

HOLISTIC TAROT SUPPLEMENT

This text is offered as a supplement to *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth* (North Atlantic Books, 2015) by Benebell Wen.



Court Cards Practice

Holistic Tarot teaches a linear analytical approach to interpreting court cards. The purpose of these practice exercises is to deconstruct that approach step by step. In an actual reading, the steps won't feel quite as disjointed as these exercise prompts. Once the practitioner masters reading court cards, the steps will be quite fluid. Before doing these exercises, review **Chapter 12**, "Interpreting Court Cards," p. 251-276 and **Appendix E**, "Profile Tables for Interpreting Court Cards," p. 775-782.

<p>Example A. is male and wants to know about his romantic prospects (with females). He draws the QUEEN OF PENTACLES.</p> <p><i>The practitioner recalls:</i> "When a court card is drawn, it can take on either a literal or figurative meaning. I'm going to go through both with you and then we will take a more holistic view of your reading to determine which one applies. In a literal interpretation, the Queen of Pentacles represents [<i>touch upon the points below under "Literal"</i>]. In a figurative, she represents [<i>touch upon the points below under "Figurative"</i>]."</p>	
<p>Literal</p>	
<p>Physical Attributes</p>	<p><i>Adult or older female; stern, serious demeanor; calm and grounded, down-to-earth or classic look with serious eyes</i></p>
<p>Personality Traits</p>	<p><i>Resourceful, loyal, reliable, prudent, pragmatic; can be conservative; very stubborn; organized and dependable, to the point where they themselves have very little tolerance for people who aren't the same way</i></p>

Figurative	
External; Symbolic	<i>Relates to finances, resources, wealth or asset management, and can generally symbolize developmental conditions in business or commerce. As related to A.'s specific question: Although this question is about love, money and more specifically, nurturing or managing A.'s wealth seems to be a significant factor tied to A.'s romantic prospects.</i>
Internal; The Self	<i>Most salient factor to achieving seeker's goal is to nurture present financial stability or security and manage assets for greater material prosperity.</i>
Practitioner's Interpretation	
<p><i>Since A. is asking about love and seeking a female, the Queen of Pentacles most likely takes on a literal meaning in his reading and offers a glimpse into the right woman for him. If A.'s sun sign is compatible with the Earth energy of the Queen of Pentacles, then I would note that to him and offer more general compatibility insights per astrology. So for example, if A. is an Air sign, I would note that he and this woman are more different than they are alike, and lots of compromising is in order. If A. is a Fire sign, then there is great potential for chemistry here.</i></p> <p><i>However, the Queen of Pentacles can also be interpreted figuratively here. If the figurative interpretation applies, then A.'s relationship status seems tethered to his financial status. Could also suggest that right now he needs to focus more on his own personal financial stability than love. I would ask him if he's in business or runs his own business. If so, then the Queen of Pentacles here suggests devoting greater attention right now to that business and commerce than to love.</i></p>	

After the exercises, at the end of this supplement, learn how a practitioner puts all the various meanings of a court card together into a fluid reading for a Seeker.



Exercise #1

B. is female and wants to know what is in store for her work and career wise in the coming year. She draws the PAGE OF SWORDS.

Author's Hint:

Not all sections below need to be filled out. If it becomes apparent immediately to you that a particular thread of analysis would not apply given the question asked, then go ahead and skip it.



Literal

Physical Attributes

Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

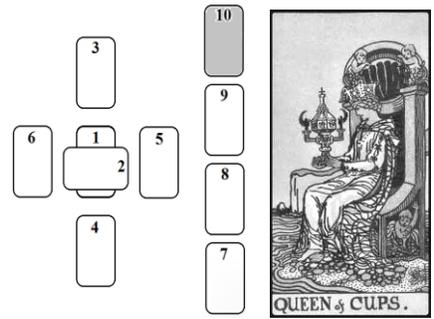
Practitioner's Interpretation

<p>Exercise #2</p> <p>C. is a female and currently in a relationship with Y. C. is not sure whether Y. is the right one for her. She consults the tarot.</p> <p>C. performs a three-card reading and draws KEY 8: STRENGTH, KEY 15: THE DEVIL reversed, and the KNIGHT OF WANDS.</p> <p>[For this exercise, focus on the court card only. The other two cards are provided for context.]</p>	
Literal	
Physical Attributes	
Personality Traits	
Figurative	
External; Symbolic	
Internal; The Self	
Practitioner's Interpretation	

Exercise #3

D. is a female and looking to start her own business and is looking for insights to help her launch the startup.

D. performs the Celtic Cross spread (Waite version), see **Appendix A**, "The Celtic Cross (Waite)," p. 707-708. The QUEEN OF CUPS appears in the Card 10 position (for most probable outcome).



