

TAROT *of the*
Golden Wheel

by Mila Losenko



Introduction

Tarot of the Golden Wheel was created on the basis of the Rider-Waite system; following classical interpretations of the cards, but considering them through the prism of Slavic culture and traditions. Dating back thousands of years, the spinning wheel has been a sacred symbol throughout Eastern Europe and Russia. In mythology the wheel symbolizes motion, infinity, never-ending cycles of life, and the four seasons. In folklore, the wheel is associated with the struggle between good and evil and it is a universal symbol of karmic justice. In Pagan beliefs, the golden wheel signifies the Sun that brings the spirit and essence of life, productivity, prosperity and contentment.

Tarot of the Golden Wheel presents a point of view about the nature of things and the place of man in this world. The most important issue is

the relationship between man and nature. Slavic folklore is rich in legends about wise, speaking animals, sacred groves, the life-giving power of the Sun and the mysterious night luminary, the Moon. Natural cycles, such as sowing grain, harvesting, the onset of winter cold, or the arrival of the first spring birds, are all important events accompanied by rituals developed over hundreds of years. The sequence of cards in the Major and Minor Arcana reflects such cycles and themes.

In creating this deck, the artist's vision of the tarot arcana was influenced by traditional Russian fairy tales. Without using specific characters, the author conveys the spirit of the Slavic tale where the hero passes a series of tests in order to finally find happiness. Very often the protagonist of the narrative is Ivan the Fool, a man who looks at the world differently than other people. He is naive,

bold, noble and full of energy. On the road, he meets guides from another world (the so-called “Faraway Kingdom”), good helpers, powerful enemies, and talking beasts. At the end of the journey the main treasure is love as well as transformation of the soul.

The symbolism of the tarot deck is closely related to the four elements: Water (Cups), Air (Swords), Fire (Wands), and Earth (Pentacles / Wheels). In this deck the pentacles are represented by golden wheels. The symbolism of color is also important in Tarot of the Golden Wheel. A favorite color in Slavic tradition is red, the color symbolizing the warmth of the Sun and life. Red represents beauty, joy and fire. Green symbolizes prosperity. Blue is the color of alienation, but it also signifies aspiration to high thoughts. It could also indicate connections with other worlds. Gold is also one

of the most important colors in Slavic culture. Gold is the light of a new dawn, the spring fields of dandelions, the color of ripe corn and the hair of a beautiful girl.

In Tarot of the Golden Wheel, the figures are adorned in traditional folk costumes. To the Slavs clothing and accessories are important elements of their culture. Clothing not only protects against cold and natural elements, it also serves as a guard against evil forces. Likewise, belts, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and headbands (*ochelja*) are ornaments protecting the owner from the evil eye. Much attention is given to the Slav's love of embroidery and decorative use of natural symbols such as flowers, solar symbols (such as the wheel) and animal motifs. All of these details have been incorporated into the art of Tarot of the Golden Wheel.

The card descriptions in this

guidebook also draw on traditional Slavic legend and folklore. Major Arcana cards represent the journey of the hero, who must pass through tests of water and fire. In his trials, the hero must demonstrate restraint, ingenuity, courage, and other tests that show him to be honest and devoid of vanity. The Minor Arcana cards play out a range of situations that a person encounters in everyday life. The tarot cards offer advice and guidance for all these life experiences.

I sincerely hope that the images and interpretations in Tarot of the Golden Wheel will shine a light of understanding for the reader and will provide insight to those who seek answers.

— Мила Лосенко



Major Arcana



O. The Fool

IMPULSE

As Mother Earth awakens from a long winter sleep flowers and grass begin to grow towards the warm sun. The whole world is covered with a spring green carpet from edge to edge. A young, fresh wind rushes over the vast meadows and you race with him, not understanding the road. You are a child of nature, a young and pure creation of the sacred spring. You are inspiration, strength and naivety, fury and fearlessness. Your life is a blank slate. You spread your wings, try your strength, and you're ready to fly like a bird. Your leap is the beginning of the path into the unknown: no plans, no thinking, no doubt — only forward motion! "Fool!" exclaims one, "Hero" others will call you, but the strength of your soul will not leave anyone indifferent. Your path begins here.

Upright:

New life cycle, journey, activity, great potential, creative chaos, non-conformism, irresponsibility, naivety in business matters

Reverse:

Imprudence, dangerous situations, mad deeds, extravagance, infantilism, carelessness, adventures

I. The Magician

WILL AND MIND

Your gaze has turned to the heavenly abyss, the light of the stars is reflected in your eyes. The universe looks at you attentively and its boundless strength pulsates in your veins. You are a magician and it's time for you to act. Your skillful hands deftly hold any tool. With its green shoots, the wand in your hand is a symbol of your creativity. The sword is your will and the triumph of the mind; you are holding everything under

your control. The full cup before you is a sign of vital energy. The Golden Wheel over your proud head illuminates your path, allowing you to walk without fear or doubt. You are the creator and master of your own destiny, but do not waste your power. Be wise in your actions, for they can echo across a great distance.

