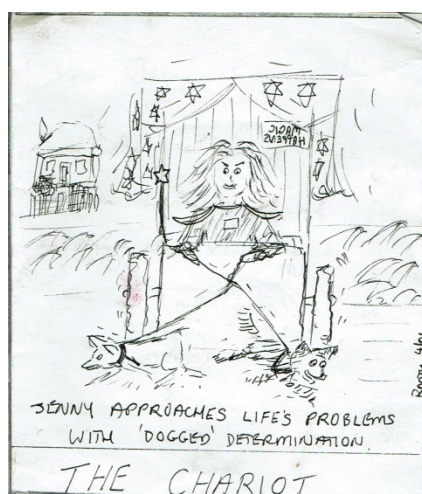


From little things big things grow....

by Jeni Bethell, writer & designer of the Twin Tarot Oracle

Who would have thought that this little card from a student - 'Rooth', in April 2001 would lead to publication, internationally, of the Twin Tarot Oracle in 2019! And my, what a great journey – with many twists, turns and detours along the way, a few of which I'd like to share with you now. Alas the 2 little dogs, Jack and Jill, who are depicted in the card have both since died - of old age!! But prior to that they were important members of all my classes.



Of course I appreciated receiving the card during a busy, somewhat challenging time in my life. It's always a thrill when someone goes to the trouble of creating something especially for you. And The Chariot was very appropriate for my situation at that time. What's more, numerologically, I am a number 7 so The Chariot is my card.

I was immediately inspired to write a little verse to go with the illustration:

*Good stuff, great riding, Charioteer!
You're doing it well; you're in the right gear
to reach all those targets, harness your will,
gain that promotion, close the next deal!
The dogs you've trained to do as they're told,
help keep you on track, find your place in the world.
You're dressed for the part, it's pleasing to note,
protected from all who might get on your goat -
the critics, whose harsh words could cause you to frown
will soon learn there's no way to keep this girl down!
If the going gets tough, as most journey's do,
it won't spell disaster for someone like you.
Victory's yours, don't fear its elusion;
Your willpower makes winning a foregone conclusion.*

Then I thought, "ah, but that is only addressing the positive aspects of the chariot archetype. So I wrote another verse, this time addressing his more challenging qualities:

*Hold up, slow down, young Charioteer,
your willpower's fine but your thinking is queer!
It's ego that drives your obsession for wealth,
cutting you off from your deeper, true Self.
You should ensure – at least each full moon –
that your worldly song is not out of tune
with the inner, the voice which always knows best
when the ride should be east though you're travelling west
or north or south...are you getting the gist?
The point is, your inner life should not be missed.
It is so important the balance be right,
the big picture remains clearly in sight.
There's much more to life than just the material.
As well as the earthly, we need the ethereal.*

Having found those fun to write, I started to do other pairs of Major Arcana cards whenever I had a flash of inspiration and a little spare time. I began to envision an oracle deck of 44 cards - that is, the traditional Major Arcana times two. A tarot deck in oracle format, I thought, would have the advantage of being able to be used and appreciated by tarot and non-tarot people alike. And having two cards for each archetype would eradicate the need for card reversals, which I had never liked very much.

Knowing I had not the artistic skills to create the 44 illustrations – though I could see them all in my mind’s eye, I approached several amateur or semi-professional artists who happened to cross my path over the next few years. All seemed initially enthusiastic but ultimately found the scope of the project too daunting. So I finally shrugged my shoulders and put the project to bed.

But like fairy-tale Sleeping Beauty, it was not to be forever; just until, in Tarot terms, the turning of The Wheel of Fortune. My project’s ‘knight in shining armour’ arrived in one of my Tarot courses a few years later: artist Rachael Hammond. A couple of times during those classes, when Rachael had a group reading the cards showed her working in partnership with a Queen Pentacles. Being an earth-sign queen myself, on the second occasion I flippantly remarked that perhaps she was going to illustrate my tarot deck. A spark had rekindled the fire. One day the following summer, I dragged out and dusted off my pairs of poems and gave her a call....

That was in 2010. Rachael and I proceeded to potter along for the next couple of years doing a pair of cards here and there until a friend wisely suggested that we should get serious and get moving or we would lose the impetus and creative energy to ever finish. By then I had also come to realise that oracle messages for some of the Major Arcana archetypes, such as The Hierophant, were difficult to describe in verse. It seemed a good time, having completed about nine pairs of cards, to invite a focus group (made up of some of my Advanced Tarot students) to consider and give feedback to us on the project.

