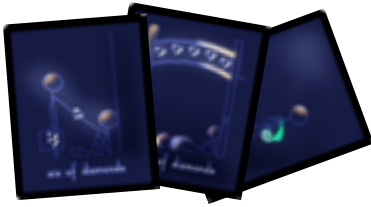


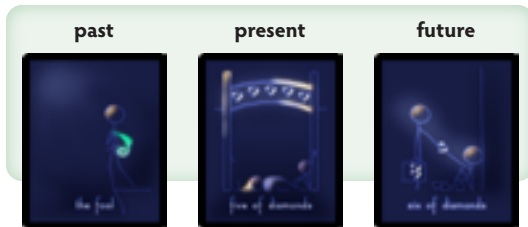
the basic idea

TAROT CARDS ARE JUST PIECES OF PAPER WITH PICTURES ON THEM.



Tarot is all about interpreting these pictures. The pictures are a bit vague, and they really don't mean anything by themselves.

With a little organization and imagination, we can take a few of these cards and make something like a story.



Here, the three cards are neatly arranged. Each image has been given a specific, unique context in which to interpret it, as if this were a timeline.

Sometime in the past, there was this guy who wasn't paying attention to where he was going and he walked off a cliff. Now, he's homeless, living under a bridge. Sometime in the future, a stranger will give him something valuable, like a diamond.

This is a very literal interpretation of the images. With Tarot cards, we'll be using a more generic approach: someone made a mistake because they were absent minded, and wound up feeling abandoned and depressed. Later, some generous person gave the depressed person something they desperately needed. Or maybe the person in the past and present is the standing figure in the future, helping others. There's no right answer.

making it personal

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF TAROT, TRY TO SEE THE PICTURES AS A STORY based on your own life. Look at the Past card. Can you remember doing anything that felt like you were stupidly walking off a cliff? It's part of this story now. Look at the Present. Is there something happening now, something related to the past event you picked, that's left you feeling lonely or helpless? That's part of this story too. The last card, the Future, is something that might happen. Maybe you should keep an eye out for people who can help. Or maybe the solution is to help another person.

This process of seeing yourself in the cards is called getting a **reading**. The goal is to learn from past events that you've forgotten about, notice things in the present that you're overlooking, and see possible futures that you haven't considered. Everything may look nonsensical at first, and you'll get more out of a reading if you let your mind wander freely. You don't have to tell anybody what you're thinking.

readings

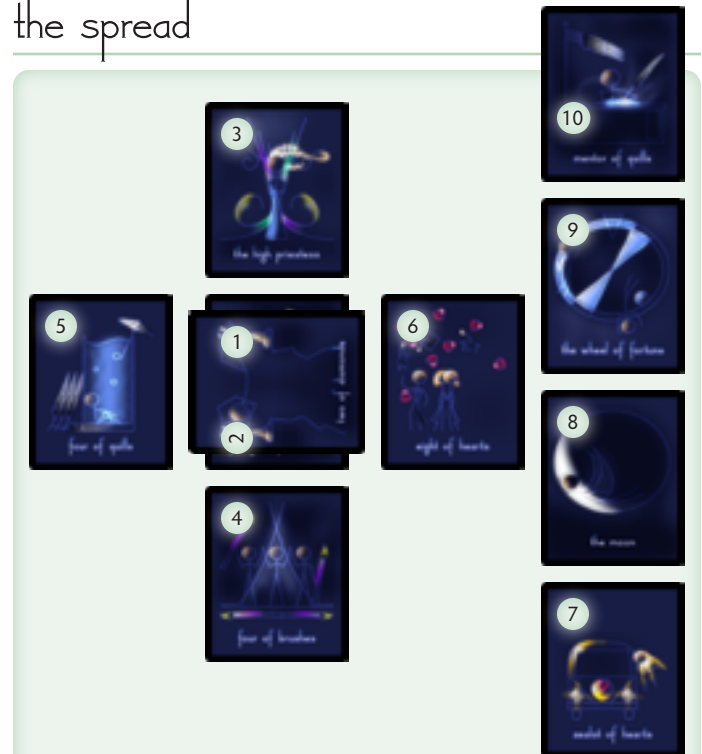
TYPICALLY, YOU NEED TWO PEOPLE FOR A READING: A **QUERENT** LOOKING FOR guidance and a **reader** who talks about the cards and helps the querent organize their thoughts. Although these two people are working together, the reader should not feel obligated to offer specific advice, and the querent should not feel pressured to reveal any personal information. The reader can just explain things in broad terms while the querent silently applies everything to their own life.

