

# Aeclectic Tarot

presents

# Thirteen's Tarot Reversals

**Interpretations and meanings  
for reversed Tarot cards**

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ISBN: 978-0-9871104-1-1

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### Introduction

This is the start of a study of Tarot reversals. I'll run through major arcana, minor arcana and court cards, explaining how to interpret them reversed.

#### Part I:

Let me start with this introduction, which is all my humble opinion.

A lot of books make it seem like you can just memorize upright AND reversed meanings at the same time. Certainly, you can, but I believe that reversals are difficult to interpret - often more so than upright. For this reason, I believe you should be familiar with the upright meanings first and save reversals for later.

Second, let me cover the oft-asked question: *are reversals necessary?*

The answer is no. Some readers believe that reversals allow for a wider range of meaning and possibilities. Some believe that all cards have positive and negative possibilities, and that the spread and question will inform the reader of what the card means with no need to have any of the cards upside-down. Other readers just find that reversed cards interrupt the flow of their reading, and so don't use them because they just don't like them.

In addition, some readers will use reversals with some decks and not others. And to make matters even more complex, there are some decks created with reversals in mind (the Revelations Deck, for example, which almost requires the reader to use reversals). Other decks will admonish the reader NOT to use reversals, and the backs of the cards will be such to help the reader keep the cards all going in the right direction.

In the end, whether you use reversals or not is entirely up to you. There is no right or wrong about using them.

#### Part II:

A frequently asked question about reversals: are reversals always negative?

Answer: No. Reversals do not always mean that something horrible is going to happen or that the situation is awful and hopeless. A spread heavy on reversals may simply be a way for the cards to get a strong message across, or to inform the reader and querent that there is a pessimistic, negative or blocked outlook to the problem. In short, that a change of attitude, beliefs, ways of tackling the problem can restore the energy and get things moving again.

This brings us to the three most common ways to interpret reversed cards.

1) **Opposite:** the meaning of the card is the opposite of its upright meaning. Frankly, I think this is the weakest and sloppiest of possibilities when it comes to reversals - it's a little too simplistic and has one problem: if a "bad" card is reversed, does that now make it a "good" card? So, reverse the Ten of Swords, Five of Pentacles or Three of Swords and the message is now a good one? We'll get back to that...but the answer is, not necessarily.

2) **Blockage:** the energy of the card is blocked or diminished. Quoting myself, from an earlier spread on the subject: "One of the best discussions of reversals I recall was one where we theorized that reversals are like running aground or being caught in an eddy. Uprights move the energy forward, as on a river. Reversals indicate that this energy is not flowing."

This means that if the Three of Swords is reversed, then its energy is blocked. If that energy includes communication, however hurtful that communication, then it is being dammed up. The vocalizing of something important is being held back and the results, positive as well as negative, are being held back as well. Nothing can go forward.

3) **Upside-down Image.** This is where you re-interpret the image given that it is upside-down. So, upright cups are now spilled, and that man in the Ten of Swords - he's actually worse off than when he was upright. Upright, the swords are all in his back - the nightmare had ended, it is over and done with. Reversed, he's on top of them sinking down to their hilts - it's a lingering end, drawn out and torturous.

In the end, reversals are not happy things - but they are, perhaps, important life lessons which teach us far more than if we only got sunny uprights.

## MAJOR ARCANA

### The Fool Reversed

Generally speaking, the upright meaning of the Fool is that of birth, new beginnings, fresh starts, journeys and exploration. It can also mean not looking where you're going, being naïve or foolish, or a potential disaster if you don't stop staring at the stars and take a good look at what's directly ahead of you.

1) Opposites: If we were to go for a simple, opposite meaning, the card might mean an ending and/or wisdom.

2) Blocked: More apt is the blocked interpretation. If the energy of the Fool is all about starting something new, going somewhere new, then blocking that energy means that the querent is having difficulty starting anew, moving, seeing the world with fresh eyes.

There is also an implication of being stuck, uninspired. The Fool, if you will, is sitting at the side of the road with blisters on his feet and rocks in his shoes, unable to go on his way.

3) Upside-down: What if we turn the image upside-down? I'll use classic Rider-Waite here--but in reversing the image, interpretation, of course, will depend on the deck.

The cliff edge is hanging over the Fool and his feet have no real purchase. We might say that he's falling, dropping off from under the rock to free fall through the yellow sky. Everything, the sack, the dog, tumbles with him.

We might well interpret this as the Fool (in Rider represented by Air), getting completely lost in his head, in hopes and imagination, in talk of what he's going to do, completely surrendering to the sky, with no way to actually walk toward anything, even disaster. This, we might say, is the Fool doomed to Foolishness that makes sense only to him. He is not in the real world and whatever he proposes cannot be made real.

### The Magician Reversed

Upright, the Magician can stand for either a person or possibilities. As a person, he's usually seen as someone with a great deal of charisma; a public speaker, maybe a doctor or healer.

If not a person, the Magician is a card of possibilities. Of having the tools available (those spread out on his table) to make something that you want or

need. The Magician speaks of magical possibilities--he creates the image for the querent, what could be, and presents the tools that can be used to make that image a reality.

Putting it another way, the Magician card offers the querent the vision of a new home and the tools to make that home a reality...if they're willing to put the work into it.

So what does this card say reversed?

1) Opposites: There are negative aspects to the Magician card and a reader using reversals might simply save them for reversed cards. Negatives in this case are seeing the Magician as a "snake oil" man rather than a true doctor/healer, as a trickster rather than a shaman, as a con-artist rather than a charismatic speaker.

Reversed, possibilities become jokes; empty promises rather than true visions of what could be. This is the "music man" running off with the money rather than really teaching boys how to use those instruments and create a band.

2) Blocked: Blockage undoubtedly seems evident here. The charismatic speaker finds he can't move his audience, can't find the right words. The doctor has trouble with a diagnosis.

And there seem to be neither possibilities for the future, nor a way to achieve such possibilities. There seems to be no way to make or get what is needed. The lumber to build the house is there, but the blueprints and tools are missing.

3) Upside-down: If we imagine the Rider-Waite Magician reversed, we can see those tools falling off the table. Likewise, the Magician in that card points his wand to the sky and finger to the Earth - drawing inspiration down from the heavens, as it were to make it possible in the mundane world. Upside-down, (earth at Magician's head, heaven at his feet) we have the opposite. What was possible become impossible; a dream only seen above not below.

Likewise, the lemniscate (infinity sign) is now being crushed. It no longer floats and offers infinite possibilities. It is "underfoot" as it were.

Thus, everything the magician had to be a Magician is lost to him.

## The High Priestess Reversed

Upright, the High Priestess is a mysterious card, both frightening and wonderful. Where the Magician is the charismatic showman with an audience, the HPS is the solitary lady guarding an ancient library. Where the Magician is all about possibilities, she is about "impossibilities." Secret knowledge, instincts, even magic. Hers is a card about personal and individual journeys across dark deserts to enlightenment.

She is also about that moment when opposites both exist but don't cancel each other out. When we stand between the pillars of light and dark, day and night...and need that secret knowledge or instincts or psychic power in order to know how to best develop what we have (Example: the Two of Wands - it isn't a choice between a wand and a pentacle, it's two wands. Rather like Harry Potter, the querent needs a wand to do the job, but which wand will best do the job? And how do you start using it?--another example might be a tarot reader deciding on that first deck...and first book to read!).

1) Opposite: Once again, there are negatives in the card that a reader might save for reversals. In this case, secrets are kept or not revealed, the answer is searched for but not found, instincts are wrong. In a more personal sense, there is a cold streak to the High Priestess. She refuses to open the door, withholds her secrets except when they're hurtful. She's that nasty maiden aunt who lives alone and knows the dirt on everyone and uses it just to watch them squirm.

She can also be that unpredictable teacher or woman - brilliant but her mood changes are downright scary. You don't know if she's going to coldly answer your question - or bite your head off.

2) Blocked: The blocking here really focuses on the instinctual or psychic energy. There is just nothing coming through. Once of those days when you do a tarot reading and the cards are just cards. They don't speak to you, you see nothing in them. Likewise, making a decision about anything seems impossible. The two wands look the same and you cannot tell the difference between them.

3) Upside-down: There would seem to be little difference if we turn the card upside-down, but like the subtle meaning of the High Priestess, the difference is similarly subtle. Taking the Rider-Waite image, she has the crescent moon at her foot and a well-spring of water begins there that runs through other cards.

Turn her upside-down and the water falls and runs dry. The moon hangs above rather than at her command. The curtain of pomegranates, shrouding

the mysteries falls open, and all that people should not see - that might be damaging to see - they see. The pillars are on their crowns not on the base and cannot support themselves.

There is, in short, a loss of control. And the High Priestess, who holds opposites in delicate balance, needs that control. If all this is lost, then there is a kind of madness. Chaos, indecision, a loss of secrets and knowledge.

### **The Empress Reversed**

The Empress is all about creation. It's about planting the seed, nurturing it, growing it. It's about patience and "motherhood" in all its facets, with the Empress as the ultimate mother - both the caring motherly kind, and the more distant, elegant kind, but in either case, the hen watching over her brood. Note that there is always a danger of the Empress over-watering the plants or having trouble (as moms do) in letting their children go when the time comes.

1) Opposite: Using negatives of the card reversed, we get neglect instead of attention. The woman who doesn't water her plants - or doesn't pay attention to her children. There is a danger in the upright Empress of smothering the child. In the reversed Empress, the danger is that she won't nurture the child enough. No affection, no protection, no care to make sure the child grows right. Here is the woman who takes a child to a restaurant, and then ignores the kid as he goes racing up and down, playing under tables, interfering with the staff, getting into trouble.

This can go for anything, not just children. Neglecting a business or project that OUGHT to be dear to one's heart, ought to be one's baby but you just don't have the patience for it .

2) Blocked: This goes one step further, I think, then the opposite. In this case, the Empress' nurturing, growing energy is blocked. It is almost as if the child were not merely neglected, but abandoned. There is no desire to help anything grow. The watering can is left to rust.

All the instincts of the Empress - knowing when to transplant that tree to a new pot so it can spread its roots, knowing when to prune it, fertilize it, are blocked. In this instance, the querent doesn't know how to help their business, children, or project grow and develop. They may be clueless, have no such instincts and need outside help - or they may need to find a way to re-discover their mothering instincts.

3) Upside-down: Turn the Rider-Waite image upside-down and we not only unseat the Empress, we uproot all her trees and scatter all her grain. Her crown of stars falls off her head, and the stream (the one that starts in the

High Priestess card), drains away. Her feet are no long planted on the Earth.

If we turn this card upside-down we go farther than just not being able to grow - we tear out what is already growing and living and kill it. We uproot everything, including the Empress. Viewing this card upside-down gives us perhaps the most terrible interpretation of it, the wanton destruction of all that is growing and thriving and beautiful. This is the card that might come up when discussing the cutting down of rainforests or desecration of natural landscapes or anything beautiful, the destruction of works or art, of someone's business or home or family.

The nurturing isn't merely blocked – it is actively, wantonly destroyed. This is abuse or even violence. Growth isn't merely neglected or stopped; it is actively, vindictively prevented.

### **The Emperor Reversed**

The Emperor is a card about control, about authority, command, organization and foundations. He follows all those other cards where the querent decides what he wants, and nurtures it into fruition--now what the querent has must be managed, guided. Hence, the Emperor. But what about the Emperor reversed?

1) Opposite: If the Emperor is the father, the adult parent, then the opposite is the baby. The negatives or opposites of the Emperor card is that of childishness: the leader is tyrannical, the worst sort of Nero-like dictator; he uses his aggression, temper and his charm for his own selfish wants rather than to help his kingdom.

