

13 Magickal Cards

Tarot Insights By JohnnieTwoBrows

Scorpio: A Time of Evolution

Merry meet! Welcome to the Scorpio edition of 13 Magickal Cards.

I am incredibly fortunate to be born under the sign of the Scorpion, and wish a sincere Happy Birthday to all my fellow secretive Scorpions out there. You know who you are; I'm sure you'd prefer to remain anonymous and keep people guessing, so I won't dime you out here. Just don't give out the secret handshake. Did I mention that more Presidents of the United States have been Scorpions than any other sign? We're not ambitious or anything... ☺

Scorpions, as a general rule, tend to be one of the most misunderstood signs in the Zodiac. The other 11 signs tend to regard us with fascination, fear, or a combination of the two. This is mainly due to our sign's reputation, which is in many cases richly deserved. Our sign rules the astrological 8th house, which has some very serious, unavoidable life topics: taxes, sex, and death. But perhaps the most awesome Scorpio trait is the ability to re-invent himself or herself almost at will. We can be anything we want to be—good or bad.

This time of year, a lot of us take a look at our own mortality. And the Tarot reminds us of this fact with the Death card of the Major Arcana. Like the sign of Scorpio, the Death card is often misunderstood and feared by Querents. Only in very rare cases does the Death card herald a physical death. (See "Questions Across the Table" for more details on this one.)

I am not trying to be deliberately morbid here, folks. But the point is that we must go through "death" and "rebirth" of ourselves

many times throughout our lives, and it takes a strong person to accept that fact.

One of the reasons that the Death card is so feared is because it represents something that we cannot avoid. None of us will be able to avoid death, but it is only through that transformation that is death that will allow us to be reborn. This process happens throughout our mortal lives; conditions around us keep changing, and we have to adapt. The changes that the Death card portends may not be easy, but they are necessary for us to continue our evolution as human beings.

Second, death represents the unknown. No one knows exactly what happens when you die. Most of us can be less nervous if we know what to expect, but there's no way to know. And we don't know when we will die, either, so it's hard to prepare ourselves mentally for it.

Finally, human beings resist change. We like to be comfortable with things; we like routine and to have certain expectations. The Death card represents a fundamental change that is occurring inside or outside of us.

When the Death card appears in your reading, that is your warning that change is about to be imposed upon you. Don't bother trying to resist it; while it may be painful in the short term, it is a necessary transformation. Another interpretation of the Death card is elimination. Sometimes we outgrow things: clothes, jobs, relationships, and attitudes. When we don't need them anymore, it comes time to eliminating them from our lives. Once again, it doesn't mean this process will be without pain. But through this experience, you will be a stronger person for it.

It's important for all of us to closely examine ourselves this month and see how we can evolve into stronger people. It starts by asking some difficult questions, like "How much have I evolved in the past year?" and "What do I have to eliminate from my life so I can continue to evolve as a person?" No matter what answer you receive for these questions, you have the power within you to evolve, to re-invent yourselves. My good wishes go with you as you walk down this solitary, yet necessary, path.

I hope to see you across my table soon. Blessed be! **J2B**

Questions Across the Table

"Can the Death card represent a physical death? And if you see a physical death, do you tell the Querent what you've seen?"

I have been asked this question quite often. It is probably the most-asked question as a reader. Actually, when people who are new to the Tarot receive the Death card in a reading, I am quick to tell them that a physical death is not predicted because I see them become afraid or nervous. I know, I know. I haven't answered the question, have I? Well, the short answer is yes; the Death card can predict a physical death.

With that said, however, it is important for me to tell you two things. First, the Death card by itself does not portend a physical death. It is only with appropriate surrounding cards that mortality is indicated. The second is that it is extremely rare to see a physical death in the cards. In my seventeen years of reading Tarot, it's only happened to me once.

I'd like to share a story with you. Before I became a professional Tarot reader, I read for my friends and family. I don't like to call it "reading Tarot for fun" because I take the Tarot way too seriously for that. But I

P.S. Several people I know, including my beloved Jennie "Sapphire Sunshine", are actively transforming themselves by participating in National Novel Writing Month, which begins on November 1. The goal is to write no less than 50,000 words in the month of November. I am proud of all of you for taking responsibility for your own development as writers, and wish you success in your literary endeavors! You can find out more about this innovative program, including how to participate, at <http://www.nanowrimo.org>.

wasn't doing it for money at that time. In the spring of 2002 I was on a business trip in Connecticut and my family, who is from Massachusetts, came down to spend the day with me. I had my Tarot cards with me and my younger sister, Jodi, asked me for a Tarot reading.