During a reading, the reader arranges the cards in a pattern called a **spread**, which usually consists of ten cards. Like the timeline described earlier, each card is meant to be viewed in a different context.

The reading proceeds like this:

- ♦ The querent thinks of a question or problem and shuffles the cards.
- ♦ One card at a time, the spread is populated:
 - ♦ The reader describes the position about to be filled (see below).
 - ♦ The reader draws a card and describes it (see p. 2-4 for card descriptions).
 - ♦ The reader places the card in its assigned position.
 - ♦ The querent takes a moment to figure out how the card relates to them.
- ♦ After all ten cards have been placed, the reader looks for repeating themes and gives an overall summary of the reading.

the spread



1 (under 2): the present — The querent's current situation.

2 (sideways): an obstacle — The querent's stated problem, or an issue they are not aware of.

3: short-term goal — That which the querent immediately wants, or should be working for.

4: point of view — The assumptions the querent is making; the mindset from which they're operating.

5: the past — Something that caused or informs the current situation.

6: the future — Something the querent will do, a person they will meet, or something to avoid.

7: description — The querent, from the point of view of other people. This could be from the point of view of friends, colleagues, or a neutral party.

8: identity — How the querent sees themselves.

9: hopes — What the Querent wants from life in a broad sense.

10: final outcome — The long-term resolution the querent's stated problem, or a general description of the querent's future.

the cards

TAROT CARDS ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS: **MINOR CARDS**, FOR ORDINARY THINGS, AND **Major Cards**, which are more dramatic issues.

minor cards

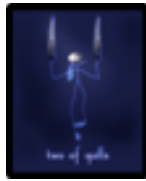
The Minor Cards are the 56 cards that mention a **suit** in the title. Each suit contains 14 cards that explore similar issues:

- Hearts** represent desire, love, or compassion.
- Diamonds** represent money or material things.
- Quills** represent hard work and action.
- Brushes** represent creativity and passion.

These symbols are used to describe the feelings of the people in the cards.



For example, in both of the images to the left and right, someone is struggling to hold on to two objects. The person on the left might be having trouble with finances, and the person on the right might be juggling priorities, such as work and a social life.



The **Ace** always represents an abundance of something, and the nine other numbered cards represent events or feelings.

The four other cards in each suit are **court cards**, each representing someone with a different personality. The suit of a court card represents someone's values, what issues they think about the most. Suppose you have some work that's overdue. If you are a diamonds person, you might buy new tools to help you work faster. If you value brushes, you might look for a creative way to boost your efficiency. And if your suit is quills, you'd just work long hours until you were finished.

In addition to having different values, different people solve problems in different ways. They may use **instinct**, feeling their way around problems and using past experiences as a guide. Or, they may favor **reason**, carefully doing research and analyzing the results of their actions.

And lastly, everyone deals with others in a different way. A person may either **embody** their suit, humbly working hard; or they may **project** it, inspiring others.

The four kinds of court cards address combinations of these ways of thinking.

	embody	project
instinct	The dreamer is quiet and playful. They enjoy doing work for its own sake, even when their results do not turn out well.	The zealot is passionate, but they have trouble finding practical solutions to problems. Their idealism, however, can inspire others.
reason	The paragon lives by their values, serving as a role model for others. They are eager to accept challenges, and avoid publicity.	The mentor is a good teacher. They easily see the strengths and weaknesses in the works of others, and offer useful guidance.