In the opposite camp, this is a card about inconsistency and unpredictability. There is no control, only impulsive demands.

2) Blocked: In this case, something is stopping the energy that gives a person authority, or the energy that brings things under control. As the Emperor is a man of aggression, charisma and energy, a reversed card could indicate that these elements are being cut off. The person in authority finds themselves unable to motivate or control others - rather like a mother who finds she cannot control her children; they ignore and disrespect her rather than obeying her. As a consequence, the entire house (kingdom) is a mess.

3) Upside-down: The essence of the Emperor is his throne. He is solidly seated on that chair, in command. Turn him upside-down and several things happen. First, the crown falls off his head, the scepter and sphere from his hands. He himself falls out of the chair, and the chair also falls. This is a trio of damages. The ruler loses all emblems of command, and the kingdom loses not

only the commander but the seat of power. All that is left are the bare rocks.

Once again, the upside-down interpretation goes one step further. It predicts not merely a loss of authority and control on the part of the Emperor, but a loss of both ruler and foundation for the kingdom. In this instance, the manager running a certain branch of a company is let go or leaves, and his job vanishes with him. No one takes his place, his employees are left at loose ends, and the whole branch collapses. There is no chance for organization, no chance for further growth or development. No one is in charge and no one can be in charge. The throne and all trappings of rulership (crown, scepter, etc.) are gone.

### **The Hierophant Reversed**

The Hierophant is the moral and social conscience of the deck. He offers spiritual guidance, and when upright and positive, he can stand for that favored spiritual leader who guides us all through troubled times and ethical dilemmas. At his best, he is about humility and teaching, about getting people through deeply frightening and difficult situations. He also represents the wider rules of society, what we teach each other in order to get along and fit in, everything from common courtesy and social graces to laws and rules. When reversed, however.....

1) Opposite: if we assume that the negative or worst qualities of the card are its "opposite" qualities, then the reversed Hierophant is the hidebound prude. Here is the man pounding on the holy book, insisting that every commandment must be followed to the letter. He refuses to listen to alternate interpretations of what is written, refuses to bend or flex. He teaches by rote, and had no mercy for those who disagree.

In a general sense, he represents the most unforgiving aspect of society; the one that stones and burns those who do not conform. It can be telling the querent that they are either in danger for trying to be different, speak up or blow the whistle--or it can tell them that they, themselves, are being far too inflexible in their point of view. Too harsh in their judgement of another's failings, weaknesses or individuality.

2) Blocked: We can better understand the negative of this card by viewing the blocking of energies. The Hierophant gets spiritual inspiration from above and makes it real on Earth. In psychological terms, he is the superego communicating and guiding the ego. If this is blocked, then the ego is without guidance. It has only the rules it wrote down to follow, with no knowledge of WHY such rules should be followed.

Hence, the community is unable to adjust its laws, erase those that no longer

apply or create new ones which might be needed. They follow law by rote, without true spiritual guidance, ethics or morality behind such laws. It is very much a matter of a parents saying to a child, "Do this because I say so!" And so the child learns to do this--but never knows why. And so true conscience for why this ought to be done, or not done, is never developed. Fear of punishment keeps the child from disobeying. Not morality or a belief in the rightness of the law.

3) Upside-down: Upright, the Hierophant gives his words to his acolytes, with the "keys to the kingdom" at his feet. Turn him upside-down and it is the acolytes who are on top, as it were, the keys in their hands. The Hierophant's head/voice (superego/conscience) is below instead of above.

Symbolically, the Hierophant is grounded, and his words come from the earth, not from heaven. Meanwhile, his listeners are in power and control, using those keys with impunity to lock away secrets, rather than open them up.

Upside-down, this card is very reminiscent of spiritual institutions who control information, maintain earthly power (where the leaders are rich and living in luxury, while their flock is poor and in need). They offer up rules for the purpose of being in control, like the acolytes above the Hierophant, rather than helping the community morally and spiritually. We see this likewise in folk who take the moral high-ground in order to get their agendas favored, while making opponents look immoral in order to undermine them. There is a strong pressure in this card to conform...or else.

### **The Lovers Reversed**

In the upright position, the Lovers card is about finding that other half of ourselves. It might be a person, but it can also be anything that completes us, that speaks to us - a career, a cause, a religion. It usually involves us making a choice to go for that something and so feel whole, unified. Reversed...

1) Opposite: The clearest opposite of coming together is being split apart. So one of the simplest and most obvious messages here is a break up. A couple breaks up, a family splits, a fight within a company causes it to be fragmented into two parts...neither of which is as strong as when it was unified and whole. One thinks of famous comedy teams, that chemistry between partners, where magic happens when they're together...but apart, they're just not the same.

Also, the reversed Lovers could be a bad or wrong choice has been made.

2) Blocked: Reading the Lovers Reversed as blocked indicates that there is

something preventing the two halves from being united. Likewise, there could be an inability to choose. The intuition needed to recognize the right decision, the one that will lead to unity and wholeness, is missing. The querent does not know what to do.

3) Upside-down: The Lovers card is very interesting when turned upside down. Right-side-up, the Angel dominates. This is important as the card (Rider-Waite style) is dominated by Gemini – which stands for not only partnerships, but communication and the mind. Hence, the card is symbolically talking about a spiritual or mental connection.

Turn it upside-down, and the Angel is grounded. What ends up on top are the genitals of our naked man and woman--and the mountain between them. We get, in essence, a hint of the up-right Devil card, with baser, earthier desires behind the choice.

I would read this as saying that the choice that is being made is being made for the wrong reasons--and therefore, is probably the wrong choice. The querent isn't using their head or intuition; communication between the two halves is not happening except below the waist.

Putting it another way, two things are coming together that may fit, but do not create that unity. In a relationship reading, this would probably indicate that the two were NOT soul mates - that they are together for earthly reasons (a woman wanting a husband or father of her children), not because they were really meant for each other. Likewise with other choices a person might make like choice of career, cause, or religion. They're doing it for practical, earthly reasons, not because it makes them feel whole. That mountain is there between the two halves - they cannot be united as they should be. They will never form a whole.

### **The Chariot Reversed**

Upright, the Chariot is all about moving forward. It's not just about charging ahead, but rather seeing where you want to go, picking up the reins, taking control of inner and outer forces, and directing everything forward. Hence, it is a card of great determination and confidence, motivation and leadership. Without these, there's no making the chariot go where you want it to go. So what about reversed?

1) Opposite: image-wise, there is some confusion with the chariot. It's about movement, victory and going forward; but the image in Rider-Waite at least, is of the chariot at rest, either after its victory or before. This makes the opposite or inverse interpretation a bit difficult, as the most obvious one would be a chariot at rest: NOT moving as compared to moving.

So let's simplify this opposite; we'll leave the movement interpretations for the other two and go for the "victory" interpretation on this one. Obviously, the opposite would be defeat. The chariot did not conquer either the inner or outer forces; it lost the battle to control the horses, lost the battle against whatever it was fighting. It might even suggest that the querent gave into cowardice. He didn't try to show the horses who was boss, didn't try to barrel through his enemies - he just hid in his chariot hoping not to get hurt, taking no chances.

2) Blocked: as the upright card often focuses on controlling the horses, on determination and direction, we can see that a blocking of these energies leaves the querent at loose ends. Ever driven with someone who has absolutely NO sense of direction? That's what we have here. The querent may know where he wants to go...but he doesn't have a clue how to get there. And he lacks the determination to find a way to get there.

Somehow, the energy of determination and direction must be unblocked. Otherwise, he's going to be driving about aimlessly and hopelessly. To the point where his attitude is "what's the use?"

Another interpretation for this blocked chariot is that it's not moving; hence, we can predict car trouble. The querent wants to go somewhere, but the vehicle he would use to get there is out of commission, either literally (a car), or figuratively (a means to leave his job, his career, his relationship...etc).

3) Upside-down: Turn the chariot upside-down and no one is going anywhere. The wheels are in the air, the horses on their backs, the charioteer thrown from the interior.

I know what you're thinking. And yes. *Car accident* is an apt if frightening prediction for this one. At its worst, the reversed Chariot is not merely about a loss of control and direction, but the complete loss of any means to get where you're going. You won't be leading anyone to victory, there's no fighting the war, let alone winning it. Anything inside (motivations, determination, energy) or outside of you is not working, not moving. The horses can't run and the wheels are spinning in the air. You are stuck.

### **Strength Reversed**

Courage, strength, inner will, optimism...reversing this card gives us some pretty evident messages:

1) Opposite: obviously, if we just go "opposite" on this card then we have cowardice, fear, timidity. A complete lack of backbone. The querent has been

or is likely to back down from challenges. They're weak-willed when it comes to controlling their own impulses or changing their life. They're far too passive and scared.

2) Blocked: Blocked is a little bit different. The implication is that the strength and will are there, but something is preventing them from manifesting. I often think of someone constrained by courtesy or peer pressure from speaking up or doing the right thing. It is not that the person doesn't want to take control, or can't, but rather that something is keeping them from doing it (either something within or something without) and so the lion remains untamed.

3) Upside-down: right-side up, the maiden is controlling, and above, the lion. Reverse it and the lion is on top and in control. A scary situation. Unlike Reversed and Blocked, this interpretation suggests that the querent cannot manage to control the beast. They are not, as in #1, afraid, nor, as in #2, being prevented from trying to take control. Rather, in this interpretation, whatever it is they are trying to control is too much for them.

Putting it another way: the lion is in control - and the maiden does not know how to gain control over the beast before it rends her to pieces. To clarify: in interpretation #1, I would likely scold the querent that they had to learn to be brave and face the beast...though I probably wouldn't expect them to take my advice. #1 suggests someone who is too timid and unwilling to fight, more likely to keep hoping that if they just keep still the lion will go away.

In interpretation #2, I would tell the querent that they needed to free their courage and inner strength, to stop listening to whatever was holding that back. And I imagine this advice would be listened to.

In interpretation #3, however, I'd tell the querent that they cannot defeat the lion alone. This is the drug addict who needs rehab. Willpower alone isn't going to work. The beast is in control and the maiden needs saving before she is entirely consumed. This last interpretation suggests a very desperate situation requiring some desperate action. Certainly a cry for help at the very least.

### **The Hermit Reversed**

Upright, the Hermit is about a time of solitude and introspection, of investigation, learning, enlightenment and sometime teaching. Reversed....

1) Opposite: If we take "opposite" to mean the negatives of the card then we can view the reversed card as all the evil stereotypes of hermits. The mean old man, isolated, misanthropic, paranoid. In this instance, isolation does not bring insights and epiphanies, but rather turns the person sour and against

the world. We might well get reversed Hermit for men like the Unabomber, using their isolation to formulate crimes and destruction.

Other opposite of the Hermit is the Fool. Such as a teacher who uses his position to do foolish or childish things rather than to impart wisdom and insights. Either way, this is not a trustworthy teacher or sage.

2) Blocked: The power of the Hermit - his energy - is in his lantern. The Hermit has keen insight, and an ability to see what is hidden to others, to look beneath the surface. If this is blocked, then we might well say that the Hermit's lantern has been shuttered. It offers no light and the Hermit is left in darkness.

Thus, if reading this card as blocked, a reader might say to a querent that they are having trouble shedding light on a problem, or that they're alone in the dark in this situation. To get out, they must find a way to rekindle their lantern. The lantern is emblematic of their keen mind, sharp eye, and analytical abilities. Though currently in darkness, the hermit has the means to shed light on things if he'll just rekindle his lantern.

