



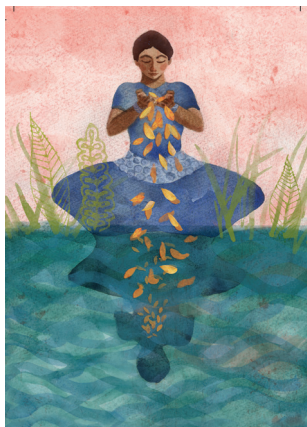
THE  
WILD & SACRED  
FEMININE DECK

A 52-CARD ORACLE  
& GUIDEBOOK

NIKI DEWART & ELIZABETH MARGLIN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JENNY KOSTECKI-SHAW



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SHAMBHALA



To all the women—virgins, mothers, rebels, holy  
ones, healers—who have come before us and  
to our daughters, who hold the future:  
Afton, Jasmine, Story, and Tulsi.  
To beloved partners, sons Haven, Jordan, and Narayan,  
and all men who have the courage to embrace the  
feminine in themselves and in all existence.  
To the Divine Feminine, may you be seen and celebrated.



For I am the first and the last.  
I am the honored one and the scorned one.  
I am the whore and the holy one.  
I am the wife and the virgin.  
I am the mother and the daughter . . .  
I am the solace of my labor pains . . .  
I am the one who cries out,  
and I listen.

FROM "THE THUNDER, PERFECT MIND"

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## INTRODUCTION

As this deck was coming through us into being, we spent a lot of time contemplating and conjuring the sacred feminine. She first showed herself to us as unnameable but undeniable. She then arrived by way of embodiment, as the dark night and the bright morning, in the fullness of our breasts, as the warm earth beneath our soles, in the fond dexterity of our hands. Her voice rang out with grit and timbre, sorrow and song, hush and holy. We listened as she proclaimed, “I am enough!” and held her boundary with “Enough, no more.” Her presence was felt in solitude, intimacy, courage, compassion, wonder, resilience, and grace, with more and more of her arriving each day while we bowed to her capacity to hold everything, find her way into anything, and exclude nothing from her heart.

When you hear the word *feminine*, you may immediately think of gender. However, the sacred feminine isn't about gender; she embodies a wild and holy energy that animates our world and circulates through all living things. Each one of us contains masculine (consciousness) and feminine (creation) aspects of being. The sacred feminine refers to the face of divinity that relates to the body, soul, nature, and the cycles of creation and transformation. She exists everywhere, in every culture and spiritual tradition around the world, in temples and rituals, throughout the landscape, and in every living being.

In the early history of Judeo-Christian religions, however, a radical split between spirit and nature emerged, sowing duality where before there was wholeness. Light and darkness became oppositional, as did mind and body, good and evil. In Western culture, the sacred feminine went into hiding. Thus the present need to recall the divine nature of the feminine isn't only aspirational, it's restorative. Why? To honor the feminine is to honor all life, to perceive the sacred in the ordinary. It is the feminine that marries spirit with matter, infusing the world with vital coherence. In the abundance of her multiplicity, the motions of daily life become revelatory. Only through her wholly re-membered being can the world be sung in all of its aliveness.

The divine feminine, too long confined to sheltering underground, once more is bursting through. And through her, the sense that something is missing can be healed. She is, and always has been, the first and the last, the honored one and the scorned one, the whore and the holy one, the hidden and the revealed. She is never one thing but includes everything. Abhorring monotony, she lives as a riot of generative contradictions. She comes to meet you in so many ways—through your body, through your heart, through the sensuous world, through language, and through listening to what is beyond words. Do you embrace the fullness of her hallowed nature? Do you recognize yourself in her unruly greatness? Your own potential is reflected in her many faces. In this deck, we invite you to greet them all and let their assembled

feminine wisdom carry you into the truest and wildest parts of yourself.

Out of the beautiful chaos where all things are possible, the *Wild and Sacred Feminine Deck* was born to invoke the sacred feminine—that embodied, life-giving manifestation of the divine that shapes everything into a vessel for the holy. Though she is always exquisite, she is not always pretty. The feminine creates and destroys, adapts and abides, sutures and sunders. This deck illuminates the feminine in her many aspects, through animal as kin, nature as home, archetype as exemplar, and divinity as ally. These oracles of feminine wisdom—which came to us through a deep well of sources from Native American animal medicine, Hindu Upanishads, Tantric Buddhism, Jungian archetypes, the natural world, and volumes of myth—are organized into four suits: Wild Feminine, Elemental Feminine, Archetypal Feminine, and Divine Feminine. Through the cards’ compelling artwork and provocative interpretations, the feminine appears, nimble and numinous, to light up the entire spectrum of existence.

