

Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell

A Seventeen-Part Video Lecture Series

Part IX: The Sevens

Video Transcript
<https://youtu.be/VCr8LLIF8fo>

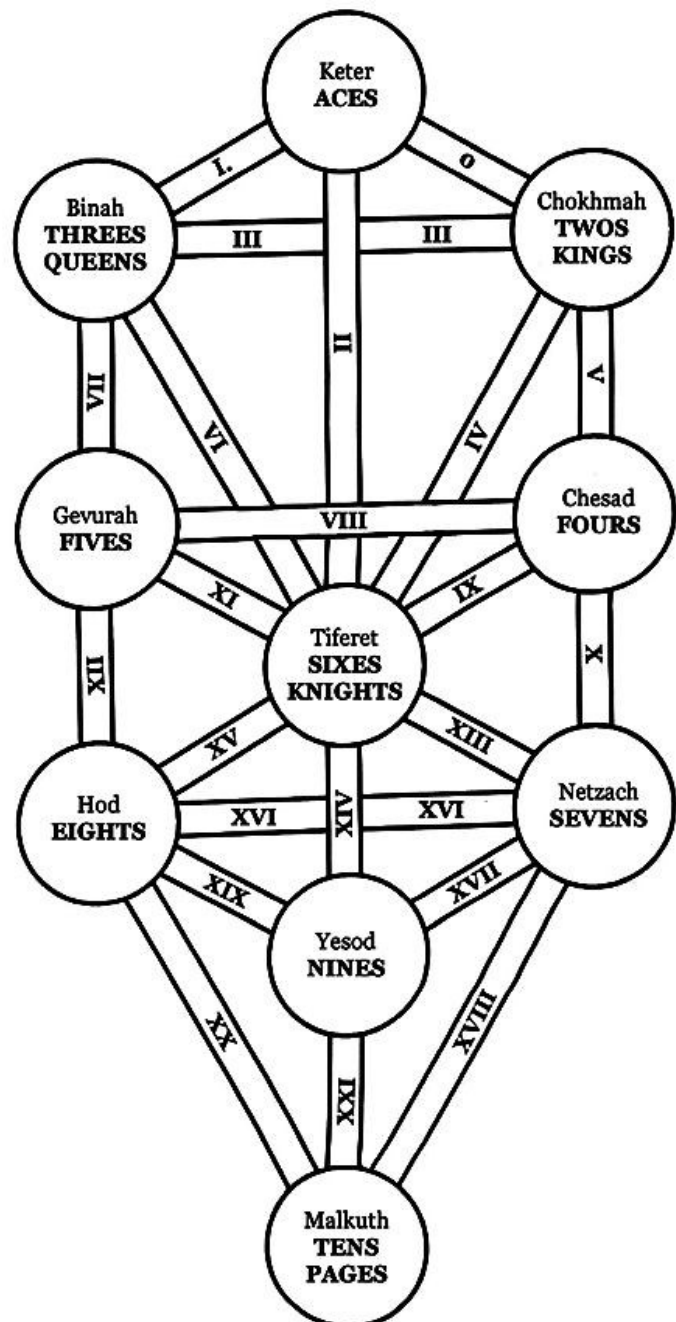
INTRODUCTION: REVIEW & OVERVIEW

Welcome back to Tarot Card Meanings with Benebell, an educational video course series, with closed captioning provided, on studies of the Tarot de Marseilles, the Rider-Waite-Smith, the Crowley-Harris Thoth, and presenting the deck I created and hand-illustrated, the Spirit Keeper's Tarot.

This lecture series is an academic study, sourcing the card meanings from authoritative references, such as Etteilla, Court de Gebelin, Papus, Mathers, and Wirth for the Marseilles, Waite's Pictorial Key and Eden Gray for the Rider-Waite-Smith, and Crowley for the Thoth, his book T, key Thelemic texts, and several volumes from his periodical, The Equinox.

All companion references, worksheets, handouts, and other free downloads for learning the tarot can be found at www.benebellwen.com. Hi! I'm the author of Holistic Tarot.

We began this course with a study of the Aces, marking Keter, the crown on the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, and here we are working with the Naples Arrangement based on the Kircher Tree. We then moved on to Chokhmah, where we studied the Twos, moved on to the Threes expressive of Binah, back to Chokhmah again for the Kings,