3) Upside-down: the most telling thing about the Hermit upside-down is that he loses his lantern. This is similar to the blocked interpretation, only worse. In the blocked interpretation the lantern can be re-illuminated. But upside-down, the lantern is gone. The Hermit is totally in the dark...and all alone. He has lost all ability to find his way and is going to have to stumble on home if he can.

I would see this extreme example in the case of people having some mental problems - they can't concentrate, they can't think, they can't remember or see things clearly anymore. An elder who is foolishly giving away his money, for example, might well be a Hermit reversed. A once wise and canny old fellow who seems to have completely lost his lantern, his ability to make intelligent decisions.

### **The Wheel Reversed**

The Wheel of Fortune is about Luck, about transitions and changes, sometimes about Karma. Generally speaking, it is about things that happen to us that change our lives...rather than, as with so many other cards, things we ourselves do to create a change. What does it mean reversed?

1) Opposite: *Usually* the Wheel is read positively as moving up. There is luck and good fortune in it, the implication that we are going to be moving up (deservingly) while someone else (deservingly) moves down. Thus, the opposite would be, quite simply, bad luck, misfortune. Instead of heading up

to the top of the wheel, we're going to be hitting the bottom. It's the nadir instead of the zenith. Someone else will be getting the promotion or position we want, and we, alas, might well be getting laid off or transferred.

As with good luck, there is nothing to be done about bad luck but accept it and make the best out of it.

2) Blocked: If we read the energy as blocked, then we have to assume that the wheel wants to move up, wants to turn, but isn't being allowed to. Hence, in this reading, the wheel is stuck. It is moving neither up nor down. Rather like a when a Ferris Wheel comes to a stop, wherever you are, there you are and there is no change.

I, personally, find this more distressing than if the wheel were moving down. An unmoving wheel means no changes - no going anywhere. The problem is, that the querent might not be able to alter this as the Wheel's energy usually comes from without - so if the company that a person works for is freezing all jobs, no promotions or demotions, then that's the way it is and there's nothing the employee can do to change that. They can leave the job, but they can't force the company to "unfreeze" and start promoting/demoting again.

3) Upside-down: There seems, on the surface, little difference if we turn this card upside-down - it's a wheel, a circle, with no top, no bottom. And yet, using Rider-Waite, we can see a change. The Sphinx is at the bottom. The "Set" creature (chaotic/devilish creature) is at the top. The Serpent switches sides and is moving up instead of down.

To understand, think of it this way. The Sphinx is at the top, hovering above the Ferris wheel. You ride up to talk to the Sphinx. Then you ride down and have to deal with Set. Then back up again.

Reverse the card and the implication is that when you rise to the top, you meet Set instead of the Sphinx! What ought to be good luck is going to be bad. In this case, the promotion that should give you what you want, that ought to be good fortune, lands you in hell instead.

This is a bit worse than just "bad luck." The idea here is that the external forces creating that luck are unreliable; you can't trust the luck you're getting to be what it seems.

### **Justice Reversed**

Upright, Justice is all about creating a balance, legalities, fairness. It involves the ability to split, cut back, share. Reversed....

1) Opposite: Justice is quite clear in this instance. Reversed it is "injustice." Unfairness, imbalance. No matter if it refers to a court case, a family situation or spirituality, the card is clear that things are not fair and balanced here. The querent is getting too much, or too little of what they need.

This interpretation is quite consistent with the other interpretations as well:

2) Blocked: The only real difference here is that the energy of Justice is that it wants to make things balanced and fair. Something is keeping that energy from succeeding. Again, things are "unjust" - but only because there is something preventing that. It may be as simple as one person being selfish, or it could be that certain evidence/legal documents have not come to light.

3) Upside-down: Again, we have "unjust" but this goes a bit farther. Turn Justice upside down and she loses her scales and her sword, which could well suggest a corruption of justice. It is not merely an accident, or something blocking justice that might be removed, here the whole system is suspect. The scales of balance are gone. The sword to slice things right down the middle is gone. Fairness cannot be achieved because the tools of justice are missing. The Judge is biased, the lawyers and witnesses corrupt, the evidence tampered with.

### **The Hanged Man Reversed**

The Hanged Man upright is about new perspectives, sacrifices, vulnerability and selflessness. It is about a time of suspension that, when over, brings with it new insights. Reversed....

1) Opposite: as the Hanged Man card usually involves sacrifice and insight, the inverse would be a refusal to surrender what needs to be surrendered, or a refusal to see things from a new perspective. In this regard, the reversed card is the assertion of the ego; stubbornness or selfishness. The querent is clinging to whom and what they are - all that they have - refusing to give it up even though the exchange could transform them and help others.

2) Blocked: The energy of the Hanged Man is about gaining a new perspective while in suspension. Blocked, however, would suggest that the querent cannot escape the suspension or the separation. They are stuck feeling apart from the world, unable to bring what they're learning and seeing from this perspective back into the world with them.

3) Upside-down: Ironically, the Hanged Man upside-down is right-side-up. He's standing rather than suspended. There is no sacrifice, no new insight. This suggests that whatever the querent is hoping to see, achieve, or do, or perhaps needs to do, they cannot do. If we follow the mantra of "no pain, no

gain" then the querent is not willing to suffer the pain--or not able to suffer the pain...and so there is no gain.

### **Death Reversed**

Ah, the Death Card. Signifies an end to something, a time of grieving with the hint that there will be something new to take the place of this lost thing in the future. Rebirth is at the other end of this tunnel, but a dark tunnel must be traversed. Reversed?

1) Opposite: The easiest reversal here is to say that something does not come to an end, or it does not die. But this may not be as good a thing as it sounds. Ever have a favorite TV show? You watch it over three seasons, it hits a pinnacle of being brilliant and wonderful...and then it starts to go down. And as it sinks and gets worse, and as it stretches out you begin to wish it had ended after that pinnacle.

Sometimes, things need to come to a blessed end. Anyone who's had someone in the hospital, alive but not alive, holding to life but not living, knows that "not death" isn't a desired thing. Not death keeps people from grieving, and from starting over again when done. It just stretches out a "not-life."

2) Blocked: Unlike the Opposite, I would say that the Blocked interpretation does allow for the death or ending of something. The real energy of the card here is about that time of grief and nadir that leads to re-birth. If this is blocked, then the querent can't grieve. They can't face or relieve the pain of loss. They remain at one end of the tunnel, refusing or unable to transverse it.

Re-birth is held at bay as well.

3) Upside-down: Turn the Rider card upside-down and the flag falls from Death's hand. Death falls off the horse. The horse is on its back and the corpses are out of their graves.

It's a grim absurdity. We might say that reversed, this card becomes a mockery of death. This upside-down card hints at some very grisly things-- desecration of graves, mocking someone's death. Someone dies and their end is celebrated or laughed about rather than mourned. Or, worse, someone dies and no one offers compassion or sympathy to the widow and children.

This situation, similar to the "Blocked" interpretation, makes it impossible to move on. Grief cannot be dealt with or overcome. I imagine I'd get this card for people who were Holocaust victims or who lost so many friends and lovers during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s. It isn't just the multitudes of deaths

they witnessed, but that no one cared, or helped or offered sympathy. They are left in eternal grief over the way death was disrespected.

### Temperance Reversed

Upright, Temperance is all about synthesis, about creating a third, unique element out of two other, usually opposing, elements. This is not the balance of Justice which trims and re-distributes to even things out, but a merging of just enough of each to form something new. Reversed, however....

1) Opposite: Temperance in the upright position is a scientist in his lab mixing chemicals until he finds the right formula, a cure for some disease/problem. The opposite of this, humorously enough, is right out of an old-time monster movie: the scientist is looking for a secret formula to save his loved one. He mixes up the chemicals in his lab, sure he's got the right formula. But when his loved one drinks this strange, new brew, she transforms into a hideous monster! This isn't just a formula that fails to work, it's one that goes horribly wrong.

Putting it another way, Temperance's solution to the problem, trying to mix together these two liquids, makes things worse rather than better. This is that sort of situation where two people or two groups, if brought together, will bring out the worse in each other; rather than getting peace, you'll get war.

2) Blocked: As the energy of Temperance is to temper, to mix and merge; blocking this energy creates "intemperance." In this case, the elements refuse to mix. Like oil and water, the querent cannot get them to blend. This might be because the person trying to temper wine by mixing it with water doesn't use enough of one or the other. Or it might well be because the impulse to blend the two is being blocked; there is a lack of effort or ability on the part of querent or someone else to get the mixture just right.

Thus, an attempt to merge two families doesn't work. An attempt to create a new company out of two smaller businesses fails. On a more personal level, the man trying to "temper" his aggressive tendencies doesn't try hard enough or the person trying to negotiate hot-tempered folk doesn't say or do the right thing to get them to agree and unify.

For one reason or another, the energy of Temperance, knowing just how to mix those two opposing elements, is blocked. Unblock it, and how to do the merging, the creating of that third element from the other two, will come clear.

3) Upside-down: The Temperance card contains a lot of fascinating symbolism. The Angel has one foot in the water - emblematic of being in

touch with intuition, emotions and the unconscious. Thus, the Angel is sympathetic and psychic, yet not overly so. The other foot is planted on the Earth, emblematic of being grounded in reality, of understanding the practical side of the problem.

The wings of Temperance indicate the airy mind while the sun rising in the background emphasizes the element of fire (passion). Hence, the higher mind avoids the problem of being merely theoretical by being backed by the energy of fire, and by having that one foot in the water, the other on earth. This intelligence understands the reality and the feeling involved, and has the drive to achieve great things: it mixes the two ingredients, never giving up till it gets the proportions just right and achieves that magic synthesis.

Reverse the card, however, and the angel's feet leave both earth and water. The higher mind drifts in the air upside-down, while the rising sun sets. Trying to mix the ingredients under these circumstances is impossible. The querent might well be informed that what he's attempting to do (or what someone else is attempting) is not going to work. The elements needed to pull off this synthesis aren't there, and no one has the coordination or talent to mix the ingredients.

All the angel can do is think about mixing the elements - even the drive/desire to do so is vanishing (like the setting sun). It's a nice dream to synthesize these opposites into a unified and unique whole, but no one involved with that dream can, currently, make it a reality.

### **The Devil Reversed**

Upright the Devil is all about addictions, about the temptations/obsessions that lure us, capture us, and which we, ourselves, refuse to escape even though we have the key to our chains. In a positive sense, it can also mean letting go of inhibitions and puritanical restrictions - sometimes we need to live on the wild side, be excessive and indulge. So what happens if we reverse this?

1) Opposite: It's natural to think that the opposite of the Devil - entrapment - would be freedom, happiness, etc. But reversals are never so easy. At its best, this opposite might indicate a near escape from entrapment, a temptation resisted but only just barely. The querent chooses to keep to their stricter morals or gets a break from whoever/whatever is tempting them, so they do not indulge, and they escape being chained to the Devil.

2) Blocked: The energy of the Devil is life on the wild side, indulging, releasing, giving in, going overboard. Reading this card as blocked could indicate that the querent is too restricted in their life or restricting themselves.

That they are too afraid of giving into temptation, too afraid of addictions, to the point where they are taking no chances.

This can include a fear of committing to others, of even falling in love. Keep in mind the connection image-wise (in the Rider-Waite at least) to the Lovers card. If the Devil card is the Lovers gone wrong, then the Devil reversed can be a fear of the relationship going wrong, to the point where the querent won't take a chance.

3) Upside-down: Turn the Devil upside-down and the chains fall off the necks off the man and woman, and the Devil himself is dethroned. The querent was in danger, being reeled in by someone dangerous. They held out, however, or changed their mind, eluding temptation and enslavement.

