

Review of Twin Tarot Oracle - The Heart of the Matter Workshop on Sunday 16th February 2020.

Presented by Jeni Bethell, founding member of the TGA, author and deck creator.

With flair and an easy teaching style, Jeni's enthusiasm was infectious as she introduced the Twin Tarot Oracle with the story behind the decks' creation. From the beginning and throughout the workshop, she welcomed comments and participation, which was a breath of fresh air on a humid Melbourne Sunday.

The idea of a Twin Tarot Oracle began with her realization that most readers, including herself, avoid reading reversed cards, especially the Major Arcana. Recognizing a missed opportunity for greater understanding and use of the Major Arcana, she also realized no artist would wish to have their artwork read upside down. And so, through a long collaboration with artist Rachael Hammond, the Twin Tarot Oracle came to life in visual and interpretative form.

A short meditation eased us into the first part of a clearly outlined lesson plan, with time schedule and clear goals to achieve a level of understanding by the end of the day. We acknowledged the High Priestess as the spirit of the Tarot, but the heroine today was the Empress and a new spread called *The Heart of the Matter*.

With 44 cards reassembled into the 22 Major Arcana pairs or 'twins', we began working through the interpretations, both light and dark of each archetype, beginning with the Fool through to the World.

I liked Jeni's use of the word 'prickly' for dark cards, identified by thorns beside their titles, as indeed many of life's moments are prickly and uncomfortable rather than bad or drastic, which sits well with our understanding of light and dark existing in the same space or within the same archetype.

Unsurprisingly, as we worked through the spreads, opposites of the same archetype turned up in the same spread, but the readings became richer as a result. As with all new Tarot decks, the written interpretations ideally need to be learned and referred to initially, while gaining confidence with the new images and your own intuition.

Jeni's insightful interpretations encapsulate decades of experience as a Tarot reader and teacher. They are contemporary and easily understood while losing none of the underlying arcane wisdoms. They come enriched with Eastern and Egyptian symbolism and innovative touches such as renaming the Death archetype to Transition and having, where possible, androgynous figures and different ethnicities, to capture humanity's natural diversity. A refreshing nod to the world we live in, broadening accessibility and understanding.

Demonstration spreads included a 2 card (Issue and Challenge) and 5 card (Diamond Spread) both found in the Oracle booklet, and a 3 card Gypsy spread. *The Heart of the Matter* spread was then introduced for participants to try their interpretive skills using the new Oracle and new spread.

The Twin Tarot Oracle is a significant leap forward in the evolution of Tarot for me and other participants. It was also fascinating for the Tarot novice I brought along, who uses it currently as a personal counselling tool. To quote Jeni, the Oracle "won't let you hide from yourself." Only by working with both aspects of our nature, light and dark, can understanding and progress be made.

I thoroughly recommend Jeni's Twin Tarot Oracle and any future workshops she may conduct, helping us explore the many ways in which this deck expands our range of options, whether reading for clients or for ourselves.

Judy Grossman

Founding Member Tarot Guild of Australia