

TAROT VITAE

BY MARCO PROIETTO

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INTRODUCTION



I started drawing my first tarot deck in 2012, never believing that I would someday publish Bianco Nero Tarot. During that time, I started tossing around a few ideas, drawing what I observed or simply what came into my imagination. I started drawing my first Arcana cards, how I imagined them, focusing on what they represented to me, without worrying about altering their meaning.

Having recently completed the Scuola dell'Arte della Medaglia, where I learned the *intaglio* engraving techniques, I couldn't wait to apply what I had learned to illustration. Once I had completed enough drawings, I

contacted U.S. Games Systems with a proposal for my deck. To my great surprise, they accepted my project. When Bianco Nero Tarot was published, it was exactly what I had imagined and wanted since the beginning: art without color, focused solely on the strength of the drawings and lines.

The idea of this new tarot project started bouncing around in my head, only when I had the opportunity to see, flip through, and hold the actual printed Bianco Nero deck in my hands. I couldn't help but imagine how the cards would look colored. It took some time before I seriously attempted to color them. I revisited the old drawings, trying to overlay colors, but the designs, although they seemed suitable to be filled with color, did not yield the desired results. It was then that I realized that the Bianco Nero Tarot was fine just the way it was, precisely because it was conceived in

black and white. To bring something new to life, I had to redraw everything from scratch — lightening the lines, opening the spaces, and letting the light breathe, leaving more space to be filled with color. Through this process of rediscovery, Tarot Vitae took shape. This project evolved from the desire to return to the origins of my artistic path, but with a renewed awareness and intention: to situate the human figure, in all its wholeness and vulnerability, at the very center of the work.

I chose an engraving-like style to give each drawing the density of matter and the truth of flesh. I wanted every line to have significance, every body to tell its own story. Old and young, beautiful and imperfect, sensual or reserved — the bodies inhabiting this deck are archetypes, yet they remain human, earthly, near. As for the illustrations of the Tarot Vitae cards, I drew inspiration almost entirely

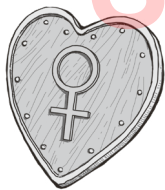
from the Rider-Waite-Smith deck. I set aside derivative meanings from other types of tarot decks in favor of precise symbolism to ensure clear readings and interpretations. Now, both the Minor and Major Arcana are characterized by more faithful depictions of RWS symbolism, retaining its essence, character, meanings, and expressive power, transposing everything into my own style and adding appropriate coloring. The coloring of each card was reproduced by studying the original tones of the skies, clothing, characters, landscapes, and everything depicted therein. Where I was not able to reproduce the exact original hues, I added nuances and accessory tints while still maintaining stylistic and symbolic coherence. In this sense, Tarot Vitae shifts its focus. Human experience is no longer simply a vehicle for meaning — it is the meaning itself. Every card tells a fragment of our embodied and

spiritual truths, a continuous dialogue between matter and thought.

The title Vitae suggests the wholeness of life experiences, including the cycles of fragility and awareness, flesh and spirit, the curiosity of youth and the wisdom of age. Tarot Vitae invites us to contemplate our dual nature — earthly and transcendent — reminding us that behind every symbol there is a living body; one that feels, perceives, and seeks meaning.

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...to my mother
(1957 - 2020)

MAJOR ARCANA

0 • THE FOOL

URANUS

Upright: new beginnings, innocence, journey, courage, unconsciousness.

Reversed: reluctant, confusion, naive, risk, fear.

The Fool symbolizes a new beginning and, consequently, an end to something old in your life. A young man walks unknowingly toward the brink of a precipice, which symbolizes the very first step toward a new journey, a leap into the unknown. The white dog at his feet is his spiritual guide through the journey. The Fool has left everything behind; he carries very little baggage, only the bare necessities. The white rose he holds in his hand is proof that his gesture is not dictated by personal gain, but rather by his purity of mind. It represents our inner child; it encour-

control of the situation. The wand is no longer a support. The sea no longer suggests change or opportunity, just uncertainty.

FOUR OF WANDS

Upright: safety, joy, celebration, family, results.

Reversed: insecurity, unhappiness, ingratitude, inconstancy, envy.

The main characters of this card hug each other under a canopy made of four wands decorated with flowers. The card shows a celebration for a homecoming, a wedding or a ceremony that brings joy and contentment. The two have worked hard to achieve happiness and financial stability. This card implies the patience needed to achieve our goals, the foundations for a stable and safe life. The large castle in the background represents the foundation and solid walls that we built over time, the place

where we feel safe. A different reading can suggest a departure from this safe place to allow ourselves to embrace life with freedom.

When this card appears reversed, it can represent instability, lack of security or financial issues. We have no patience or consistency.

FIVE OF WANDS

Upright: enemies, quarrel, rivalry, competition, commitment, play.

Reversed: conflict, chaos, challenge, renunciation, unfair play.

