

TAROT OF A
MOON
GARDEN
BY KAREN MARIE SWEIKHARDT

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Tarot of a Moon Garden is dedicated to the goddess in all her forms—waxing, full and waning—and especially as she appears in each of us.

The Goddess Charge

Isis, Ishtar, Chicomecoatl, Shakti, Demeter, Artemis, Astarte, Hecate, Pele, Aphrodite, Kali, Cerredwin, Brigid, Arianrhod, Ostara, Inanna, Diana, Athena, Gaia from the spiral nebula of the goddess, Great Mother of all time, distant future and Ancientzs past, of star matter and your spirit's flame, I AM born!

I breathe of your cosmic winds and feel your pulse in my veins and in the ocean's tide.

I am your reflection in the light of the luminous moon and radiant sun on the rich plains and in the fertile valleys of this earth.

I AM of your essence and from this, whence I came, to return in the end and begin anew.

The circle is cast!

What I seek, I AM.

What I learn, I have always known.

In the mystery of your seed, I have discovered the inner garden. With reverence in my heart,

I plant these seeds of wisdom to flower in an empowered world, one of beauty, wonder, mirth, and bliss.

So mote it be.

V • THE HIEROPHANT



The Rendering

A full moon halos the androgynous figure of the Hierophant. The light fills the surrounding monument, summoning impressions of the megalithic circle of Stonehenge on the Salisbury Plain.

Ego and archetype, male and female, solar and lunar, past and present, heaven and earth, intersect in the cerulean cross abreast the white, violet and red vestment of the Hierophant. The crowning tiers

of the gold tiara represent ascending consciousness. The papal cross of the staff echoes the ternary levels of the holy trinity and the triune of the goddess.

The keys to the kingdom of heaven cross before the Hierophant. One of solar gold and one of lunar silver in symbol, they are mirrored in the image of the stone circle with its lintel crossing the face of the moon. By design, they unlock the wisdom of the crown.

Blessings envelop the suppliants deep in prayer at the feet of the Hierophant. The five vibration of this card relates to the realm of the five senses. In its quintessential state, the five embodies spirit as the Hierophant, coalescing in an alchemical amalgam with air, fire, water and earth.

The Reading

This is a card of crossing. It warns against energies contrary to the Seeker's nature, especially those imposed by religion or mandated by governmental agencies. The presence of the Hierophant cautions against any tendency to accept things at face value. Examine those circumstances in which there

is a conditioned response or an unquestioning acceptance. Look below the surface. Search for the source before avowing any belief.

The Ritual

Basic ritual construction incorporates five elements. The first element is the location of sacred space for the performance of the ritual. A secluded beach or forest clearing are optimum sites. However, for the sake of privacy, your own living room may have to suffice. The ritual should be shared only with those of kindred spirit.

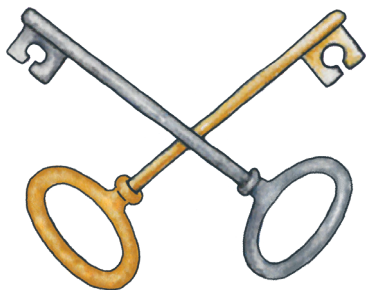
Consecration of the site comprises the second element, which begins with clearing the space. Any objects or debris which will interfere with free movement about the circle or detract attention should be eliminated. Due to limited space indoors, a round or square table may be used as a central altar for the cauldron, candle and censer, as well as ritual tools of magic. Outdoors or in any space permitting, altars are arranged at the four cardinal points with their tools, offerings, and decorations placed respectively. When the surroundings and conditions permit, a ceremonial fire, in a cauldron or firepit, blazes at the center of the circle. Define the circle with stones and/or candlelight. Once physical obstructions are cleared, use the elements of fire, air, and water in a ritual clearing. (See Tarot Initiation in the Introduction.) The area may also be swept clear of any negative import with the sacred besom, a witches' broom. Bells and chimes will also scatter any wraiths lurking about. Most sacrosanct is for all who enter the circle to do so in the spirit of love and healing, free of negative emotion or intent.

