to accept any change and follow it with good grace. Alternatively, could he be there as a support to one of the other characters who may be

the target of Death in this case? Will he be able to offer some spiritual guidance and understanding to make their period of transition that bit easier to experience?

WOMAN

This is the character who appears most afraid of Death's presence. She is seen trying to run away, but that may be futile – she is on foot whereas Death is on horseback. Surely she must understand he will be able to keep up, therefore there is no real escape. If you associate with this woman, what is it you are trying to avoid and why? Is the fear a genuine one, or one borne out of lack of self-belief in being able to deal with change?

The woman is dressed in a plain dress with her arms and chest unclad. I believe this does support the fact she does feel vulnerable and exposed.

THE CHILD

Oh how I do rue the fact we lose this sense of innocence as we age. Children go through phases for sure. On one hand they are afraid of the imaginary Bogeyman under the bed, or a character from Dr Who. Then, as they grow just a little older, it appears as if nothing fazes them at all. Our child is at that stage. He is looking intently at the horse carrying Death, and appears to be quite mesmerised. Why does he not fear Death in the same way we do as adults? Is it because he is not developed enough to fear anything? Or does he appreciate the mask being worn is simply just that – a mask and therefore not real?

The background shows a sun which is either setting or rising on the horizon. Either way this will definitely show change is at hand. If it is setting, you may need to accept something is ending. If it is rising, then something new is in the offering. We do not fear the change indicated by the turn of a new day. Maybe you need to view the change you are currently experiencing/about to experience in the same way. See the sun as projecting a bright and vibrant energy.

THE WATERBOATMAN

In ancient Greek burials and, indeed to this day, it was traditional to put coins on the eyelids or in the mouth of the deceased to 'pay the ferryman' (Charon) - the expression is still used today as indeed is the practise. Therefore when this card appears in a reading it could mean that there is a debt outstanding. This debt could be money as representing by the gold on the death mask of the figure on the horse and the silver ribbons on the woman's dress. Or it could be a favour which will never be returned or a spiritual debt which has to be paid as represented by the bishop.

Often this card makes a welcome appearance when we feel things are not going well etc.

If there is any card in a deck which for me epitomises feminine energies this is the one. There is always a gentle vibe with this card, as if we feel our woes can be washed away leaving behind a sense of genuine serenity.

The image here is in the style of the traditional RWS whereby we see a female character pouring and mixing an elixir or water between two jugs. She seems to be juggling more than one action though. On one hand she gives the impression she is concentrating on this particular course of action, yet we also see her reaching out with her left foot into the pool in front of her. What can we gleam from this? Is she coping with both tasks equally well? The jug on the ground appears to be full and may be about to overflow. Could this indicate a spilling over of emotions? Or could it show that there is an abundance of healing available to us should we choose to link in with that energy? You may find you need to think about what area of your life is in need of some TLC or healing. It may be you directly, or it may be a situation around you. Certainly this does support the belief Deirdre has that there is some global healing indicated.

I associate the presence of earth and water with feminine energies. We do not seem to have obvious references to fire or air, so in this case we may be asked to tune into those receptive energies or look at what our emotions are trying to tell us.

The angelic being has got part of her foot in the pool. Is she unsure of what is under the surface, and therefore a little nervous about committing her full weight accordingly? If so, you may need to look at what it is you are being hesitant about and why. Or could it indicate she is just 'testing the water' for now? If so, it could show you may be right to be a little cautious, at least in the short term.

In the background we can see there is a house, with a path leading from the house to this particular pool. Has our Angel come to class this area as sacred or a place of sanctuary / healing? If so, you may need to consider if your environment is conducive or not to provide the same for you. This card could indicate there is something which could help you, but you may need to look elsewhere to actually realise this. Do you find at home your emotions are spilling over, perhaps due to disagreements, or lack of privacy around you? If so, take the gentle guidance of the Angel in this card – try to identify and locate a space you can class as your own. However, I am also aware this could indicate you feel as though stability is some way away for now. If linked to a sense of low self-belief or self-esteem it would explain why you are hesitant in testing that water out!