Literal

Physical Attributes

Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

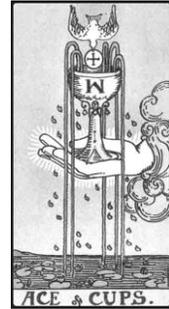
Practitioner's Interpretation

<p>Exercise #4 E. is a male and wants to know about his romantic prospects (with males). He draws the PAGE OF WANDS.</p>		
Literal		
Physical Attributes		
Personality Traits		
Figurative		
External; Symbolic		
Internal; The Self		
Practitioner's Interpretation		

Exercise #5

F. is male and has been unemployed for months. He is looking for insights into his financial situation. F. performs a three-card spread and draws the TEN OF WANDS reversed, KING OF SWORDS, and ACE OF CUPS.

[For this exercise, focus on the court card only. The other two cards are provided for context.]



Literal

Physical Attributes

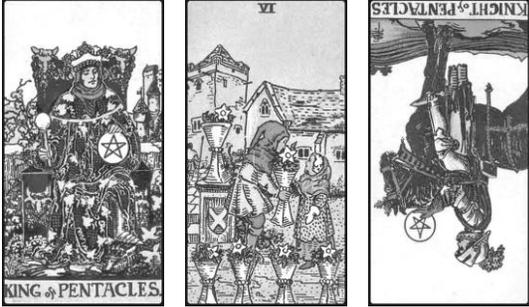
Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

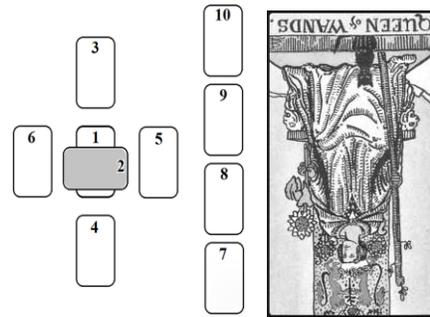
Practitioner's Interpretation

<p>Exercise #6</p> <p>G. is a female who wants to know what her marriage prospects are in the next five years.</p> <p>G. performs a three-card spread and draws KING OF PENTACLES, SIX OF CUPS, and KNIGHT OF PENTACLES reversed.</p> <p>[For this exercise, focus on the court cards only. The other card is provided for context.]</p>	
Literal	
Physical Attributes	
Personality Traits	
Figurative	
External; Symbolic	
Internal; The Self	
Practitioner's Interpretation	

Exercise #7

H. is a male who does a general reading to get a sense of the trajectory of his life path right now.

H. performs the Celtic Cross spread (Waite version), see **Appendix A**, "The Celtic Cross (Waite)," p. 707-708. The QUEEN OF WANDS reversed appears in the Card 2 position (challenges/obstacles; what blocks him in the present).



Literal

Physical Attributes

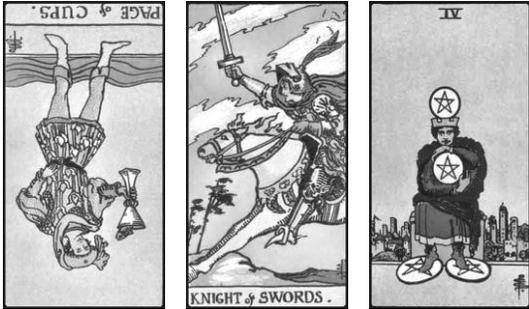
Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

Practitioner's Interpretation

<p>Exercise #8</p> <p>I. is a female and currently dissatisfied with her job. She's not sure whether to stay with her current job for security's sake or take a chance and relocate to the city of her dreams and start a new career path there.</p> <p>I. performs a three-card spread and draws PAGE OF CUPS reversed, KNIGHT OF SWORDS, and FOUR OF PENTACLES.</p> <p>[For this exercise, focus on the court cards only.]</p>	
Literal	
Physical Attributes	
Personality Traits	
Figurative	
External; Symbolic	
Internal; The Self	
Practitioner's Interpretation	

Exercise #9

J. is a male who is in a rocky and tense relationship with X., a female. He consults the tarot to get a sense of what is going on with his relationship.

