

Evaluation

For this project I wanted to work with Tarot and their meanings. During my research I found out some Tarot cards are very misunderstood and are either looked at as insults or bad omens, for example, The Fool and Death, the cards or the reader isn't calling you a fool or saying you're going to die when these cards are drawn, they simply mean new beginnings and rebirth, but a more skilled reader will see more than that as the colour, symbols and numbers all hold meaning too. So, knowing this, I wanted to create my own representation of the cards and possibly in some way link some of them to the current pandemic.

I started with The Tower as I felt this card really sums up 2020 as this card means chaos, dramatic change and destruction of the old. I scanned this card and took it to photoshop where I distorted it until it was almost unrecognisable. I feel this visually represents this year as there's so much going on it's all too much to take in to see the full clear picture and there is no solid answer as to when everything will be completely normal again, if ever.

Next was The Moon. This card represents mystery and secrets, which I feel could also be related to the pandemic as there is still a lot of mystery around how it all began and possible secrets still being held from us by higher authorities. For this photo I like the idea of the tape over the mouth as a symbol of secrets that want to come out but are forbidden.

Next was The Star. This is a more positive card as it means hope and a light at the end of the tunnel which I feel we all need right now; we need some hope for normality to return. For this photo I used a single candle with macro lenses and a high shutter speed so I get a really

close up photo of the flame and the back is dark, this way the candle symbolizes the light within the dark, the light at the end of the tunnel and guidance.

Lastly was The Hermit. This card represents solitude and isolation which I feel perfectly represents this year as we were all prisoners to our own homes not to see loved ones and friends, not even allowed to go for a simple coffee. For this photo I wanted to use myself in the photo as isolation is something I'm still struggling with now seeing everyone able to go out for meals and casual shopping I'm still confined to my home and workplace so I do not possibly expose my work place to the virus as our clientele are extremely high risk.

I have enjoyed this project as I get to express my love and understanding of the Tarot and share my interpretations and connections to the cards which I feel in Tarot reading is the most important. I would have liked to have been able to experiment more with film for this project but hopefully with more and more restrictions being lifted I might just be able to do that for my next upcoming project.









Experimental Strategies

What are Tarot Cards?

“R.J. Stewart suggests that the Tarot had its own origins in ‘The storytelling traditions and images preserved by travelling entertainers, originally the bards or filid of Celtic culture.’ He points out the images of the Tarot have clear connections with images described in the Vita Merlini, a text that pre-dates the earliest known Tarot deck by three centuries. It clearly describes The Empress, The Hanged Man, The Wheel of Fortune, The Fool, and so on, which are derived from the bardic Celtic tradition of preserving images of the God, Goddesses and Cosmology.” – Anna Franklin, The Sacred Circle Tarot.

Tarot cards became an Occult tool in 1789 and their design was based off Renaissance playing cards, whose design also inspired out modern day playing card deck. The tarot consists of a suits such as swords, cups, pentacles and wands ranging from Ace to 10 as in a regular card deck and this is called the Minor Arcana, these cards represent features of life:

- Wands – Creativity and will
- Pentacles – Material body or Possessions
- Cups – Emotions
- Swords – Reason

The Major Arcana is a bit more complex as there are 22 cards and they all hold a different life lesson and how they are interpreted varies on the reader.

0 The Fool – Innocence, Beginnings, Trust, Hope, Opportunity

I The Magician – Hidden Power, Magical Ability, Mastering Unseen Forces, Inner Guidance

II The High Priestess – Intuition, Emotion, Feminine Power, Imagination, Spirituality

III The Empress – Creativity, Feminine Power, Mature Women, Fertility, Pleasure

IV The Emperor – Leadership, Masculine Power, Mature Men, Material Success

V The Hierophant – Spiritual Authority, Leadership, Tradition, Institutions

VI The Lovers – Partnership, Union of Opposites, Choices, Harmony, Cooperation

VII The Chariot – Controlling Opposing Forces, Willpower, Resolving Conflict, Travel

VIII Strength – Inner Power, Overcoming Weakness, Courage, Persistence

IX The Hermit – Guidance, Solitude, Inner Wisdom, Self-Evaluation

X Wheel of Fortune – Change, Destiny, Unexpected Turn of Events, Good Luck

XI Justice – Rectification, Decision, Balance, Legal Matters

XII The Hanged Man – Letting Go, Surrender, Sacrifice

XIII Death – Transformation, An Ending, Sacrifice, Rebirth

XIV Temperance – Moderation, Harmony, Acceptance, Resolution, Cooperation, Patience

XV The Devil – Obsession, Indulgence, Fear, Materialism, Egotism

XVI The Tower – Change, Chaos, Freedom, Upset, Destruction of the Old

XVII The Star - Happiness, Hope, Light at the End of the Tunnel, Good Fortune

XVIII The Moon – Intuition, The Unconscious, Mystery, Illusion, Secrets

XIX The Sun – Happiness, Success, Pleasure, Self-Expression, Clarity, Vitality

XX Judgement- Awakening, Self-Realization, Choices, Assessment, Rebirth

XXI The World – Fulfilment, Completion, Achievement, Mastery, Wholeness

“The beauty and richness of each card reflects clarity and wisdom. Each image and symbol has a message designed to empower us spiritually and make every day and special life decisions easier” – Kisma K. Stephanich, Faery Wicca Tarot.

Symbolism in Tarot

“Tarot is above all a symbolic system of self-knowledge, self-integration, and self-transformation. Vital to integration is the union of opposites within, a process which Jung says ‘on a higher level of consciousness is not a rational thin, nor is it a matter of will; it is a psychic process of development which expresses itself in symbols.’” – Richard Roberts, The Original Tarot & You.

Colour correspondences are important for gaining a deeper understanding of the cards as the colours themselves have meaning and were used carefully when designing the cards.

