

13 Magickal Cards

Tarot Insights By JohnnieTwoBrows

Welcome to My Newsletter!

Merry meet! Welcome to the first installment of 13 Magickal Cards, my Tarot newsletter. The title, of course, is a reference to the spread of 13 cards I designed for 13 Magickal Moons and use on Wednesday “Tea Nights” there.

Here’s a little bit about me: I’ve been reading the Tarot since 1989, when I picked up a Rider-Waite Tarot deck for the first time. To this day I’m not really sure why I did it; I guessed it just looked interesting. I’ve been doing readings for friends since that time, but I had no idea that 17 years later the Tarot would open up a spiritual door for me into a new life. Last summer I took my first class—the five-week Tarot class—at 13 Magickal Moons, and the rest is history. I started reading at 13 Magickal Moons regularly last summer, which is a place where I feel truly comfortable and surrounded by kindred spirits. I started my professional Tarot reading career last September, and I have the honor to be 13 Magickal Moons’ Tarot reader. I’m also an Initiate in the Tradition of the Witches Circle, working on my Practitioner level. It’s been quite a year for me! I am very fortunate to have loyal friends and customers like you who have expressed an interest in my newsletter.

Before I go on, a few sincere words of thanks. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my beloved bride of nearly 11 years, Jennie “*Sapphire Sunshine*”. This newsletter was her idea, and she helped me bring it to fruition. I also want to thank Summer and Sam at 13 Magickal Moons for their continued support of all my efforts, and for providing me a great space to read Tarot (please see their ad on page 2!). And

of course, a final thanks to all of you, for taking the time to read my insights.

Well, down to business. Each month, I hope to bring you some interesting insights into one of the world’s most popular divinatory tools, the Tarot. To many people the Tarot is a mystical thing, confusing and frustrating, oblique and a little scary. Should you find yourself in this category, I hope this newsletter will help you understand the Tarot a little better. If you’re a Tarot enthusiast, I hope to provide you with guidance on working with and studying the Tarot. No matter what your level of experience with the Tarot may be, I hope you will glean some nugget of knowledge every month from this newsletter.

Expect to see one newsletter a month from me, around the 15th. Each issue will be named for the upcoming astrological sign, so this month’s issue is “Leo 2006”. Your comments on content for upcoming newsletters are most appreciated. Thanks again for your interest, and I look forward to seeing you across my table soon!

Questions Across the Table

“What is a Tarot reading?”

Essentially, the Tarot is a metaphysical digital photo. It will provide insight into you, a situation, or a certain area of your life. It does this by taking your energy—I always have the querent shuffle the cards for this reason—and showing you what it feels you need to know at this time. As the reader, it’s my job to interpret the images on the cards and any intuitive feelings I get from them and create a story that the querent can understand. This isn’t always easy, either; some things are very complicated. That’s

why interaction between the querent and reader is very important.

Because the Tarot reading is a “snapshot in time”, its messages are not set in stone. We no longer refer to the Tarot as “fortunetelling” because there is no “fortune” or set outcome. The Tarot cannot take away free will; the querent is always the master of his or her own destiny.

One of the biggest reasons for using the Tarot is to get an idea of what is coming up in your life so you can prepare for it. For example, if a Tarot reading tells you that you will have a financial crisis in 3 months, it may never happen if you know it is a



Tarot Deck Review

The Gilded Tarot

I first saw this deck last summer at 13 Magickal Moons. I knew right away it was special when Summer told me the deck was so popular she couldn't keep it in stock for long. I haven't heard that about any Tarot deck before, so of course I had to buy it and see for myself.

The deck is a standard 78-card deck with Rider-Waite-based images. But the first thing I noticed were the colors; they are incredibly powerful and bright, much more so than many decks I have seen. They seem to radiate optimism and hope. The artwork is excellent, and the more “disturbing” Rider-Waite images (Death, for example)

possibility and behave differently from how you normally would.

Another important reason to consult the Tarot is to find out what you need to do regarding a specific situation. Many querents come to me with questions like this, especially regarding spirituality or career. The Tarot shows us the truth and allows us to make decisions that will help us grow.

The Tarot presents life possibilities and influences and gives us the information we need to make good choices. In the end, however, the choice is yours; only you know what is best for you.



have been softened somewhat by the artist. A number of the major arcana cards also feature astrological symbols.

One feature that I really like is the color-coded orbs in the top middle of each minor arcana card so you can tell a particular suit at a glance. The orbs on the major arcana have Roman numerals.