I laid out the cards using a Celtic Cross layout, and got to the pile which talked about other people. I got the Five of Cups, which represents a painful loss. I clarified the card with the Death card, and then topped it off with an additional card, a Page.

I told Jodi that I saw the untimely death of a young male that she was very close to. We discussed males that were young and close to her, and the first person that came up was my younger brother, Jeff. But I wasn't sure who it was exactly. Needless to say, Jodi was very upset at that revelation. But I continued through to the end of the reading.

Some time later, I was on another business trip in San Diego. I was waiting for my luggage at the airport when my cell phone rang. Jodi was on the other end of the line, and she sounded distraught. Her ex-boyfriend had been killed in a motorcycle accident. It was only after giving me the news that she said, "You told me this was

going to happen in that Tarot reading, remember? That's pretty freaky." I was trying to console her, and had forgotten all about the reading. I'm glad she couldn't see my face when she reminded me; I'm positive that I went white as a sheet.

That was the first and only time that I have seen a physical death in the cards. And in that moment when Jodi reminded me of the Tarot reading, my opinion of the Tarot was transformed forever. I was humbled by the Tarot's awesome power. I could never again see the Tarot as entertainment; how could it

Private Tarot Instruction

If you're interested in learning the Tarot--and let's be honest here, who isn't--the series of five Tarot classes taught by Samantha Beaty at the Tradition of the Witches Circle School is a great way to get the basics in a supportive, caring environment.



Tarot Deck Review

Tarot de los Muertos (Tarot of the Dead)

Many of us wouldn't even look twice at a Tarot deck called "Tarot of the Dead". And I'll admit that I was skeptical about it at first mainly because I was afraid it was too morbid. However, I was intrigued by the whimsical way in which the deck was presented.

possibly be a "diversion" and predict the death of someone my sister loved so much?

If I saw a physical death in the cards today, I'd handle it the same way. It's my responsibility to tell the Querent what I see, and while predicting a physical death is very hard, it's important that I do it, and with care. I'd inform the Querent, reminding him or her that what I see is a snapshot in time, and can change.

If you've taken Sam's Tarot classes (or have some experience using the Tarot) and would like additional Tarot education, private tarot lessons make a great Yule gift for yourself or for a loved one. Email me at hierophant@cox.net for the details.



It is a standard 78-card Tarot deck whose suits are pens, coffins, pistols, and (movie) reels. All of the cards have blue or yellow squares with blue or yellow numbers or letters: Roman numerals for the Major Arcana, letters or Arabic numerals for the pip cards (A-10), and letters for the Court Cards. Nearly the entire color scheme of this deck is muted greens, purples, and blues, with plenty of white out of necessity. The text on the cards is written in both English and Spanish; I couldn't stop

thinking about Mexico's Day of the Dead as I went through them the first time.

Before you say "no way" and take a long hard look at the advertisements (which I encourage you to do, but later), hang in there for a few more minutes. This deck is just starting to get interesting. The Major Arcana have taken their inspiration from that the Rider-Waite images, but the first twist is that all of the figures (except for one) are skeletons. This includes the animals as well. The skeletons are pictured doing things that humans and animals would do. For example, in the Chariot, a skeletal charioteer is being pulled by two large skeletal beasts. Many of the other Rider-Waite images, such as the blue canopy and the crescent moons on the shoulders of the charioteer, remain. Also, this deck has modernized the images while still trying to remain true to the original Rider-Waite. In this deck, The Fool and his (skeletal) dog are not walking off a cliff, but hitchhiking; a car waits nearby to pick them up. The Emperor sits in an office talking on the telephone in front of a computer.

The pip cards (ace through ten of each suit) were a little bit of a letdown for me because of their simplicity. The Six of Reels, for example, just has six reels on the card with the number 6. There are no figures of any kind. The aces are a little more interesting, and they are the only pip cards in which you may see the element they are representing. The Ace of Pens, for example, has a pen with fire coming out of it.