Colour	Qualities
Red	Passion, Vitality, Courage
Orange	Warmth, Energy, Activity, Drive, Confidence
Yellow	Creativity, Optimism, Enthusiasm
Green	Healing, Growth, Fertility, Prosperity
Light Blue	Purity, Serenity, Mental Clarity, Compassion
Royal Blue	Loyalty, Insight, Inspiration, Independence
Indigo	Intuition, Focus, Stability
Purple	Wisdom, Spirituality, Power
White	Purity, Wholeness, Protection
Black	Power, The Unconscious, Banishing, Wisdom

Pink	Love, Friendship, Affection, Joy, Self-Esteem
Brown	Grounding, Permanence, Practicality

Symbols found in the design of the cards also hold meanings they come from different spiritual, cultural and psychological traditions.

Symbol	Meaning
Circle	Wholeness, Unity, Protection, Continuity
Square	Stability, Equality, Structure
Triangle	Trinity, Three-Dimensional Existence, Movement
Downward Triangle	Divine Feminine, Earth or Water Elements
Upward Triangle	Divine Masculine, Fire or Air Elements
Star	Hope, Promise
Five-Pointed Star	Protection, The Human Body, Physical Incarnation
Six-Pointed Star	Union of Male/Female or Earth/Sky, Integration, Manifestation
Vertical Line	Movement, Heaven, Sky, Masculine Energy
Horizontal Line	Stability, Earth, Feminine Energy
Cross	Union of Male/Female or Earth/Sky, Integration, Manifestation

Spiral	Life Energy, Renewal, Movement Toward the Center
Sun	Clarity, Vitality, Optimism, Contentment, Masculine Energy
Moon	Secrets, Intuition, Emotions, Feminine Energy
Dove	Peace, Reconciliation, Promise
Crane	Wisdom
Rose	Love
Mountain	Challenge, Vision, Achievement
Water	Emotions, The Unknown Depths of the Psyche
Snake	Transformation, Hidden Knowledge
Egg	Birth, Fertility
Rainbow	Renewal, Hope, Happiness
Book	Knowledge
Lantern	Guidance, Clarity, Hope
Bridge	Connection, Harmony, Overcoming Difficulty
Tree	Knowledge, Growth, Protection, Strength
Butterfly	Transformation

Poems inspired by Tarot cards

Wanting to Die

Anne Sexton - 1928-1974

Since you ask, most days I cannot remember.
I walk in my clothing, unmarked by that voyage.
Then the almost unnameable lust returns.

Even then I have nothing against life.
I know well the grass blades you mention,
the furniture you have placed under the sun.

But suicides have a special language.
Like carpenters they want to know *which tools*.
They never ask *why build*.

Twice I have so simply declared myself,
have possessed the enemy, eaten the enemy,
have taken on his craft, his magic.

In this way, heavy and thoughtful,
warmer than oil or water,
I have rested, drooling at the mouth-hole.

I did not think of my body at needle point.
Even the cornea and the leftover urine were gone.
Suicides have already betrayed the body.

Still-born, they don't always die,
but dazzled, they can't forget a drug so sweet
that even children would look on and smile.

To thrust all that life under your tongue!--
that, all by itself, becomes a passion.
Death's a sad Bone; bruised, you'd say,

and yet she waits for me, year after year,
to so delicately undo an old wound,
to empty my breath from its bad prison.

Balanced there, suicides sometimes meet,
raging at the fruit, a pumped-up moon,
leaving the bread they mistook for a kiss,

leaving the page of the book carelessly open,
something unsaid, the phone off the hook
and the love, whatever it was, an infection.

The Kindness

Jan Beatty

Banff, Alberta

The mother elk and 2 babies are sniffing
the metal handle of the bear-proof trash bin.
I remember the instructions for city people:
*3 football fields of space between you &
the elk if their babies are with them.*

I'm backing up slowly,
watching the calves run into each other
as they bend to eat grass/look up
at the mother at the same time.
The caramel color of their coat,
the sloping line of their small snouts &
I want to hold that beauty,
steal it for me,
but I'm only on football field # 2 & walking
into the woods past the lodge pole pines.
Their fragility, their awkward bumping
opens me to a long ago time—

 a hand on the door,
 I was walking in
to the psych hospital in Pittsburgh,
feeling broken and stripped down—
 a hand on the door
 from around my body
& I looked up to see the body
of a man, who said:

Let me get that for you—
 a hand on the door
 & the bottom of me
 dropped/

I couldn't breathe for the kindness.
I couldn't say how deep that went
for me.

I had been backing up, awkward/
I had been blind to my own beauty.

XVI The Tower

the devil's lightning tail
cracks above
(a harbinger of doom).
a white shoot of bamboo,
built up in elephant ivory blocks,
grows from beneath
tornado black skies.

we flail our arms
as the ground
prepares to swallow us up
like Jonah's famished whale.

fire drops from clouds
caress your arms
and red riding hood cloak.
I still wonder why you chose that ensemble
for our excursion,
and if the spat that followed
caused this collapse, and
if you blame me for it.

my face and a single
molasses tear
reflect an understanding
of the ravenous beast beneath
smacking its rocky lips
to gobble us,
crown and all.

IX The Hermit

greet the dead-eyed statue, once all of my heart,
toss a lantern at his fixed grin

watch him crumble before me.
chunks of granite,
his cold remains, cradled to chest, slice my hands
as i gather them into the skeleton of the lantern.
they arise again, screaming,
screaming of love
of hate
of me.
i run for sanctuary, for solitude— but cannot escape,
even when buried in the mountainside.

a futile act, this self-graving,
because i can't get away,
for his sliver still remains in my palm.