My favorite card in this deck is The Lovers. It is an excellent interpretation of the standard Rider-Waite imagery but with some new twists. One of the main differences from the Rider-Waite Lovers image that spoke to me is the absence of an archangel over the man and woman. The spiritual “blessing” in the card is represented by a golden light coming down from above. Also, the Lovers are embracing

each other in waist-deep water, which represents their strong emotions. In the original Rider-Waite deck, no water can be seen on the card. Finally, while the Rider-Waite Lovers card clearly refers to the biblical story of Adam and Eve—with both figures unclad and a snake in the fruit tree behind the female figure—the Gilded Tarot represents a Greco-Roman style set of lovers; the male figure of the Gilded Tarot's Lovers card is dressed in Greco-Roman battlefield garb, while the woman wears a bikini-style outfit with a gold circlet in her hair adorned with flowers.

I found very little not to like about this deck. If I had to cite one negative thing, it is this deck's incredible power to get people to pay attention to it to the exclusion of all other decks. When I offer a choice of decks to querents, if the Gilded is among the choices it is inevitably picked. I have never had a querent say to me "No, I don't want the Gilded Tarot," which does happen with some of my other decks. I actually stopped bringing the Gilded with me for a while because I wanted to read with other decks!

I'd recommend this deck for anyone familiar with the Rider-Waite style imagery and looking for a bright, optimistic Tarot deck. Fire signs in particular will gravitate to it because of its bold color scheme. Leos especially may like this deck so much they may never use another one; their propensity for lavishing attention on things will not be wasted here. **13 Magickal Moons has ordered a few copies of the Gilded Tarot. Pick yours up while you can!**

Note: I will be carrying the deck I review for the entire astrological sign that this issue covers. So I'll have the Gilded Tarot in my box until Virgo begins.

Next month's review: The Revelations Tarot.

Querent's Queries

Q: *How do I consecrate a new Tarot deck?*
- Sam

A: It's actually a very simple process, and an important one so that you can put your energy on the cards and start getting a feel for working with them. I start by taking the cards out of their original box, or the protective covering they came in, and mixing them thoroughly by spreading them out on a table or other flat surface. New decks are usually in order when they're packaged, so shuffling them won't do as much good. Once they are mixed, I collect them into a stack and smudge them with sage. Then I take some time going through the cards one by one slowly to start getting to know them. Once that is completed, I hold the pack of cards in my hands and I ask for the Lady's blessing on the cards and on any readings I do with them. It should be a personal consecration of the cards, using words that make sense to you. For me, it might be something like this:

*Great Lady, Goddess of intuition, bless these cards;
Guide my Third Eye as I see with them,
Guide my hand as I draw them,
Guide my voice to speak the right words in my readings,
And guide my heart so I may help others and myself using them.
Blessed be!*

If you have a question that you'd like me to answer in print, please submit it to hierophant@cox.net with the subject line "Querent's Queries." Of course, I reserve the right to pick and choose the most appropriate and relevant questions for the newsletter. Also, *your name will be listed as the person who submitted the query unless you tell me otherwise.* Happy writing!

Learning the Tarot

Interested in learning the Tarot hands-on? For beginners, I highly recommend the series of 5 Tarot classes taught by Samantha Beaty at the Tradition of the Witches Circle school. This was the first set of classes I took with Sam and even though I had a lot of experience with the Tarot, I felt that I got a lot out of it. Ultimately, this experience led me to take more and more classes with Sam and start “walking the Witch’s path” last summer. I truly believe these courses are a great way to learn the basics of the Tarot.

If you’ve taken Sam’s Tarot classes and would like additional Tarot education, I offer private lessons on the Tarot to anyone who is interested and motivated. Email me at hierophant@cox.net for the details.

Upcoming Dates

I’ll be reading Tarot for the following dates for Leo and Virgo as well as the remainder of Cancer at 13 Magickal Moons.

All of these dates are tentative. Please check www.13magickalmoons.com for an up-to-date schedule. If you know in advance you’re going to be coming to the store for a reading, you may also call me to schedule an appointment. This is especially true for weekend dates.

I’ll be taking off one weekend a month to avoid the dreaded TRBO (Tarot Reader Burn-Out).

Wednesday, July 26	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, July 29	10:30am-5:30pm
Sunday, July 30	12:00-5:30pm
Wednesday, August 2	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, August 12	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, August 16	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, August 19	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, August 23	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, August 26	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, August 30	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, September 2	11:30am-5:30pm
Monday, September 4	12:00-5:30pm
Wednesday, September 6	6:00-9:00pm
Wednesday, September 13	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, September 16	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, September 20	6:00-9:00pm

Shameless Marketing

Have you ever considered having a Tarot party? It’s a fun way to introduce your friends and family to the Tarot in the privacy and comfort of your home. Also, it can be tailored to meet your specific needs. I can bring the decks you prefer and stay for the amount of time necessary to read everyone at your party.

My rates are very reasonable. For more information, including dates and pricing, email me at hierophant@cox.net. Dates are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. My schedule is fairly open right now, but dates tend to fill up quickly, *especially around Samhain (Halloween)*.