

THE LOVER'S PATH TAROT



by Kris Waldherr
creator of The Goddess Tarot



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INTRODUCTION

ALL LOVE RELATIONSHIPS mirror our relationship with ourselves. They ultimately reflect upon our relationship with the world around us—how we think others see us, what we believe we are worthy of. Our beliefs about love relationships can even embody our thoughts about how we feel the universe nurtures and supports us.

This truth is a rewarding but complicated conundrum, which all humans confront throughout their lives, for we are surrounded by relationships from our first breath. They begin with our dependence upon our parents for our very existence, and continue as we grow through our friendships. They reach their perhaps most intense expression in the magical, self-contained world of lovers.

In many ways, the ultimate expression of our connection to the world is to fall in love. Daring to love another brings us face to face with whatever is going on within ourselves, for better or for worse. Love can be viewed as the bravest act of all, for in order to be truly intimate, we must be honest in our vulnerabilities. As we reveal our innermost selves to our beloved with all of our imperfect glories, we are truly exposed in both body and soul.

Experienced authentically, love relationships offer the sweetest rewards and the thorniest challenges. They also present us with an unparalleled opportunity to gain awareness and wisdom.

The Lover's Path Tarot is a tool to examine and improve relationships—whether they be with yourself, with your beloved, or with the world. Examining our preconceptions about love, the ways we yearn to connect with another, what we desire in a partner, is an act of self-illumination. More importantly, it's one way to take personal responsibility for our lives.

ABOUT THE ART

THE ART FOR The Lover's Path Tarot was inspired by my first visit to Italy in 1990. Accordingly, the art for The Lover's Path Tarot is inspired by the art, architecture, books, and maps of the Italian Renaissance. The decorative borders for each card were painted in gouache upon handmade paper. Other elements incorporated into the borders—the map backgrounds, the oil paintings of the elements—were digitally assembled.

The main card art was created with oil paints glazes, which were layered over a watercolor underpainting sealed with acrylic gel medium. The paintings were modeled for by friends and associates, each person chosen because they reminded me in some manner of the character they represented. In this way, the art reflects my personal belief that the human is divine, the divine human.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LOVER'S PATH TAROT

LIKE MOST TRADITIONAL tarot decks, The Lover's Path Tarot contains seventy-eight cards. These seventy-eight cards are divided into twenty-two major arcana cards and fifty-six minor arcana cards.

Each major arcana card is affiliated with a story of a famous couple from history or mythology. Accordingly, each card is named after archetypal emotional states represented by the stories; these, in turn, are related to traditional tarot symbolism.

In the minor arcana, the great themes explored in the major arcana are brought to earth, made relevant to our individual experiences. The minor arcana is divided into four suits of cups, staves, arrows, and coins, which are related to the elements of water, fire, air, and earth. Each suit represents one classic love story, with each card progressively depicting an important scene from the story. They serve to impart the lesson associated with each suit.

Meanings for reversed, or upside-down, cards are included here. These can be used as you wish. I prefer to think of cards as being strong or weak by considering the question asked, tarot spread position, and surrounding cards. For more information on reversed cards, see page 30.



THE MAJOR ARCANA

O ♥ INNOCENCE

Traditional Card: The Fool

Lovers: Tamino and Pamina

Keywords: New Ventures, Innocence, Trust, Optimism

The Magic Flute was the last opera Mozart composed before his death in 1791. Some of its fairy tale plot was inspired by the rites of the Freemasons, a secret society into which Mozart had been initiated. The Magic Flute tells of a princess named Pamina and a prince named Tamino who learn to trust their hearts, innocent and inexperienced as they may be.

MEANINGS: The start of a great journey. Innocence that allows one to be open to possibilities, and protects from difficulties. Facing fears. Trusting your heart. Feeling protected by divine forces. REVERSED: Ignoring your better instincts. Cynicism and pessimism. Distrust of the self or others.

I ♥ MAGIC

Traditional Card: The Magician

Lovers: Merlin and Vivianne

Keywords: Self Empowerment, Mastery, Actualization, Growth

When we think of magic, we often think of Merlin. Famed as the influential advisor and wizard to King Arthur, Merlin fell in love in the winter of his life with the lovely Vivianne. In time, Vivianne used the very spells Merlin taught her to entrap him. Ultimately, the magic that empowered Merlin all his life had been undone by the only thing more powerful—love.

MEANINGS: Developing the magic within yourself. Casting a spell on another to create positive change. A yearning to grow beyond perceived limitations. Renewed creativity and vigor. REVERSED: Blocked power. Feeling under the spell of another. Manipulating or using others. A need to control situations behind the scenes. Secrecy. Trickster behavior, which creates distrust.

II ♥ WISDOM

Traditional Card: The High Priestess

Lovers: Shahrazade and Shahriyar

Keywords: Knowledge, Education, Enlightenment

Over the course of a thousand and one nights, Shahrazade, the wise bride of King Shahriyar, tells many compelling stories. Shahrazade's wisdom won the king's love and trust. In doing so, she saved her life—as well as those of her fellow women of the kingdom.

MEANINGS: Wisdom gained from education. Translating book learning into understanding. A teacher who will share with you what you are seeking. Using wisdom to transform a difficult situation for the better. REVERSED: Unwillingness to learn. Superficiality. Intimidated by intelligence or education. Feeling limited by a lack of knowledge or understanding.

III ♥ FERTILITY

Traditional Card: The Empress

Lovers: Cleopatra and Caesar

Keywords: Fecundity, Abundance, Growth

Cleopatra, queen of the fertile Nile, reigned as empress of Egypt for over two decades. During this time, she became known throughout the ancient world for her seductive charms, musical voice, and unusual intelligence. Caesar immediately fell in love with the young queen and successfully helped her regain her throne. Together they had a child they named Caesarion.

