

13 Magickal Cards

Tarot Insights By JohnnieTwoBrows

Pisces: Give 'Til It...Almost Hurts

Merry meet! Welcome to the Pisces edition of 13 Magickal Cards.

Warmest birthday wishes to everyone born under the sign of Pisces the Fish. You are naturally intuitive and compassionate, and when people need a friendly ear they come to you. But you don't have to put aside your wants and needs for everyone else all the time; it makes you less resentful of others in the long run if you attend to your own needs, too.

Pisces is the natural ruler of astrology's 12th house. As I say in many readings, this house is called "The House of Sorrows", and while this house does rule worry and sorrow, that title focuses too much on the negative for me. This house also rules karma, any place of confinement (hospital, asylum, prison, etc.), escape and ecstasy, unfinished business and obstacles, surrendering to a higher power, and public welfare (which is appropriate given Pisces' incredibly caring nature).

In the Tarot's Major Arcana, Pisces is represented by the Moon. The ruling planet of Pisces is Neptune, planet of the imagination and fantasy; it is represented by The Hanged Man in the Tarot. This is totally appropriate, given Pisces' penchant for sacrificing for others.

The energy of Pisces closes out the astrological year, and during this time my thoughts often turn to an interesting way of categorizing people that I heard long ago. I don't remember who the first person was that mentioned it to me, but we perceive people in two main groups: "givers" and "takers". So it's only appropriate during Pisces, which rules selflessness, martyrdom, and self-deception, to ask ourselves this question: Am I a giver or a taker?

This is not an easy question to ask yourself and it's even thornier to answer. On the one hand, being a giver is a positive thing. It means you are willing to sacrifice to help others succeed and help people when they needed you. Unfortunately, the more negative side of the giver is that if taken to extreme, the giver becomes a martyr, and while giving of yourself is a noble thing, being taken advantage of is not.

On the other hand, being a taker has definite negative connotations. I actually remember categorizing someone this way not too long ago, and the context was definitely not positive. Takers are seen as selfish, egotistical individuals who think of themselves as more important than the rest of us. But there is a positive side to being a taker: They take what they need and show more initiative than many givers by asking for something instead of waiting it to be handed to them. That part of being a taker—the fulfillment of one's own needs and not those of another—is often unnoticed.

So should you be a giver or a taker? My answer would be both, or neither, depending on your point of view. The Wiccan Rede says "Fairly take and fairly give," and I think that's a good place to start.

My high school used to pass a donation box from person to person once a week during homeroom, and they used to exhort us to put money in the box by saying "Give 'til it hurts!" Well, I would encourage you to give of yourself, but not until it hurts; give and take equally in all aspects of your life.

I hope to see you across my Tarot table soon.
Blessed Be, J2B



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Tarot Deck Review

The Grail Tarot

This Tarot deck was definitely an interesting find. I'm a big fan of Arthurian-style decks, and this one is very impressive. "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" is one of my favorite films so as you can imagine I'm a fan of this genre. (Sadly, "Sir Not Appearing in this Film" did not appear in this deck. ☺)

The first thing you notice is the colors; they are incredibly bright. The images are done in a Renaissance style (including the lack of size perspective for people, so some appear much larger than others), and the artwork is beautiful. The backs of the cards are very simple and just show a red wax seal superimposed on a plain red card. Titles for each card can be found at the bottom center; this is true for both the Major and Minor Arcana cards.

However, Tarot practitioners and enthusiasts who are used to seeing the Rider-Waite titles for the cards will have to read carefully, as most of the Major Arcana cards have themed designations. For example, in this deck, the Fool is the Seeker; The Emperor is Solomon, named for the Bible's legendary King Solomon who used an ingenious method to settle a

dispute between two women fighting over a baby); and the Sun is Bors, one of the Knights of the Round Table. The numbers for the Majors are the same, though, so any momentary confusion by just reading the title can be alleviated quickly. There are no Roman numerals on the cards at all; Arabic numerals are used on the Majors while the Minors' numbers are written out longhand. Even the Aces are listed as "One".