### **The Tower Reversed**

Ah. The Tower. It certainly signals a powerful shake-up that will bring down structures that the querent thought were stable...but really weren't. And there in lies the trick of the Tower. With that flash of lightning – the insight that illuminates a dark landscape - the truth is revealed. What seemed to be stable is not, and comes crashing down. All that is left is the bare, harsh truth on which something more stable and real can now be built. But the devastation remains. However, what about Reversed?

1) Opposite: The easiest opposite is that there is no shake-up. No flash of lightning, no destruction. The Tower remains standing, the lies remain in place, the truth remains hidden. The querent may breathe out a sigh of relief - he's gotten off easy. But that's not necessarily a good thing.

The message of the Tower is "The Emperor has no clothes!" but the reversed Tower, in this case, indicates that the querent doesn't want to hear that, refuses to hear it, refuses to believe it. And lucky for him, no one is going to say it. So everyone maintains the lies, and the status quo goes on.

2) Blocked: The energy of the Tower is in that lightning flash, the energy of illumination and destruction. Very like in the opposite interpretation, the blocked interpretation suggests that things will remain in the dark and standing. The difference is that there is a desire for the truth to come out. However, someone or something is keeping the words ("The Emperor has no clothes!") from being said. Someone or something is keeping the Tower of lies safe from revelation and destruction. Unblock that energy, and the truth will come out.

3) Upside-down: In the Rider-Waite deck, the Tower is one of the few major arcana cards which places the viewer in the middle of the action. It's like a

frame of film, a frozen moment in time as the tower is struck by that bolt and folk go flying. Reverse it and it's almost as if the film is being shown backwards. The people seem to be falling back *into* their windows, the crown (emblematic of arrogance, of the tower proclaiming itself king and on par with heaven) is shooting a bolt into the heavens instead of vice-versa, and the foundation reigns supreme (as compared to the crown on top).

This is very backwards indeed. Reversed, the Tower proclaims that its foundation is solid--almost like it's "mooning" everyone. The crown mocks heaven, and the false builders who should be tossed out find their way back in. Not only are the lies not going to be revealed, but the liars are going to get away with worse. They will tell more lies - lies which will be believed over the truth (the crown throwing back the lightning bolt at heaven!). They are protected by the rocky foundation which now crowns them, and there is no throwing them out.

The reversed Tower is the card a querent might get if they were trying to reveal the truth about a terrible scam or scandal, but the liars are too powerful and the lightning that should reveal all about them, that should bring them down, will be thrown at the querent instead. The truthful querent will be seen as the liar and, for the moment, they will suffer. They will not be believed and the Tower will remain standing.

### **The Star Reversed**

The Star is a card of hope and healing. Coming after the Tower, it promises that there is a future, and offers a light to guide the person on their way to that future. It is a drink of cool water (knowledge) in the wasteland, a promise of tomorrow. Reversed....

1) Opposite: Clearly, the opposite is that there is no future, no hope, no healing. Or, more to the point, that any hope or promise offered is going to be false hope. The star one is following is not fixed, and will lead the person astray. There is a feeling of being lost, with no way out.

This interpretation does not speak well for one who is sick or emotionally or psychologically hurt - they're not going to get well any time soon; they may even have taken a turn for the worst.

2) Blocked: We can think of this interpretation as there being clouds at night blocking out the star that one is following. Unlike the opposite, we know the star is there, but we can't see it. The person is feeling hopeless, but that doesn't mean there is no hope - they just can't see it.

I would read this as intense pessimism; the sort of cynical or depressed out-

look that insists that the world is coming to an end, there is no future, the glass is half-empty, etc. The sick person feels that their illness will never end, that there is no cure.

This, however, is not accurate. There is hope and healing. But something is standing in the way of our querent finding it - either their own refusal to see it, or some other dark cloud.

3) Upside-down: Reversed, the waters of knowledge and healing that the Star pours out fall into the sky, and both pond and urns and earth are left dry. The Star is no longer in the sky, and so can't shed its light on the earth.

Very like the blocked interpretation, this is a time of darkness. Only in this instance, there really is no hidden promise. Everything has run dry. No one is offering the querent a future or hope for a future. This is a person in a very desperate situation. At its absolute worst, they are dying or suicidal - and with good reason. They are getting no help; they are alone with no guiding light, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually bereft. It is a very bleak and black time for them.

### **The Moon Reversed**

We have a bit of conundrum with the Moon. Its usual interpretation often has to do with hallucinations, insanity, wildness...but it also relates to dreams, fantasy, artistic talent, creativity, psychic ability, romance. This makes interpreting the reverse a bit troublesome. Is it positive or negative? Let's see what we can work out.

1) Opposite: trying to figure out the opposite of the Moon is problematic. Logically, it should be "The Sun." But we already have that card. So let us say, instead, that it is the "Dark of the Moon." In this instance, I would interpret the Moon at its very worst, giving its milder interpretations to the upright.

By the light of the Moon, we can still find our way - even if wild things do happen by that light. When the Moon is dark, however, dark things happen. We might well say that things are not merely wild, but primitive. Criminals lurk in the dark, shady folk with dark purposes and intents. Sexual predators instead of romance, artistic talent used to hurt and destroy. Evil fantasies and dreams. Here is the stalker, the person who wants to scare and harass.

This interpretation would probably include a bad psychological time. If the querent suffers from any problem or has someone in their family suffering through such a problem (depression, bi-polar disease, substance abuse) they are going to be going through a dark time with it. It's going to be a long dark night of the soul.

2) Blocked: The energy of the Moon is that of chaos. It can be insanity or artistic genius, but either way, it is restricted. Blocked suggests a writer's block, perhaps a sexual block, even a block put on that insanity (medication that dulls the mind?). The block might be physical (bars on the window!), or just self-restraint. This is not order, so much as a lock on the door, keeping the chaos, freedom, and wildness outside.

There may be calm with this blockage - but it is artificial. The chaos has not been removed or corrected, only prevented. Bars protect the person from the wild, but the wild still calls to them. So, in this case, crime is prevented, but not stopped. Depression, etc. are held off, but not cured.

3) Upside-down: Turn the card upside down and the creatures are not gazing up at the Moon - the Moon gazes up at them instead. This suggests that what rules and commands the wild is no longer in charge. Base as these instincts may be, they do have a gut feeling that they are following. It's certainly topsy-turvy for the light to be looking up at them, for them to be in charge instead.

It is out of primordial ooze, out of chaos, that order comes (the Sun will follow the Moon), but upside-down, it suggests that order is moving into chaos instead. That even the guiding light of the moon has been subjected, and only the primitive reigns - unchecked, directionless, with no purpose or hope of coming to an end.

This is the sort of interpretation one might find for revolutions and riots, for countries melting down into political turmoil with no path to peace in sight. On a more personal level, you're likely to get this interpretation for a complete mental breakdown or a merciless plummet into the worst depths of drug addiction. There is no civilization. Men and women are ruled entirely by their animal natures. Complete anarchy.

### **The Sun Reversed**

The upright Sun is all about reason, light, order. It is a card of youthfulness, children and music, of clear thought and the feeling that all is right in the universe. Reversed....

1) Opposite: The opposite would most logically be "night" or the "The Moon" but we have those cards already. With the Sun, reason and order should prevail, as with the Moon, emotion and superstition prevail...so what of the Sun reversed? Say that *poor logic* and *bad reasoning* prevail. Facts are presented, but taken out of context. Wrong conclusions are reached, arguments are twisted. This is not chaos so much as "disorder." Things are in place, just not in the right place. Which, frankly, can be far more frustrating

than if the Moon were ruling and all was just chaos and anarchy.

2) Blocked: The Sun's energy is all about clarity, reason and light. Blocked gives us an eclipse. Things seem dark, muddled, unclear; illogical - but there is hope that once the eclipse is over, the light will shine again. Give the Sun's connection to children, this could also indicate problems with pregnancy or getting along with young children.

This would also be a bad card for musicians or mathematicians, ruled by the Sun, a reversed card would indicate discordant music for the musician, and problems wrongly solved for the mathematician. What should make sense and be harmonious is not.

3) Upside-down: Reverse the Rider-Waite Sun card and the sun sinks down instead of rising up. The innocence, wisdom and clarity of childhood loses his banner and his seat on the horse, the sunflowers wilt. The Sun provides life to flowers and to people; if it is reversed and going down, then its light and warmth is fading, and so is the life it supports.

This is not, as with the blocked card, a suggestion that the light is temporarily gone. This is a fading Sun - it suggests that the querent is either unable to recapture youth and childhood - or that they are refusing to see the light. There is a suggestion here that they would rather be in shadow, than see what the light might show them.

It is possible that the querent is rejecting reason and logic. Or that the querent cannot stop the light from fading. Ignorance is winning, as are the dim and short-sighted forces of cynical adulthood. No one is listening to youthful protests, or thinking of the children, of future generations. Energy fades, the light fades, music and wisdom fade. Something must be done before all the flowers have wilted away.

### **Judgement Reversed**

Right-side-up, Judgement is about letting go of (or freeing oneself from) something that you've been hanging onto, something that needs to be released in order for you to be reborn and move on. It could mean forgiving someone, or releasing your anger, it could be letting go of the past or of a bad relationship. Judgement is also about that "rebirth" or renewal of the self, about getting well after a long sickness, or finding a new career or spiritual path. You become a new person, unburdened by the baggage carried by your old self. Reversed...

1) Opposite: The easiest opposite meaning here is that instead of becoming free of a burden, you take one on. Instead of being reborn, you dig yourself in

deeper into that old life. Even more, this interpretation could suggest something the querent thought they'd dropped returning to haunt them. They thought something was over and done with, but it appears like a ghost, not banished at all.

2) Blocked: similar to opposite, this suggests an inability to let go, to free oneself from that baggage. The energy of the card is rebirth and here it is being blocked: the sick person stays sick. The person in the bad relationship can't seem to leave it. There is no forgiving or letting go of old issues. Something is getting in the way of the querent's renewal of self.

3) Upside-down: Turn the Rider card over and folk "fall" out of their coffins rather than rising up out of them. The angel is below rather than above, and coffins fill the sky. This is certainly ominous. It suggests not a release from the grave so much as the graves opening up and spitting out their dead.

We've switched from Resurrection to Zombie Movie. Not pretty. This suggests that, as in a Zombie film, the querent is not only having trouble getting rid of their baggage - but is surrounded and overwhelmed by it. The more Zombies the querent kills, the more that seem to surround them. The sins of the past, of people from the past, keep turning up. There seems to be no escape; and the querent spends all their time trying to get out from under those coffins. They never get a chance to renew themselves.

This could well suggest a recurring illness that keeps the querent from holding a job or having a life. An ex-spouse who keeps putting demands on them, so they can't remarry or have a new love-life. Old debts and/or black marks on their record that keep cropping up, making it hard for them to get credit, a job, even a place to live. There seems to be no escape from the past and no hope for a new future.

### **The World Reversed**

Finishing up our Majors...the World or Universe is a card about achievement, mastery, completion, and a feeling of being welcome anywhere you go. It's a card of travel, not travelling to learn but travelling to dispense knowledge. This is the Wise Scholar instead of the Fool, packed up and going wherever the road takes them. Reversed....

1) Opposite: obviously, the opposite of the travelling card would be staying at home. A person who can't venture from their comfort zone. Likewise, the person is far from finishing what they've been working on. It isn't complete, it's only just started.