J. performs a three-card spread and draws QUEEN OF SWORDS, reversed, NINE OF PENTACLES, and PAGE OF PENTACLES.

[For this exercise, focus on the court cards only.]



Literal

Physical Attributes

Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

Practitioner's Interpretation

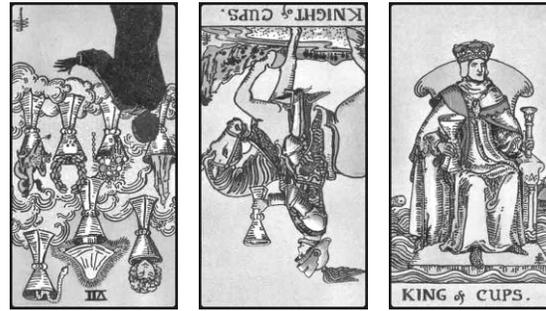
<p>Exercise #10 K. is a female who does a daily morning card draw to get a sense of her day to come. This morning she draws the KING OF WANDS.</p>		
Literal		
Physical Attributes		
Personality Traits		
Figurative		
External; Symbolic		
Internal; The Self		
Practitioner's Interpretation		

Exercise #11

L. identifies as a male and wants to know why he has experienced so much trouble, loss, and heartaches in love.

L. performs a three-card spread and draws the SEVEN OF CUPS reversed, KNIGHT OF CUPS reversed, and KING OF CUPS.

[For this exercise, focus on the court cards only.]



Literal

Physical Attributes

Personality Traits

Figurative

External; Symbolic

Internal; The Self

Practitioner's Interpretation



Putting It All Together

When you interpret a court card to a Seeker, start by noting to the Seeker as follows:

“The [*insert applicable court card*] is a court card. In tarot, court cards can take on literal or figurative meanings. Literal, the [*insert applicable court card*] can indicate [*insert physical attributes*]. This is someone who is [*insert personality traits*]. Figuratively, however, the [*insert applicable court card*] governs our [*insert applicable elemental plane, i.e. physical for Wands, emotional for Cups, mental for Swords, material for Pentacles*] plane and denotes [*insert external or symbolic meaning*].”

<p>A. is male Seeker who wants to know about his romantic prospects (with females). You are the practitioner and perform a one-card reading for him.</p> <p>You draw the QUEEN OF PENTACLES.</p>	
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Example

In the Example given above with the Seeker A. and the Queen of Pentacles that was drawn, the practitioner would start the one-card reading as follows:

“The Queen of Pentacles is a court card. In tarot, court cards can take on literal or figurative meanings. Literal, the Queen of Pentacles can indicate a woman in your life who may have darker hair, a more olive tone complexion, and just this overall calm, grounded, down-to-earth demeanor about her. She’d have a classic look with serious, intense eyes. This is someone who is very resourceful, practical, can be a bit conservative in her thinking, and very stubborn. She’s someone who is dependable and organized, and so much so that she doesn’t seem to tolerate those who are not like that. Figuratively, however, the Queen of Pentacles governs our material plane and denotes developmental conditions in business or commerce, and can generally symbolize us taking care of our finances, resources, wealth, or other material assets, like property.”

If the reading is done in person or real-time, follow up the analysis with a question to the Seeker:

“Does any of this resonate with you?”

If the Seeker nods and says yes, encourage the Seeker to talk to you about how the card applies. Is it someone in the Seeker's life that he or she recognizes immediately? Does the court card take on the external figurative or symbolic meaning you mentioned?

Listen to the Seeker's response and apply those facts to the meaning of the card the Seeker has identified. Note the elemental dignities. What is the corresponding element to the suit? What element amplifies that element? What are the corresponding attributes of that amplifying element? Note that to the Seeker, as those amplifying attributes can help facilitate success in the situation. Note the weakening element and corresponding attributes, and offer notes of caution.