Even though this card is associated with calmness, harmony and balance, I can see this has so many angles of approach as described above.

THE MAIN CHARACTER

It is interesting to note that Deirdre has not portrayed the devil with the stereotypical attributes of horns etc. I can totally associate with her reasons. If we feel we are hard done by, we often need to look at our actions and attitudes before pointing the finger.

However, with this Devil I think we can see a lot more can apply. Firstly, he is human. Not necessarily a nice or pleasant person, but human nevertheless. If we can accept that, we should realise he is only as frightening as we allow him to be. If we allow him to feel he is superior to us in any way, he automatically holds a certain power over us. In this case, once he knows he has this power he will not hold back in taunting us. Notice the way he is holding his hand up as in blessing? Deirdre quite rightly classed this as grotesque, but he really does not care what we think. If we were to show our disdain, it would prove to him that he has got under our skin, and therefore has that power over us. I believe this card can also appear when we need to really take a long hard look at ourselves, and take responsibility for our actions, particularly if we have acted less than honourably.

A very seductive and manipulative character, who can easily play at mind games. If you find your thoughts are spiralling out of control, and could spill over in inappropriate ways, try to find what devil has been at play. Are you making a mountain out of a mole hill, or is there an external cause?

THE DOGS

Now we turn to the dogs. Not exactly your fireside faithful companions. My first thought when I saw these was that they reminded me a little of those breeds that have been made illegal in the UK. Quite often these were owned by people who wanted to give the impression of being intimidating or threatening. Again, another example of a person wanting to create that sense of power. Certainly, when looked at this way we can understand why they would be the breed of choice for this particular character. Look at the size of the chains around their necks. Again, another indication of power and strength. You can almost believe they need something as substantial as this to hold them in check. Take a closer look though – are they tight enough to hold them? Or is it possible they could easily shrug away the shackles? How safe would you feel if met by this scene?

If you were associating with the dogs in this card, what would be your interpretation? Are you expected to act as a front for someone else? Are you perhaps intimidating

another person, or being intimidated? Is the threat contained or does it have the possibility to become very real?

What do you think the forked tongues mean to you? Could it indicate the threat is in the form of malicious words as opposed to malicious deeds? If you are looking at your actions, could it indicate you may have stirred the flames by what you have said?

SUSPENDED CHARACTER

He or she is not the main character here in the card, so could easily be overlooked. They could be present just to convey the idea of burning in hell, which is something that could be associated with the stereotypical image of a Devil. So what are they portraying in this card?

Are they paying a price (in this case the ultimate price) for their actions? Could this show what you do or say could come back on you in the future? Or could it indicate if somebody is guilty of manipulating you, they could get their comeuppance? If you associate with this person, could it show you have been a victim here, whereby control has been totally relinquished? You do appear to be totally helpless. and almost appear resigned to your fate with the flames etc. If so, from where you are is there anything you could do to warn somebody who may be about to receive similar treatment? If so, what would you say to them?

I love how this card has taken a very brave look at the traditional meaning associated with it, and brought it into the 21st century in a way everybody can have an association with it. Just as a lot of my parent's generation can remember where they were when Kennedy was assassinated, I will always remember where I was when the news broke of the Twin Towers tragedy. That one single act shocked the world, and also highlighted the vulnerability of us all. It certainly made us all sit up and take notice whereby our own safety and security was not something we should take for granted.

Only in time will the world be able to look back on this event with the wisdom that comes with hindsight. History may show how this was a turning point for the better, but that time may be some distance in the future. In other words, we have to learn from this and make changes accordingly. Hard though it may be to consider right now, bearing in mind wounds are still raw for some people, it is possible good can come from this. It is not for me to say how or when, but I do believe spiritual laws will redress the balance for the sake of humanity. However, as mankind we have to take responsibility for our actions and make changes in our attitude where necessary.