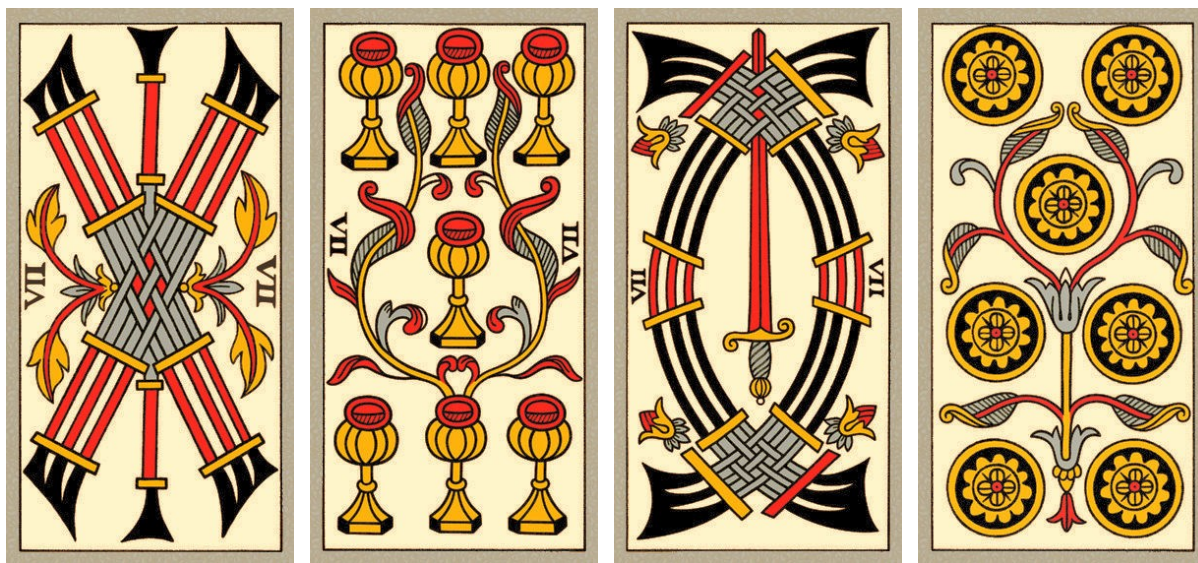
which in my tarot deck are represented as non-binary intersex archangels, then springing back to Binah for the Queens, which in the SKT are the Shields, presenting as gender fluid Empyrean divinities.

We crossed the Abyss, passing through the unseen sephira, Daath, descending below to Chesad, the tarot Fours. Here is the first state of Design and Building, and the residence of the Demiurge.

Moving on, we addressed the Fives in Gevurah, a rather challenging state of uncertainty, but one necessary to pass through for expansion, and then the Sixes in Tifereth, where aesthetic beauty reveals to us divine harmony. We cross The Veil, which we covered in brief in the last lecture, and descend into Netzach, realm of Sevens. And that's what we're going to be covering today. We've still got the Knights in Tifereth to explore. Ah. Yes. But we have not cultivated all that we need quite yet. Hence the descent into Netzach to explore the Sevens, where we can cultivate discernment, reasoning, analysis, logic, and better understand the philosophy of free will and choice.

By the way, please forgive my horrible pronunciation. Know that I am trying my very best. I would actually love the correct pronunciation to be provided in the comments to the video. Thank you in advance.

Here in Netzach, a masculine noun, we see the tillage of triumph and endurance. It's also about timeliness, the importance of being in the right place at the right time. Netzach is attributed to Moses.



The Sevens in Fire explore your choice and discernment between fight and flight. The Sevens in Water explore choice and discernment between vice and virtue. The Sevens in Air explore choice and discernment between risk and control. And the Sevens in Earth explore the choice and discernment between action and non-action, to reap the fruits of your labor and work product now, or to defer the harvest for later.

On screen right now, study the Sevens in the Smith-Waite deck up top compared and contrasted to the Crowley-Harris Thoth deck below. Pause the screen if you have to, because your visual study here will help to reinforce long-term memory retention. So take your time.



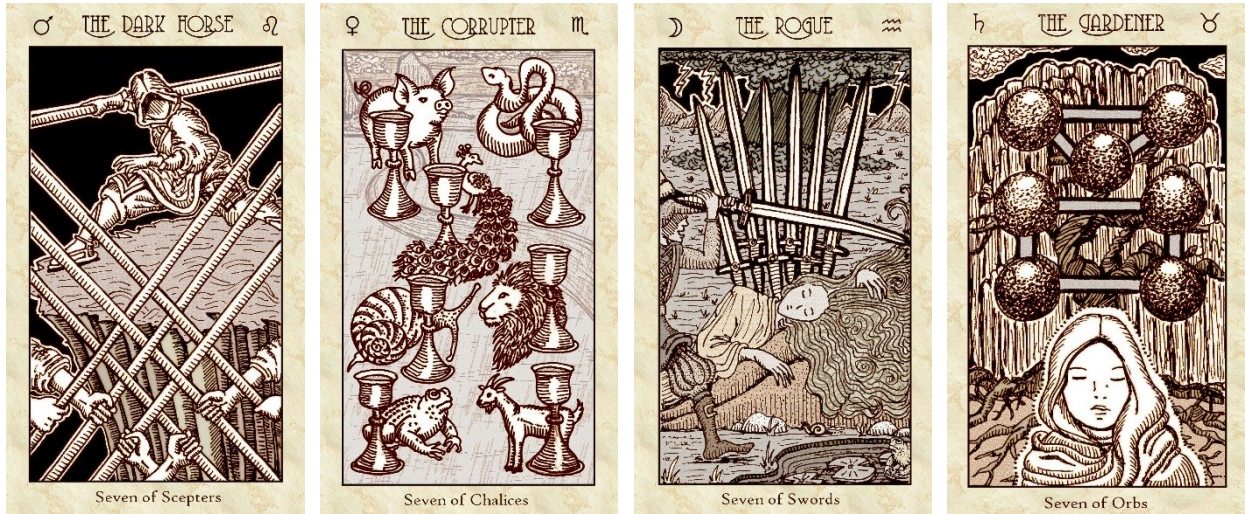
Reviewing the previous video on the Sixes from the Minor Arcana pips, this was about harmony, the balance of the trinity. Moving into the Sevens, we are here in this realm to cultivate that one feature characterizing our humanity, and that is intellectual discernment, reasoning. In Pythagorean numerology, seven is the Sacred Number of the Divine Law.