We might also say that the opposite here would be the Fool - but we already

have that card. So what's the difference? I would say that the Fool doesn't pretend to know anything. But the reversed World indicates a person who thinks they are worldly, pretends to be worldly...but they are not.

This card could very well suggest someone who is fooling themselves or others. Their knowledge is faulty or just plain wrong. Their information is false; they don't know what they're talking about.

2) Blocked: as the energy of the World card is completion or mastery, a blocked World card indicates that something is stopping a person from finishing the job. Ever seen the movie "Wonder Boys"? A writer keeps working on a novel, it gets longer and longer, but he can't seem to finish it. The reversed world would very much suit this man. What he's taken on he can't compete or master - or, for some reason, doesn't want to.

This card might also come up for someone who is agoraphobic. A person who cannot leave their home, who is afraid of the outside world.

3) Upside-down: the upside-down image of the Rider-Waite world gives us an image very like the Hanged Man. The dancing figure can't dance, the world, as it were, can't turn. We end up with stillness rather than movement. As with the other interpretations, we get the feeling that no travel is possible. The person can't turn and so can't see all around them - they can't complete what they've started.

### MINOR ARCANA

So now we move onto the minors. I'll be taking them four at a time to get us through them quickly--and I won't be spending as much time on the Opposite, Blocked, and Upside-down distinctions. I also view Wands as associated with Fire/Energy and Swords with Air/Mind/Communications. If you view Wands as Air and Swords as Fire, just flip them.

#### The Aces Reversed

Aces are the spark, the initial energy of the suit: unfocused, undirected, pure and new. So for the Ace of Wands, they are new energy. For the Ace of Swords, a new idea. For the Ace of Cups, a new emotion. For the Ace of Pentacles, new luck (or health).

If we reverse the Aces then the most immediate opposite meaning is that there is no spark of energy, idea, emotion or luck, or that the potential for these is blocked. In the card image, the reversed card shows these aces pointing down, going down, instead of rising up. The overturned cup is emptied of all its liquid.

So what does this mean in a reading? It likely means that the querent should be feeling a stirring of that ace, but isn't. So, the querent should be feel excited at a new prospect or ambition, but doesn't (reversed Ace of Wands). He should feel the start of a new idea, or a new speech he wants to give, but there's nothing (reversed Ace of Swords). He should feel emotions stirring as he, say, gazes at attractive people or his newborn child. But he feels nothing, empty (reversed Ace of Cups). He should feel that his luck is turning, the beginnings of renewed health but doesn't (reversed Ace of Pentacles). The reversed Ace of Pentacles, in addition, could indicate a failed anticipation - the querent anticipated a hint that money would be coming his way, and there's no such hint. Things remain speculative, rather than real and solid.

Reversed Aces are like trying to start a fire, and getting nothing. No smoke, no spark. It's the hope of a hope that never comes. There's not even the feeling that something was there and died - it was never there in the first place. You just feel that something that could have become "it" ought to have been there.

#### The Twos Reversed

The twos are about balance. Where there is one, now there are two. Yin and yang, day and night, forces that in all four suits find a kind of tension that holds them in status, both existing for a moment, as at twilight or dawn.

Reverse the twos and the yin/yang forces start vying for dominance rather

than co-existing. This is the opposite of most of the cards. Blocked, likewise, suggests that something is keeping these two from co-existing and the result is upset or imbalance.

### **Two of Swords**

Upright, this is a card about a temporary compromise. Opposing forces agree to put up their swords...for now. Clearly, if this is reversed, then no such compromise is or can be reached. The two keep on fighting.

### **Two of Wands**

Upright, this is a card about making an intuitive choice. There are two possibilities, equally good, and the querent judges them and goes with its instinct after one or the other. Reversed, it seems quite clear that a decision cannot be made. The blocked interpretation is most clear for this - something is preventing the person from seeing any difference in the two, from being able to tell which is the one in which to invest his energy.

### **Two of Cups**

Upright, this is one of the most romantic cards in the deck. Eyes across a room, recognition of a kindred soul, a new friend or lover. Flirting, even, and that spark of emotion in the Ace finds an object for its new feelings. Reverse this and you can almost see the two figures not gazing at each other, but with their backs to each other, cups empty. Instead of magnetic attraction, they repel. Or, at best (using a blocked interpretation), they fail to notice each other. Like a romantic comedy where the leads keep missing each other as they walk down the same streets.

### **Two of Pentacles**

Upright, our man juggles finances, luck or health. It's not easy and he can't keep it up forever, but he's managing. Reversed, however, he loses all coordination. Those pentacles go flying and he not only can't juggle them...he might not have them at all. Reversed this card could indicate that the finances our juggler was relying on have vanished. If one goes, there's no juggling with the other one.

### **The Threes Reversed**

The Threes are about new growth, a time of stability, of something finally finding a direction and moving in that direction. They are the baby or birth of a baby, if you will, a third added to the two to create a very solid triangle. Reversed....

### Three of Swords

Upright is one of those dreaded cards as it speaks of betrayal, of hurtful things said. In this case, our third is a third wheel and the other two are not being nice to it. Often a card suggesting that the querent is being cheated on-- and will find out about it. Painfully. So is it better reversed?

Alas, no. This is a good card for the "upside-down" interpretation. Right side up, the blood (or poison) drains out of the pierced heart. But turn it over and there is no draining out. The Heart sinks down on those swords, firmly embedded, no relief.

What's important about the Three of Swords is not just the pain - but that something is finally out in the open. Those other two swords are not your friends, the card tells you. But turn it upside-down and the friendship continues. The querent suffers and suffers, but gets no relief. What has come out into the open, what has been said, changes nothing. I liken this to "Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf" type-people who keep hurting each other. They yell and insult and humiliate and nothing is ever resolved. They just inflict pain.

### Three of Wands

Waiting for ships to come in, this card promises the payoff for that initial investment of energy. Your good choice brings rewards. Reversed, however, and you get, I think, a blocked interpretation. A delay in the pay off, or, if really opposite, the ships have sunk. The anticipated reward is not or cannot come your way.

### Three of Cups

Celebration, sisterhood, joy. Reverse this and our dancing ladies loose all the liquid in their cups. I read this as a celebration gone sour. Sisters bitching at each other, jealous or hurtful rather than loving.

Remember also that one of the most negative things about cups is that they can stand for indulgence in sloth, food, liquor or drugs. So this could suggest a party where things go wrong because people drink too much or take drugs.

### Three of Pentacles

The craftsman shows off his work to an interested patron. Hard work, craftsmanship, creating an interest in a business, investments. Reversed however, the card would indicate that there is a block - no one is interested, or the economy is such that none can afford to invest.

The reversed card might also be a warning to the craftsman himself, a suggestion that his work has been sloppy, not up to the high standards that would win him investors. There might be some question as to whether he is putting a true effort into this business. Likewise, if the card stands for health - this could indicate a person who is not giving a real effort to an exercise program and this is why he's not seeing any real results.

### **The Fours Reversed**

Fours are emblematic of stability or stagnation. Either the foundation completed and ready to be built upon, or a time which, for better or worse, there is a status quo being maintained. Reversed...

### **Four of Swords**

Upright, this is a card of rest, recuperation or meditation - a retreat to regain health and mental sharpness. Reverse this and the man falls off his pallet. Clearly, the reversed card indicates that there is no rest, no retreat and no recuperation. The querent may want or need it, but they are not going to get it.

### **Four of Wands**

Often called "The marriage card", this is the card of foundations laid and ready to be built upon. Reversed would indicate a blockage of this energy. The foundation is not laid or not ready - the cement, perhaps, is still wet. Certainly if a reader got this for a querent engaged to be married, the reader may want to warn the querent that they ought to postpone the wedding. Something is not solid about the relationship and the couple are not ready to marry yet. Possibly the families aren't united either. All in all, if this card is reversed, it suggests that there is quicksand underneath rather than solid stone.

### **Four of Cups**

A card where the status quo, pleasant as it is, has become boring and the person has begun to dream of other things. The card can suggest either laziness or restlessness. Reversed, our cup of dreams spills out its temptation. But all the other cups are emptied too, and the seated dreamer is unseated. This suggests that life is not so restful and good that the person can become discontent with it. In fact, things are so emotionally empty that the dreamer can't even imagine a better life.

### **Four of Pentacles**

Often called the Miser card the Four of Pentacles suggests that the person is hanging on to what they have, perhaps a little too hard. Reversed this card would suggest the opposite, that the person is profligate, throwing away all their money, spending it and keeping nothing for a rainy day. This might suggest a gambler or spendthrift, someone who is lending out money with abandon, or buying drinks for everyone at the bar or just buying things they don't need. Likewise, they might be ruining their health or pressing their luck.

All in all, reversed fours suggest a lack of something solid and dependable. A lack of anything reliable, be it love (Cups), money/health (Pentacles), spiritual/philosophical foundation (Wands), a way to gather up their thoughts and rest their mind (Swords).

### **The Fives Reversed**

Fives are all about loss and learning and change. The card suggests a hard loss that carries with it a lesson and an important change. The idea of the fives seems to be that loss is important if things are going to push past the status quo to something new, different or better. Because of this, the reversed meaning does not, necessarily, turn loss into gain....

### **Five of Swords**

This is a card all about losing a fight, in particular a battle of wits or communication. There is a suggestion that the other side might have cheated or used underhanded methods. Reverse this and the card does not really say that the querent will win the argument instead. A blocked interpretation seems most apt here, and that interpretation suggests that the argument drags on. If losing the argument is the energy, then blocking it means that there is no loss...but no win either. Just an on-going battle.

Another possibility is that the querent does win the argument - but does not feel that they've won. It is a hollow win. And yet another interpretation (upside-down), suggests that neither side wins. All the swords are lost, everyone loses.

### **Five of Wands**

In this card, the querent is warned that he will lose his individuality. That he will be struggling to stand out among others equally talented. What's positive about this card is that there is a struggle, a belief that one can stand out. Thus, reversed, this card suggests that the person has no faith in winning such a struggle, and so doesn't even try.

This is the card of the person who walks in for a job interview, sees all these other talented people waiting, and walks out. They say, "What's the use of even trying. I can't possibly compete with them!"

### **Five of Cups**

Upright, this is a card about regret for lost love or other good feelings or people. What is always pointed out about his card is that even though the man weeps over the spilled cups, there are two standing that he's not seeing. Not all that is good is gone.

One can well imagine how dark, therefore, is the reversed card. Turn it upside-down and the liquid in the remaining two cups is lost as well. Our weeping man has lost it all. Some because he spilled it himself, the rest because he didn't notice it and it evaporated. This is the stereotypical scenario of the man who weeps over the loss of a beautiful girlfriend, never seeing the plain girl who still loves him and is still there waiting for him. In the reversed card, the plain girl finally gives up and goes off in search of love elsewhere.

### **Five of Pentacles**

The upright card suggests financial loss or a loss of luck/health. But there is still friendship. The material may be gone, but the spiritual is still there. Reverse it and our Church window is upside-down, suggesting that even institutions that would normally help the poor (charities, for example) are not there. Our poor folk are on their own.

### **The Sixes Reversed**

Six is a number of balance and resolution. After the upset of the fives comes the quiet and problem solving of six. Reversed, therefore, suggests that answers and balance have somehow been put off or kept away altogether:

### **Six of Swords**

The wonderful Six of Swords is all about escaping troubled waters. The boat may not have reached the shore, but it might well be in view. The answer to communication problems, mental worries, even science and math problems written on a chalkboard are becoming clear. Turn the card up-side-down and it's rather like overturning the boat. Everyone is in the water, the swords sinking to the bottom. Not only is there no getting the problem solves, but all that the boat was carrying gets lost as well.