Upright:

Time to act, achieve goals, control of the situation, great results, mastering new skills, creativity, favorable outcomes

Reverse:

Tricks and scams, abuse of power, selfishness, lack of self-development, cunning, disharmony

II. The High Priestess

KEEPER OF THE KEY

Slow down, Wayfarer, the moon has already risen and only its faint light

illuminates your path. Do not rush into the dark forest, where mystical shadows and black silhouettes confuse you. Give yourself a break. Stop in front of the ghostly gates; there waiting for you is the Keeper of the Key. She is speechless but wise. In her hands is the treasured key from the gates, but she will give it only to the worthy. Be patient and attentive, and then you will hear the voice of your own soul offering your unconscious wisdom and intuition. You can find answers to your questions and solve the mystery by trusting yourself. To hear, sometimes you just need to be quiet. And then the darkness will recede, allowing you to find the right path.

Upright:

Mystery, hidden factors, deep connection, uncertain relations, empathy, insight, introversion, patience, intuition, meditation

Reverse:

Disclosure of mystery, prejudice,
intrigue, insensitivity, impatience,
arrogance, narrow-minded,
loneliness, manipulation

III. The Empress

MOTHER EARTH

Once again you see the light of the day. In the midday heat the aroma of honey grass wafts up to you. Golden stalks lean towards the ground, there will be a good harvest! In the shade of the trees you see a woman on her throne, her hair is black, like rich, fertile soil. She is dressed in red and gold, a wreath of wheat and red poppies crowning her head. The look of her eyes is attentive and gentle; sympathetically she offers you rest and food. Accept her care. You're safe and serene, so use this time to regain energy. Feel how the fruits give you strength to continue your path and affection heals your heart. As you

make your way on your path do not forget the one who always meets you with open arms; she is your mother and mother of all people.

Upright:

Patroness, development, kindness, implementation, security, coziness, joyful emotions, new ideas, creativity

Reverse:

Destructive personality, despotic character, stagnation, indecision, domestic problems, instability, decline, authoritarianism, coldness, creative

IV. The Emperor

HEAVENLY FATHER

Your Path has led you to a cold and inaccessible peak. You've spent a great deal of energy trying to conquer this mountain. Now you are at the summit, where the rocks touch the heavens and the eternal snow glistens. Here, you will meet the Master who keeps this

world safe from chaos and destruction. His royal calm and equanimity are transferred to you. You look to him like a child to his father, wanting to become as solid and unshakable, wise and impassive as he. Your mind is cleared of unwanted thoughts; there is only the will to act and the firmness of spirit. You know where your path leads you from here and what you will take with you from this mountain. Be persistent and confident, weigh your decisions, moderate your passion, elevate your spirit, become an example for others, as the Emperor has done for you.

Upright:

Leader, guardian, power, authority, control, dominance, rationalism, reliability, civilization, logic

Reverse:

Tyrant, coward, conflict, nominal power, despotism, cruelty, lack of ideas, waste of energy, immaturity

V. The Hierophant

SANCTUARY

You have come to seek knowledge in the ancient green grove, where the branches of centuries-old giant trees intertwine like a canopy overhead. In this temple of nature, people learn to distinguish evil from good. This is where they come to honor ancestors and gods, marry, and keep their traditions. Here they come with their joys and sorrows. You came here to find a mentor, and he went out to meet you. Listen to his words—this is the wisdom of centuries and countless generations who lived before you. He speaks with the voices of the old gods. You're a student, be patient and attentive to comprehend the science of living among the people, to be moral and compassionate, industrious and inspirational. Find your place in the world and improve yourself. Let your spirit be worthy of your mentor.

Upright:

Moral authority, priest, conservatism, traditionalism, professional advice, self-improvement, spiritual growth, trust, moral values, education

Reverse:

Eccentric, false prophet, dogmatism, fanaticism, neglecting obligations, stubbornness, limitations, bad advice

VI. The Lovers

PARTNERSHIP

The air is clear and clean with the radiant summer sky reflected in the cool water. In your soul blooms sincere and deep feelings and your heart sings a song of true love. This is the greatest gift of the gods, joy without bitterness and euphoria giving you wings. But be careful, Wayfarer: right now you are standing at the crossroads of your life. Should you avoid temptations and go on a familiar road? Or give in to yearnings, new

sensations, and unexplored pleasures? Reason or feelings, reliability and stability, or enticing uncertainty? Whatever you choose, remember—you are free in your choices and you are responsible for your decisions. In choosing, simply be honest with yourself, be wise, be strong and remember that love is the greatest gift.