As we go through the card meanings, please pay attention to both what I say and the text on screen. Don't just copy down the text and in doing so, ignore what I'm saying. Also, study and pay attention to the imagery, letting the imagery itself work in tandem with the lecture.

Now, zooming in closer, let's take a look at the nuances, similarities, and discrepancies in card meaning attributions across the four deck systems. Study the Marseilles Sevens. In Marseilles decks, think about color symbolism and what feelings the ornamentation evoke. What knowledge or insights arise from those feelings?

Here is the Rider-Waite-Smith, which is the most popular and recognizable system of the tarot decks today. Do you interpret the single figure in these four cards to be the same individual across all four scenes, or different individuals and what does your interpretation mean to you? Invoke Pamela Colman Smith, the artist right now. Can you identify her artist point of view here? I mean, what's up with that skull sketched into the chalice holding the victory wreath in the Seven of Cups? Do you see the circle of people gathering in the background to the left in the Seven of Swords?

Hold that thought. Now study the Thoth Tarot by Aleister Crowley and Lady Freida Harris. What feelings, vibrations even, do you get from these cards? Is there something ominous, just a touch of nausea here, and why? Why is that being evoked? What does that say about how the Thoth is presenting the Sevens?



And how do those three deck systems appear to have inspired my deck, the Spirit Keeper's Tarot?



SEVEN OF WANDS

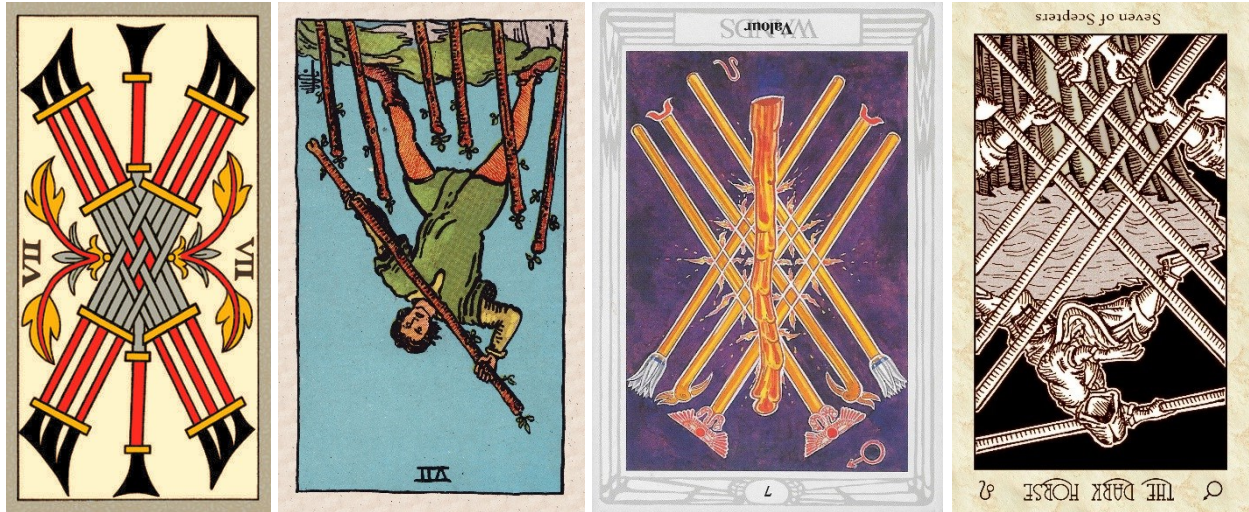
Here's the Seven of Wands from the Marseilles. The historical textbook meanings ascribed to this card are generally positive. It indicates assured success of a creative enterprise. Keywords: profit, advantage, and victory. The odds may look like they're against you right now, but you shall prevail.

In the Rider-Waite-Smith deck, Waite's Pictorial Key describes the scene: "A young man on a craggy eminence is brandishing a staff. Six other staves are raised towards him from below." The negative of your situation: You are outnumbered. The positive of your situation: You hold the position of higher ground. You stand on higher ground above your adversaries. Echoing the Marseilles tradition, this card predicts success. Yet beyond that, there are also themes of a trade war, competition, robust debate, or difficult negotiations.

The Thoth deck imagery for the Seven of Wands continues the themes established in earlier numbered cards in this suit. These are all, thematically in the suit's foundation, power struggles. This is about vying for power. Who holds it? Who doesn't? Here in the Seven of Wands, the Lord of Valour, the Seven of Wands is about winning that Last Stand. You're outnumbered. You're depleted in resources. It doesn't look good. But because your spirit is strong, your passion burning bright, you win. You've chosen to fight even when you're gravely outnumbered, and for that, your courage will be rewarded.

