

# MEDIEVAL CAT TAROT

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*To Gina M. Pace,  
“It all began with the Fool.”  
A very special thanks to Gina for all  
her guidance and encouragement.*

*To Robin “Annah-Kosinishov”  
Sekora, my patron extraordinaire.*

**SAMPLE**

*To Keith Stanfield and  
Randy L. Cutler—beautiful  
people with beautiful minds.*

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE TAROT is a deck of seventy-eight cards used for many years to help people answer some of their deepest questions about life. Historically speaking, the Tarot has moved through many evolutions, including a playing card game, a form of “flash cards” to teach values, and more familiarly as a fortune-telling device. Now, in the twenty-first century, it has grown to become more of a tool for transformation—allowing people greater control and more enlightened decision-making.

Medieval Cat Tarot marries rich esoteric symbolism with truly wonderful artistic styling and expression. While there is a definite theme to the illustrations on the cards, this is not merely a collector’s deck. Each card’s meaning is rendered in a heartfelt but simple way so that anyone can appreciate and understand it. One need only seek to identify with the players in the drama acted out on each card.

The characters on each card are shown either in the act of, or participating in, behavior and situations which describe the truest meanings of the card as it is understood in a more universal way, based upon Golden Dawn symbolism as interpreted by A. E. Waite. However, instead of drowning the reader with massive amounts of redundant symbols, one coherent image is used to create a feeling of association with the card itself. One might look at a character on a

card, understand what he or she is doing, and say, “that is how I feel, I know what that card means to me.”

Some of the first tarot decks did not include numerology symbols or a numbering system in the Major Arcana. I have chosen that same omission for Medieval Cat Tarot. As there is some interchangeability with a few of the Majors (most often Strength and Justice), this allows the reader to use the cards at his or her discretion.

The most special feature of Medieval Cat Tarot is its completely original system of Court Cards. More readers struggle to understand the Tarot Court than any other part of the deck. In Medieval Cat Tarot the symbolism changes from card to card to aptly demonstrate how this set of sixteen cards can, in fact, be some of the most powerful cards in the deck in terms of helping the reader to ascertain the state and growth patterns of the querent.

Reverse meanings are not included in the card descriptions for this deck. I feel this maintains the more traditional method of reading the cards. However, the symmetrical card back allows the reader to choose to incorporate his or her own reverse interpretations if desired.

This may be your first deck, or it may be one of many you have purchased over the years. Either way, your journey with Medieval Cat Tarot promises to be a rich and fulfilling one!

—Lawrence Teng, February 2004

# MAJOR ARCANA

## The Fool

**O**ur journey begins with the Fool. Youthful in outlook, though not necessarily in years, the Fool is symbolic of a fresh new perspective and the ability to take life on its own merits. He is without preconceived expectations of what is owed to him or what he is supposed to be having or doing. When viewing the Fool we see there is a cliff ahead and we must ask ourselves if the risk is that of real danger or is it the risk of being trapped in our own fears and never stepping out into the unknown. We see that our Fool travels lightly—he does not even carry a backpack. He accepts that life will bring him what he needs when he needs it, or else he will be guided to find it, even in regards to his own sustenance. The promise of a new day dawns ahead, and when the Fool comes up in a reading, we must prepare ourselves for anything. This means asking ourselves whether we are holding ourselves back from accepting any possibilities that are available to us, or perhaps taking unnecessary risks. The one thing we do not leave behind when seeing the Fool in a reading is personal responsibility for our actions—we may be lighthearted and not bogged down by unhappiness, but we cannot simply walk away from those people and things who truly deserve our attention.

## The Magician

When we see ourselves as the Magician in a reading, we are symbolically—like the cobbler shown here—in a position with all things in balance around or before us. The four main spheres of our life—mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical—are represented as the four suit symbols of the tarot: Swords, Wands, Cups, and Coins. When all things are present and in balance in our lives, we have the ability to reach above ourselves and receive the power and responsibility necessary to take what we have been given and “juggle” it or direct it until our lives reach the goal that we have set for ourselves. Much like the expression “As Above, So Below,” the Magician is a constant reminder that the power to make our lives possible flows through us, not from ourselves directly. We are in and of ourselves a complete system, but one that relies on and moves through the greater cosmic universe as well. When the Magician comes up in a spread, we must ask ourselves where it is that we must take responsibility for the outcomes of our actions. This in and of itself means taking both the good and the bad and making life what it *can* be instead of accepting what it has been.

## The Popess

We see before us the Popess, or the symbol of the Divine Feminine. Many believe this icon to be based upon Christian legends of the female Pope Joan. More importantly, however, is her role as the Oracle in our search for our own self-wisdom and spiritual freedom. Dressed in the soothing, nurturing colors of the Blessed Virgin Mary, she appears before us as a spiritual mother, welcoming us to ourselves as the key to our own spiritual destiny awakens and the path widens before us. This key is not connected to religion in any organized form, but marks the place where we find Divinity within ourselves. Perhaps the most apt expression here is “Know Thyself.” Pomegranate fruits on the plant behind her are a symbol of our ripening consciousness, as the seeds of awareness move to awaken our sleeping subconscious. When the Popess appears to us in a reading, we must ask ourselves where it is that we may be looking for our answers outside of ourselves, and the truth we seek may be seen within—not without.

## The Empress

Where the Popess is our spiritual mother, the Empress is Mother Nature herself. An icon of great warmth, abundance, and physical well-being, she welcomes all the prosperity that life has to offer. She is a symbol of all that is possible for us in our lives, all the richness we deserve. We

simply have to reach out and bring it to ourselves. The Popess has challenged us to look in the mirror and see inside ourselves to our spiritual destiny. The Empress asks us to take what we see and transform it into a richer, fuller life. She is the embodiment of life that is enriched by a spiritual awareness. When the Empress comes up in a reading, it is time to ask ourselves how in our lives we might be overlooking possibilities to take our faith, our beliefs, and make them a reality in the physical sphere as well as in our hearts and heads. She challenges us to take what we've learned and "Make It Real." She marks a time when the learning and growing can no longer continue until we start practicing what we preach. Where are we already applying this and where can we change to embody this practice?

## SAMPLE

### The Emperor

Unlike the Empress, the Emperor stands alone. He is a power symbol, representative of how one often must stand alone to accomplish great things. All of the truly powerful icons of history were those who believed so strongly that they had to stand independently. Great passion and conviction often come at great cost, and this card can signify a period of time in one's life where it is time not to follow, nor to wander aimlessly in a crowd—but to lead. In order to accomplish what one believes in, one must take a chance and go against the grain. When the Emperor comes up in a reading, we must ask ourselves what is necessary

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