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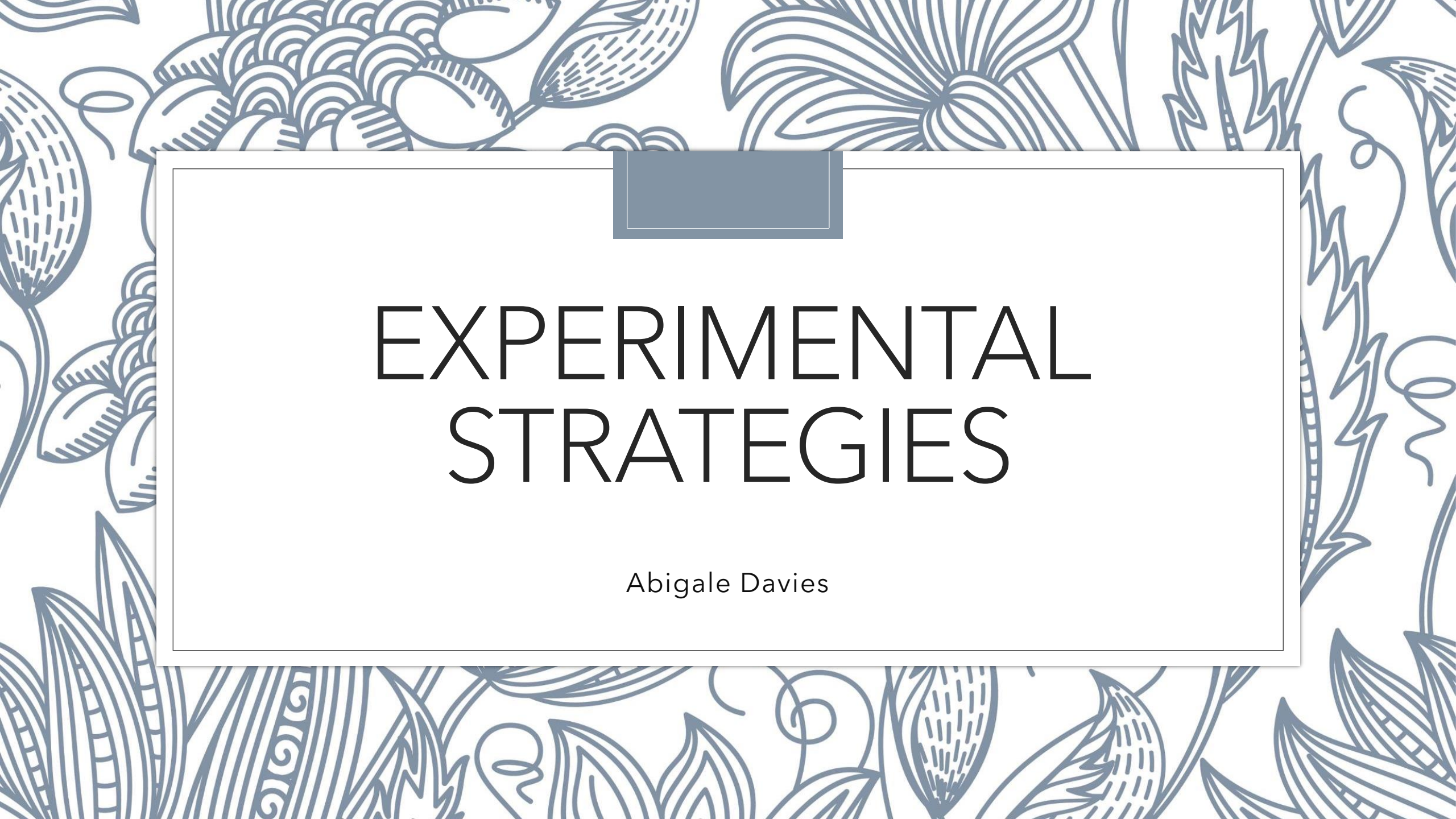
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Sexton, A. "Wanting to Die" from The Complete Poems of Anne Sexton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981). Copyright © 1981 by Linda Gray Sexton and Loring Conant, Jr. Reprinted with the permission of Sterling Lord Literistic, Inc.

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EXPERIMENTAL STRATEGIES

Abigale Davies

Project Overview

- For this project I wanted to look into the meanings of different Tarot cards and how some of them are very misunderstood, for example, the card Death does not really mean death, it actually means transformation or the end of a cycle and beginning of a new one. Tarot readings are personal to me and I heavily believe in making a project personal and something that you enjoy doing.
- Due to COVID-19 and where I work I am forced to look for experimental strategies with what is available to me already as I cannot travel due to isolation reasons for work. This is a challenge as I need to experiment with digital methods rather than film.

The cards I'm looking to work with

For this project I'm only going to be working with the 22 Major Arcana cards which are the soul of the tarot deck. Each card is viewed as a life lesson or words of advice. I will only be picking 6-8 cards from this group and visually representing their meaning.

I'm also going to look at poetry linked with the chosen cards to gain more inspiration and to help me understand other people experiences from these cards.

The cards I want to work with are:

- The Hermit - Solitude
- The Tower - Collapse, Chaos
- The Moon - Mystery, Secrets
- The Star - Hope, Light at the end of the tunnel

The Tower



Keywords – Change, Freedom, Upsets, Destruction of the old.

The Tower is by far the scariest in the deck, it isn't always a bad card but it does symbolise dramatic change and destruction of the old. I wanted to use this card as I feel this perfectly represents 2020 as life as we know it has changed dramatically and life for a while became distressing and chaotic.

This card depicts a fortress being destroyed by fire and lightning, symbolising a safe building people go to for shelter and protection betraying them and leaving them running for their lives. As scary as the message seems it turns out it's not all that bad.

When the card is drawn upright, yes it indicates collapse and this could be in the form of a relationship or a job but this card tells us that structure in life needed to be destroyed so we can start anew. The fortress can be interpreted as a prison, a prison we need to break free of, this card pushes you to make a change in life, overthrow bad habits, cut out negative people in your life, leave that job that's making your life miserable, finally make those changes in your relationship that you have desperately needed for a long time. This card shows big change mostly for the good if you work towards it, but with no effort then this card will work against you.



When this card is drawn reversed this is when you need to take this message even more seriously as this shows you've been refusing change and whether you like it or not this change is coming and the more you try to push it away and refuse to accept it the more difficult things will become until you finally give in to these changes, these changes must and will take place eventually. This interpretation is best described as clinging on for dear life to a crumbling structure, you know the structure will collapse in the end but you are refusing to let go, if you let go sooner the easier the escape will be, but the longer you leave it the less stability you have and it'll only get harder and harder to get free.