In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot deck, I've named this spirit The Dark Horse to indicate the underdog, the longshot win. In a fight or flight situation, you are now in a circumstance where "flight" is no longer an option. Now your only choice is to fight. So, warrior within, ready your stance. Resist the opposition. Defy. I promise the gods are on your side. They've got your back as long as you're ready and willing to fight for your position.

If you want to understand the foundation and essence of the Seven of Wands, there's a passage from the Tao Te Ching that expresses the essence of this card, an essence that if you remember always, will take you far in how you understand the Seven of Wands when it shows up. Being loved by another gives you strength. Loving another gives you courage. That is the essence of this card.



For those who want to study reversals, let's compare and contrast your perspective of the imagery ill-dignified and how the Seven of Wands reversed might be read.

In the Tarot de Marseilles, this reversal suggests that the window of time to assert yourself has passed. See, you coulda woulda shoulda pulled the trigger much earlier, but now, due to your own hesitations and stalling, it's probably too late. Better to retreat and come another day.

In the popular Rider-Waite-Smith, Waite notes that the reversed card means perplexity, embarrassments, which back in the day meant a serious loss, one that may even have social or economic and financial implications, and a whole lot of anxiety. The reversed Seven of Wands is a caution against indecision. Move forward fast or move backward fast, but stop stalling.

The Thoth Seven of Wands is inverted valour, suggesting a fruitlessness to your efforts. If you partake in this upcoming battle, there will be destruction. This can also suggest a mistaken identity of who is the Chosen One. You thought it was you, but it wasn't. The gods have championed another.

In The Spirit Keeper's Tarot, the reversed Seven of Scepters warns of the oppositional forces being stronger than you. It is better to retreat and attack another day. The divinatory message here is to yield.



SEVEN OF CUPS

Now on to the Seven of Cups. In the Marseilles, this card is a very positive omen when reading about love and relationships. It also shows that emotions are supercharged, so whatever the situation you're reading about, it's a deeply emotional one. So when trying to understand that situation, you have to understand the emotions driving it all. This card in fortune-telling also predicts a plan in the works. Look to the surrounding cards in a reading spread to discover what that plan is. Or, draw an additional card to reveal that plan.

In the Rider-Waite-Smith, Waite describes those cups as "strange chalices of vision" and each of these chalices, with the symbols you see each cup filled with, represents a "fantastic spirit." Waite even goes so far as to reference fairies, the fae. There's something illusory going on, or a mirage. This is the card of lucid dreams: it's a dream state, but you've got some modicum of control and choice while in this dream-state. When this card shows up in a reading, the querent is feeling a lot of emotions. There are a lot of feels going around. Think: deep sentimentality. Emotions are coloring your view of the situation, causing bias, and the result portends something negative.

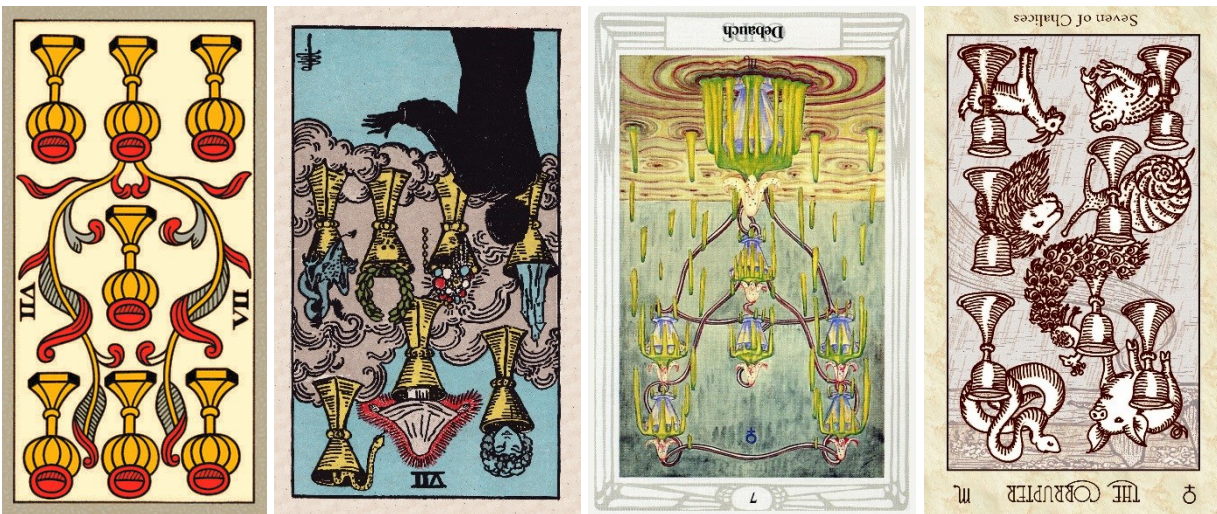
In the Thoth, this is the Lord of Debauchery. This is also known as Illusory Success per the Golden Dawn attributed keywords. Crowley tells us that the Seven of Cups could portend broken promises, wrath, vanity, fornication, and even makes a specific note to violence against women. This card warns of deception. Someone or something is pulling the wool over your eyes, so tread with care. Says Crowley: "This is one of the worst ideas that one can have, its mode is poison, its goal madness." The Seven of Cups is about falsehoods appearing as truths. Here we also see implied references to the seven sins.