Once "the circle is cast," the confining reality of the mundane or day-to-day existence is lifted. Participants are free to access the Self and their potential. The god and goddess are present in each and everyone. This empowerment is the third element of the ritual. Singing, chanting, dancing and drumming are effective methods of enhancing empowerment.

As the power builds, the fourth element comes to bear. The circle, quite likely, has come together to effect a single, collective goal. (And many personal magics abound as well.)

The last of the five elements of ritual is the dispersal of this charged energy. The responsibility usually is that of the High Priest or Priestess. In unstructured gatherings, any individual with a heightened sense of focus or concentration may perform this rite. As the power reaches its peak, the four winds are invoked to carry the command to the four corners of the universe. The ritual staff is thrust upward releasing this charge. All the entities, elements and energies are acknowledged in appreciation. The sacred circle is opened to the mundane. A communal sharing of refreshment and merriment follows, allowing a period for grounding. The area is returned to its commonplace appearance. But, the magic lingers in the air.

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VI • THE LOVERS

The Rendering

The Lovers share many symbols with the biblical Eden. Like Adam and Eve naked in their innocence, they discover themselves in a garden paradise resplendent with foliage, flowers and fruit. The Tree of Life, its roots woven through the rich earth, grows upward shouldering the heavens on its limbs. Sheltered beneath the branches, the Lovers shyly touch. A bush, a flower in flames, undulates in a rhythm of passion.

A serpent winds its way from trunk to limb. Like the dragon, it is a guardian. Its treasure is knowledge. The symbol of the snake is voluminous, as is that of the tree. The two are universally linked in theme. Resurrection and immortality are common motifs. The snake sheds its skin as the tree sheds its leaves. Also analogous to the symbol of the snake and the tree is the attainment of higher consciousness through upward motion and growth. The tree's roots signify the subconscious; its trunk, the wakening consciousness; and the branches, a very high level of consciousness. Kundalini, an energy released in the process of spiritual perfection, is portrayed as a serpent uncoiling from the chakra at the base of the spine to rise through the energy meridians, ultimately to the crown chakra. This crowning consciousness is portrayed in the figure of the angel. The golden wings of this heavenly host span the sky. The forbidden fruit lies on the ground below. The apple in its spherical form represents totality. The deep red color and tender flesh render desire and sensuality.

The Lovers card, the sixth key of the tarot, with the numerological qualities of six, is divisible by both the two vibration of duality and the three vibration of multiplicity. Separation and separateness are qualities of both. With these qualities come the desire for union.

The Reading

The Lovers appear when the Seeker has discovered love in an intimate, experiential sense of self. This love is the seed for a true union to flower in the outer garden, as the inner love is reflected in the outer reality.

When there is a query about relationships of a romantic nature, the answer lies in the alliance between the Seeker and the self. All relationships mirror that essential one. If love is absent, nurture balance and harmony within. The sixth key of the tarot may also point to the challenge of opposing opinions, values and personalities. These trials initiate new perspectives and growth. Tension and desire are both requisites for choice. Choice evokes change. Evolving change, not change just for change sake, engenders satisfaction and fulfillment.

The Ritual

The magic of the apple has long been associated with romantic love. Should you desire the affection of an acquaintance or wish to enhance a love interest, share an apple with your Adam or Eve. Collect all the seeds after you have both eaten of the fruit. On the new moon, anoint a pair of pink candles with oil of cardamom, ginger or rose. Mix the apple seeds in a potpourri of rose petals placed between the candles. Visualize the form you would like to see this relationship take. Invoke the goddess Ishtar to bless the union. Allow the candles to burn out. 10 p.m. on a Friday—the evening hour of Venus, on her day—is an auspicious time for this ceremony, especially should the new moon be seen on this day. A talisman may be made with a sachet of

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