

LESSON 117

STRENGTH

In the older versions of this card a maiden or youth was depicted either opening or closing a lion's jaw. This showed the weaker overcoming the stronger by direct application and contest. The Golden Dawn differs in meaning from the other decks considerably, for here we find a woman standing passively beside a Lion who appears to be also docile. We are also reminded of the Fool and the child having a similar effect on the wolf. Since this card is associated to the astrological sign of Leo one now finds that the picture starts to contradict slightly the meaning of the sign and as such takes precedence over it. What in fact has happened is that the Golden Dawn version of Strength is more concerned with the way in which one overcomes obstacles through a type of control likened to that of the concept of passivity which does not reject the strength of the lion but in fact absorbs it. So here the title 'Strength' is clearly the same as other versions of the card but with the Lion and woman portraying how this is to be accomplished.

The Lion in the card, apart from representing the astrological forces of Leo also has numerous other associations from a variety of different levels. It represents the the beastly nature of man, the uncontrolled concept which can run rampant if aroused. The woman here has her hair in the same shape as that of the lion's mane which shows a link between them. She is the passive of femininity while he is the solar strength of masculinity. At first glance the woman is the physically weaker of the two. In fact she should be prey to the lion. The action between the two is difficult to explain, but simply, the energy of the passive force has drawn out the masculine vital energy, due to the merging of their auras. The four roses she holds also have many associated meanings for they represent the four lower centers or chakras which she has control over (they also represent the four beasts of Revelations), which in turn are the four elemental parts that make up the body and are in the form of a square. The shawl around the body of the woman is in the shape of a figure eight. This in many respects reminds us of the symbol of the serpent in the Two of Disks. On one level it is generative, sexual, and shows instinctive uncontrolled desires. Its association to the letter Teth here also becomes apparent. The self fertilisation aspect here also relates to the twin aspects of the self, shown by the woman and lion. It must be also considered that this Trump is on the path between Chesed and Geburah and shows the combination of the two actions. Here the apparently

weaker half has gained the advantage by being receptive to the situation until the stronger force has expended itself - part of the self fertilisation process.

The colouring of this card is mainly done in the translucent scale for the darker scale makes the images unintelligible, and they are only used for darker aspects of shading. The woman's skin, hair and shawl are coloured translucent Poison Yellow of the King Scale. Her dress is the Dark Violet of the Queen Scale which show the receptive nature of her empathy. The Lion is coloured Mahogany Red of the Prince Scale which show its fiery nature. The ground she is on is Green Black (this is its normal colour of the Princess Scale and not its translucent aspect), which show the fertilising process while the sky background is the translucent version of this colour. The roses she holds are a Red-Violet which is the complementary to Poison Yellow (which is a Greenish Yellow) of the King Scale.

The title of this card is called Daughter of the Flaming Sword, it relates to her birth from the fiery aspect of the martial Geburah and also to her victory over the Red Lion at her side.

The psychological association to this card is "achievement"; for Strength shows exactly what can happen when the will to succeed is applied. There is also a certain amount of self-consciousness here, which is highlighted by the woman's apparent docile nature though she is standing next to the King of beasts. Here the woman has recognised that her power has limits in the role of direct confrontation with the lion, so she has diverted his energies to other areas then quietly conquered him. The way she did this was through the area of emotion. The risk she took in trying to tame the lion was great and that is also a part of her nature, as is her will to win and conquer. One of the main differences of the psychological makeup of the Golden Dawn concept of this card compared to previous versions must be looked at again for in Strength the will to win, the pride and the power is there, but what concerns us is the way in which this is used. This is one area that differs from the association of the psychological makeup of people born under the sign of Leo. For here we find the 'hidden strength' and not the outward show of it. In many ways this is the apparent quiet calm associated with those who do not need to prove themselves. There is of course a high degree of sexuality present with this card, a point in which Crowley went to the extreme, while Carl Jung considered that a representation of both woman and animal together (no matter what it was) represents sexuality. A closer look at the two principles of the masculine lion and the receptive female also bear this out. The lion as the uncontrollable part of the Self has been seduced, not by blocking off ones desires and supressing

them but by showing, caring and channelling its energies into other areas so that the main part of its strength is too dispersed to be dangerous and can be controlled by will, expressed as the woman.

Felkin's rendition of the meaning of Strength is that the lion is very much a keeper or guardian of the path that we must eventually come across and pass. The actual technique of passage being left up to the individual though a thorough study of the card does give us the answer.

In this instance possibly the best way to describe Strength is from an alchemical viewpoint for here the woman stands (holding some roses) beside the Red Lion. In fact she is the Green Lion (shown by her colours) while the roses she holds in her hand show the colour of blood, the sap of the Red Lion. As a solvent, she drains the strength (depicted as the blood and shown in the roses) from the Red Lion - her other half.