"The collapse of the tower is echoed in description of shamanic initiation, where the candidate experiences, in a vision, a symbolic dismemberment whereby his body is stripped down to its bones." - Anna Franklin, The Sacred Circle Tarot.



The Moon



Keywords- Intuition, The unconscious, Mystery, Illusion, Secrets

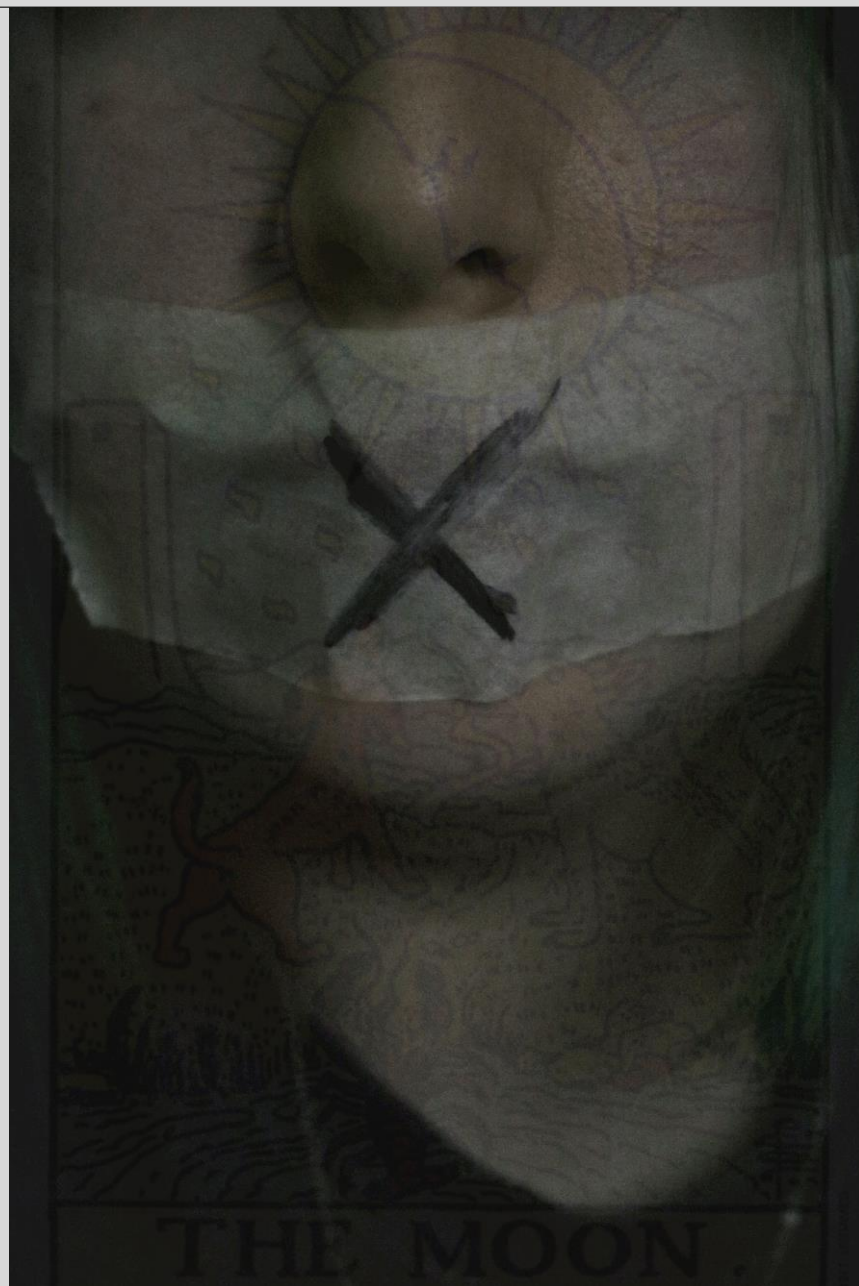
The Moon is an emotion based card as it represents the unconscious mind and the secrets it holds. When this card is drawn it symbolizes secrets or mysteries hidden within the reader and encourages the reader to become more in touch with their inner feelings and to pay attention to instincts and intuition.

When this card is drawn upright it shows you are leaning to your lunar side, your more emotional, inner voice side. When this card is drawn upright you need to pay attention to your feelings, dreams and instincts, for some people, mostly artists this is a great card as it indicates a time of increased creativity and imagination and this will work in their favour.

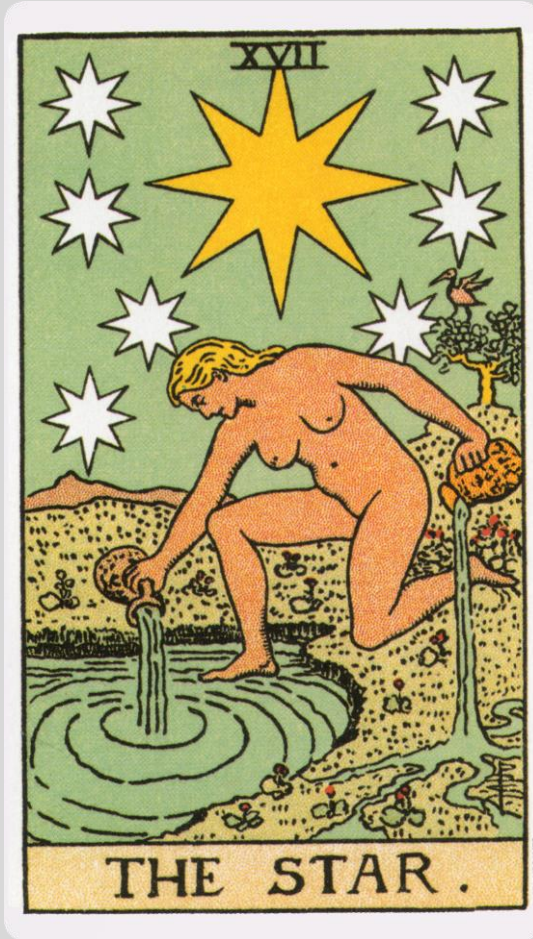


When this card is reversed it's linked to self-deception and disappointment, this can be because you didn't listen to that little voice inside you. Listen and trust that your instincts are true, do what feels right not what you think is right.

