

SELJUQ TAROT



by
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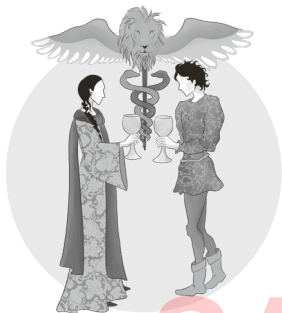
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INTRODUCTION

I have always been passionate about art that is rich in detail, mystery and surreal elements. My artistic influences range from the impressive works of Pieter Bruegel and Hieronymus Bosch to the imaginative worlds of Hayao Miyazaki and Lewis Carroll.

My fascination with tarot stems from the intricate details and symbolic depth of the cards. Among the many tarot decks I have studied, the classic Rider-Waite-Smith deck is

particularly inspiring, with its rich symbolism and detailed illustrations. This inspiration, coupled with my study of various artists who have ventured into creating tarot decks, motivated me to design my own deck. My approach integrates graphic design techniques I developed during my studies at the University of Science and Culture in Tehran with the classical and pictorial elements I explored at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma.

My illustrations for Seljuq Tarot are heavily influenced by Iranian miniature art and the Seljuq school. The Seljuq miniature school (11th–13th centuries) represents one of the earliest formative phases of Persian manuscript painting. Flourishing in Anatolia and Iran under Seljuq patronage, it established visual foundations that profoundly influenced later Persian miniature traditions, despite the relatively small number of surviving works.

Seljuq illustrations are characterized by expressive figures, bold outlines, vibrant yet harmonious colors, and clear, direct narrative compositions. Manuscripts of this period

often included epic poetry, romantic tales such as *Varqa and Gulshah*, as well as scientific and historical texts. Within these works, text, ornament, and image were seamlessly integrated, forming a unified visual language that endured for centuries.

Key Characteristics of the Miniature School

Narrative Emphasis

Seljuq miniatures were primarily designed to illuminate specific passages in a manuscript. Their function was closely tied to storytelling rather than purely decorative display.

Human Representation

Figures commonly feature rounded “moon” faces, almond-shaped eyes, and delicate mouths. They are frequently shown seated cross-legged in frontal poses, a hallmark of Seljuq visual identity.

Color Palette

Persian artists favored bold, saturated hues, particularly red, blue, green, and ochre, often accented with gold. The palette is vivid yet balanced, creating clarity and visual strength.



The Abbasid bride of the Caliph Muqtadi, folio from a manuscript dated 1573-74

Composition

Scenes are typically symmetrical and straightforward, with minimal spatial depth and restrained architectural or landscape detail compared to later Timurid or Safavid paintings.

Iconography

Recurring motifs include the Tree of Life, double-headed eagles symbolizing Seljuq dynastic power, and mounted hunting scenes.

This deck draws inspiration from the Seljuq school, especially its distinctive color palette and stylized floral motifs. The strong chromatic contrasts and ornamental vegetal patterns characteristic of Seljuq manuscripts have informed both the visual rhythm and decorative elements of the deck's design.

On the Spelling: Seljuq or Seljuk?

Both spelling variations are correct and widely accepted. The variation results from different methods of transliterating the original Arabic and Persian spelling into the Latin alphabet.

Seljuk is the more common form in contemporary English usage and appears as the standard spelling in general dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster.

Seljuq (sometimes written Saljuq) is more frequently found in older scholarship and

in academic contexts that aim to preserve a pronunciation closer to the original Persian and Arabic. It is also commonly used in scholarly references such as the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

While the two forms are interchangeable, Seljuq was chosen for this project in order to maintain closer alignment with the historical pronunciation and its Persian cultural context.



Seljuq Tarot merges the Western iconography of the Rider-Waite-Smith deck with my personal graphic and pictorial style, enhanced by classical Persian decorative elements.

Reversed: May indicate issues related to excessive greed, fear of losing possessions, or financial instability.

FIVE OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Couple in the Snow: Hardship, feeling left out.

Crutches: Support needed.

Shrouded Woman: Vulnerability and protection against hardship.

Stained Glass Window: Hope and spiritual solace.

Church: A place of potential support and comfort.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Hardship, poverty, exclusion, poor health, struggle, and seeking help.

Reversed: Recovery, improvement, help received, and overcoming adversity.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Indicates a period of financial or emotional struggle. It suggests feelings of exclusion or hardship and highlights the need to seek support.

Reversed: Suggests the possibility of recovery from difficulties, or receiving help to overcome challenges. It often implies that the worst is over, and better times are ahead.

SIX OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Man in Purple Robe: Status, wealth and authority.

Scales: Balance and fairness in giving and receiving.

Beggars: Those in need and vulnerable.

Open Hand: Generosity and willingness to share.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Generosity, fairness, charity, and sharing wealth.

Reversed: Imbalance, inequality, selfishness, and potential exploitation.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Represents a period of giving and sharing. It emphasizes fairness and balance in financial dealings and charitable acts.