The suits are listed as Stones (pentacles / earth), Swords (air), Lances (wands / fire), and Vessels (Cups or water). The Court cards are listed as Master (King), Lady (Queen), Preceptor (Knight), and Brother (Page).

The book is a real necessity to get everything you can out of this deck. It's an excellent reference to Arthur and the Grail Legend. It can certainly be used without the book but I highly recommend it, especially if you're not familiar with the Grail or the Knights of the Round Table.

Another reason for the book is that the cards definitely show some of the Rider-Waite imagery, but some are very different. For example, The Hanged Man is "The Wounded King" and the image is that of a bloody king sitting on this throne attended by the Seeker, who makes an appearance in several additional Majors himself. The

Three of Stones shows one man addressing a group of other people, one of whom is holding the “stone”, which is present in each of the cards of the Stones suit, which doesn’t immediately conjure up some of the standard images of the card (marriage, etc.) So it’s important for the reader to be able to easily associated the cards with their divinatory meanings on these specific cards.

The most interesting card for me in this deck is the One (Ace) of Wands. A man walks out of a castle holding a walking stick (this is the Lance for the card). A beautiful landscape is behind him, clearly showing each of the four elements. There is a lake or pond (water) with waves (air), in front of a mountain range (earth), and a sunrise in the background (fire). To highlight the fire energy, the sunrise is almost directly above the man and is in the upper center of the card; your attention is drawn to it almost immediately. I just found this card breathtaking, even if the man was almost as big as the castle he just walked out of.

I encourage those of you interested in the Grail and/or King Arthur legends to give this deck a whirl and see what you think. This deck is very different from many that I have and I’m glad I picked it up; I think it’s the only Tarot deck I have where Jesus is pictured; he’s the High Priestess. ☺

Shameless Marketing: Tarot “Party”

Last weekend I invited all of my Tarot friends to a party at my house to thank them for another successful astrological year working together.

Ever prompt, the Page of Wands was one of the first to arrive, coming in and making himself right at home on the couch. On the other side of the coffee table sat the 10 of Pentacles, discussing the recession and its effect on the housing market with the Queen of Swords, who listened intently and shared some of her experiences with him.

The Three of Cups took one of the stools at the Tiki Bar and drank a Scorpion and a Zombie all on her own before mixologist Jennie Sunshine told her to slow down a little and celebrate more responsibly.

The Magician arrived not long after and decisively made his way to the Tiki Bar, ordering a Mai Tai. He said that the High Priestess didn’t tell him whether or not she was coming. “There’s always a chance for her to show up,” he said, “but I guess she wants to keep everyone in the dark for now about what she’ll do.”

As the party roared into full swing, Strength held the door open for the King and Queen of Wands, arriving fashionably late but wearing gorgeous outfits. The shy but smiling Page of Cups followed, looking wistfully at the Queen of Pentacles as she sampled the buffet table. “She is so out of my league,” he murmured, still staring.

The Devil asked for soda water and cranberry juice, and asked if we had anything to eat that wasn’t fried or fatty. He finished off a whole box of crackers on his own but had no idea that eating that many carbs wasn’t good for him either. “It just isn’t natural,” said the Empress, smiling at him from the other side of the kitchen. “Too much of anything...except perhaps, passion...is unnatural,” she continued, winking at the Devil, who turned red in the face. “Too much of *everything* is a good thing, dear Lady,” replied the Devil slyly, regaining his composure. “Why don’t we take a walk in the herb garden later where we can talk about this more privately.”