If I got the reversed Six of Swords for a querent, I'd be worried that the poor

person was going to lose all their important notes. That their computer might crash, or the person they needed to help them get to that other shore was going to suddenly move to another country, no forwarding address. The querent is going to have to swim for it and do the best they can without boat, oarsman or swords.

### **Six of Wands**

The victory card is all about success, applause and accolades. The energy the person put into their endeavour has paid off and they have won. Reverse it however, and we can easily see several interpretations: opposite being a defeat rather than a win, but more likely, the blocked interpretation of something getting in the way of victory. I would read this as either a victory delayed, or one achieved but not getting the applause it should get.

I have a friend who works in the movie business. He worked very hard on a movie, but when he saw the credits, his name was hidden away, barely there. This would be, to me, the Six of Wands reversed. The querent is cheated of the satisfaction and laurels he ought to have gotten for his hard work.

### **Six of Cups**

The nostalgia card is about finding answers in the past, in old friends, old family members, even just memories of youth and innocence. Reverse this and such memories or friends and family cause more problems than answers. If I got the reversed Six of Cups for a querent, I'd say that their childhood was so bad that anything that reminds them of it causes them emotional upset rather than emotional peace and joy.

If I got this card for them, I'd be very worried that they were going to run into a relative or old friend who had caused them pain and problems. A glance back at their school yearbook would only have them remembering how miserable they were, not, as with the upright card, their first love or happier times.

### **Six of Pentacles**

The generosity card is about balancing out the scales by giving - or receiving. This is a card about finding an answer in charity, and the querent might be on either end of it - sharing the wealth, or getting their share from some benevolent soul. Reverse this, however, and there is no money to share. The querent may want to share in order to solve a problem, but finds themselves short of cash. Likewise, they may need some generosity in order to survive, but there is no one willing to give them a helping hand.

If I got this card I would assume that the querent either was having trouble getting a scholarship or charity, or that they wanted very badly to help someone but hadn't the resources to do it.

### **The Sevens Reversed**

The sevens are about getting through difficult times, past stumbling blocks or delays. They urge the reader to find a way to get to their goal even though the way to that goal may be uncertain. They are also complex cards because they present difficult situations with ambiguous solutions. Reversed....

### **Seven of Swords**

The "Thief" card is one of those ambiguous cards - is the querent the thief, who must steal in order to gain his goal? Or is he being preyed on by a thief, who he must stop in order to get to his goal? Either way, this is a card about sneaking around, about whispers and tricks. The underhanded method is the only way to succeed.

Turning this card upside-down helps us to interpret it reversed - the thief loses his stolen swords. Sneaking around isn't going to work, and in fact, it's a disaster because no one ends up with the swords. If I got this card I would warn the querent that cheating wasn't going to pay off. You get someone else to write that final exam paper for you, but then lose the paper and fail the class! It's a lot of sneaking around that leads to nothing. Rather like arranging to cheat with another man's wife only to find she went off to cheat on you with your best friend. The swords you were stealing vanish from your hands.

### **Seven of Wands**

The "holding your ground" card indicates that you use your energy to defend your position, even if it's not popular. There is no indication in the card if the person holding his ground is right or wrong, only that he must hold his ground to achieve his goal.

Reversed, we get the opposite: that the person can't or won't be able to hold their ground; that they will immediately fold under pressure, drop to their knees and surrender rather than try to defend themselves or stand up for what they believe in. They may have faith in their ideas or religion, but they haven't the stomach to fight for those ideas or religion, not when others insist that they're wrong.

### Seven of Cups

The "illusion" card presents a variety of tempting cups, but which of these futures are possible to achieve and which are unrealistic dreams? The card doesn't say. Troubling as this card is, however, the reverse is worse. As with all cup cards, what the cups contain is spilled out. And in this case, the querent has not even illusions to motivate them to continue on. They've stopped dreaming, imagining, wishing.

If I got this card I would seriously worry that my querent might be on the downward spiral of a drug habit or suicidal depression. This is a person who sees no possibilities of life getting better, not realistically or in a pipe-dream sense. They are stuck and going nowhere. We all need fantasies to keep us going. This man has none.

### Seven of Pentacles

The Waiting Card - here the man waits for his labors to bear fruit. This is a card about patience and letting things ripen. Reversed, it suggests that the energy of the card, patience, is blocked or not there. The person is impatient, pushing, rushing, tearing down the fruit before it is ripe.

If I got this for a querent, I'd worry that they were the sort to keep blowing their chances. The sort who creates something, then immediately puts it on the market before it's ready, and it fails, because it's badly done, not polished and ready. Like a movie where the special effects are bad because the movie makers didn't give the effects guys enough time to finish--or enough money.

### The Eights Reversed

Unlike with the Sevens, there is no ambiguity with the Eights, no question of whether what you're doing or choosing is the right thing. With the Sevens, the person is often stubbornly holding to their course, praying it's the right thing but not sure. With the Eights, there's no such doubt. The right course is clear. Doing what needs to be done might not be easy, but what needs to be done is sure.

This means that reversed Eights are often about cowardice, weakness, unwillingness or uncertainty, as compared to the upright.

### Eight of Swords

The dreaded "trapped!" card. The bound woman, blindfolded and surrounded by swords. In this upright card, the querent feels isolated, banished and ostracized. Friends and enemies have had their say, and left her

encircled her with their swords (representing words and ideas). She stands, bound and blindfolded by her own doubts. Yet her feet are not bound, and she can move, if she's willing to take possible cuts from the swords, she can even escape. But that will take a great deal of courage. Still, it is the only course open to her. Like with the scarlet letter, she has to be bold and unrepentant about her position, not cowed.

One would think that the opposite of this card would be a feeling of courage and freedom. But even if we turn it upside down, freeing the woman from the swords (that fall away), she is still bound and blindfolded and, upside-down, she's lost the use of her feet.

I'm a little uncertain myself about the meaning of this reversed card, but I suspect that my interpretation would be this:

Upright is like the girl/boy in high schools who did something unacceptable, and her group of friends tell her what they think of her and turn their back on her. She eats alone, miserable and doubting herself. The opinions of others keep her isolated, and her own opinion of herself keeps her where she is.

Reversed is the girl in high school eating alone because she imagines others don't like her (that she is surrounded by swords)...but this isn't true. She isolates and hobbles herself, but there is no censure from the outside, it's all her own doubts about herself, her own self-hatred and low-self-esteem. Other folk probably have no opinion about her, but she thinks they do, and these leave her unable to move.

### **Eight of Wands**

Interpreting the Eight of Wands, by comparison, is relatively easy. Upright, the Eight of Wands is all about speedy movement ahead. Things fall into place and there is a fast climbing of the ladder as well as a burst of energy.

Block this, and we get sluggishness, lack of energy, slowness. This is both without and within - without, things take longer than they should, there are delays. Within, the person feels tired, unmotivated.

### **Eight of Cups**

The Eight of Cups is also relatively easy. This is the follow your dream card, and in the upright, the person leaves what is comfortable and established to follow their dreams - however remote or improbable.

Reverse this and our dreamer walks away from his dreams to come home. Worse, as the cups are inverted, home isn't that comfortable. This is that

terrible card where a querent who went out to make his own life surrenders that life to take care of his domineering parents. It's the husband who sells his dream business because the woman he married insists on it, and now he's working at something he hates, living in a home where there is no love. A very, very sad and painful card. The querent has given up his dearest dream as being impossible, and surrendered to a miserable reality.

### **Eight of Pentacles**

The apprentice card is all about new jobs, learning a new craft, hard work and diligence. Although the person is low on the job totem pole, there is promise of new knowledge and promotions down the road.

Reverse this and we have both a blocked/opposite feeling: instead of being new, the job feels old. The work is tedious, and the person learns or gains nothing. If I got this card, I'd say that the person had been working at the same job - or the same low level of jobs for a long time. That they were overdue for a promotion, or that they weren't going to get that promotion that they deserved.

It's also quite clear that they hate their job and are not giving it their best effort, if they're giving it any effort at all.

### **The Nines Reversed**

Nines signify *earthly* completion. That is, the most you can accomplish in this world, in the here and now--as compared to the Tens which are more spiritual completion. There's a sense of accomplishment with the Nines, a sense of maturity to the suit and a feeling that something is coming to a conclusion. Reverse the Nines, however, and that conclusion is either put on hold, reversed or derailed.

### **Nine of Swords**

The "nightmare" card. This certainly is a card about having too many anxieties and worries, to the point where it haunts your dreams and wakes you in the night. Swords are hanging over your head. This is the "maturity" of the suit in that the mind is filled with ideas - the intellect can imagine and speculate too well. There is, however, the assurance in this card that one can wake up, and that such worries maybe overblown, and more in the head than in reality.

Assuming that the swords are attached to that wall, then turning the card upside-down does only one thing - tosses the woman out of bed. So instead of waking from sleep, she's getting no sleep at all. Total insomnia.

Either that, or going for the opposite, this person is sleeping like a baby - but only because they are totally ignoring their problems. "Ignorance is bliss" might be the motto for the opposite of this card. Rather than thinking too much about their problems, this person isn't thinking at all about them - which isn't going to make them go away.

### **Nine of Wands**

The "last stand" card has a person putting their final reserves of energy into maintaining, guarding and supporting whatever it is they've built. There is the temptation to surrender, to give up, but if they just hold out, they will succeed. It's almost over.

Reverse this and we might well say to our poor soldier that the cavalry aren't coming. The reversed card signals either not having enough energy for that last stand, or a waste of energy. Like putting all your energy into an important sales pitch and succeeding, only to find that your bosses have changed their minds about the deal. Trying to save the fort wasn't worth the effort.

### **Nine of Cups**

The "wish" card is really about the completion of family and Earthly happiness. It is a card about feasting with friends and family, the comforts of good food, good drink, love, friendship, cheer. This is why it's the "wish" card, because what more could anyone wish for?

Reverse it however, and you are not going to get what you wish. This is a card about a family (or friendship) falling apart; siblings, parents, friends and children are at best indifferent; at worst, they hate each other and want to cause each other misery and pain. There is vindictiveness and cruelty. Likely abuses, divorces, child custody cases, and indulgences (alcoholism) and/or psychological problems.

This might also signal a family coming apart; a family once close, having family gatherings, but disintegrating with each new generation until it's not really a family at all.

### **Nine of Pentacles**

This is a card about creature comforts; about a modest but beautiful home of one's own; the completion here is that luck, health, finances are solid and comfortable, able to give a person a beautiful and happy retreat.

Reversed, however, can indicate that there is nothing comfortable about this place. Instead of comfortable solitude there is loneliness. Instead of financial security, there is a price to pay. If I got this card for someone, I'd worry that they might have married someone for money - that they weren't happy, and were always worried that if they didn't satisfy their husband or wife they'd lose that home.

The home is neither secure, nor is it one's own; this could also be read as someone's long time home being sold out from under them, stolen from them in some way - or perhaps they were tricked out of it. The home belongs to another and, at best, the querent is a kind of prisoner in it. At worse, they might well find themselves evicted.

### **The Tens Reversed**

The Tens are about spiritual completion, being beyond Earthly comforts and the now. They examine the results in future generations, but also within, on how it affects the soul, the spirit of the person. This means that a reversal is damaging not only to the person in question, but possibly to others.

### **Ten of Swords**

The Ten of Swords indicates a final end. All that's been said, all that's been thought, all that's been argued is over. It's ended and the matter is dead - if not the person who was on the other side of the discussion. The positive of this card is that things can be laid to rest and everyone can move on.