I think it can also ask us to not put too much emphasis on possessions or achievements which could crumble around us if complacency does set in. Please understand – I am not saying anybody deserved to be a victim of this atrocity. However, the towers were taller than anything around them, and in that respect they had made themselves vulnerable. Sadly they were an feasible target for the aircraft to hit. If we look at this from the viewpoint of the message this card portrays in the tarot system, is it suggesting firm foundations are needed to perhaps avoid such catastrophe, but we have consider an issue more holistically? That it is foolish to pay attention to the foundations, yet ignore the main structure itself?

The rising sun does indicate that a new dawn can bring about a fresh start. If that fresh start is coupled with a sense of 'learning' from what has been experienced, the catastrophe will not have been totally in vain. If however there is no change put into place, it can show the loss which occurred has the potential to happen again.

We have to listen to the rage expressed by the Eagle. Does the rage represent that of those who were behind the attacks? Or does it express the rage shown by those who were the victims in some way? Either viewpoint could apply, and could massively affect the energy of the card or subsequent message. What does the eagle signify? It is an emblem of the USA, so thought has to be given to the fact it does have particular relevance here. Does it indicate a defiant stance may need to be taken if you feel you have been wronged? Can it show in your current situation you have every right to feel

and express your anger? I also see the Eagle as being a key animal from the Medicine Card deck by Jamie Sams. I am reminded that the Eagle asks us to soar above and see things holistically if not from a different viewpoint. How could that interpretation link with this card and why? Certainly we need to be mindful the anger may be misguided. If that is the case we have to be prepared to take responsibility for repercussions if we have been the cause of that misguided anger.

If there was ever a card which is usually a welcome sight in a spread, it is the Star. I have usually associated this with your hopes coming to fruition. It may well come after a period of waiting of sorts, but by remaining positive you have confirmed your intent to higher energies. In this deck, we are given a hint of this.

THE SKY

Here we see 3 aspects all of which may be read as being linked, or in their own right. The largest body in the sky is definitely that of the star. It is an 8-pointed star, which again has a numerological link to the number of the card. What significance can you give to the fact it is so big in comparison to the sun?

The sun is also shown on the horizon. It is not usual to see a star so clearly when the sun is also in play. What does that tell you about the power of the star in this case? How does that relate to your situation? Deirdre has indicated the sun is rising, signifying what you are hoping for is about to appear or materialise. If so, I can also see something here that I would class as important. Make sure you are ready for this and try not to let that opportunity slip away unnoticed. In this card the woman is focusing on the pool and has her back to the rising sun. Could this indicate you have your attention diverted away from what may appear behind you, thus missing a golden opportunity?

As we can see, the storm clouds are to one side of the card, indicating they were at one time in play. However, the significance of the cloud could depend on the system you use. If you see the presence of objects to the left of the card indicating issues of the past, or energies being left behind, you may not read this as indicating the difficult times are passing away. In fact if you do use this system, it may indicate you need to be prepared for some difficulties etc. If however, you see anything to the right of a card as being an energy in passing this would definitely indicate that the storm or obstacle is now clearing. (NOTE: I tend to use a system of objects to the left as showing energies passing, and objects to the right as possibly coming into play. However, there will be other variables which may change this such as which way characters are facing etc).

THE WOMAN

Here we see a woman naked, knelt by a small pool. This nakedness could indicate vulnerability, as suggested by Deirdre. Remember this does follow the Tower, so she may be indicating the stripping away of stability or support in some way. What can

you make of the sticks to one side of her? Is she in readiness for the night whereby she may need to make a fire for warmth bearing in mind her nakedness? If so, what does that tell you about her ability to plan for eventualities? Is that an example of something she has learned having experienced the issues from the Tower – the importance of planning and preparing ahead? As Deirdre has said, she appears to be reaching out for some coins at the bottom of the pool. What could they signify at this moment in time? Is she able to reach them or is the pool too deep? Again, what would be the significance of her ability to reach or not reach them?

In a reading:

Interestingly this once appeared in a position where it indicated factors the querent had no control over. Usually this would be because of an external influence, so it was an unexpected card to see during this particular reading, and in this position within the spread.