In summary, they were all taken by the idea of a tarot oracle deck, especially one with pairs of Major Arcana cards; and they loved Rachael’s illustrations. Some were ambivalent about it being written in verse. Many thought it should include key words and phrases for each card in addition to the oracle message since, they believed, it could also be a very meaningful working deck for tarot readers using Major Arcana spreads. Their suggestions were most helpful and I am grateful for their thoughtful and enthusiastic individual and group feedback.

So it ultimately came to pass several years later, in 2016, that a deck of 44 cards was completed, with each card having a unique oracle message written in prose, accompanied by the card’s key words and phrases and a positive affirmation written in verse.

And this deck was almost immediately presented to the Italian Tarot publishers, Lo Scarabeo – at *their* request!! How this happened, how the name ‘Twin Tarot Oracle’ was arrived at, how each pair of cards ultimately came to be referred to as either ‘the light’ or ‘the dark’ side of an archetype.... these things, and lots more, Rachael and I hope to share with you at the official ‘launch’ of the deck in Melbourne by the Tarot Guild of Australia, at their December 2019 meeting. We do hope to see and meet you there!

Here are the Chariot cards in their final format:

THE light CHARIOT

We all have worldly aspirations – mountains to climb, races to win, tests to pass, obstacles to overcome. The Chariot's strong-minded young energy can help us achieve them. The hero of myth and story, he readily accepts such challenges and remains doggedly determined to succeed – to slay those dragons!

In choosing this card it seems you are in that same mindset, with the focus and drive needed to realise your present goal. This may be to reach new heights in a particular area of your life, to break free of a bad habit, or to keep on keeping on - if you are going through hard times.

Like the charioteer, you are balancing any opposing thoughts, desires and feelings, aware that by remaining centred within, you can more easily control the inevitable disparate external demands placed upon you. You can't literally wear armour like his, but you can remain on your guard against people who would undermine your confidence, or situations which could distract you from your purpose. And never underestimate the power of will and self-discipline; see how he controls his horses despite having no reins!

This Chariot card encourages you to keep believing in yourself and your ability to succeed. Be prepared for the inevitable trials and challenges you will have to deal with on your quest. And remember to enjoy the ride, as well as the victory which should await you at the journey's end.

Key Words:

Willpower, Drive, Determination, Victory, Courage, Hero, Warrior

Key Phrases:

- *Success through personal effort*
- *Control of opposing forces within and without*
- *Mind over matter*
- *Singleness of purpose*
- *Taking a physical journey*
- *Realising, and demonstrating who you are out there in the world*

Affirmation:

*Victory's mine; it's not an illusion;
My willpower makes winning a foregone conclusion!*



THE dark CHARIOT

The dark Chariot card represents the negative side of ambition. This charioteer is obsessively driven by a lust for material wealth or power. He is so preoccupied with winning that he is oblivious to the needs of loved ones and rides roughshod over anyone who gets in his way.

You may have chosen this card because your focus on a goal is becoming too extreme. You can test this by asking yourself two questions: Do I still have time to smell the roses? Am I aware of, and considerate to the feelings and needs of those around me?

Alternatively, you may have chosen this card because you are presently being pulled in opposite directions by very different but seemingly equally important aspirations. If so, you need to sacrifice one of them for the moment, so that you can give the other the time and effort it really needs. Or find some realistic ways in which you can better manage these two priorities in parallel.

The dark Chariot card reminds you that it is healthy to have and pursue material goals and aspirations, but not at the expense of everything and everyone else in your life. Ideally, you need to get the balance right between work and play, with time to enjoy the fruits of your labour, for caring and sharing and, hopefully, also giving you some space to contemplate the deeper meaning of life.

Key Words:

Bravado, Blinkered vision, Obsessively driven, Imbalance, Insensitivity

Key Phrases:

- *Charging ahead no matter what*
- *Riding roughshod over others*
- *Only concerned with outer successes*
- *Being pulled in two directions*
- *Losing your way*

Affirmation:

*Material goals and ambitions I need;
Not letting them rule me completely, I heed.*



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