In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot, I opted to emphasize that implied reference. Pictured here are: gluttony, envy, pride, sloth, wrath, avarice or greed, and lust. The animal symbolism here is taken from the Tableau de Francois-Marie Balanant. The illustration pictured here is from the 1899 edition of Les Taolennou published by Kemper. A link to download the PDF of this text for free is in the video description box. Very cool illustrations that are worth your while.

Returning briefly to the Lord of Debauch, or the Thoth Seven of Cups, note the overturned white lilies spotted with impurities. The black spots suggest a fungal disease or spores overtaking the white lily petals. White lilies symbolize the soul and the purity of the soul. The overturned, diseased white lilies suggests a corruption of a soul's innate purity. There's malfeasance at play.

In summation, the Seven of Cups is a wisdom that you thought you were pursuing a righteous path, but you are being led astray. The pursuit of wealth leads to poverty. Seeking dominance leads to subjugation, peace will turn into war, grace will become ugliness. And if you've been deprived and desperate, this card warns that the good things you see are not true, but are illusions and temptations.

“This is one of the worst ideas that one can have, its mode is poison, its goal madness.” The spirit of Debauch is the gateway onto the Poison Path.



How does a card reversal modify the meaning and interpretation of the Seven of Cups? You want to study how this upside-down imagery makes you feel, lean in to those emotions, and find your way toward realizations.

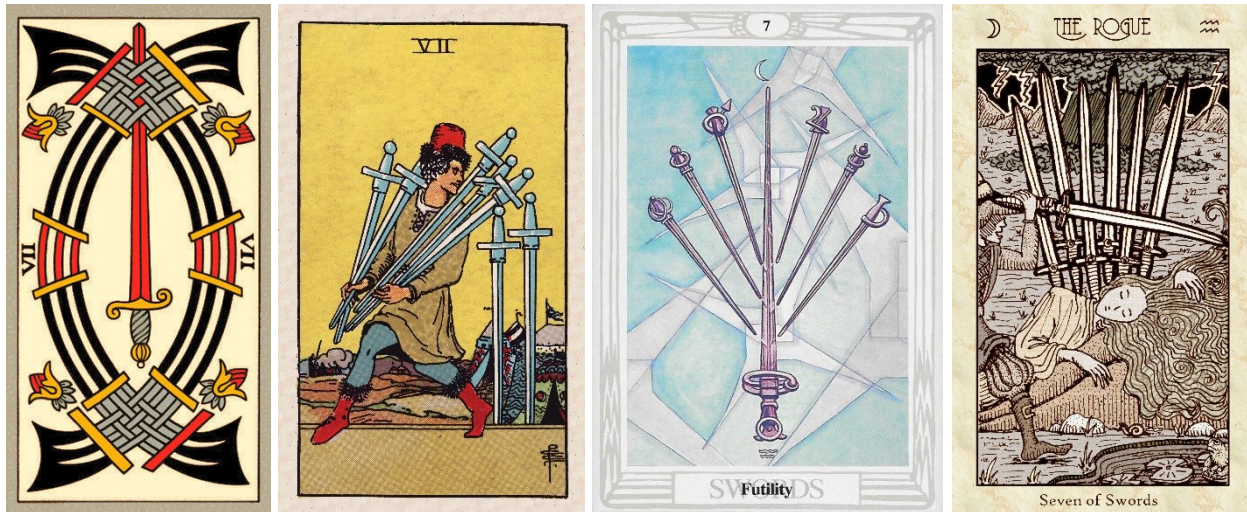
In the Marseilles, the reversed Six of Cups can be a sign of weak will or lacking determination. You need to show a little more backbone when it comes to making decisions.

In the RWS, Waite tells us that this ill-dignified key suggests desire. It's an omen that there needs to be greater determination shown. It can also suggest the advice to undertake the project. In other words, if the reversed Seven of Cups shows up, then you know that thing you've been thinking about doing? That project you want to complete? Yeah. Pursue it. Take it to the finish line. Act now.

In the Thoth, the reversed Lord of Debauchery shows recovery and lessons learned. This is a positive sign that you're overcoming your inner demons. Forebear rather than self-indulge.

Extending that interpretation, in the SKT, this is about delayed gratification, rising above being corruptible so that your resolve is incorruptible.

Overall, the advice from Spirit is this: You must decide and act now; show some determination. You need to arrive at a solution, and do so quickly. Stop deflecting. Stop procrastinating or stalling.



SEVEN OF SWORDS

In the Seven of Swords, we see the tip of that red sword piercing through, valiant. In the Tarot de Marseilles, this is a positive card, suggesting success after a terrible struggle. There is hope, because you will overcome the adversity. That being said, there will be damage, or damage control to do afterward.