"We comfort ourselves too much with light. Sometimes we must wander in the dark so that our other senses can find their full expression and we hear more clearly the message of the night, the wilderness and the strange creatures that inhabit the unseen spaces." – Steve Roberts



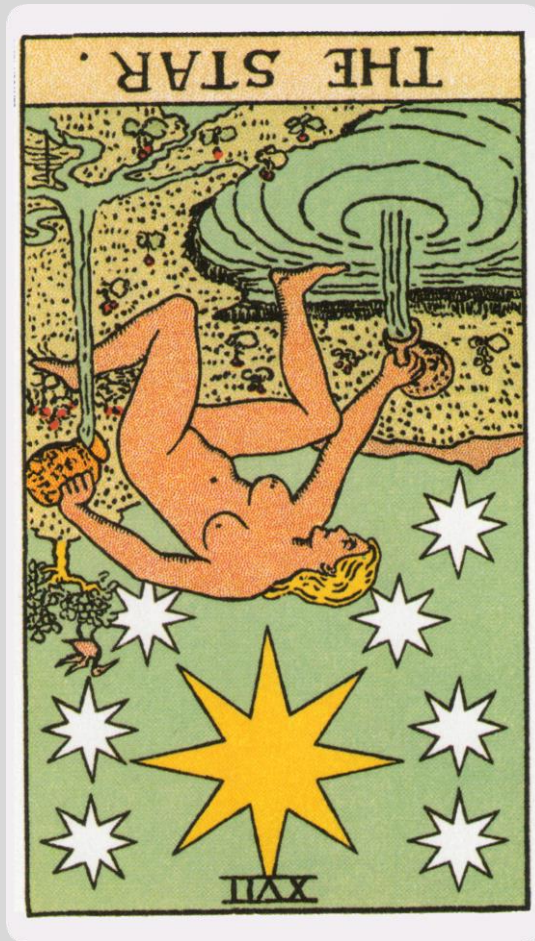
The Star



Keywords - Happiness, Hope, Light at the end of the tunnel, Good fortune.

This is a very positive card and one I feel we need these days as this card represents hope and happiness. This card shows the end of difficult times and a light at the end of the tunnel. This is also a card of good fortune. This is a very feminine card not just from the naked woman who represents purity and truth, she is nourishing the stream and grass with water, two elements that are associated with femininity. When getting this card it is the equivalent to looking at a star filled sky on a clear night.

When this card is drawn upright it signifies an end to problems and the beginning of a happier time in life. This card is the literal light at the end of the tunnel, it tells you not to give up and the good fortune and happiness is within arms reach. That time in your life you've been preparing for has finally come.



When reversed this card means you're taking your change in life more privately instead of shining it to the outer world. Messages and blessings will be received more spiritually than physically. You might feel low in self-esteem and uninspired during this time but this card gives you the message of trust the process, attune yourself to your needs and you'll make it through just fine.

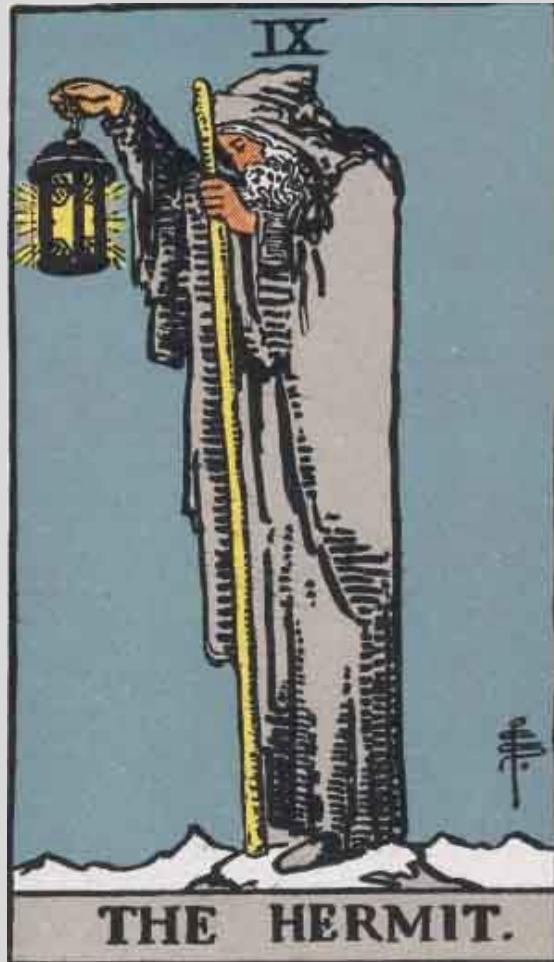
"Hope...which whispered from Pandora's box only after all the other plagues and sorrows had escaped, is the best and last of all things." - Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomas, The Rule of Four.



THE STAR.