When a court card appears in a reading, the querent should try to think of somebody who reminds them of the person on the card. They may be of any gender or age; what's important is the values and behavior of the person described.

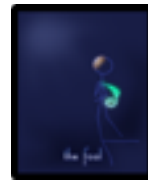
major cards

THE MAJOR CARDS ARE THE REMAINING 22 CARDS THAT DO NOT MENTION A SUIT. While the Minor Cards focus on specific types of issues, the Major Cards more broadly describe ongoing events or intense feelings. Some of the cards depict people, who may be people the querent knows, someone the querent might become, or a more intangible concept that's easier to understand personified.

Major Cards in readings should be treated as more important than Minor ones.

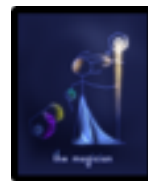
card reference

major cards



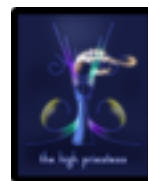
the fool.

The Fool is starting a long journey. It could be a new job, a new school, or a new relationship. He's excited and optimistic, but he is paying too little attention to the details of the path he is taking. If he does not start approaching things from a more practical point of view, he is likely to get into trouble.



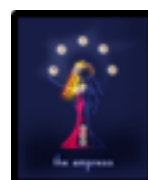
the magician.

Bursting with knowledge, the Magician has absolute control over his environment. He has a deep understanding of the behavior of different people and the properties of different materials, and can get them to do nearly anything he wants. His tools are extensions of his body; his subordinates are extensions of his will.



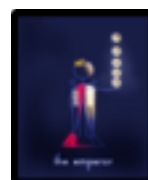
the high priestess.

The High Priestess is a master of coordination. Calm and calculating, she can take any complex system and make it manageable. She can turn destructive forces into productive ones. She uses everything around her to her advantage and sees relationships between unrelated things that others do not.



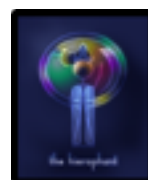
the empress.

The Empress is fertile and prosperous. She can represent parenting or being nurturing in general: allowing things to grow organically, lending them support, and letting them develop in their own way. She also represents a simple sensuality: taking joy in the smell of food, or the warmth of another person.



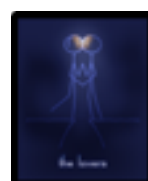
the emperor.

The Emperor is a symbol of control, order and authority. He could be a strict parent who demands discipline and accountability from his children, for whom he provides a sense of security. He can also represent order and structure in general: laws, rules or procedures that must be followed.



the hierophant.

The Hierophant dictates institutional values and is not someone you'd personally know. He sets protocol, rewarding good behavior and punishing those who stray from the norm. Often a priest, a politician, or head of a school, he could also represent tradition as a concept, rather than an actual person.



the lovers.

The Lovers is about overcoming insurmountable obstacles to be with the people you love or do something you're passionate about. It may represent a romantic relationship, though this is not necessarily the case. The card broadly speaks of courage, dedication and hope when success seems impossible.

major cards



the chariot. Frequently, we think that having more cutting edge tools or exceptional skills will help us reach our goals. And while these things are useful, greatness comes from the precise application of the abilities we already possess. The Chariot represents this sort of precision: raw power, harnessed for maximum effect.



strength. Strength can mean physical strength, but more frequently, this card speaks of emotional strength: the courage to defend your beliefs, the will to keep fighting, or the patience to work through a long and frustrating problem. Strength is sometimes a quiet, humble thing, that may be hard to see.



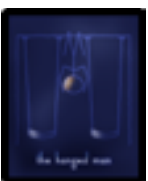
the hermit. Sometimes, we all need to look at our problems with a quiet mind. The Hermit represents this kind of introspective solitude -- either the presence of it or the need for it. This need not be something so drastic as withdrawing from society; it may simply represent a short pause to clear your mind.



the wheel of fortune. People's lives can often change suddenly because of unpredictable events. The Wheel of Fortune may represent such a change in the past. It is also a reminder that luck affects much of what we do or fail to do. Thriving ventures can crumble, and the poorest people can discover wealth in unlikely places.