MEANINGS: Ruling over one's life. A new marriage or special relationship. Practical action that manifests as physical product—children, artistic endeavors, or wealth. Pregnancy. REVERSED: Deprivation or sterility. Feeling the lack of material resources. Limitation that overwhelms.

IV ♥ POWER

Traditional Card: The Emperor

Lovers: Arthur and Guinevere

Keywords: Leadership, Responsibility, Authority

The legend of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere appears in various forms in British, Breton, Celtic, and Roman history and folklore. From the first

moment he saw her willowy form, Arthur loved Guinevere, the daughter of King Leodegrace of the North. But Guinevere loved Lancelot, the king's most loyal knight. Though Merlin warned Arthur that another woman would bring him greater happiness, the king's heart was irrevocably set. Arthur used his power to marry Guinevere, just as he used his power to rule wisely.

MEANINGS: The ability to use power wisely. Meeting an authority figure or teacher who can help. The ability to lead and inspire. REVERSED: Oppressed by another's power and authority. Insecurity. Passive aggression. Using power to manipulate others for personal gain.

V ♥ TRADITION

Traditional Card: The Hierophant

Lovers: Romeo and Juliet

Keywords: Structure, Conformity, Ritual

Romeo and Juliet are considered the quintessential example of star-crossed lovers. Trapped by their families' traditional hatred for each other, their love could only have a tragic ending. Sad as their tale may be, the love of Romeo and Juliet did bring an end to the tradition of intolerance that plagued their families. It gave way to a new tradition of peace and understanding.

MEANINGS: Following established social structures. In love relationships, the desire for marriage or some other formal structure for the sake of security. Awareness of public image and the desire to control it. Possible rigidity. REVERSED: The need to throw out old social structures that constrain. Fear of unconventional ideas and ways of approach. Nonconformity.

VI ♥ LOVE

Traditional Card: The Lovers

Lovers: Isis and Osiris

Keywords: Love, Harmony, Passion, Sensuality

The myth of Isis and Osiris illustrates the power of love and how it can transform us irrevocably. Isis and Osiris were blissful in their love for each other. Jealousy ate at their brother Set's soul, granting him no rest. He trapped Osiris in a coffin and heaved him into the Nile. Using the power of her love, the goddess brought Osiris back to life for a final embrace.

MEANINGS: Awareness of the nature of passionate love, and what is needed to encourage it. A new, important relationship. Peace within oneself. Love that transforms the world around you as well as yourself. REVERSED: Feeling unworthy of love. Manipulating others with sexuality. Immaturity and irresponsibility in love relationships. Game playing.

VII ♥ DESIRE

Traditional Card: The Chariot

Lovers: Tristan and Isolde

Keywords: Movement, Fate, Transition, Change

Without family of his own, Tristan pledged his loyalty to King Mark of Cornwall, who loved and cared for Tristan as his own son. Through irreversible twists of fate—and despite devotion to Mark—Tristan fell helplessly in love with Mark's bride, Isolde, and she with him.

MEANINGS: Being pulled by desire. Movement into the next phase of life. If you are feeling impatient, don't worry—transitions will go smoothly, as if they are meant to be. REVERSED: Impatience. Trapped by desires that feel unquenchable. Inconvenient timing. Disregard or insensitivity to the portents around yourself.

VIII ♥ STRENGTH

Traditional Card: Strength

Lovers: Siegfried and Brunnhilde

Keywords: Courage, Strength, Leadership, Confidence

The Valkyrie Brunnhilde was the favorite child of her father Wotan, divine ruler of the gods and goddesses. Brunnhilde angered Wotan by betraying him when she was moved by mortal Siegmund's story of love. For the first time, she understood the power of love, which made her strong enough to go against her father's will—she agreed to help Siegmund, though Wotan had ordered her not to. This led to Brunnhilde finding her own true love with Siegfried, the son of Siegmund.

MEANINGS: The transformation of weakness into strength. Integrity. The strength to do great deeds. Confident leadership. REVERSED: Feeling insecure or fearful. The scattering of energies. Creating discord to weaken others.

IX ♥ CONTEMPLATION

Traditional Card: The Hermit

Lovers: Abelard and Eloise

Keywords: Withdrawal, Introspection, Retreat

Peter Abelard was famed as a brilliant theologian and teacher during the medieval ages. Abelard quickly became known for mastery of philosophical dialogue and independence of thought; he even went against church policy and took positions sympathetic to pagan traditions. However it was his love for Eloise that caused the biggest scandal. The story of their forbidden love is set out in Abelard's 1130 book, The History of My Calamities.

MEANINGS: Listening to your heart. Retreat into inner life—at this time, your needs are not so focused on relationships with others, but on your relationship with yourself. **REVERSED:** Distracted by the world. Ignoring intuition. Superficiality. Feeling unconnected with your heart.

X ♥ FORTUNE

Traditional Card: The Wheel of Fortune

Lovers: Danae and Zeus

Keywords: Chance, Fate, Expansion, Prosperity

King Acrisius had a daughter named Danae—a princess with a curse, for upon her birth it was predicted that one of the princess's offspring would kill the king. When Danae came of age, the king walled her within a tower made of bronze. Despite this, Danae was loved by Zeus and together they had a son named Perseus. Perseus grew into a strong man and after many adventures, he did slay Acrisius—a just punishment for treating his only daughter so cruelly.

MEANINGS: Positive fate. The generosity of the universe. The ability to be open to abundance. Awareness of beauty and love. **REVERSED:** Uncomfortable feelings or disappointing experiences with chance. Feeling ignored by fortune—when will it be your turn?

SAMPLE