Upright:

Important choice, test, partnership, new relationships, love, attraction, charisma, engagement, success, development

Reverse:

Wrong choice, unreasonable decision, disagreements, infidelity, end of affection, marital problems, separation, irresponsibility, fear of commitment

VII. The Chariot

VICTORY

A wonderful spectacle presents itself before your eyes: through the radiant dawn clouds rushing across the sky, two horses, one black one white, like darkness and light. The horses carry a man in a golden chariot. The fiery cloak billows over him like the pillar of a bright flame, and a golden banner flutters above his head. Bright light fills the world as the dawn follows the chariot. You feel joy at the sight of the new victory of the morning over night, what a surge of strength and power it causes in the soul! Spread your shoulders and breathe in, filling your chest with energy. As darkness recedes and enemies fade, you are ready for any challenges. You, as the charioteer, tighten the reins of your destiny and lead it with a firm hand to victory.

Upright:

Activity, optimism, joy from profit, increase, accomplishments, euphoria, courage, success at any cost, travel, relocation

Reverse:

Loss of self-control, reassessment of forces, stagnation, failed plans, conspiracies, quarrels, waiting, delays, trouble on the way

VIII. Strength

SPIRITUAL POWER

The sounds of nature: the trembling of foliage, rustling in the grass, the singing of birds, the whiff of a fresh mountain breeze, everything stirs your soul, filling it with a new power. The forest opens before you and you see its master—a mighty bear. Your flesh is weak, but the spirit is strong and you overcome fear of a powerful and dangerous enemy. Your wisdom, intuition and power of persuasion

help you cope with serious obstacles. This card symbolizes the triumph of your spiritual power over primal animal instincts. The beast is defeated, but not broken; you acted gently and turned it into your ally and friend. This card says that you are perfecting yourself by achieving harmony of the soul and flesh, mind and heart, instincts and morality. You tamed the beast.

Upright:

Courage and bravery, active action, diplomacy, power of persuasion, self-confidence, energy, wisdom and patience

Reverse:

Self-doubt, cowardice, complaisance, insolence and vanity, intimidation, immoral acts

IX. The Hermit

SOLITUDE

The gloomy and stony terrain under the cloudy sky meets you. Prickly vines creep among the gray stones and the cold north wind howls in the canyons. Why is this person looking for shelter in this wild and desolate place? Looking around you start to understand that there are no temptations here, no noise, none of the distractions of ordinary life. In this quiet place you begin to hear your thoughts and find out who you really are. Turn your gaze into yourself, look at yourself, without embellishment and other false impressions. Ask yourself — “Who am I?” “For what do I live?” “Where do I go?” The light of truth, like a lonely firefly in the dark, flares up brighter. You are lonely, but on this journey to your true nature you do not need fellow travelers.

Upright:

Self-knowledge, spirituality, closure, loneliness, deceleration, rejection of ego, insight, restraint of emotions, training, travel

Reverse:

Perfectionism, negativity, secrets, misanthropy, inactivity, expulsion, suspicion, arrogance, loss, fear of illness or isolation

X. Wheel of Fortune

ETERNAL MOVEMENT

Happiness and misfortune are the two sides of human life. Who knows what will befall each man. Will he be rich or poor, healthy or sick, beloved or reviled? Fate may generously give one person a garden full of golden apples, while another person has only thistles and stone under her feet. But luck is fickle and capricious. Wealth can melt away like snow in the spring sun. In the field overgrown with

weeds a garden could bloom forth.
The lessons of this card are: everything passes. Joy and sorrow are not eternal. The sun disappears beneath the horizon today; tomorrow it will be reborn with the new dawn. Life is eternal movement from darkness to light.

Upright:

Progress, luck, fortune, success, cycles, winning, courage, cheerfulness, new opportunities, natural, relocation

Reverse:

Regress, deadlock, unavoidable obstacles, annoying failures, delays, recurring problems, disappointment, disruption of plans

XI. Justice

TRIAL

Blessed is the man who did not rebel against the truth, did not sin and did not betray. He does not know painful remorse, he is not afraid of exposure,

he lives in peace with himself. He will not be shaken by someone else's penetrating gaze and he will not be afraid of righteous judgment. Listen to the voice of your conscience. Do you keep dark and shameful secrets? Will you withstand the trial? Stand before Justice. Here is a shining sword in the hands of a judge—a sign of law, strict and just. She punishes criminals and protects the weak. The hot iron ore is a test of God's judgment. If you are noble and pure the sword will not touch you, and the iron will not burn your hands. If you forgot about honor, loyalty and mercy, then you will pay your debt in full. This card reminds us that the world must remain in equilibrium.

Upright:

Honesty, integrity, respect, personal responsibility, law, expert opinion, karma, mutual honesty, logic

Reverse:

Illegal actions, ignoring laws and rules, false accusations, shame, bias, intolerance, prejudice, accusation, sentencing, broken promises

XII. The Hanged Man

ABYSS

Beware! Suddenly you fall into a noose and a blind, ruthless force throws your body into the watery abyss. Splash and like a stone, you sink to the bottom. The water is cold and desperate madness seizes your heart. You are helpless in a tangle of captivity and chaos, everything turned upside down. You're caught, broken, lost, defeated and cast down to the depths. A light fades in your eyes and you cannot hear sounds in your underwater prison. You freeze, you humble yourself, you are ready to accept this death. You're ready to surrender. But in the depths of your soul there lives the hope of liberation. As a

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