Turn the card upside-down, however, and the body sinks down on those swords. They impale him even deeper. What should be over isn't over, it lingers, torturing its victim.

Upright, I would read this as a querent's opponents putting the "nail in the coffin" in regards to the debate. They stab him in the back and leave. But reversed, I'd read this as his opponents turning the knife, making him suffer as long as possible. This is the card you'd get for a kid being mocked and insulted every day at school; it just never seems to end. Even worse, the querent may be lead to think that his suffering is over...but it's not. The kids may treat him nice just to get him into a position where they can make even more fun of him. Not a nice card.

### **Ten of Wands**

Upright, this is a card about taking on too many burdens. It is the end result of putting out all your energy into projects - they multiply and you find yourself carrying the entire load. Here's the important thing, however, these

burdens were brought about by good fortune, by doing the right thing. The querent built up a good and honest business (for example) and now it puts too many demands on his time - but he did right.

Reversed, therefore is a person trying to shirk his responsibilities. This is the dad who promises his kids he'll do all kinds of things for them and never does; the guy at work who volunteers for everything, then passes the jobs onto others to do - or just doesn't do them, leaving a mess for everyone else to clean up. This is a person who doesn't carry their load, they toss it away, neglect it, put it on someone else's back.

### **Ten of Cups**

This is a card about the spiritual bliss of love, love in partnership and in family, love in the home. There is affection and warmth, joy and harmony.

Reversed: In essence, reversed this card is a disruption of the harmony. Someone in the family, or something in the partnership is making it hard to maintain the love. This may be as simple as a child throwing temper tantrums or a teenager rebelling. Or it may be a bit darker than that - a husband/wife with a vice or addiction or psychological problem that is getting worse and eroding what would otherwise be a happy home.

The difference here between Nine of Cups and Ten of Cups: the Nine of Cups reversed is like going to a family party or dinner and everyone is shouting or making trouble; disruption is total, the family is in pieces. In Ten of Cups reversed there is the feeling that all was well - and could be well again - but for one, disruptive problem that is eating away at the soul of the family. There is a focus and a center to what is turning the family up-side-down. It isn't, as at our reversed tavern in the Nine of Cups, a free-for-all.

This makes Ten of Cups more problematic. In Nine of Cups, as discussed, we can conclude there's no wishing this away and best to cut ties. But in the Ten of Cups, there is no wish to cut ties or give up on the person. The erosion is slow but equally devastating, like rust. The person causing the problem is still loved, still part of the family...but what can be done?

### **Ten of Pentacles**

Upright, this card is about fortunes or legacies that can be either passed onto the next generation or used to benefit others. The Querent transforms the earthly (money) into spiritual good by using it for the benefit of all (building a library, for example).

Reverse this card and we see a fortune or legacy wasted or lost. The children

eat up their potential inheritance with luxurious living, or the parent with the fortune gambles it away, or it gets taken away by creditors. This is also a card about squabbles over money, fights over legacies. A relative dies and the vultures descend to take their valuables. In the worst case, the children come to the reading of the will only to find that there is no money, only debts. The fortune they thought their parent had never really existed.

## COURT CARDS

### Court Cards Reversed

Before I start in on the Court Cards, I'd like to give a general over view of how we might read them reversed.

When we readers do a spread, we usually see Court Cards as standing for a person - either one our querent knows or does not know. So we may say, "This King of Pentacles here...could that be your boss? Well-off, good at managing a business....?" Or, pointing to a Queen of Wands, "I see a dynamic woman, life of the party, energetic--" and the querent will say, "Sounds like my sister!"

What this means is that in *most cases* a reversed card will mean one of two things:

- 1) It will be the bad, opposite or negative qualities of that court and so we can offer that description when trying to figure out who this is. Example: "I see a hot-tempered woman who demands people follow her lead..." And Querent says, "That sounds like my sister!" ;)
- 2) If we know who the card stands for when upright, then reversed can signal that the person is either mixed-up, in a foul mood, or just having a very bad time of it. They are not themselves. They feel "upside-down."

I'll be exploring the first (the negative qualities) as well as what the card might mean if it's not a person. But readers should keep in mind that in a lot of cases, a reversed Court Card may simply mean that someone in the querent's life is not "themselves" this week: "Your Boss is not himself this week. Something's really wrong with him."

### The Pages Reversed

Pages can symbolize children, or very youthful folk, or people who are very new at something and just starting at it, whatever it may be. They are apprentices or newbies. The energy of the suit they carry is in the "earth stage" meaning that it's rather like a seed planted in the ground. Very physical.

Likewise, Pages can stand for messages, as that is what pages originally did: carry messages. Today, it could be e-mails, gossip, telephone calls, a letter.

So we have two ways to examine our pages reversed. First, the negative aspects:

### Page of Swords

Upright, our Page of Swords is a chatty newcomer, interested in just about everything, fully of fresh new ideas and the desire to learn; he may be something of a story teller. He's also clever and likely very good with the computer.

The reversed, negative qualities include lying, gossiping, and being a know-it-all. He may spread stories about people, say inappropriate things, waste his time on the computer in chat rooms, etc. Do not, under any circumstances, trust this person with a secret – they won't keep it.

If upright and not a person, this card is about messages reflecting legal matters, solutions to problems, or amusing stories. If reversed, they may well be messages that contain malicious gossip, inaccurate stories, news of illness or negative legal matters.

### Page of Wands

Upright, our Page of Wands is an energetic, athletic newcomer who won't sit still. They are cheerful, warm, ready to help or come to the rescue, even if, being new, they don't quite know what to do.

Reversed, this Page can be a bully, using their strength and mean temper to get their way. Also a show-off, demanding that everyone pay attention to them. This is the new guy who will take credit for another's work in order to get the promotion.

If upright and not a person, this card is about messages regarding travel, spirituality, show-biz, career moves and leadership positions and party invitations. Reversed these messages are likely to be negatives in regards to this - no, you can't go on that trip, or sorry, you didn't get that job you wanted, or some other actress got the lead part. Also messages regarding problems with a party you might be throwing.

### Page of Cups

Upright, this card is about a very sensitive and gentle newcomer, one with the soul of a poet. Deeply imaginative and empathetic, they will really care about your opinion and try hard to please you.

Reverse this card, and our newcomer is someone who is hard to motivate. They're sad all the time and they'll bring your mood down with them. This is the apprentice who does his work but grudgingly, as if wondering what the

point was. They may also weep and cry way too easily and over nothing - dealing with them is hard as you have to walk on eggshells.

If not a person, the upright Page of Cups relates to love letters and messages from your loving family. Reverse this and you can expect sad messages, word of break-ups, divorce, infidelity, alcoholism, drugs. The romance or family in trouble.

### **Page of Pentacles**

Upright, the Page of Pentacles is a very hardworking newcomer. They don't talk much and they're not very social, but they are honest, diligent, organized. They're also clever with their hands and able to fix things; often also a health nut.

Reversed our Page of Pentacles is one of those new guys who cares too much about money ("Will we be getting overtime?" he'll always ask when you want him to do more). Go out to coffee with him and he will insist on separate checks. He pays only his share. Likewise, his area is his area. Don't step into his cubical, don't touch anything. If not asked to do something, he won't do it. Very unhelpful.

If not a person, Page of Pentacles can be a message regarding money, business affairs, good news about health or luck, winning the lottery even. Reversed and you get the negatives - bad news about money, business, health - and you didn't win the lottery or if you did, you have to pay a lot of taxes.

### **The Knights Reversed**

Note: Though Knights are usually portrayed as male, they can stand for males or females (in Thoth-style decks with Princess/Princes, the two are fairly equal and are more likely to signify which is male or female). I'll be using the male pronoun here, but really, it's him or her in all instances.

The Knights are all about travel, forays into new lands, combat (honorable, one hopes!), proving one's valor and worth, upholding the honor of one's kingdom and, in doing so, spreading the values of said kingdom. Knights, as Air, are about communication and spreading the message passed on by the pages.

They are also the next stage of development - from the "child" of the page we go onto the "young adult" of the knight. Given this, there is a rash and reckless air about knights. Like young adults, they take risks, ride head-on into situations, and live on the edge.

Reverse this and we get a suggestion of many troubling things--running away from fights or engaging in dishonorable combat, problems with travel, miscommunication and changes leading to disaster:

### **Knight of Swords**

Upright, our Knight of Swords is the young wit who leads the debate team or the computer club. He is the science wizard and young, hot-shot reporter. In a positive sense, he's out to change the world with his knowledge, cleverness and quick tongue. Verbally, no one can ever quite get the better of him.

Reverse this, however, and the cleverness, knowledge and tongue hit stumbling blocks. This is a person with a speech impediment or learning disabilities. He is intelligent, but unable to express himself, and his inability to win his battles frustrates him.

Contrariwise, he could also be a braggart - a blowhard who makes up wild stories that he can't back up or support. A coward who hides behind big words. He may, as well, be a cheater, pretending to be smart, but stealing his information from others (watch out for this guy if you're working on a project together, he'll take all the credit for your work!). This is a computer hacker, a troll, a person who uses his programming talent to spread viruses; he'll find naked pictures of you and post them on the internet; he delights in using words and his own cleverness to cause trouble and fights.

If not about a person, this card could be about air travel. Expect delays and problems if you're going to be travelling by air.

### **Knight of Wands**

Upright, this is our star quarterback; a warm-hearted, genuinely friendly fellow who loves to lead and win the battle for his team. He also likes to go out and celebrate afterwards. A fellow with irresistible charm, he is nevertheless open and honest, the natural center of attention and the one in the drivers seat. And he does like to drive as fast and as far as his stallion will take him.

Reverse this, and we get a bully who wants to win at any cost. This is an intimidating fellow who will threaten those who stand in his way - perhaps not physically, but he has influence, and acting talent. He'll turn on his charm and make people think you've wronged him. He'll thunder at his girlfriend (or if female, scream mercilessly at her boyfriend), blast his considerable and teenage-tough-like temper at those who bump into him at a bar, break and throw things, but when confronted, will be all humble and repentant, seeming so sincere that folk forgive him. This is the abusive boyfriend or girlfriend.

This is also the guy who will steal your spotlight away if he can. If you bring in something to show and tell, he's sure to bring in something bigger - he lets no one upstage him. With his charm he'll steal your girl (or if he's a girl, she'll steal your guy!), steal your friends, ingratiate himself with the boss and get that promotion you wanted...and no one but you will know the truth. Do not let his guy be your roommate. He'll trash the place and expect you to clean up, play his music loud at all hours, borrow your car and crash it. He's a nightmare.

If not a person, this card signals trouble travelling in a land vehicle (car, bus, train), most likely a motorcycle. Something is going to break--or there might be a crash from going too fast. Watch out.

### **Knight of Cups**

The sensitive Knight of Cups travels from place to place to sing his love songs. This is a deeply creative knight, poet, musician, painter, writer. He is a soulful artist, still new, but with great promise. A gentle soul he's a Good Samaritan, a fantastic and empathetic listener and friend. This is the boy who is close with women and learns all their heartfelt secrets--or the girl who gets guys to open up to her.

Reversed, however, this Knight sinks into gloom and depression. The glass is always half-empty, they wear only black, and whatever story they tell ends in tragedy. Far from being romantic, this knight is cynical and can use their insights into human nature to wound people, to make others hurt as much as they, themselves hurt. Young-Adult-wise they might suffer from problems common to teens, hormonal imbalances, moodiness, being rude and bitter and rebellious. Also, and most troubling, he might be suicidal.