The numerological association is 8. This was considered by the Greeks as the most powerful of all numbers for it is the only evenly even number within the decad when depicted as the cube. For the 8 is double the quaternary which shows the manifested aspect of nature, such as the four elements, and the incorporeal elements are their etheric counterparts, thus showing a communication and interaction between the two halves so that the harmonious whole can be stabilised into a type of perpetual motion or Yin and Yang.

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#### DIVINATION

ON MATTERS OF Selfhood; Self Projection; new ideas; new beginnings; reactions to outside stimuli; the life force; first encounters:

The card Strength depicts a person with a powerful but controlled, if not altogether disguised personality. This sort of person is usually underestimated and many are overcome by such a personality before they are aware of this person's influence, but once aware it is too late. Response to outside stimuli is controlled emotions, outward appearance is cool, calm and collected where under the surface there is a lot of movement. This card shows that risks will have to be taken to achieve goals, new projects do not work out as originally planned, or how one envisioned them, though a working alternative will arise and be agreed upon. It shows winning over impossible odds.

ON MATTERS OF possessions and personal attitude towards such; personal estate and resources both physical and material; principles and feelings; management and projection; commerce, personal, commercial, governmental and national financial affairs directly relating to the self:

Here the key impetus for Strength is to take control. In business, a subordinate will take charge, effectively running affairs smoothly against what would appear to be difficult odds. Strength warns the querent on the danger of over-confidence and recklessness; it advises one to consolidate resources and personal energy. Money can be made through a partnership - teamwork - although there is always one element taking subtle control. Material gain is generally through personal endeavours when this card turns up here. It also shows someone taking great risks with her resources, someone who manages his/her own affairs. In general matters are under control, or heavily influenced by one will.

ON MATTERS OF short journeys; communications; relationships; brothers, sisters, neighbours; humour; identity; early education; books; correspondence; enlarging ones field of activity:

The card Strength does not, on the outset, imply a journey, it moreover shows an influence preventing one in continuing a journey. Stronger bonds are made in personal relationships and a family member or neighbouring figure may have more power over one than first realized, possibly through psychic transmission of thought although they may be nescient; but perhaps it is the querent. On a wider scale Strength shows that someone or something will make its/their presence known to you. In educational concerns, Strength shows two meanings:- the first is that one is confused, or overcome, by their study assignments. The second is that one has taken control through absorption of knowledge. This of course gives you the secret - don't fight it, sit back passively and absorb all that is thrown your way. In areas of communication Strength shows itself through auric empathy.

ON MATTERS OF the end of one stage and the commencement of another; the home and private life; buildings; land; parents; security; emotions; significant shifts in lifes directions; concerning the soul; the occult in its practical terms; divination:

Subconscious desires are held in check by the Will. In practical occult matters ones magical skills are put to use. On the domestic scene, the apparently weaker half, however passive

they may appear, holds the power (this mainly refers to women but it could be extended to suit the situation). In many instances this hold through the emotional level. Even the victim can be secretly the victor, for children will be strongly influenced by this mode of consciousness, their sympathies (emotions) bind them to the victim, and in this way the victim is the victor. On a material note the card Strength implies that what one has is becoming more - this relates to worth as well as quantity. As regards the soul, it shows spiritual intelligence guiding. As regards direction, Strength is 'being' and 'becoming', the movement is forward and out.

ON MATTERS OF love given; creativity of selfhood; the creative will; children; entertainment; recreation; speculation; sports; the arts; gambling; fulfilling potentiality:

When receiving Strength in this house a victor and victim will arise out of a situation. The victor is the weaker physically but proves to be the stronger mentally. This card shows competitiveness and those who take on something larger than themselves. If positively aspected, they will win against impossible odds by beating their target (or obstacle) at its own game. The opponents energies are dispersed and weakened through positive resistance. One can liken this card to mind games, rather than any direct physical confrontation. On speculations, a reasonable assessment will be made. Sexuality is vital though one tends to 'sit on it'. This sexual energy is often directed into creative pursuits. On a large scale this card shows internal and external assessment.

ON MATTERS OF sickness; employment; employees; relationships within the work environment; conflicts; service; ones sense of service; the acquiring of skills; psychology:

Sickness is overcome or prevented by will power. One tends to come to grips with ones problems. This card advises natural health methods and changing ones life to a quieter healthier way of life. Stress problems occur through ones work environment which leads to loss of vital energy. Those who receive the card Strength here tend to be very serious about their professions and hold their qualifications and achievements with great value. It depicts great achievement and development of internal power. It shows that one can take control of their work environment (i.e. learn to handle any difficulties). Women are warned against confronting matters directly as their power is limited.

