

FOLK
LORE
TAROT



BY ROWAN ORTINS

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INTRODUCTION

Storytelling has always been a part of human nature. Every culture has a rich tradition of mythology and folklore that continues to enchant us to this day. These stories serve not only to entertain, but to also carry deeper truths and symbolism about the nature of the world.

While myths and legends are unique to the cultures they originate from, many of these stories share common themes, pathways and character archetypes. It shows that despite the diversity of human experiences, we are more alike than we are different. Even the cards and depictions of the tarot are built out of these powerful symbols. This deck serves to bridge the gap between the past and the

present, bringing the wisdom of these ancient deities and creatures to guide us on our current journey.

The Folklore Tarot is inspired by those stories as well as the detailed patterns and floral designs found in many folk art traditions. Every pip card is represented by these intricate floral elements. The court cards, as well as the Major Arcana, are illustrated with creatures and deities from mythological tales around the world.



SAMPLE

MAJOR ARCANA



O • FOOL

Upright: *innocence, adventure, potential*

Reversed: *naivety, ignorance, carelessness*

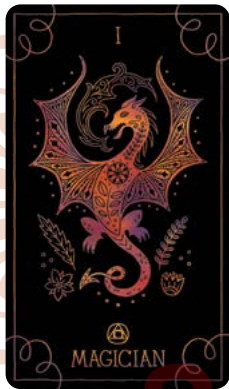
The jackalope is a creature from American folklore, described as a jackrabbit with the antlers of a deer. While the jackrabbit, a type of hare, represents swiftness and intuition, the deer represents doe-eyed innocence. These animals

combine their traits to create a quintessential representation of the forest. Though many creatures of legend are fearsome, the jackalope is more often seen as cute, friendly and whimsical. It is content to hop through the forest and explore the world. The Fool teaches us to revel in simple joys and be ready to learn and grow.

Symbol: Salt

Salt is one of the three primes in alchemy, along with sulfur and mercury. It represents the body and the physical world. Due to its use in preventing food from spoiling, salt has become a symbol of protection and purification. The expression “salt of the earth” refers to a person who is honest and grounded.





I • MAGICIAN

Upright: *skill, magic, confidence*

Reversed: *powerlessness, doubt, procrastination*

The dragon is one of the most well-known mythical creatures. Variations of these mystical serpents appear in most cultures around the world. This card depicts the fire-breathing dragon that originated in medieval bestiaries and is a common staple in modern fantasy

fiction. Since this particular dragon lacks forelegs, it is more specifically identified as a wyvern. Dragons are often said to be intelligent and powerful guardians of treasure. This card encourages us to think about what we treasure most and hold on to it dearly. With traits inspired by lizards, serpents, bats and crocodilians, these powerful hybrids represent all of the base elements (fire, water, earth and air) combined. The Magician teaches us to use every skill at our disposal and tackle problems head-on.

Symbol: Philosopher's Stone

The ultimate goal of alchemy was the creation of the legendary Philosopher's Stone, a substance that had properties of healing and immortality, along with the ability to turn lead into gold. As a metaphor, the Stone also represents the acquisition of skill and knowledge, a transformation of the mind.





SEVEN OF CUPS

Upright: *choice, temptation, illusion, imagination*

Reversed: *lack of focus, confusion, indecision*



EIGHT OF CUPS

Upright: *withdrawal, dissatisfaction, escape*

Reversed: *aimlessness, avoidance, stagnation*



~999▽888~

NINE OF CUPS

Upright: fulfillment, satisfaction,
gratitude, abundance

Reversed: indulgence, materialism,
arrogance



~999▽888~

TEN OF CUPS

Upright: happiness, family, harmony

Reversed: family conflict, discord,
disconnection



~***~ ▽ ~***~

PAGE OF CUPS

Upright: *innocence, opportunity, surprise, confidence*

Reversed: *immaturity, doubt, insecurity*

The selkie is a creature from Celtic folklore capable of shape-shifting from a seal to a human. In human form, they are often portrayed as women wearing their shed seal pelt as a coat. This coat is necessary for them to transform back

to their true form. Many tales revolve around a man stealing a selkie's fur so that she is forced to stay on land and often ends up marrying him. But sooner or later, she is able to recover her stolen coat and returns to the sea in her seal form. The selkie teaches us to be happy in our own skin and not to let anybody stop us from being our true selves.





KNIGHT OF CUPS

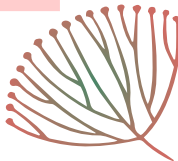
Upright: *romance, optimism, imagination*

Reversed: *jealousy, disappointment, unrealistic expectations*

Some may recognize the word hippocampus to be a part of the brain that focuses on learning and memory. However, it is also a mythological creature depicted as a cross between a horse and a fish. Though the name is Greek,

similar creatures appear throughout diverse folkloric traditions, particularly around the Mediterranean. It may seem like a strange combination to modern eyes, but the horse was often associated with water in ancient folklore. In Greek/Roman tradition, a team of hippocampus sped Poseidon/Neptune across the waves. In Celtic lore, a Kelpie is a shapeshifting aquatic spirit often in the form of a horse.

These curious hybrid creatures encourage us to think outside the box and become more imaginative in our associations.





QUEEN OF CUPS

Upright: *compassion, calm, comfort*

Reversed: *insecurity, dependence, selfishness*

The suit of Cups is associated with the element of water and is therefore represented by one of the most well-known aquatic creatures in folklore—the mermaid. Mermaids have the upper body of a woman, with the lower body of a fish. Depictions and reported

sightings of mermaids are common in many cultures around the world. While a few cultures view them as ill omens, such as the tales of Greek sirens luring victims with their song, the majority of mermaid myths see them as benevolent creatures. Their beauty and joyful innocence relate to the best features of the sea—calming waves and awe-inspiring views.



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