1875 LUGGAMES

The Hermit

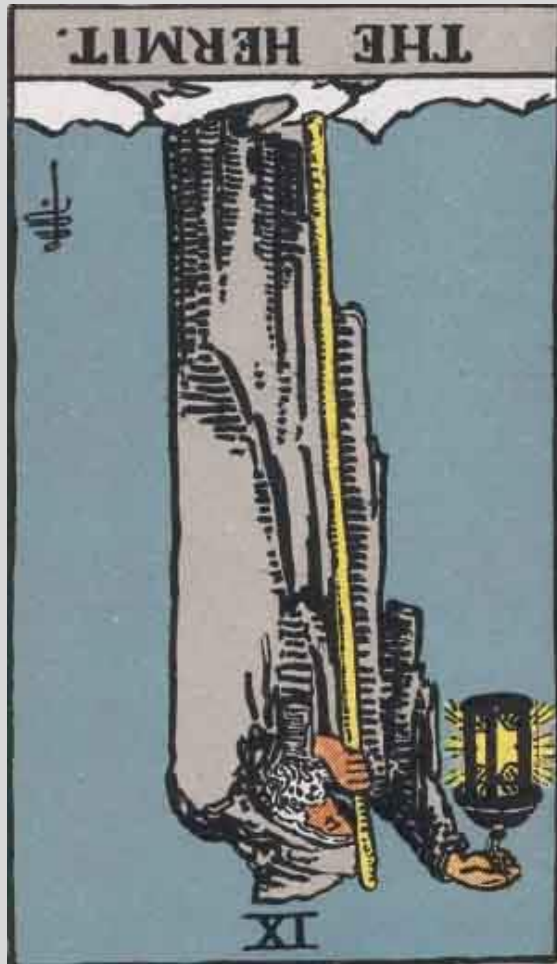


Keywords - Guidance, Solitude, Inner Wisdom, Self-Evaluation

This card I feel is another good one to represent 2020 as this card symbolizes solitude and isolation. I wanted to use this card to represent the many months we had to spend as prisoners to our own homes and the whole world experiencing complete isolation.

The Hermit can be interpreted as a seeker of truth and someone who lights the way for anyone who will follow. He is a wise figure and is often used to represent people in our lives like teachers or therapists. This card can encourage you to draw away from busyness and focus more on yourself and what you physically and mentally need.

When this card is drawn upright it hints that you might be looking for guidance and you want to gain perspective on your life. Be open to your inner guide and others who offer to help and with that you can be on your way to discovering truth and inner balance.



When this card is reversed this suggests you are ignoring or rejecting wisdom and guidance being offered to you. You need to take time to self reflect and look back on your goals, relationships, career and purpose in life, find what you need to work on and what you need guidance on and accept the help that is coming your way and to stop isolating yourself.

"If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." – William Blake



The 5 of Swords



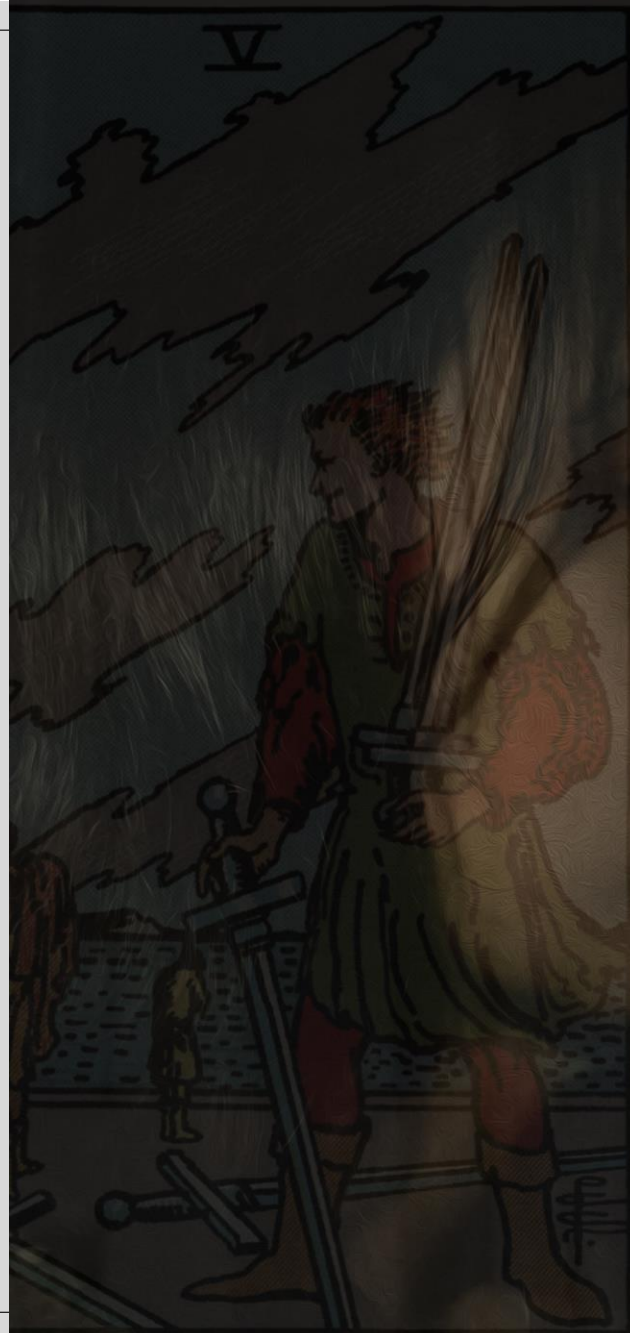
Keywords- Change, Adjustment, Loss, Destruction, Conflict, Indecision, Sadness

This card represents a time of adjustment, mostly after conflict, this could be with your inner self or with someone in the outer world. This card shows a soldier on the battlefield, this encourages you to ask yourself have you really won? Or did you lose?