ON MATTERS OF marriage and divorce; contracts; the other party;

competitors, adversaries, and known enemies; partnerships; public relationships; social interaction; the law of compensation; what is lacking; the workings of karma:

Although your desire to be free is strong, karma draws you into entangled relationships where one will be the stronger, mentally and emotionally, leading, or entrapping the other. In marital relationships the wife tends to make the final decisions; In matters of divorce, amicable agreements are made. This card is not favourable if one queries a future partnership or marriage. Be careful a competitor does not get the better of you. This is a situation where you cannot drop your guard for a minute. With adversaries one must make compensations but these will turn out for the better for you.

ON MATTERS OF death and rebirth; accidents; effects of others; crime and retribution; legacies; wills; others estates and finances; joint resources; moods; sex; spiritualism; rejuvenation; mysticism; transformation; psychotherapy:

This is not a good position for the card Strength. The key impetus here is taking risks. On a financial note a person will take risks with other peoples assets, who may also abuse the power he or she holds, much to your detriment. Also this shows dispersed investments with an overall large return. On one hand, Strength alludes to excessive sexuality and promiscuity, but on the other hand it shows regeneration. It is not a card of transformation, but it does have mystical connotations, inner sight being an example of this. On a higher level it is controlled emotions, on a lower it is action by instinct. It shows that one person has power over another in partnerships and if not abused can lead to a symbiotic relationship. The conscious begins to master the unconscious. Inheritance is usually dissipated before being received. Concerning death, this will be avoided at this stage.

ON MATTERS OF religion; metaphysics; philosophy; higher study and education; legal systems; morals; institutions of learning; long distance travel; exploration; public communications; the collective mind:

The card Strength, in this position, reminds one of Christ at the age of 12 when questioned by the Rabbis on the doctrine of the Torah. He confounded them with his knowledge and they became confused. This card shows the questioning of teachings and spiritual strength. There is a need to nurture the spiritual self and heighten the animal self. Thought patterns are visionary and these people do not adhere to traditional religious forms; they

are crusaders at heart. Any travelling done will be to seek or give knowledge and there is a certain amount of magnetism or control over the masses, through tapping into the collective mind. This card shows more activity in the intuitive/psychic mind than in areas of direct conscious thought applied to study or higher education. For the average person Strength works in the subtle unconscious.

ON MATTERS OF public honour; status; ambitions and goals reached; achievements; profession; the other parent; causes for disgrace; recognition; identity:

The key impetus for Strength in this position is achievement and courage. People will go all out to achieve in life, while women or men who do not meet their need for achievement are drawn to others that do and they bathe in reflected glory. If badly aspected you can become the victim of superior forces. Prominence in wealth is desired and a high standard of living is sought. Goals are reached through perseverance. Ambitions are surpassed where one receives more than imagined, however, one may not be totally conscious of what one has. In a profession you probably work in a large corporation or in employment that has a lot to do with the masses.

ON MATTERS OF friends; income; social alliances; legislation; one's attitude; group activities; government, counsellors; love received; spiritual and intellectual aspirations; ideals; fulfilment; what you yield and how you benefit others:

With Strength in this position you will receive good counsel, however, your pattern of thought will be influenced by another or a group. A political party wins over a larger party at election time through tactical means, the secret is disperse your opponents energies. A person will be able to sway a larger group or organisation's direction and humble them to his/her thinking. The type of friends chosen are those of intelligence and potential talent who are able to inspire one and whom one can help cultivate. Spiritual and intellectual aspirations are for power, fulfilment, and are achieved through winning control. You are able to yield alternative thoughts, answers, ways, to all whom you come into contact with. Or perhaps it is you who is shown a way!

ON MATTERS OF responsibility and contribution to others; humanistic concerns; karmic debts; unresolved problems; hidden resources; the unconscious; sorrow; health afflictions; secret enemies; hospitals; secret societies; self undoing; total

identification:

For Strength in this position there is a reconciliation between internal or external enemies. The method used is to absorb and channel any attacking - or stronger - force through indirect confrontation. That is don't stand in the way, step aside and let them wear themselves down while you gain strength. In sickness, one must not fight it, but come to terms with it. Healing will be a long sure process. If negatively aspected, something saps your strength, a disease spreads. If positively aspected one will win over problems. Your answer lies in the reconciliation between your positive and negative self, or the anima/animus. This card shows someone in a position to "pull strings" in a large institution.

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MEDITATION ON STRENGTH:

Let the Student first study the overall picture of the card, then study each detail: Each symbol and image. Study the colours. Now let the Student look at the card and feel its vibrations. Write down your overall impression.

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exercise

Now paint this card with the above described colours. An outlined drawing is supplied with this lesson.

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