There was a feeling she was not ready to reach out to the coins, for a variety of reasons. There was nothing external to hold her back - more a case of she was not quite emotionally or mentally ready to take this new opportunity. All she could do for now was remain positive with her thoughts, and allow her emotions to wash over, as depicted with the pouring of the water from the jug. She was aware a new day could bring about a new start and a fresh outlook on her situation, but she was prepared to just sit it out in the meantime. It was not a negative feel to the situation, and the presence of this card did offer some hope to her. Certainly there was no urgency to the situation, but by keeping her eye on the coins she could remind herself that there was something there for her when she felt she was ready to reach out for it.

This is the card I have seen so many interpretations for, it is easy to understand why it can be confusing for readers, particularly those starting on the path of tarot. Some key words I have seen include confusion, secrets, uncertainty, doubt, mystery, change etc.

Deirdre has also guided us to consider the fact this could be a period of uncertainty or confused emotions. The moon has many phases – just when you think you are in tune with the energies of a particular phase it changes on you. When this card has appeared in relation to what somebody is portraying, it can show they may show one face or side of themselves to you, yet portray something entirely different to another. In this respect, it could indicate the need to be careful and not to be too trusting because their motives could be brought into question.

As Deirdre has rightly said though, you may have to consider the fact you may be the one who is showing many faces, thus deceiving or confusing someone.

If you are being deceived you may need to make use of the full moon phase whereby some light may be shed on an issue, thus making things that bit clearer for you. If this is the case, you may have to wait a period of time, particularly if you sense you are in a waning moon or new moon phase. Keep on your toes in the meantime though.

THE WOMAN

She has her hands shown with palms upwards as if to invite trust and confidence in her. Do you feel you can trust her? If you could reach into her mind, is there something you feel she may be keeping hidden from you? What is the significance of the stars shown in the palms of her hands? Why may she be drawing attention to her hands?

CRAYFISH & POOL

I have seen different meanings attributed to this symbol, and they alone can be very different depending on what book is read etc. I see this as indicating an emerging from an emotionally still or stagnant state. The water is still, not flowing. Can this show our emotions have become unmoving or stifled? Does the crayfish indicate a coming out of this state, but shows we still need to do something to protect ourselves from external influences as we do so?

GUARD DOGS

This is something we can associate with a lot of the traditionally portrayed Moon cards in the tarot system. In this case we see that the dogs appear to be focused on different things – one is looking at the woman with its jaws open, the other is focused on the crayfish as it emerges from the pool. Which of the guard dogs do you most associate with at the moment, and why? Do you feel they are guarding you and therefore offering protection of some kind? Could they be indicating that the way forward for the crayfish is barred in some way? If so, what would you be doing if you were the crayfish to alleviate this situation?

If there is ever a welcome sight for sore eyes in a reading, this is the one. Just closing your eyes and thinking of a lovely warm day, not a cloud to spoil the view makes you feel content. You just 'know' everything is either going well or has the potential to turn out that way. A time to really soak up the energies of the sun and to relax whilst doing so.

Here we see 3 different characters with the sun dominating the skyline in the centre top of the card. So how could we read this card taking into account the different characters portrayed? We see a hint of a white cloud to the right of the card. Is that about to come into play, and if so, what could it signify? How could it affect the experiences of the boy or the girl?

THE HORSE

Here we see a white horse running across the plain. The children seem to be oblivious of its presence, just as the horse appears to be lost in its own private scenario of freedom and expression. It is liberated from any reins, or saddle, and is relishing in the freedom it is being given. Notice how the mane is flying backwards. Does this signify how you should be letting your own hair down for a change? Just as the horse is unsaddled, does this indicate how you should perhaps ditch anything that hinders your freedom or expression? This horse is experiencing the joy that comes from being in a totally natural state, at one with the energies of the sun. If you are thinking "if only I could do that", shake off that restrictive mindset and just go for it! Summer in the UK is sadly rather short lived. If you wait, or come up with reasons why you shouldn't do something, you may find the opportunity does not come around again for some time.