A card table had been pulled out in the library and a number of guests were sitting around a Monopoly board, with others looking on. The Five of Wands, the Page of Swords, the Seven of Pentacles, and the Emperor were focused on the game, with The Moon, The Hanged Man, and the Five of Pentacles watching closely. At the outset,

the players were going to establish \$500 for landing on Free Parking but the Emperor said that went against the rules, violating the structure of the game and making it more difficult to send players into bankruptcy. The others reluctantly agreed when the Emperor took on the additional duty of being banker. The Five of Wands was dead set on winning, and controlled most of the orange properties. However, he needed New York Avenue from the Seven of Pentacles, who considered the deal carefully; the money the Five of Wands was offering would significantly improve his financial position. The Hanged Man was in favor of the sacrifice required by the move, while the Moon was really concerned that the Five of Wands was cheating by hiding some of his cash under the board. The Emperor bristled at this incredible disregard for the rules, but the Page of Swords spoke up and asked everyone not involved in the trade to be quiet so the players could negotiate a deal.

Suddenly, the Tower, drunk as a lord, staggered into the room, grabbed the board and threw it up in the air, shouting, "DEAL WITH THIS!! HAHAHAAAAHAHA!" I've never seen the Five of Wands so upset. The Five of Pentacles turned away from the table and said, "Whatever. Bankrupting your friends is so over-rated anyway."

Death had to come into the library and put an end to the Tower's mayhem and transformed the mood of the party to a more somber, serious one. At that point the guests started realizing they should start heading home. Judgment helped clean up so the house would look as good as new. The King of Cups held up the leaning Tower, speaking quietly to him to calm him down and then led him slowly out the door. The Seven of Swords slipped out quietly, and no one really saw him leave. The Eight of Pentacles really paid attention to each person in turn as they left, making sure to close the door tightly behind him.

Jennie and I stood for a moment, savoring the quiet of our home again. Despite all of the noise and the effort required to put on the party, a good time was had by a great majority of the guests, with the exception of the Four of Cups and Nine of Swords. The Four sat in a corner the whole time and wouldn't talk to anyone. The Nine was so concerned with getting home before 2 because "all the freaks come out at 2 o'clock!" that she couldn't let go enough to enjoy the party. Actually, she was so anxious that she couldn't stop thinking about these "2 o'clock freaks".

MORAL: When you bring 78 different personalities to a party, you never know WHAT will come out. So join in the fun by scheduling a Tarot party today. ☺

Card of the Month: The Five Of Wands

Generally speaking, the Fives in the Tarot deck are not particularly good cards. Thankfully, the Five of Wands is probably the least harsh of the group.

Its divinatory meanings include chaos, miscommunication, and friendly competition or an exciting struggle. The card shows five people battling against each other with wands, but they do not appear to be hurting each other; they're engaging in this activity because it is fun.

I often draw it in situations where everyone around the Querent is talking and no one is listening, or when many people are competing for the time or attention of the Querent.

Some opposing cards for the Five of Wands include the Emperor (order and structure) and the Eight of Wands (focus or message received).

Dorothy Morrison is Back at 13 Magickal Moons!

Yes, you read that right...the illustrious Dorothy Morrison will be returning to our midst at the end of March...March 29 to be exact. And you know it will be totally awesome. For those of you lucky enough to have scheduled a Tarot reading with Dorothy (Jennie Sunshine and I both got slots...and we were lucky because in less than 12 hours they were all gone!), you are in for a real treat. Dorothy is an incredibly talented witch with a set of Tarot cards.

Dorothy is also an incredibly talented witch without a pack of Tarot cards in her hand. Make sure you sign up for **Utterly Fabulous, Taking Control of Your Own Damn Life**, from 7-9pm at the store.

More details are available for your perusal at www.13magickalmoons.com. You don't want to miss this opportunity!

P.S. Mark your calendars **now** for Dorothy's and M.R. Sellar's upcoming book release parties, October 3-4 at the store.

Upcoming Dates

I'll be reading Tarot for the following dates for Pisces and Aries at 13 Magickal Moons. Readings will be done on a first-come, first-served basis. Just go to the Tarot table and sign up when you get to the store. All of these dates are tentative. Please check www.13magickalmoons.com for an up-to-date schedule. This is especially true for weekend dates.

Saturday, March 8	11:30am-5:30pm
Saturday, March 15	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, March 19 (Open Ostara Ritual)	6:00-9:00pm
Wednesday, March 26	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, April 5	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, April 9	6:00-9:00pm