In the Rider-Waite-Smith, Waite describes the imagery on this card: You see a man in the act of carrying away five swords, running away. Two swords remain stuck in the ground. He didn't get the chance to take them all, so he has had to leave something behind. You also see a camp close at hand. A few points to get out of this card. One, hurt people hurt. That's the theme here when you see the Seven of Swords. A have-not decides to cheat the system to become a "have." The advice here: If you want to win this, you can't play by the rules, because the rules are stacked against you.

All that said, Waite also warns that the "significations are widely at variance" in this card. In other words, there are lots of very different meanings to the Seven of Swords, so you have to go with your gut as to how you want to read this card.

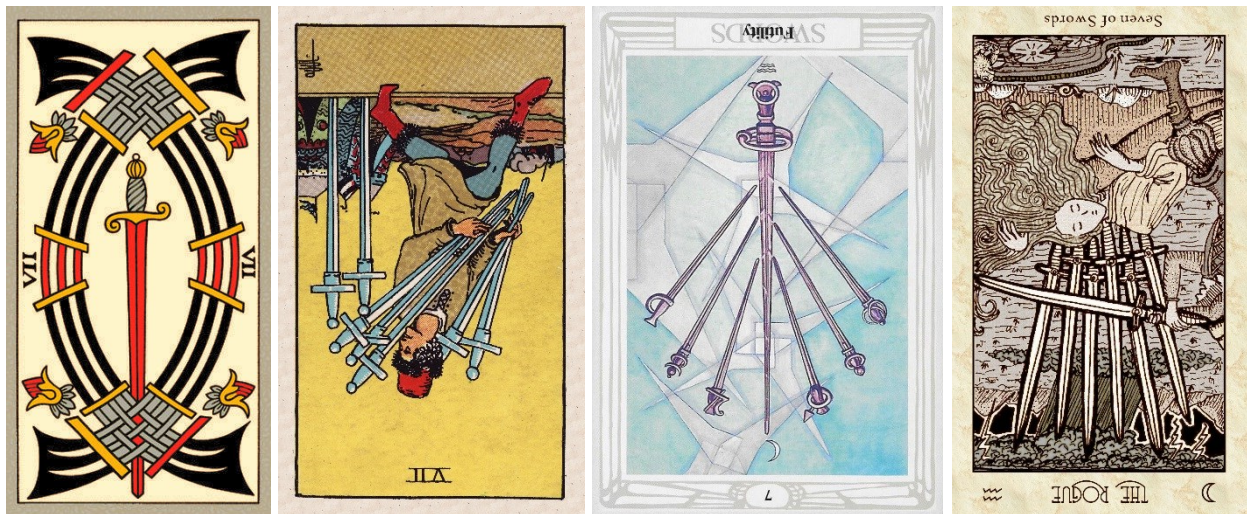
In the Thoth, you'll see the astrological glyphs for the Sacred Seven atop each of the seven swords. At the hilt of the sword, you see the glyph for the sun. Here, the smaller swords are ganging up on and overtaking to fracture the larger sword of the Sun. In the background, you see a geometric abstract expression of the Star of Bethlehem, or the natal star. This is the Lord of Unstable Effort. Crowley attributes a rather different meaning to this card than what you'll see in terms of textbook meanings for the Marseilles. On screen you'll see some of what he ascribes to this card of Futility. At its core, this card is about a Chosen One facing many perils, yet one who will rise against all odds. That rise, however, is futile. The Chosen One fights a battle that won't be won.

The distinction I make between this Crowley Seven of Swords and the earlier Seven of Wands card meaning is this: In the Seven of Wands, you're outnumbered but you stand on higher moral ground and you shall prevail because Heaven stands by you. In the Thoth Seven of Swords, you're outnumbered and the outcome doesn't look good for you because the threats come from above. In the earlier Seven of Wands, destiny stands by you. Here in the Seven of Swords, destiny stands against you.

Now on to the SKT Seven of Swords. Here I've tried to illustrate the Norse myth of Loki, the god of mischief cutting off the hair of Sif, the goddess of the harvest, while she sleeps.

Sif is the wife of Thor, the god of thunder. Those golden locks of hair were Sif's pride and joy, and also her husband Thor's pride and joy. Loki had cast a sleeping spell over Sif before cutting off her hair. When Thor and Sif reported to Odin what had been done, Odin commanded Loki to rectify the wrong, so Loki headed underground to meet the Gnomes. Using flattery, Loki tricked the gnomes to weave new golden hair for Sif.

When the The Rogue or SKT Seven of Swords appears in a reading, I tell to myself the story of Loki and Sif. Soon enough the light bulb goes on in my head and I understand what that story is telling me about my situation and what next step to take.



Reversed, the Marseilles Seven of Swords is advice to be more cunning if you want to succeed. You've got to play chess. This can also portend that good advice is coming your way, so when you get it, heed it.