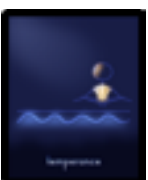
justice. The Justice card is the ideal of fairness and equality. If you have been wronged somehow, this card may be an indication that things will be corrected. If you have done something that hurt another person, it may be time to take responsibility for it and take it upon yourself to make the world a more just place.



the hanged man. The Hanged Man is a card about solving problems by doing nothing. By relaxing, by just hanging around near a problem rather than frantically trying to solve it, we may see it in a new way. It's also a card of detachment: sometimes, we need to be dispassionate about a problem if we want to find its solution.



death. An oddly named card, this can represent death in a literal sense, but it is fundamentally a positive card. It primarily represents the sort of rebirth that a metaphorical death can bring: we can recycle old materials, learn from past disasters, and reinvent ourselves when we seem empty and lifeless.



temperance. Temperance is about finding balance. It's doing work at a steady pace that won't leave you burnt out, and having regularly scheduled fun that isn't too self-indulgent. It can also represent the need for compromise in general: in a relationship, with conflicting desires, or helping two other people work together.

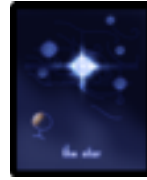


the devil. The Devil is a symbol of deception. It may represent a dishonest person or a situation that is not what it seems. It could also mean that you're deceiving yourself, willfully ignoring an uncomfortable truth. In any case, this card is a suggestion to seek out the truth.

major cards / hearts ace - 2



the tower. The Tower represents any kind of catastrophic event — a project gone horribly wrong, or a romance that's about to end badly. It's the most worrisome card in the Tarot, and if it shows up anywhere in a reading, it's a warning to be very careful about what you're doing, and to pay close attention to your surroundings.



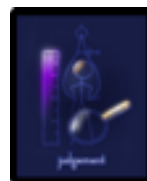
the star. The Star represents a calm, amorphous sort of hope. It's not about resolving desperate situations or finding concrete solutions to problems. It's simply wondering if things could be better, even if they are good; dreaming about future events that are unlikely to happen; or being inspired by something larger than oneself.



the moon. The Moon represents imagination and dreams. These can be good, but they can also be deceptive: to imagine a strange, wonderful thing happening, a person does not need to be able to contemplate its plausibility or possible negative side effects. As inspiring as they are illusory, certain dreams require caution.



the sun. The Sun is a symbol for knowledge: literally, shedding light on things. It's about realizing something you never knew, and understanding something so completely that it becomes a part of you. It may represent insight you already have, a chance to apply your expertise, or a discovery you're about to make.

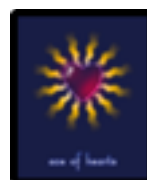


judgement. The Judgement card represents your whole worth as a person. Your entire history, your mindset, your every action. It may represent an event in the past where somebody was evaluating you, or it may suggest that you need to step back and see how your life as a whole is doing, because it needs changing.



the world. The World represents a great accomplishment, perhaps finishing something you've been meaning to do all your life. It's about feeling like you have everything you ever wanted, at least for a while. Things may change, of course, but the World itself is a card of genuine happiness and fulfillment.

minor cards



two. The two of hearts represents a blossoming new relationship. There is mutual understanding and respect between the two parties, and things are going well. While this is most often interpreted as a romantic relationship, this card could also symbolize a business or creative partnership.



hearts 3 - dreamer



three. The three of hearts represents friendship or community in general: feeling secure that you have others to go to for support, but also, having others to share your successes with. The community here could be a large organization, or just good friends.



four. The four of hearts represents wanting something you can't have, to replace existing things you've grown bored with. That 'something' could be a person — pining away for a someone new while you're in a stale relationship — but it could also be a lofty dream or intangible desire that makes everyday life seem dull.



five. The five of hearts is about being obsessed with a recent loss; being so overwhelmed by grief that you're failing to notice the good things you still have. It can be a sign that it's time to move on and try to learn from your mistakes, rebuild your relationships, or reclaim something that's been taken away from you.