Example

Let's say that A. tells you that there is a woman he's interested in who has dark brown hair and brown eyes, and he thinks the Queen of Pentacles is her because she's pretty reserved and serious. He also tells you that this girl is an accountant, so what you said about assets and finances makes sense.

Note that the suit corresponds with Earth energy, which is amplified by Water but attenuated or weakened by Air. A good reference diagram is in the *Holistic Tarot* text on p. 438. Generally review p. 435-450 on the elemental correspondences. Thus, in the reading for A., you might follow up his response with the following:

"Well, if this girl you mention is the Queen of Pentacles, then the appearance of the card for your reading definitely bodes well for a potential relationship with her. The queens in tarot are always about nurture, and as it applies here, you'll want to nurture and pursue this prospect.

"She's very much grounded in Earth energy, so she may be a little bit more introverted, and she won't read like an open book. She's reserved. If you're too forceful or try to impress her with your intellect, she's not going to be very impressed at all. You're not going to win her over with your cleverness, achievements, or ambitions. People might *think* that about the Queen of Pentacles because there is an aspect of materialism to her, but no. Wrong. To win over the Queen of Pentacles, you need to be more intuitive, empathic, and embody the metaphysical or energetic qualities of Water. You can soften the Queen of Pentacles with your sentimentality and charm. Remember, there's a difference between wit and charm. You want to be charming with the Queen of Pentacles, not witty. That's how you'll win her over."

Note: Elemental dignities are covered in the subsequent **Session 4** of the Intermediate Study Guide and in the text, **Chapter 15**, p. 437-450. Thus, for now, read this supplement, note it generally, and then after Session 4, return to the court cards study and learn to identify the elemental energies and correspondences.

Optional – Compatibility Assessment Based on Elemental Dignities

In a reading about love, you can raise compatibility points based on astrology and elemental correspondences.

In the example, if A. knows for sure who the Queen of Pentacles indicates and he also knows her date of birth, find out what her sun sign is. If she is indeed an Earth sign, or Taurus, Virgo, or Capricorn, then compare that to the elemental correspondence of A.'s sun sign. Say that he is an Air sign. He'll want to be less outgoing, opinionated, forceful, or overly talkative, which are tendencies that Air signs are prone to. Say that he is a Water sign, then note that compatibility is very good here. If he is a Fire sign, compatibility is also good.



However, let's say that after your initial remark and question about whether any of it resonated, A. seems confused and says no, he's not sure what the Queen of Pentacles could represent. Continue by restating the applicable elemental plane the suit governs and the external, symbolic meaning of the card. Add a few more details about the card. Note any imagery on the card that immediately stands out to you at the moment and is triggering your intuition. The following template is a good starting point:

“Well, the [insert applicable court card] governs the [insert applicable elemental plane, i.e. physical for Wands, emotional for Cups, mental for Swords, material for Pentacles] plane, which is about [insert general attributes ascribed to that element]. And the [insert court title] symbolizes [insert symbolic representation, i.e. receiving messages for pages, action for knights, nurture for queens, and leadership and dominion for kings].”

“Also, as I look at the [insert applicable court card], I'm drawn toward the [note what aspect of the card's imagery is demanding your attention intuitively]. [Describe that aspect of the imagery with some detail.] I see that as indicating [note what you intuit that imagery to symbolize for the Seeker's situation].”

Example

In the example with A., you might say the following:

“Well, the Queen of Pentacles governs the material plane, which is about money, property, resources, or commerce. And the queen symbolizes nurture or further development in that particular area of life.”

“Also, as I look at the Queen of Pentacles, I'm drawn toward the mountains in the horizon. Mountains symbolize stability, preserving energy, preserving your resources, and also knowledge and wisdom. I see that as indicating the need for you to focus on your own financial stability right now.”

To review the symbolic representations of the courts, see the “General Symbolic Representations” reference chart in the *Holistic Tarot* text on p. 256 bottom.