Waite echoes the classical attributions to the Seven of Swords, and says this card ill-dignified is about setting aside your pride and ego to listen to other people's counsel. Be prudent. However, Waite also tells us that the Seven of Swords in reverse could indicate slander and gossip that is going on behind your back, so be careful with who you trust!

The Thoth Seven of Swords reversed suggests that the end net result of your situation will be an important realization. Ultimately, good results are achieved. Things may seem chaotic right now, but there is meaning to the madness. Trust the system.

In the SKT, the ill-dignified Rogue could suggest that the thief will be caught red-handed. This is the exposing of one's misdeeds. Tread into the future with great care, my dear, because the truth will be exposed and you don't want to be on the wrong side of that history when the reckoning comes.



SEVEN OF COINS (PENTACLES, DISKS)

In a fortune-telling tradition with the Marseilles, the Seven of Coins here suggests that you need to spend money, or expend effort and resources, in order to earn money. You must invest the costs of overhead upfront if you seek to gain profits later.

Overall, though, the Seven of Coins is a very positive omen for anything money, finances, or business related. It generally suggests positivity and productivity, no matter what your question is.

Waite describes his Seven of Pentacles in this way: A young man is leaning on his staff. He looks intently at seven pentacles attached to a clump of greenery on his right. These seven pentacles represent his treasures and where his heart is at. This is having put investments toward what it is you most love, what you hold most dear. Now, if you've ever gotten confused about what exactly the meaning of the Seven of Pentacles is, don't worry, you're not alone. Says Waite about this card, the divinatory meanings "are exceedingly contradictory."

This card is about admiring your hard work and labors, which have yielded productivity, but you haven't gone all the way just yet. You have yet to fully harvest or reap the rewards of your passionate pursuits.

And yet Waite also says the Seven of Pentacles can indicate a quarrel, an argument or altercation over how resources should be spent. This card also means ingenuity, he says, being clever, highly-skilled, and resourceful. It's also about purging yourself of that which has been undesirable or impure. It's detoxing from negativity that's been in your life.

The Thoth Seven of Disks takes on a very different meaning from the Rider-Waite-Smith Seven of Pentacles. Just the difference in color palette already gives you a much darker vibe. This is the Lord of Failure, also known as Success Unfulfilled. You've spent all of that time planting and tending to your tree, but it does not bear the fruits you had hoped for. The seven disks you see are arranged in the same pattern as the Marseilles, and inscribed within them are sigils for the decan ruler Saturn in the zodiac sign Taurus.

Per traditional astrology, Saturn is considered a malefic planet. Not to say it's bad, but just to say it brings obstacles and challenges. Taurus relates to the corporeal, the body, and resources. This is assets and liabilities. Saturn both as a decan ruler of Taurus and when the planet is in house Taurus portend difficulties, interruption, or a financial encumbrance.

In ascribing meaning to his Seven of Disks, it's evident that Crowley is taking it from the astrological and also the geomantic correspondences in this card. We'll get to geomancy a bit later.

Let's talk about the SKT Seven of Orbs. I wanted my interpretation of this card to be a merger of the Rider-Waite-Smith and the Thoth, but with such disparate meanings, how do you do that?

Pictured here is someone organizing investment or project cultivation ideas and having implemented them into action, hence the willow tree in the background, showing the body that the seven orbs are a skeleton or structural framework of. We're looking at something mid-stream though resulting outcome is still to be determined.

It is evident that you have put in a lot of hard work, but will you be the one who gets to reap the fruits of your own labor?

This card reminds me of how I work so hard to tend to the apricot, peach, pear, and persimmon trees in my backyard, but when the fruits ripen, the deer, foxes, and raccoons always get to them first!

When this card shows up in your reading with the SKT, it's validation that your idea is worth investing in. But there's also a cautionary note: make sure you get your due. Make sure you speak up for yourself, stand up for yourself so you benefit from your own hard work, too. Don't let others exploit your efforts. Make sure you harvest in time, so do not hesitate when it's time to claim what's yours.

This card portends great potential, but perhaps a lack of self-confidence or it's sensing hesitation in you. There's also an untapped power here: The Gardener is the nature spirit of low magic, meaning you can use the Seven of Orbs to grow fruit, to cultivate financial prosperity into your life when using tarot cards in magic and spell-crafting.

Now let's talk about geomancy.