six. This card represents the innocence of the past, childhood, and uncomplicated friendships, simple gifts given and happy memories. It is the only card explicitly about the past, no matter where it is played in a reading, but it may refer to a present case of nostalgia.



seven. The seven of hearts is a card of dreams and wishes, the sort that sound exciting, but that you don't really intend to work for. The card can be a sign that you need to have more fun exploring silly wishes, or it may be a warning that all your wishes won't come true without a lot of planning and wading through tedium.



eight. This is a card of graduation, of moving on, as the image shows. But it's also a card of stagnation, of emotional lethargy, in short of having achieved a state where moving on is the very best option. Something is always left behind, but it needs to be and greater things lie ahead.



nine. This is a card of contentment, satisfaction and fulfillment: of having what is needed, with reserves for the future, and knowing it. The figure basks in the surrounding hearts, free from anxiety or deprivation. There is no danger in this card, but that the unappreciated joys will leave too quickly.



ten. This card represents feeling at home, whether it's a physical home or a state of mind. You know where everything is, how everything and everyone will react to you; every interaction is effortless. It may symbolize a happy family, or a more personal feeling of being comfortable being with oneself.

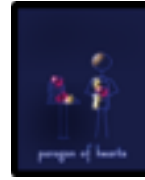


dreamer. Dreamers of hearts are always smiling or humming to themselves, always ready with a joke or a compliment. They are relaxed and easy going, content to spend all of their time relaxing with friends. While they do very little that would be considered productive on their own, they are always available to help others.

hearts zealot - mentor / diamonds ace - 6



zealot. The zealot of hearts is a spirited, fickle radical who bounces from cause to cause. They may be a human rights activist for a couple years, and abruptly decide that environmentalism is more important to them. They are perpetually having personal epiphanies, working hard to find the perfect place for themselves.



paragon. The paragon of hearts is an experienced, dedicated caregiver. They could be a social worker, therapist, or just a good friend. They may appear to be overly sentimental or shallow, but they are quite mature and emotionally balanced. They have a deep understanding of how other people will behave in any given situation.



mentor. The mentor of hearts is a priest, teacher, actor or writer: a person who uses their talents to inspire others to be better. They can give a rousing speech or write a heartwarming story. However, they may not always feel as happy as they look, and sometimes ignore their own problems while they help others.



two. With great risk comes great reward, and so many choose to live on the edge. Things are in flux, change is certain, and balance is essential. Too many projects, too many balls in the air, make balancing difficult, and on the edge, it only takes a little wobble to topple over.



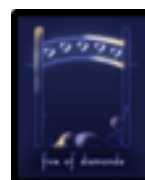
three. No great work is satisfying simply because of the wealth gained for it or the praise of others, rather the work itself brings joy. This is a card of that joy — of feeling competent and skillful. It is a card of building for its own sake and reveling in simple craftsmanship.



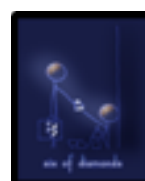
four. The miser holds on tightly to what he has, but that traps him. Our miser is sitting in a safe because so long as he holds on to his diamonds, he cannot touch anything else. The miser is self-deluding. His money doesn't get him anything without being spent.



five. This is a card of poverty, but also a card of caring and family. Whereas the miser in the four of diamonds has everything but is alone, the people on the five of diamonds have nothing but each other. Material hardships strengthens emotional bonds and those bonds will help with the present difficulty.



six. This card can represent children, happy childhood memories, or child-like emotions in general. It can signal that it's time to take a break from work and just have some simple fun. Or, it could mean that it's time to look at things more innocently, without cynicism or distrust.



diamonds 7 - mentor / brushes ace



seven. A long project is completed, and yet there is a sense of dissatisfaction. The farmer wonders if he couldn't have gotten more from his investment. Yet, impatience would have resulted in risking everything for an uncertain profit. Small, consistent gains are the road to success.



eight. The eight



nine. The nine



ten. The ten



dreamer. Dreamers



zealot. The zealot



paragon. The paragon



mentor. The mentor



ace. The Brushes are the suite of creativity, health and fire. The ace represents that first explosion of creativity at the start of something new. It is excitement and creative force. Like wildfire, this creative energy can be unruly and unexpected, but it is always powerful.

