

CAT'S EYE TAROT

by Debra M. Givin, DVM



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INTRODUCTION TO CAT'S EYE TAROT

No one can say for sure why cats have chosen to live with us. It may be that they are observers, watching the progress of human beings. Perhaps cats are our spiritual guides. Even if you believe that cats are merely persuaded by the simple bargain of warmth and food in exchange for companionship, there is still much to be learned from their life strategies. The Cat's Eye Tarot deck is illustrated from a feline point of view. These cats are portrayed behaving like cats. They hunt, play, love, fight, and contemplate the mysteries of the universe.

Because cats rely upon visual signaling to communicate at a distance and avoid physical conflict with other cats, they are experts in the subtle art of body language. Cats are so good at "reading" our body language, they may seem to be psychic. People can learn to read their cat's mood by posture, set of the ears, and the carriage of the tail. Anyone who has lived with a cat, or observed them crouched and tense, or relaxed and ready for affection, knows what is being communicated and responds accordingly. Moreover, cats are pleasing to the eye, complex

in their behaviors, and mysterious in their motivation; an ideal model for a visually evocative medium like the tarot.

You can use this deck as you would any traditional 78-card tarot. The images in the Cat's Eye Tarot are simple and uncluttered; there are few, if any, esoteric symbols. Even if you have never done a tarot reading, these cats can speak to you. Every card tells a story. All you have to do is focus on the image and think about how it relates to you and your question.

The card meanings, numbering, and suits in Cat's Eye Tarot follow the Rider-Waite-Smith tradition as interpreted by Joan Bunning in her book *Learning the Tarot*. The suit names are the familiar Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. Color is used to convey suit energies, establish continuity, and orient the reader as you become familiar with the deck. The Major Arcana are purple, denoting important events and spiritual matters. In the Minor Arcana, wands are orange (creative energy); cups are red (emotional energy); swords are blue (air, clarity; intellectual energy); and pentacles are green and brown (earthy; practical; natural). Initially, cat coat colors were chosen to coordinate with the suit colors, but they also work well with the suit energies — solid practical

brown tabbies for pentacles; sweet black and white for cups, talkative Siamese for swords, and flashy red tabbies for wands.

Reptiles (wands), fish (cups), birds (swords) and mice (pentacles) replace the usual suit symbols and appear when appropriate for the activity illustrated. These creatures were chosen because they are all the natural prey of cats. Also, lizards, birds, and fish appear in Pamela Smith's illustrations so they are familiar to tarot practitioners; and finally how could you have a cat deck without mice?

I have been a practicing veterinarian for 28 years; 22 of them in an exclusively feline practice so cats hold a special place in my heart and mind. For me, the tarot has become a tool for reflection and a way to think through a situation. I use the cards for myself and with others. Balancing emotion, intellect, creativity and practicality are important for the health and wellbeing of people and cats. Cats can teach us many things about how to make the best of almost any situation. Let these cats guide you as you use the tarot to learn about, yourself and your cat.

Enjoy.

O ❖ THE FOOL

Keywords: BEGINNING; SPONTANEITY; FAITH; APPARENT FOLLY

It is springtime and the world is fresh with promise. A young cat, in pursuit of a bumblebee, looks as though he is about to step off the railing. Youthful enthusiasm brings him joyously to the brink. He reaches out to grasp all that he can without a care about possible consequences. He will learn from his adventures and perhaps become more cautious, but for now he is letting impulse be his guide.

In a reading: Perhaps it is time to take a leap of faith. If you are paralyzed by fear of the unknown, you will never begin an adventure. On the other hand, if you are repeatedly being stung because you are not learning from experience it is time to consider the risk before you leap.

I ❖ THE MAGICIAN

Keywords: ACTION; CONSCIOUS AWARENESS; CONCENTRATION; POWER

An adult, male cat in his prime is interrupted while sharpening his claws. He pauses, unperturbed with a stare that is direct and unflinch-

ing. At his feet we see a fish, a lizard, and a mouse; in the sky, a bird flies by. In Cat's Eye Tarot, these creatures represent the suit energies of this cat's universe. Neither domestic nor wild, he can make his way in either world. Endowed with intellect, patience, charm, agility, keen vision, hearing and sense of smell, he uses these gifts well.

In a reading: When the Magician appears, anything is possible. You have the power to make something happen. Focus your energy and concentrate on your objective, but be aware of your motivation. The Magician represents a force of nature, which is morally ambiguous. If you forget from whence all power comes, you will find yourself spiraling out of control.

II ❖ HIGH PRIESTESS

Keywords: NON-ACTION; UNCONSCIOUS AWARENESS; POTENTIAL; MYSTERY

The moonlit ocean beckons this white cat to venture out into the night. She returns in her own time, never sharing the details of her secret life. Inviting and yet aloof, this inscrutable cat will not reveal what she knows. You will have to discover for yourself the unconscious awareness that she possesses.

In a reading: Be still. Allow yourself to know what you need to know before you proceed. If it does not feel right, it is not right. Trust your intuition. Do not act just for the sake of doing something. Often it is only possible to learn a secret by waiting patiently for a mystery to reveal itself. Do not fret. Center yourself. Quiet your mind. Purr!

III ❖ EMPRESS

Keywords: MOTHERING; ABUNDANCE; SENSES; PROTECTION

The world of mystery does not beckon for this plush long-haired mother cat. Her world is one of comfort and abundance, and she thrives in her role of mother and mate. Sensual and lusty in her appetites, nurturing and protective of her kittens, she is perfectly at home in her safe, secure world. A pampered queen, this cat can fully enjoy the indulgence of her senses.

In a reading: One naturally thinks of motherhood and relationship with our mothers or mates when this card appears. Mother is often seen as a protector and a refuge from the potential dangers of life. Mothering can be a positive or a negative energy, protective and

fulfilling, or stifling and draining. This card suggests a nice, warm, fuzzy feeling of satisfaction, like a kitten safely curled up in the protective shadow of its mom.

IV ❖ EMPEROR

Keywords: FATHERING; STRUCTURE; AUTHORITY; REGULATION

The Emperor is a black smoke Persian. Like the Empress, he is also living the good life. This is not your devil-may-care, free-roaming tomcat. He is bound by the structure imposed by his position and he takes his responsibilities seriously. His young impetuous offspring bring him joy and he guides them with patient but firm discipline.

In a reading: You may need more structure and discipline in your life. This card can be a reminder that the paternal role is an important one and should not be taken lightly. There is a sense of conformity and maybe a trade-off between freedom and security. Alternatively, you may be feeling the oppressive presence of a rigid authority figure.

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