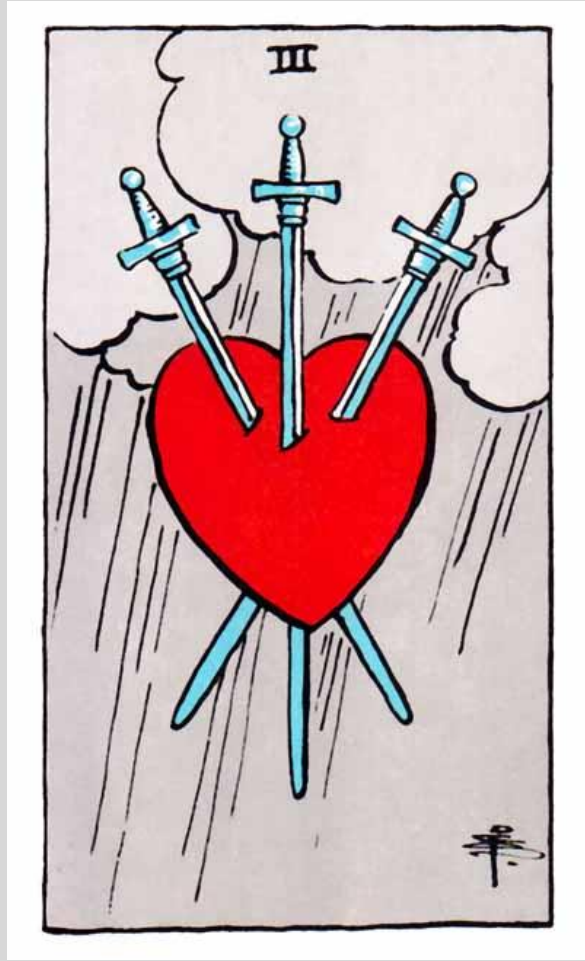
When this card is drawn upright it symbolises devastation and a need for you to resolve problems. The cost of winning may not be worth it and it might be better in the end to take the loss.



When this card is reversed it's meaning is still the same as it is when it's upright but this time its more remorseful and sad. It shows you can make repairs and set things right after conflict and learning from your mistakes but ultimately this card symbolises the emotional suffering that will accompany you through this time.



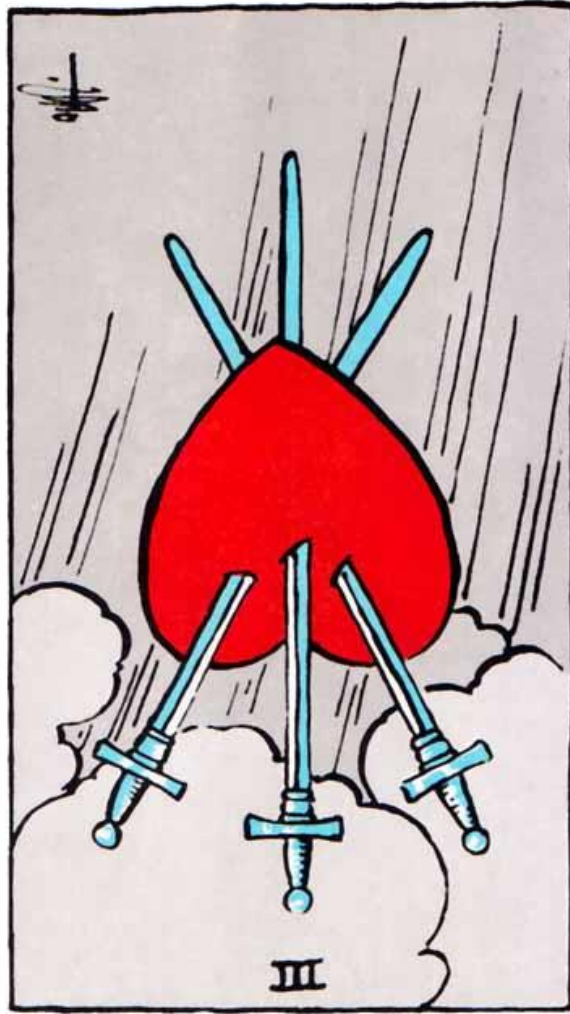
The 3 of Swords



Keywords- Suffering, Heartache, Regret, Grieving, Sorrow, Loss

Just from the image alone it is clear to see this card is a painful one and not one you'd like to receive. This is the saddest tarot card as it symbolised deep emotional pain, tragedy and heartbreak. This is commonly associated with a bad break up, the loss of a loved one or devastating news.

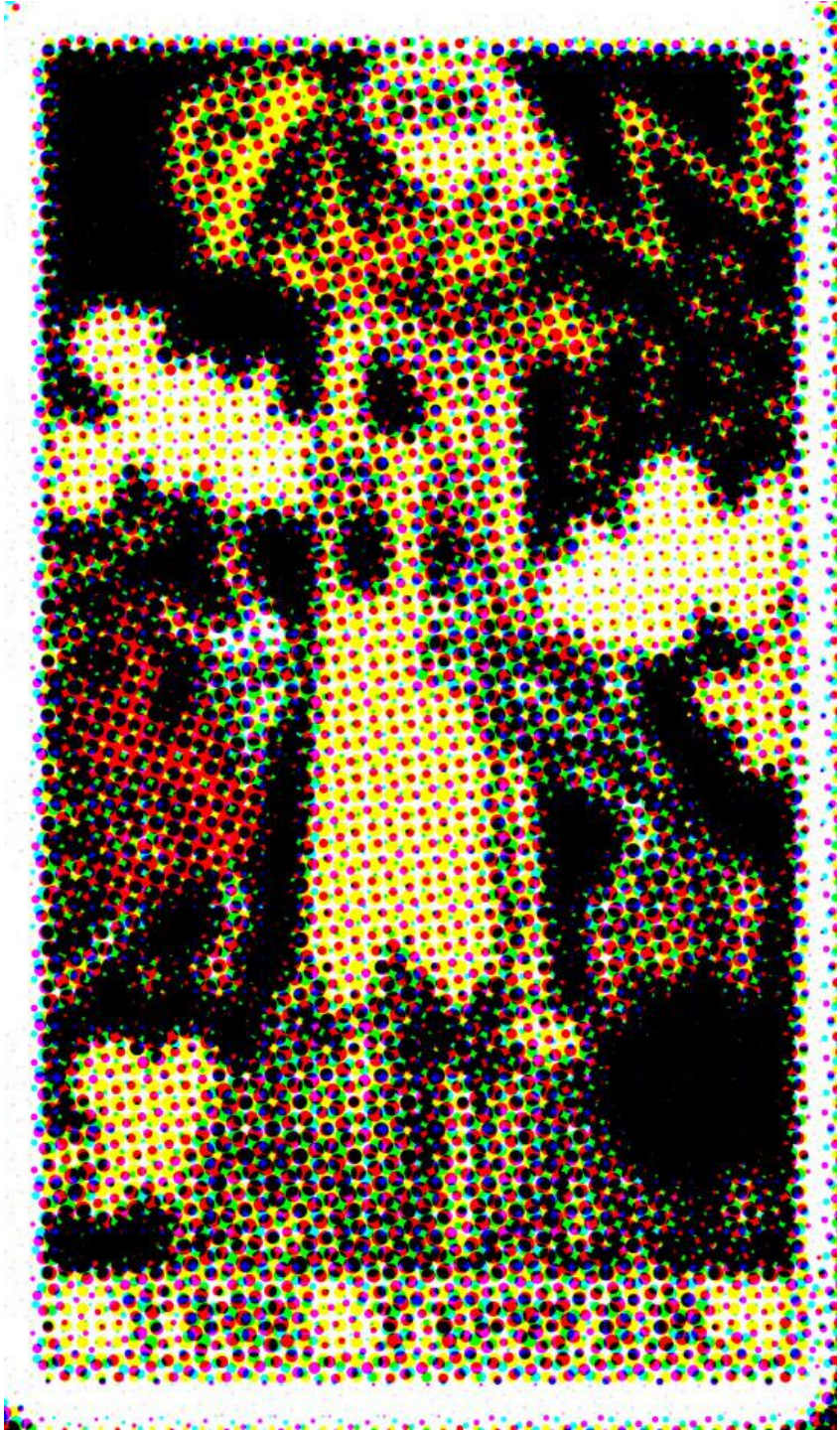
When this card is drawn upright it signifies the severing of a connection this might be from someone or something you held very close to you. Something in your life has died whether this be literally or something such as a job or relationship has just run it's course and is now time for you to let it go and move on.