Contrariwise, they could be hyper sensitive, finding insult in the smallest things, crying excessively, showing timidity, changing their minds all the time. There is no way to make arrangements with this person; they won't make it because they've changed their minds, or they're too sad, or too tired or too afraid of something or other. Their over-active imaginations blow everything out of proportion. Like looking at something through water, everything is magnified and blurry.

If not a person, this card warns about travel by water, boats especially, but any water sport or activity. Check equipment, take safety measures, know where the lifeboats, lifeguard and life preservers are.

### **Knight of Pentacles**

A most diligent knight, the Knight of Pentacles is very careful with his charge. This is the guy working two jobs to put himself through school or help his family. He's got everything organized and planned, and extra projects at home. He has his future mapped out, and has no resentment about starting at the bottom or working hard to succeed. Quiet and often solitary, he is the least reckless of the knights - though equally ambitious. He can be trusted with anything from secret passwords to locking up the business at night to dealing with vast sums of money. His integrity is his pride.

Reverse this card, however, and now you need to watch this guy. Instead of diligence, you've got sloppiness. He may appear to be working, but he's coasting. And if you give him money to buy something, he's going to find a way to buy it cheap so that he can pocket half that money. He is bitter and envious of anyone who is already a success and living large. He's likely to be a brown-noser, ready to ingratiate himself with those who can help him climb that ladder to wealth and the good life. He will do nothing for those who haven't money or connections.

He'll never leave a tip, he'll always ask for separate checks. Contrariwise, he might well be a reckless if small-time gambler, blaming his bad luck on others and never himself.

If not a person, this is a card about travelling over land on foot, hiking or cycling. Getting lost is a likelihood - take a compass and make sure your cell phone is charged. Watch out for washed out or muddy trails, and take a first aid kit.

### **The Queens Reversed**

Note: A Queen will likely stand for a woman ("There's a romantic woman coming into your life..." for example). But in an in-depth reading of a certain person, it could stand for that person, who they are, what their position in life is, even if they are male.

Queens are the "hearts" of the kingdom, its life-giving water. Not unlike the Empress, they help it grow, develop and thrive. The King may give the commands to shape what is going to happen, but the queen is the one who has to make sure it happens. Like any good hostess, any woman running a home or helping to run the family business, she is the one who decides how things should be accomplished.

Reversed, therefore, the Queens signal a block to things being accomplished. The water is blocked or dried up, the hostess/housekeeper/business partner cannot do her job. In short, the needs of the kingdom are not being attended to and nothing can grow or develop or come to fruition.

### Queen of Swords

Upright, our cool, Queen of Swords is a very sharp and astute intelligence. Far-sighted, she is the consummate problem-solver, especially when it comes to solving problems in communications - including important communications like radio and television - science or technology. She has all her facts at her fingertips and if she doesn't she knows how to get them.

Personality-wise, a reversed Queen of Swords can also indicate the worst qualities of this Queen. Aloof and distant, cold, cruel even. A woman who uses her information and communication ability without considering other people's feelings or what damage it might do. She wins arguments by saying, "These are the facts and that is that," she says harshly, with no tact at all--or in the nastiest way possible.

The Queen of Swords is all about communications and information, using them to solve problems. Reverse this card and our Queen's ability to solve problems is blocked, as is her access to information. Mental acuity and verbalizing are turned upside-down. These problems may be exterior - things like computers, telephones breaking down, arguments and miscommunication. It could also be interior problems: memory loss, even a stroke.

### Queen of Wands

The Queen of Wands is a Queen of energy and warmth, who is always center stage, even as she directs the action. Hers is a charisma that can get things done whether it's raising money for charity, putting on a play or getting a politician elected. This is the woman with all the connections, all the friends to call or e-mail. She makes things happen.

The negatives of this Queen, however, seen in her reversal, is that she can easily intimidate. You *will* do things her way. She refuses to listen to the opinions of others, she knows best. She becomes, as discussed, almost a dominatrix, one with a terrible temper if you happen to cross or go against her. And if you fall out of favor with her, she will call all those friends and make sure you are abandoned. The Queen of the social scene will have you snubbed.

The Queen of Wands is the Queen of energy and getting things done by way of energy, faith, charisma and friendship. Reverse her and we have a real lack of energy, a loss of faith. A woman who disappears rather than stands out, a woman who has no friends. Externally, this card could signal a drop in social

status, friends are not willing or able to help. Internally, this card could easily signal chronic fatigue syndrome.

### **Queen of Cups**

The Queen of Cups solves problems with love and affection. She is the empath, the romantic, the intuitive, the sensitive artist. People want to do things for her because she is so loving and kind, so understanding. She puts her heart into everything.

The negative in this card, seen in its reversals, however, is a woman who uses emotions to manipulate. Makes you feel guilty or ashamed, ungrateful. She's been so kind and affectionate and helpful - how can you say no? She's hurt, wounded, saddened. She will make you do one more thing - and one more thing - to pay for all the love she's given you.

The Queen of Cups is all about using emotions or intuition or even artistic creativity to get things done. Reverse this card and emotions are either blocked or tilted up-side-down. That is, the person feels nothing, is numbed...or they have very dark feelings. This includes psychic abilities. A person's psychic talents just aren't working. Externally, the person may be taking too many medications or drinking too much alcohol, numbing or screwing up their emotions. This card, however, can also signal some bad internal problems. Hormonal imbalances, post-partum depression, bi-polar problems, and depression in general. Anything involving serious mood swings.

### **Queen of Pentacles**

Queen of Pentacles is about getting things done practically...but tastefully. Whether investing money or just hard work, this queen knows who to hire and isn't afraid to get her own hands dirty. This is the Martha Stewart type. She will plant the flowers, hang the pictures, reupholster the furniture. She is also a consummate business woman who keeps scrupulous accounts.

The negatives of the Queen of Pentacles, as seen in her reversal, a woman who insists that everything be the best and won't accept anything less. A boss who expects everyone to work as hard as she does - with no sympathy for anyone who can't (she worked when she was pregnant, why can't her secretary do the same?). A person who thinks there is a practical solution to every problem: "Just buy another!" she might say to a child who has lost her favorite teddy bear.

The Queen of Pentacles is a card about practical solutions to problems, physical solutions. When reversed, therefore, it can signal blockage or

problems with that answer. Materials haven't arrived, plants aren't growing, the things ordered have arrived but they're all wrong. Internally, a person may have an injury preventing them from physically doing the work, whatever the work is, and running their business.

### **The Kings Reversed**

Note: Though Kings usually stand for a male in a spread, they can be female if the situation or reading warrants it.

Kings lead their knights into battle and sit in judgement on their throne. Where the Queens are the life-giving water of the Kingdom, the Kings are its inspirational fire. Not unlike the Emperor, they represent the power of civilization and authority, control and command.

Reversed, therefore, these cards signal abuse of power or barbaric behavior. Judgement is bad and control has either been blocked or surrendered. The King uses his power to achieve selfish whims rather than do what is best for the kingdom.

### **King of Swords**

This cool, eloquent observer is a fair man with high ideals. He is the philosopher, the judge, the theoretical scientist. He sees the larger picture, the broader implications. No one can render a more balanced, non-biased judgement on a situation. The negatives of this King come out in his reversal: Woe to anyone who tries to argue with him - he will run verbal rings around them, destroying their mistaken ideas without a second thought. He has no heart when it comes to his ideals and judgements, and will cruelly, if coolly, undermine and condemn those who are in error. At his worse, this king will censor or manipulate evidence to keep himself in power while destroying others.

The King of Swords is also about new philosophies, theories, about observations and facts that can alter and balance out a judgement. Reverse this card and there is a block to new theories and facts. Externally, these could be suppressed by the opposition, like a news program only running stories that agree with its political philosophy, or the church suppressing Galileo's findings, established scientists mocking new ideas that disagree with theirs or police deliberately ignoring the statements of key witnesses. In other words, censorship, or, worse, a deliberate manipulation of facts. It might also be benign problems, loss of evidence, for example. Internally, this could signal a person censoring themselves, holding back truths they ought to be telling.

### King of Wands

The King of Wands is a most charismatic leader. An innovator who can get a following with one speech; adventurous, challenging, warm and in charge. His ideas set people on fire and motivate them to do the impossible. Here is a man who can get pyramids built and countries conquered or peace movements rolling. He can impose civilization on unruly mobs with his energetic willpower alone.

The negatives of the King of Wands come through in the reversal where he becomes, well, Hitlerian. He expects people to worship him and do as he says as if he were a god, not a human leader. He has secret police and shuts down any critics of his ideas. His temper is terrible, often violent - and if he wishes it, he can turn his otherwise civilized followers into barbaric, bloodthirsty mobs, ransacking and destroying in his name.

The King of Wands represents the energy of innovation, change, motivation and challenges. This is the power to get something new started which will make a great difference. Reverse this and we see blocks to innovation and change ; old powers standing in the way, red tape that makes it difficult to just bring out a new invention. Internally, it can mean a fear of taking big, important chances or risks, putting your beliefs or ideas on the line.

### King of Cups

The King of Cups treats his followers like family, his kingdom like a neighborhood. He knows everyone's name and problem; no one is too small or low, he cares for and about everyone, and will make great sacrifices to help them. And everyone loves him back; he is the ultimate, loving father, eliciting fierce loyalty. People will do anything rather than risk disappointing him.

The negatives of the King of Cups are seen in the reverse, where we have a man, maudlin in his expression of emotions, who is far too partisan. He will hear nothing bad said about his "family." They can do no wrong, and even if they do, he will forgive them. Meanwhile, those who are against his family can do no right. He loves to extreme, hates to extreme. He expects, in return, absolute loyalty to the family, and will not forgive those who betray it. This is the family secret (alcoholism for example) that no one talks about because it would be disloyal. At the very worst, this man might well be a perverse loving father, the paedophile who insists his acts are an expression of love and affection.

The King of Cups is about motivating with love, loyalty, and intense feelings. Reverse it and we block the ability to express such emotions - external forces may forbid it, as a man may not cry because society has taught him it's not

manly. At its worse, however, is a misuse of such emotions, using loyalty and love to keep secrets, to get people to do and say things that are wrong or feel wrong.

### **King of Pentacles**

The King of Pentacles is the hard-working, earthy man who motivates with common sense and a hands-on attitude. He shows people how to build that fence, he offers a fair wage and health benefits for workers, he comes up with a practical business plan that everyone can understand and get behind. There are no risks with this King, his fire is banked in the hearth and burning steadily; he is also a wise environmentalist, knowing just how many trees to cut down and plant so that there will always be more for the future. If he says it will work, it will work. And if he says he'll find the people to do the job, he'll find them, reliable, good people that can be trusted. People trust and follow him because he offers no surprises, nothing new or strange or chancy-- and he wants to get the job done and done well.

The negatives of the King of Pentacles come clear in his reversal: here is a man who won't take chances, who is too conservative and won't hear of making any changes in the way things are done. "If it's not broke, don't fix it," his is motto, and stubbornly so. In his negative mode he's likely to be a miser, unable to comprehend why prices have gone up, or why he must pay a higher wage. He might well cheat his workers, cut corners, even, at his very worse, embezzle from the company. He expects the best but isn't above letting those who serve him have the worst.

The King of Pentacles represents the motivation of the practical, of hard work and reliability, of conservative methods. Reverse this and we see a blocking of these - people who think they know better do unpractical things, take risks that are foolish, go with wild, new ideas that haven't been tested rather than reliable old methods. Outsiders with their own agenda may waste resources rather than make good use of them (like clear cutting a forest). Internally, a reversed King of Pentacles may be ignoring his own good sense, taking gambles and risks, or keeping to a method that no longer works because he's too stubborn to change.