Diving into this chorus of oracular voices, we found that the feminine refuses to be polarized against the masculine or sit quietly in any rigid definition. Instead of *either/or*, she cries *more, more, more*, happily containing multitudes. As Anne Baring, a pioneering author and champion of the Great Mother says, “the word ‘Feminine’ stands for the Soul and the unseen cosmic web of life that connects each one of us to all others and to the life of the planet and the greater life

of the cosmos.” The Great Mother is immense and unfathomable, the most ancient symbol of the feminine, invoking the invisible embrace of the soul and the instinctive intelligence that guides it. The way of the divine feminine is one of infinite variety, great tenderness, and benevolent forgiveness. Lead with love is her counsel. Whoever you are, she asks you to soften your heart and attend to your experience of immanence—what it’s like to be here and now amid the miracles and the clutter. All life is sacred, and every body can open to receive the divine feminine. She lives inside you through birthright via the womb. And so this deck is for anyone who wants to explore the feminine as a channel of generous energy that rolls through all things. Once you delve into the feminine, she opens doorways to more vibrant inner and outer worlds.

As you move deeper and deeper into the world, do you long for trustworthy guidance? Whether in the haze of confusion, the fathoms of despair, or the heights of ecstasy, if you tend to your inner work with devotion, unknown guides will come and seek you, just as you seek them. The divine feminine has your back. Think of this deck as an *anam kara*, the Celtic term for “soul friend.” Wherever you are on your journey, these fifty-two cards speak through archetypes and universal symbols to resonate with your innate knowing, invigorate your emergent potential, and reveal any blind spots that may hamper your growth.

To know the feminine is to embrace the breadth of her

permutations and realize her essential nature is never static, always ushering in the new. Each card reflects one aspect of the sacred feminine, a threshold to cross, a way to integrate what we have been and the “not-yet” we can become. As such, these fifty-two oracles speak to the participation you have with the unseen, the friendly forces that tease essence into presence. You are invited to receive these messages as memos from the source of creation, to listen as they speak to you—and through you. In this way, you can conduct the ongoing conversation you have with your life and your next horizon in a larger, more luminous context. The deck relies upon reciprocity: the recognition that the sacred lives inside you and you live inside the sacred.

It is in this spirit that the deck was born. When Shambhala Publications asked us to write this deck as a broader reincarnation of *The Mother’s Wisdom Deck* the three of us created ten years ago, we were unequivocally honored. Yet, it was clear that our highest offering was to be in service to something greater than ourselves, to get out of the way, allowing ourselves to be conduits for whoever was speaking to us and through us. The first thing we did was send out a prayer to the divine feminine, asking her to show up.

And show up she did, in synchronicities, new awarenesses, and a deluge of feminine expressions. She was everywhere. We tried on various soul skins, feeling into which ones wanted to step into this sacred circle. Sometimes we were surprised by who came forward and who stayed behind. We wanted the

deck to be relevant and accessible, to evoke the unknowable mystery but not be obtuse. We wanted to highlight a broad range of cultures and have a universal appeal. Eventually, each card emerged as a feminine attribute and its numinous messenger. Together, they represent a continuum of human experiences that show up across time and culture. As emblems, the cards have the power to speak directly to the soul. Not wanting to get overly invested in one particular strand of the feminine at the expense of another, we welcomed a constellation that includes the familiar and the lesser known. That said, we recognize that, like everyone, our careful listening has been tuned by our particular time and place in this world. If the feminine has taught us anything, it's that there is always room for more—more shapes, more colors, more love.

As we began to write and paint, we leaned into co-creation. A heightened collaboration, astonishing in its insistency, made itself known in a way that was collectively energizing. Jenny's artwork helped us to embody the feminine, and the words being set on the page inspired Jenny to envision other worlds. During the deck's creation, we thought a lot about the women who inspire us. We turned inward and outward to incorporate a greater range of feminine voices. We tapped a vast well of feminine wisdom through extensive research and personal interviews with a host of sisters. Jenny invited women from diverse backgrounds to model for the paintings. Finally, we paired each card with a quote that could speak to experiences that reach beyond our own, including

voices of individuals whose art and wisdom transcend gender to embody the feminine.

Of course, this deck is still not an exhaustive collection. But we are enamored with the process of conveying the truths that arrive moment by moment, sometimes with ease and other times following a string of gorgeous failures. Together we have discovered a new relationship with the feminine, one that is less head, more body and heart. We trust what is flowing, aligned around the conviction that the feminine be represented with love and fierceness, textures and layers, light and dark. We fervently wish that as your relationship with the deck evolves and coheres, you will fill any gaps, and bring depth, nuance, and your own story to flesh out its meaning. As your associations change, this deck is meant to accommodate the pivots. These cards can shapeshift to acclimatize to your inner landscape, to become rightsized to the shape of your queendom.

We each must hold—and ultimately embody—a vision of the sacred. But first, we need to dream the feminine alive inside ourselves, to have a repository of images to draw from as touchstones. Only then can we come into relationship with her. This step requires a profound commitment to your intuition. Take a vow to not abandon yourself or forsake what you know in your bones to be true. As Clarissa Pinkola Estés says, the guiding ethos of this path shifts the passive “what will be, will be” to the engaged “let me see all there is to see.” Intuition atrophies with disuse. When you use it, the

trajectory of your life becomes more conscious. In partnership with the divine, you can shape your reality as much as you are shaped by it. This deck is a tool for integrating all the diverse and wild aspects of the sacred feminine within you. You create the vision by dreaming it, you make the road by walking it.