When this card is reversed it is less severe and very much less problematic than when it's upright. This gives the message of "it's not the end of the world" indicating you're making a mountain out of a mole hill and even though the issue at hand at the time seems devastating and heart-breaking, it isn't really in the long run. An example of this is the truth hurts but once you accept it you're able to make improvements and move on in life unscathed.

"The soul...is...a diamond in the rough, which must abide the blows inflicted by suffering in order to shine in all it's brilliance."
- Laura Esquivel, Like Water for Chocolate.



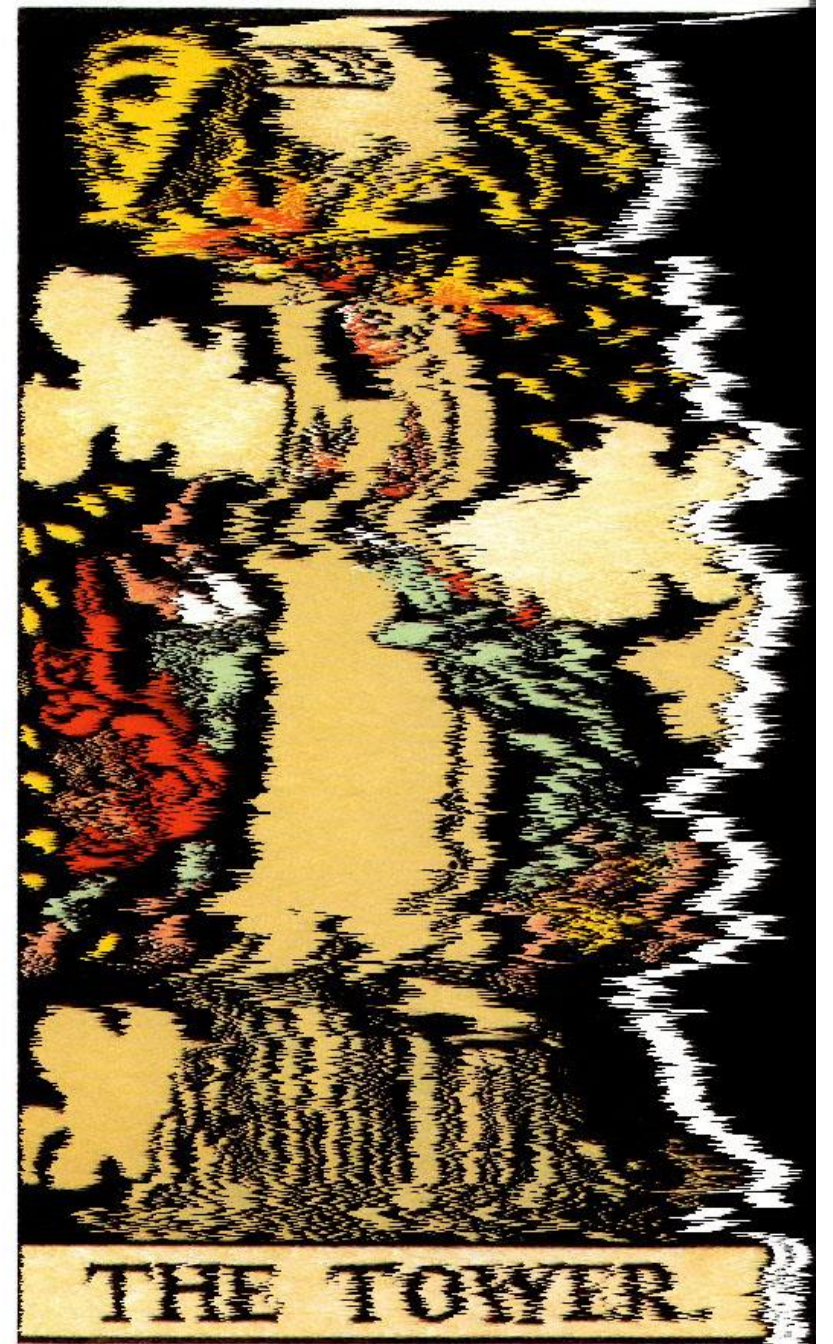






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THE HERMIT.