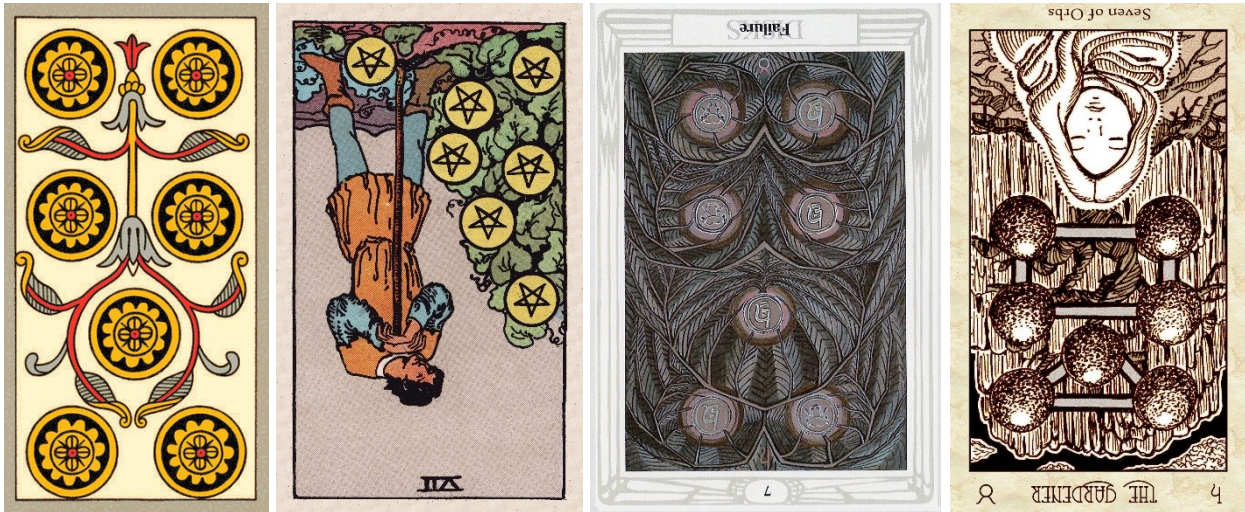
Notice the arrangement of coins in the Marseilles Seven of Coins. In the Book of Thoth, Aleister Crowley directs our attention to it.

He then preserves that arrangement in his Seven of Disks. Also, notice the colors in the Lord of Failure and consider how these colors make you feel. I've also copied the arrangement in the SKT Seven of Orbs.

This arrangement you see is a particular figure in geomancy. Rubeus. In Latin that means "red." It's about passion and strong emotions ruling over the situation at hand. Decisions are being made in the heat of passion, so not everything is rational. As a result, failure is predicted. Hence, the Lord of Failure as the card title in the Thoth.

Crowley emphasized the arrangement to be Rubeus, so if you're reading with the Thoth, this is something you'll pay attention to. In the Thoth, the Seven of Disks is a, well, to put it plainly, a very, very bad card.

The prophesied outcome is that what you most care about will go up in flames. Time frame for the happening: months.



Let's study the imagery of the Seven of Coins, Pentacles, and Disks when this card appears in reverse, when the energies here are ill-dignified.

In the Marseilles, the extenuating circumstances, meaning conditions beyond your individual control, are going to cause disturbances in your daily life. There's a sense of melancholy here. When this card shows up, look at neighboring cards to understand the root cause of the disturbance. If it was a one-card reading, pull an additional card and this follow-up card will tell you the root cause of the disturbance.

In the reversed RWS Seven of Pentacles, Waite says this prognosticates anxiety and stress around money issues. We see liabilities or debts, so now is the time for you to be a lot more fiscally conservative.

In the Thoth, Crowley refers to the Lord of Failure as the spirit of decay and deterioration. This is heading toward the state of insolvency. You're using up more than you have in supply. But, the good news is, the Seven of Disks reversed reads better than it does upright.

Here, we also see the indication of a military last stand. Yes, your defense is going to take a really big hit casualties-wise by the oncoming offense, and there's going to be destruction, but a greater good will arise from all of this.

Earlier we talked about how the Seven of Wands designates a last stand. Here's how that's different. The Seven of Wands "last stand" foretells success. You stand on higher ground against your adversaries, though they've got strength in numbers. In the Seven of Disks, the "last stand" predicts failure, but not defeat. Important lessons will be learned and you will rise from the ashes.

In the Spirit Keeper's Tarot, the reversed Gardener warns of over-harvesting. Or excess materialism. In agriculture, over-harvesting is, in short, when you are exploiting natural resources. This is deforestation, this is overharvesting of certain types of plants or over-hunting of a particular animal; so this is resource destruction and will in the long-term cause endangerment

The reversed Seven of Orbs is warning you of an imbalanced relationship between you and your material, physical environment. Here, there's also that sense of disturbances in your mind causing physical imbalances to your body and health. This could also indicate a have-not or victim mentality when you do have, when you're not exactly the victim.

NEXT LECTURE: KNIGHTS

And that concludes your lecture on the tarot Sevens.

The next video lecture in this series will ascend back up for a return to Tiferet, where we will study the Knights, or as it's titled in the Thoth, the Princes. You're going to notice that these are the court cards featuring the chariots. Although, there is also a dissenting school of thought that says the Knights should be equated with the, well, Knights in the Thoth, ya know, the ones depicting horses. It's complicated. We'll talk about it in the next episode.

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A Video Lecture Series

P A S T L E C T U R E S

The Aces	20:02 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Twos	34:41 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Threes	22:15 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Kings/Knights	42:40 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Queens	53:26 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Fours	42:22 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Fives	31:27 minutes	Video	Blog Post
The Sixes	38:40 minutes	Video	Blog Post

BENEHELL WEN is the author of *Holistic Tarot: An Integrative Approach to Using Tarot for Personal Growth* (North Atlantic Books, 2015). Learn more about her work and access free educational and business downloads at www.benebellwen.com.