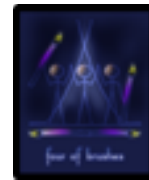
brushes 2 - 10



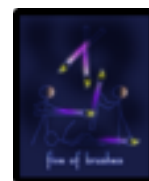
two. The executive looks out on her domain — she is powerful and owns a great deal, but craves more. This card is about ambition and personal power. Ambition is a positive force; it drives us to create and affect our world, but we can become ruled by it and end up feeling empty.



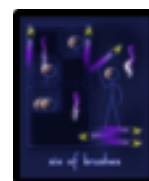
three. This card has two complimentary meanings – either a long, hard journey at its end, and the elation of having achieved it; the desire start such a journey. Be it physical or creative, climbing a mountain or starting a novel, whatever it is, it's about moving forward because you can. The journey is its own reward.



four. Three figures stand together, working to build something new. This card represents a house, home life, and the establishment of order. These all require people collaborating to build, and it is this coming together to create that makes a home, more than walls or floors.



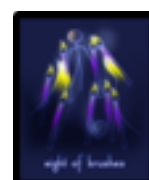
five. Creativity and fire, the representative forces of this suite, often lead to conflict. The figures on the card are fighting, when they could be working together. This may be an argument, creative differences, or legal proceedings. The conflict itself is the problem; it saps creative energies and turns them to destruction.



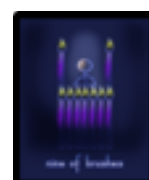
six. The figure holding a brush aloft has won something—a battle, renown, fame—and is showered with praise by all around him. This is a card of victory and success, and also bringing the victory home to people you care about. Seeing their joy, makes the victory that much sweeter.



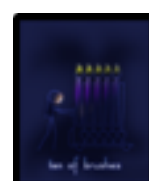
seven. A single figure wards off a barrage of brushes while those around him cower. This is the card of the long, hard battle. It's about standing their ground, because the fight is just, and others depend on them. Though the odds seem insurmountable, in the end, endurance will prevail.



eight. This card represents the power to take flight. Creative energy and physical energy combining to lift you off on a powerful journey. If it is a physical journey, this is no day-trip, but a globe-trotting experience. If it is a personal or artistic journey, it really takes off.



nine. A lone sentry waits in his fort. This is a card of vigilance. The battle is over, but another is coming. Though the sentry is tired, he must persevere and find hidden reserves of strength to survive the coming flight.



ten. This is the card of doing your job, not because you want to, but because you have to. It can feel ambiguous — the figure is responsible for some small part of a system whose overall purpose is unclear. Work and responsibility build character, but external forces can cause energy to be wasted.

brushes dreamer - mentor / quills ace - 5



dreamer. The Dreamer of Brushes has a vivid and child-like imagination. He or she is playful and unconventional. They can be a messenger, like other dreamers, or, given the creative qualities of this suite, can bring ideas or inspiration for a new project. They can be a person or an event that sparks creativity in others.



zealot. The Zealot of Brushes is friendly, passionate, and always moving. They like to sweep in and save the day, but may abruptly rush off without planning. This is a person of action who gets in and out of trouble with alacrity. They will always help a friend move, but won't necessarily stay for the housewarming.



paragon. Creative and willful, the Paragon of Brushes is nearly always the center of attention. This card can represent a craftsman, an artist, or a counselor, a can-do person whose greatest flaw is stubbornness and a need to be the person who does everything. She doesn't share the limelight well.



mentor. The Mentor of Brushes is not an artist themselves, but a director of others. They are a leader and instructor, showing others how to best use their creative talents. They feel excited at having a chance to solve a problem and take charge, but respect other people.



ace. The Quills are a suite of duality, the mind, and air. The Ace represents a beginning. The untold power in the pen before it touches the paper. It could compose sonnets or sign death warrants, it is in the choice of the wielder.



two. This card represents an impasse. Two opposing forces of equal strength meet, and there is no clear victor. The result is stillness, peace, and poise. This may seem restful, but it is a stagnation. The figure is blinded by the choice between these two forces, but the real answer may be a third, unseen option.



three. This card represents division. The figures are cut off from each other by the quills between them, which may represent words or actions. It is the card of the war between our logical and emotional selves, of having two right or two wrong answers to a question.