Reversed: Indicates issues with fairness or

generosity. It may point to imbalances in giving or receiving.

SEVEN OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Farmer: Hard work, patience and dedication.

Flourishing Garden: Growth, abundance, and the results of effort.

Pentacles: Rewards and tangible results of labor.

Contemplative Gaze: Reflection and careful evaluation of progress.

Harvest: The outcome of patience, work, and persistence.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Patience, assessment, reflection on progress, perseverance, and reward.

Reversed: Impatience, lack of progress, poor planning, or dissatisfaction with results.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Indicates a time to assess efforts, progress and achievements. Success and rewards come from hard work and patience.

Reversed: Dissatisfaction with the results of

one's efforts can indicate a need to reassess plans and address potential issues.

EIGHT OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Craftsman: Focused effort, skill development, and dedication.

Pentacles: The tangible results of labor and craftsmanship. Progress and achievements in skill.

Solitude: Concentration on and commitment to one's work.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Skill development, attention to detail, diligence, craftsmanship, mastery.

Reversed: Lack of focus, dissatisfaction with results, inferior craftsmanship, or feeling unappreciated.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Represents a time of hard work and dedication to mastering a skill or craft. It also signifies a commitment to producing high quality work and the rewards that come from diligent effort. This card emphasizes the im-

portance of precision, patience, and continual improvement.

Reversed: May indicate challenges in maintaining focus, a lack of satisfaction with one's work, or a need to reassess one's approach. It can also suggest feeling unrecognized or undervalued despite one's hard work.

NINE OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Vineyard: Prosperity, abundance, success achieved through hard work.

Grapes and Golden Coins: Achievement, wealth, and the fruits of one's labor.

Falcon: Independence, control, and keen insight.

Estate: Security and the results of personal effort.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Financial independence, abundance, luxury, self-sufficiency, accomplishment, and fulfillment.

Reversed: Over-indulgence, financial instability or dependence on others.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Signifies self-sufficiency and success achieved through personal discipline and effort. It represents financial stability, luxury, and enjoying the rewards of one's hard work.

Reversed: May suggest issues with financial stability, overindulgence, or feeling unfulfilled despite outward success.

TEN OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Patriarch: Wisdom, stability, and a legacy of success.

Archway: Security and the enduring nature of family and wealth.

Family and Dogs: Joy, harmony, and the close bonds of family life.

Richly Patterned Robes: Abundance and prosperity. Grapevines represent growth, fertility, and the cycles of wealth.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Legacy, financial stability, success, generational wealth, long-term prosperity, and security.

Reversed: Financial loss, family disputes, instability, or difficulty achieving long-term goals.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Indicates lasting success and stability, often linked to family legacy and financial security. Hard work has paid off, leading to a comfortable and prosperous life for the whole family.

Reversed: May point to issues with financial stability, family conflicts, or the erosion of success.

PAGE OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Page: Youthful enthusiasm and a fresh, new perspective.

Pentacle: New opportunities, practical pursuits, and material growth.

Furrowed Field: Preparation and the promise of future success.

Golden Light: Optimism and enlightenment.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: New beginnings, ambition, diligence, practicality, dedication, opportunities, and potential.

Reversed: Lack of progress, procrastination, impracticality, or missed opportunities.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Represents the start of a new venture marked by a diligent and focused approach. This card highlights a time of learning and growth, driven by ambition and practical planning.

Reversed: May suggest obstacles to progress, such as procrastination or impracticality. It can also indicate missed opportunities or difficulties in starting new projects.

KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Plough Horse: Commitment to duties and steadfastness.

Pentacle: Material focus and practical goals.

Field: Hard work and productive efforts.

Thoughtful Gaze: Concentration, focus and dedication.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Responsibility, hard work, practical efforts, diligence, and reliability.

Reversed: Stagnation, lack of progress, rigid adherence to routines, or overwork.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Signifies someone dependable and hardworking, who is committed to their responsibilities. This Knight approaches tasks methodically and with determination, focusing on practical results and steady progress.

Reversed: Indicates difficulties in maintaining progress or becoming overly bogged down by routine. Can also suggest a need to reassess priorities or a tendency to be too rigid in approach.

QUEEN OF PENTACLES

—SYMBOLISM—

Angels and Goats on Throne: Symbol of divine protection and practical success.

Fertile Ground and Flowers: Abundance, prosperity, wealth, and good health.

Pentacle: Material security and guidance.

Rabbit: Fertility and earthy focus.

—KEYWORDS AND PHRASES—

Upright: Nurturing, supportive, abundance, resourcefulness, and security.

Reversed: Overemphasis on materialism, self-neglect, or excessive control.

—IN READINGS—

Upright: Represents a person who is practical, nurturing, and resourceful, embodying both material and emotional abundance. This Queen is adept at creating a supportive and stable environment.

Reversed: May suggest issues related to excessive focus on material wealth or neglect of personal well-being. It might mean imbalance between practicality and generosity.

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