The Court Cards are probably the greatest departure from the Rider images. The Page of Coffins, for example, has a skeleton in a coffin twirling a spoon. Those of you who use reversals will be pleased to see that if you turn the card upside down, there is a different image: a skeleton peeking out of a coffin. Both the pips and the Court Cards can be read upright and reversed; the Major

Arcana are not designed to be reversible, however.

My favorite card in this deck is The Magician. This skeletal figure is seated at a red table, keeping the red and white color scheme of the original Rider-Waite Magician's clothing, writing with a pen while a movie reel plays onto a screen behind him. A pistol in a holster hangs off the front of the table, and a skeleton puppet sits in a small coffin not too far away. All of the elements are represented and the infinity symbol appears over the Magician's head.

This deck is clearly not for everyone, and I wouldn't recommend it for people just learning the Tarot. But if you feel somewhat comfortable with the Tarot and want to embrace your dark and playful side, you'll want to buy this one. Astrologically speaking, Scorpios will especially gravitate toward this deck because of its theme, but some braver Pisceans might do well to check it out also.

13 Magickal Moons will have a few copies of the Tarot de los Muertos on hand. Pick one up today!

Next month's review: The Mythic Tarot

Querent's Queries

Q: What is a birthday spread and how is it different from other spreads? - Unknown

A: The birthday spread that I use is commonly known as a "horoscope spread". It has 13 cards, one at each of the points of the clock, representing each month of the next year. The reading will give general guidelines on trends that you should be on the lookout for throughout the next year.

The most important card in this spread is actually a 13th card that is placed at the center of the spread. It represents the

overall theme of the next year. I encourage Querents to really embrace this influence over the coming year, and in some cases to focus on this card while meditating.

The horoscope spread can be used as a general reading on future conditions as well, instead of covering a specific year in the future. The layout is the same. In this case, each one of the twelve points represents one of the twelve astrological houses, and what you can expect in the near future in each house. Many sources can tell you what the houses mean. The 8th House, for example, is about transformations, taxes, death, and sex.

If you have a question that you'd like me to answer in print, please submit it to hierophant@cox.net with the subject line "Querent's Queries." Of course, I reserve the right to pick and choose the most appropriate and relevant questions for the newsletter. Also, *your name will be listed as the person who submitted the query unless you tell me otherwise.* Happy writing!

Shameless Marketing

Did you feel like The Devil had chained you to your computer last Yule when you had to order all those last-minute gifts that didn't come in until February? Yule is just around the corner, even closer than before. Don't worry about your holiday gifts being backordered or not shipped in time! Order some Tarot **gift certificates** in any denomination that be used for Tarot

readings, private Tarot lessons, and Tarot parties.

Don't forget to be good to yourself this Yule! In addition to the **Arthurian Tarot**, **13 Magickal Moons** also has only one remaining copy of the **Gilded Tarot**. If someone buys it before you do, or if you don't see one that strikes your fancy, ask Summer or Sam to order you one that suits you!

If the unthinkable happens and you have to buy a gift for someone who's not interested in the Tarot (perish the thought!), **13 Magickal Moons Gift Certificates** also make an outstanding gift.

Finally, this is the time of year when people have a lot of get-togethers, with Samhain, Thanksgiving, Yule, and the New Year coming before you know it. Why not enhance that party by having a Tarot reader come and read for you and your guests? My rates are very reasonable. For more information, including dates and pricing, email me at hierophant@cox.net. Dates are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Upcoming Dates

I'll be reading Tarot for the following dates for Scorpio and Sagittarius at 13 Magickal Moons. All of these dates are tentative. Please check www.13magickalmoons.com for an up-to-date schedule. If you know in advance you're going to be coming to the store for a reading, you may also call the store to schedule an appointment. This is especially true for weekend dates.

Wednesday, October 25

6:00-9:00pm

Saturday, October 28	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, November 1	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, November 4	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, November 8	6:00-9:00pm
Wednesday, November 15	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, November 18	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, November 29	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, December 2	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, December 6	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, December 9	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, December 13	6:00-9:00pm
Saturday, December 16	11:30am-5:30pm
Wednesday, December 20	6:00-9:00pm