THE BOY

It is such a shame we lose sight of the simple pleasures of life as we get older. At one time flying a kite could give us such joy, yet as we mature, we can be guilty of turning our backs on our childhood treasures. This character does remind me a little of the Fool, in as much as he is genuinely enchanted by his toy of choice. There is a real sense of youthful innocence. All he needs is his kite and a little wind to help him on his way. What does the kite signify to you? The string is quite loose, yet the kite obviously has enough of a breeze to keep it airborne. What area of your life could that replicate at the moment? He has wisely wrapped a lot of the string around his hand, so as not to lose the kite should the wind pick up. He is not about to let go of something that he gets enjoyment from.

THE GIRL

She appears to be a lot older than the boy and is not playing as such. Instead we see her picking flowers from the ground around her. She is very well dressed and has a red bow in her hair. Notice how her attire appears to be quite smart in comparison to how the boy is dressed. What does that tell you about their different personalities? She also has a daisy chain around her neck. We see she has picked a few small flowers, and is now reaching for a particularly large blossom. What could this signify to you? I reckon if you have a chance for something 'bigger' (job promotion by way of example) you should be aware it is well within your grasp, and associated energies indicate you would have a good chance of success.

This is a card that can cause us to sit up and take notice, and we may not like what we hear. In Greek Mythology, Zeus was no fool, nor would he suffer fools. If anyone lied to him or displeased him, there was a fair chance they would be on the receiving end of the thunderbolt. Therefore, this card is asking you to be honest and look long and hard at your actions or deeds. If you have acted with good intent you have nothing to fear. If you know you have some past issues that have left a shadow, you need to face up to your actions and be prepared for possible consequences. Tied in with the key words used by Deirdre in the Tarot Unlocked book, if you can do this you have a chance to put things right or in effect, be given a second chance. Zeus is not vindictive, and will be willing to show mercy, but he will not be taken for a ride.

Let's take a closer look at some of the characters shown on the card.

ZEUS

He is ruler of the sky, and this can be evidenced by the fact his throne is on a cloud. Take a look at his demeanour and the way he holds the lightning bolt in his right hand. He really does appear to be sitting in judgement. He has a lot of power at his disposal – is he about to use it on you at this moment in time? Imagine you have discussed your issue with him – what do you think he would be saying or advising, bearing in mind he will have an objective viewpoint? If you are lucky enough to be offered another chance with an issue, what would you need to do to capitalise on this to ensure you don't let it slip by?

We see the Angel blowing their trumpet to summon the dead on this day of judgement. They will be guided through their life and allowed to act in judgement for themselves on themselves. Not an easy thing to do.

THE 3 SMALLER CHARACTERS.

We came across three characters on the Death card, whereby we witnessed how they reacted to his presence. Perhaps we can identify with these characters in the same way. The character on the left has his right arm up in what appears to be surrender or as a defensive stance. Is he reluctant to accept responsibility for himself and is trying to defend himself against the might of Zeus? If you identify with this character, where in your life is someone trying to absolve themselves of similar responsibility? He is facing Zeus and standing firm, so we can see this as positive in a lot of ways. He may be feeling very uncomfortable with the fact he has to face up to something, but has the courage to do so. This bravery may prove to be a valuable life experience or lesson – if he accepts the judgment passed.

The second or middle character has their arms spread wide in an open and accepting posture. This shows an acceptance of their actions and also subsequent consequences. If you identify with this character, do you feel Zeus will look on you favourably? What makes you think this?

The final character has not fully emerged from his grave, and is skeletal in appearance. Importantly, we see him with his back to Zeus. So, what can be gleamed from his appearance. Well, I see this figure as being the one who was resistant to change and to accepting responsibility. There was no moving on, no learning from actions, and therefore no progress or movement. He has instead rotted in his grave. We can assume he had an opportunity or a second chance, but failed to do what was necessary to grasp it. Zeus may have used his lightening bolt on this character, but it would not have been his first resort. I see lightening as having both the power to destroy and charge with energy at the same time. Sometimes we need that lightening bolt to galvanise us into a change of attitude or positive action. When it comes we have no choice but to take notice, or face the subsequent consequences.