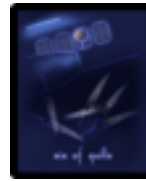


four. This card represents a retreat or hermitage — going off to be alone and reflect. The figure is taking a break and letting their thoughts flow unrecorded. Perhaps they are thinking great thoughts; perhaps they are just admiring the bubbles in their lemonade. Soon, they will be refreshed and better able to take charge.



five. This card has two meanings — the unearned defeat or the hollow victory. Either way, the figures on the card are rebuilding their shattered world, having suffered a costly, unexpected conflict. It is a mournful card, but there are things worth rebuilding, nonetheless — all is not lost, and some is gained, even if it is a hard lesson.

quills 6 - mentor



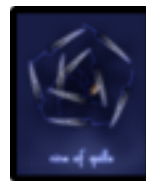
six. This is another card of journey, but it is specifically a journey ruled by logic and mental clarity. A decision has been made, to leave one place or situation for another, and the mere act of decision has caused turbulence to fall behind. It will be a smooth journey.



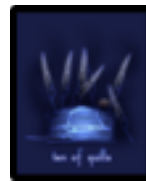
seven. This thief has absconded with many quills, but have to leave some behind because that was all they could carry. This is a card of unrealistic ambition and rash plans. The thief will very likely get caught, or at the very least, will feel they did not get as much as they had hoped from this daring plan.



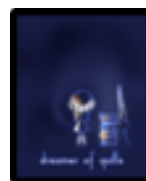
eight. Logic and thought are the purview of the swords, and so this prisoner is trapped not physically, per se, but mentally — caught in a logic loop or frozen with indecision, they find themselves unable to move or act. Ironically, the quills that trap them are also the tools they could use to get out.



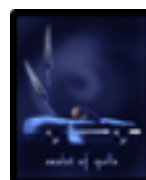
nine. Guilt, regret, fears and inner anguish — this card represents all those thoughts that keep someone up late at night, thoughts that swirl around without resolution. It also represents nightmares, illogic, and the failure of the rational mind to control irrational fear.



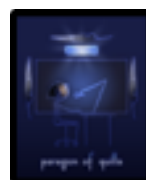
ten. The figure crawls into a tomb, nearly buried in quills. It is a card of insurmountable opposition and sure defeat. There is no logical recourse but to brace for the hit and take it. In the suite of logic, there is strength in knowing when one is beaten.



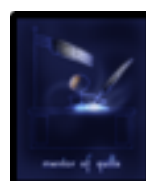
dreamer. The dreamer of quills is inquisitive and studious, fascinated by science and the mind. They may serve as an investigator or spy, as they are always observing what goes on around them. Like all dreamers, they are messengers, and so they will share their observations and spread knowledge. Secrets don't last around this dreamer.



zealot. The zealot of quills is decisive and logical, level-headed and quick to act. They may signal a sudden departure or arrival, the start or end of a conflict. Whatever it is, the zealot of quills swoops in with their mind made up, and acts confidently, altering the course of those around them.



paragon. The Paragon of Quills tells it like it is. They are brutally honest, and see both sides of every issue. They have very high standards and so have few close friends, but are a valuable source of wisdom and advice. They are logical, wise, and likely to have a dry wit.



mentor. The mentor of quills is a fair and honest judge. They are impartial and logical and have their emotions firmly under control. They always consider what is fair for all parties involved. Their realm is administration, government, or law, and they are exacting in seeing their high standards carried out.