Conclude interpretation of the card with an affirmative statement, such as the following:

“To answer your question about [*reiterate topic of Seeker’s inquiry*], the [*insert court card*] is most likely conveying to you a sense that [*synthesize the Seeker’s inquiry with symbolic representation of the card*]. Thus, [*insert final conclusive statement*].”

Example

In the example with A., you might conclude as follows:

“To answer your question about your romantic prospects, the Queen of Pentacles is most likely conveying to you a sense that those prospects are intertwined with matters relating to your material plane, your finances and material prosperity. Thus, your romantic prospects right now seem to hinge on nurturing or improving your personal financial situation.”

Although the following chapters will be covered in-depth later, for now and to enhance your readings when court cards come up in a spread, use the following for possible affirmative statements to conclude your court card readings with:

- References in **Chapter 26**, “Tarot and Love” for final conclusive statements you can use when the inquiry is about love and romance
 - Courts in the suit of Wands, p. 569;
 - Courts in the suit of Cups, p. 571;
 - Courts in the suit of Swords, p. 572, and
 - Courts in the suit of Pentacles, p. 573

- For final conclusive statements relating to career or work inquiries, use the references in **Chapter 27**, “Tarot and Professional Development”
 - Courts in the suit of Wands, p. 584;
 - Courts in the suit of Cups, p. 585;
 - Courts in the suit of Swords, p. 587; and
 - Courts in the suit of Pentacles, p. 588

Also be sure to end by circling back to the other meanings of the card and remind A. of your earlier statements. Returning full circle or even actually repeating yourself gives the reading a sense of fluidity to the Seeker.

Example

Thus, at the end of the reading, remind A. of what you said earlier and keep relating it back specifically to his inquiry about romantic prospects. You can also end the reading with general common sense wisdom.

“With the Queen of Pentacles appearing here, there’s definitely feminine energy nearby and that bodes well for your romantic prospects. Keep yourself open to meeting and getting acquainted with the Queen of Pentacles. She’s going to have a down-to-earth, classic look about her, with serious eyes, someone calm and stable, and probably quite stylish, too. The women from the suit of Pentacles can be quite fashionable and have refined taste. But for now, focus on your own personal development, especially in the area of finances. Work on wealth building and asset management. Earth energy is dominant, so you want to save, be a bit more conservative than usual, and work on building up your own sense of financial security. From there, love will come when it comes.”

If the reading is not done in person or real-time, such as a recorded reading or written report, then follow the foregoing trajectory of analysis, covering the most salient points of interpreting both literally and figuratively for the court card and reach a conclusion to end with. Per your intuition *which* of the possible interpretations do you intuit to be most applicable to the Seeker? Conclude affirmatively.

(Checklist Reference for Court Card Analysis on next page)

CHECKLIST OF COURT CARD ANALYSIS

1. Identify the court card
2. Provide literal interpretation
 - a. Convey physical attributes
 - b. Convey personality traits
3. Provide figurative interpretation
 - a. Note the corresponding elemental plane
 - b. Note external symbolic meaning
4. *If the reading is in person:* Ask whether any of the above resonates with the Seeker.
 - a. *If Seeker answers YES:*
 - i. Encourage Seeker to convey to you in what way it resonates
 - ii. If literal meaning is applicable, note the sun sign correspondences for the court card
 - iii. Note elemental dignities and the correspondences
 - iv. Offer more specific details in the interpretation, correlating the facts the Seeker has provided with the court card
 - b. *If Seeker answers NO or ISN'T SURE:*
 - i. Restate the corresponding elemental plane
 - ii. Restate the external symbolic meaning
 - iii. Note the facet of the Self that the court card indicates and how the card's appearance is a message to the Seeker to focus and hone in on that facet of the Self, as that is the key to success for the situation at hand
5. *If the reading is by previous recording or in written form:*
 - a. Note the facet of the Self that the court card could indicate.
 - b. Conclude intuitively which interpretation most likely applies, literal or figurative, and why you are pulled toward that interpretation.
6. Continue the reading by noting the imagery on the card drawn.
 - a. Note what aspect of the imagery is demanding your attention intuitively.
 - b. Describe that imagery in detail.
 - c. Offer your interpretation of what that imagery symbolizes.
 - d. Interpret how that symbolism applies to the Seeker's situation.
7. Conclude with an affirmative statement.