In a reading

This appeared once when a relationship situation was being evaluated. I saw Zeus as representing the querent. They were taking a long hard look at how the relationship was progressing, and were questioning the motives of the other party. The other party was trying to use mind games in pleading their case, but the querent knew they would have to take a tough stance and fire the lightening bolt to show they were not prepared to be manipulated in this way.

Most readers would associate this card with the culmination of something. A completed journey. Successful outcome etc.

However, just as time is not linear this card is not signifying the END of something. As a new day dawns we start another journey. It may be very different to the one just undertaken, but the lessons learned will stand us in good stead. On the other hand, it may be a new start with a similar or ongoing situation, whereby we do look at things with a wiser head on our shoulders. It will not be possible to go through the Major Arcana without it leaving a profound mark on us in some way. I liken this to where we again relive the journey of the Fool after this card, but with the benefit of wisdom and hindsight.

THE WOMAN AND THE WORLD

We see traditional imagery here with the naked woman and the World. In this case she is encircling the world, her hands grasping her feet behind her. My first thought when I saw this was "She must be uncomfortable stretched out like that!" but when you look at her face she is calm and relaxed. Does this bring about an image akin to yoga perhaps? She has had the experience and journey, and is now calmly reflecting on it and how it all synchronises together. Otherwise what is the point of undertaking such a journey if no time is given to reflecting on what has happened? The fact she is circling the world shows she has been on a journey and is now returning to where she started. She is back to her roots so to speak. I have been on a round the world trip, and the experience is one that will stay with me for this lifetime. Only by truly experiencing different cultures for yourself can you really understand what life means to different people. Watching on TV or reading about it will never really be enough. Even with this trip behind me, I know my knowledge and understanding is incomplete – there are so many parts of the world I have not experienced, and so my journey may begin again. However, I will be that bit wiser and able to deal with issues that may arise in a way I was not prepared for on my first trip.

CHARACTERS AROUND THE CARD

We can see the Angel above her, its arms outstretched. There are also some orbs along the woman's hair. I believe there is another on her forehead which is not quite discernable. These I believe are higher spiritual chakra's. She has now opened herself to spiritual understanding to take her to her next level of awareness, and this is where the angel I believe plays a part. The Angel is now preparing her and guiding her as she readies herself for a new journey. Certainly those of us who are aware of the

Ascension process may understand that the main character has learned some life lessons and is now ready to ascend to a higher level of 'being' where new challenges may be presented. And so the journey would continue. The Angel will be there with her as she attunes herself to higher energies and her own spirituality.

The Eagle we saw previously on the Tower. In this case it is quiet and focused. Its senses sharp and finely tuned. Has the woman managed to deal with the anger that had previously been displayed? If so, what area of your life now seems to be clearer than it did before?

Interestingly, the other characters are shown reversed. This could be useful for those who use reversed cards in a spread, but for now I will not use any reversed meaning when looking at them. The lion is in fact a lioness. When we compare the characteristics of the lioness over the male of the species they are very different. Would this affect how you interpreted the presence of this animal? The lioness is the mainstay of the pride. She will be responsible for most of the hunting, the nurturing and also will play a major role in the overall success of the pride. Not only does she have strength, but incredible tactical skills when hunting. How would you see those skills as relating to the meaning of this card?

The buffalo is one of the main animals in Native American culture. Certainly the Plains Indians saw their spirituality and society stemming from the birth of the White Buffalo. Therefore this animal is sacred to them, and provided life through food and shelter to the Plains Indians for many years. It is believed through the stories passed down that their culture and civilisation would once again flourish, should a White Buffalo be born in their midst. In other words, a new journey and one that would be eagerly embraced. Deirdre sees the buffalo as representing endurance, and I can totally associate with this. Sometimes what we endure can be extremely difficult and there will be times where we feel we cannot go on. However, if we persevere there is always the possibility that we can come through. Sometimes hardship is needed before we truly appreciate the fact life is precious and can offer so much by way of experiences.