This card shows five men holding wands, fighting each other, but they don't seem to actually strike each other. On the contrary, they seem to be having fun, as if it were a game. This card represents the challenges and the issues that we face in order to achieve the desired results, which can only be achieved with much effort. It

also represents the protection of their territory and their safety. The fact that they do not seem to battle each other, but instead are training themselves, suggests the we can overcome conflicts peacefully with cooperation, rather than by violence. This card is still an action card; something is moving and we should be more careful. We may need to defend ourselves but it need not be physically.

Reversed, this card can suggest that we are not prepared to get involved; we avoid committing. We have achieved something easily and we do not appreciate its value. We might feel too confident and underestimate a danger. We can't protect ourselves or our belongings.

SIX OF WANDS

Upright: success, victory, chasing a dream, commitment, leadership.

Reversed: failure, defeat, wrong path, carelessness, irresponsibility.

In this card, a celebratory parade for the victor of a battle is represented. In the center is a man on horseback who holds a wand with a laurel wreath. Below him, the cheering crowd waves five more wands. The triumphant man on horseback represents the success and the achievement of our goals, while the wand with the garland is the approval and acknowledgment of our hard work. The crowd waving wands shows their support and appreciation. This card shows us that we have taken the right path with great commitment, and we have achieved success.

Reversed, it suggests a lack of goals and responsibility; we feel unmotivated and lost. We did not receive the approval we were waiting for, therefore we may have lost our passion. Perhaps we have not worked hard enough, or we don't have

any support and protection from our family or our community.

SEVEN OF WANDS

Upright: conflict, resistance, facing adversity, opposition, border.

Reversed: renunciation, attrition, fatigue, surrender, defeat.

The Seven of Wands shows a man who stands up in defense of his territory, firmly gripping a wand, against external enemies. New threats are on the horizon; however, we are strong enough to hold our position without flinching. We have the determination and ability to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our belongings. It can also suggest a situation in which we are ready and determined to face a challenge or a conflict.

When reversed, this card suggests a situation in which we avoid challenges and conflicts, or we show a passive

attitude. Challenges and conflicts could now be overcome, giving us the opportunity to face the future calmly.

EIGHT OF WANDS

Upright: movement, progress, news, travel, action.

Reversed: slowdown, relegation, lack of control, failure, weakness.

The Eight of Wands shows eight wands flying high in the sky, over a landscape of hills, mountains and lakes. These wands represent our inner strength. We now have the capacity to make the right decisions and manage our lives. They suggest that something is moving at great speed—maybe even without our knowledge—and may arrive earlier than expected. It is usually a positive and upcoming event. It can also suggest readiness for departure or a journey.

When reversed this card loses its power. Things slow down and may even stop, until we step back and regain control of the situation. Events and news that we have been waiting for a long time to arrive seem to be out of focus. A trip may be delayed or even skipped.

NINE OF WANDS

Upright: defense, limits, stubbornness, resistance, realization.

Reversed: openness, naivety, lack of protection, trust, self-discovery.

The Nine of Wands shows an injured man with a bandaged head clutching a wand. Other wands behind him form a palisade. The injured man suggests that we come from a painful situation, which is why we need the protection. It refers to two meanings: the need to defend ourselves from the outside and the conclusion of a cycle of suffering.

This card means that we have struggled to reach an important goal but we have achieved the desired result.

Reversed, this card shows us that obstacles prevent us from achieving our goals, and we might even be sabotaging ourselves. The answers we expected are slow to arrive and we lose the early passion; we lack energy. Either we failed to complete a project, or, if we did complete it, we may feel unsatisfied with the results.

TEN OF WANDS

Upright: satisfaction, hard work, strength, commitment, goals.

Reversed: delegation, lightening, request for help, weakness, lack of realization.

The Ten of Wands shows a man carrying on his shoulder a bundle of ten sticks toward his home. The man is strong, he is close to finishing the work

he started, only one last effort remains. He does not mind how much he has to work, he is satisfied and confident. The card suggests that we will have to work hard if we want to achieve our goals. We are close to the achievement, and we must overcome the last challenges to get an important job completed.

Reversed, this card suggests that we can no longer make it. We thought we could easily finish what we started, but now we realize that we no longer have the strength to do it. We have taken on an excessive burden. We cannot carry on and we need someone to help us, someone to lighten our load and our responsibilities.

PAGE OF WANDS

Upright: creativity, inspiration, growth, initiative, independence.

Reversed: disinterest, boredom, laziness, stalemate, dependence.

The main character of this card is a young man who holds up and observes a long wand. He wears a hat with a feather. In the background, we can see the desert and the pyramids. This positive card suggests that there will be news, opportunities and interesting proposals coming our way. With the Page of Wands we are ready for action and adventure and we can overcome any issue. This card suggests that we have new insights and inspiration. Pages also represent someone who pursues his goal with great enthusiasm, or people who are young, energetic, passionate and impulsive.

Reversed, this card suggests a lack of action. Perhaps we feel stopped, bored and uninspired. We look around for something new, but we find nothing that catches our interest. We need to find something that rekindles our excitement.

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