

JESSICA ADAMS' SMITH-WAITE TAROT GUIDE

JESSICA ADAMS

Copyright 2020

0

THE FOOL

There is an adventure about to unfold here. A major trip ahead, a relocation or a symbolic leap into the unknown. It could work, and why would anybody want to deter such optimism and faith? Yet, it would be crazy to just set off without a map or insurance.

There are other ways to go exploring. The Fool is setting out on the wrong foot, on the wrong path. It's crumbling. Why not go back the way he/she came and start again? Why not head West or East, and find another direction? Above all, The Fool is about taking your time. Don't rush this.

This is really The Happy Wanderer of the song - or perhaps Jack Kerouac writing *On The Road*. It is The Durrell family off to Corfu, or anyone on their gap year. It may be dull to hear, but you can't just take off blindly and trust in God to rescue you if something goes wrong. Keep the spirit of adventure, lose the blind trust. The little white dog, which will come up again in a moment, is the voice of caution.

There may be a laptop, map and guide book in the rucksack, but this foolish person is not looking. Instead he or she is about to go careering off the cliff. Just in time the white barking dog alerts him/her (assuming the headphones are not on under the hat) and this adventurer can turn back. 'Watch out!' might be the translation of 'Woof, woof' in this card.

We are reminded of Tintin and Snowy here. Snowy was ever willing to raise the alarm. In fact, he saved his master numerous times, as fans of Tintin by Herge will know.

The little white dog was probably modelled on the favourite pet of actress Ellen Terry, who was Pamela Colman Smith's hostess at Smallhythe, where she created her Tarot cards. We think about dogs like Lassie who save the day, and the archetype is extended. A St. Bernard hound can save us in the snow.

As much as you want to look at The Fool in all his/her glory, lit by the Sun (the Sun may be an astrological symbol to consider here) do note the dog. Dogs are employed as guards. They bark at intruders and at airports, they sniff out contraband.

Going back to astrology again, Pluto owned a dog called Cerberus who guarded Hades. If you are reading the Tarot alongside your astrological birth chart that may be another clue for you.

There is a white rose in the Fool's hand and the Sun is shining brightly - dazzling. Look for Sun sign transits and aspects with this card, but also obviously the Third and Ninth houses of long and short journeys. The Third House is ruled by Gemini and the Ninth House is ruled by Sagittarius.

There is a fair amount of denial in this card. The hose and boots are yellow, the colour of fear (cowardly custard colour) and Saturn, that pale yellow planet, is also a symbol of hesitation and caution, provoked by fear of the future. So here we have a mixture of bravado, stepping out into the unknown, off the cliff and sheer fear, ignored.

In an age of epidemics and pandemics (AIDS in Africa and COVID-19 in America, India and Russia) this card is particularly important. Let's look at fear denied, again.

The denial in The Fool, in general (not travel-related) comes from not checking the latest news on the destination ahead. Why wouldn't you? What's so hard about caution? This is why the determined ignorance of

necessary trepidation is so interesting, with this card. It's almost a show of bravado. A theatrical display of not caring. But there is yellow, yellow, everywhere.

This card shows all the romance of Byron and other poets on their grand European tours but the truth is, everybody needs travel insurance or a proper map.

Who or what is the barking white dog? The 'journey' here may be symbolic not literal. There is no luggage but it's a leap into the unknown. Even a leap into the unknown comes with useful websites. This may be a magnificent love affair; the thrill of finding a new job after resignation; a giant leap into NASA internship.

This is a Major Arcana card so it's a major potential outcome. As always with Pamela's cards, you can move The Fool around, like an actor. He or she can return home and give up the grand idea, having heeded the dog's warning. He or she can (as discussed) turn in a different direction and take another route.

This card also asks 'Who or what is The Fool actually racing towards?' It's a really interesting question. Is it the thrill of the unknown, the adrenalin high of the great departure, or actually some very specific destination. The Fool also brings to mind *The Sound of Music* and the great escape led by a young Julie Andrews. That was about a very specific goal in a dangerous time of approaching war. Is this? Or is The Fool just doing it for the endorphins?

The crumbling cliff won't take much weight and there is always a sense, with this card, that The Fool is going to behave like some kind of Warner Brothers cartoon creature and leap off the edge, only to run in mid-air before crashing down below, with a worry white dog looking on.

In the After Tarot, we find The Fool hanging on to the edge of the cliff by his fingertips. He's made it. Seriously, though, is that the kind of universe you or anyone else wants to end up in? There are ways to make good one's escape, and ways to avoid.

I THE MAGICIAN

A famous card in Pamela and Arthur's deck and one that seldom turns up. There is so much power in The Magician. The musician Steve Kilbey has painted himself as The Magician in his own, illustrated deck.

It really depends on what you mean by magic. Magic is about measuring reality and watching it unfold. Quantum mechanics tells us that. There is no single reality. There is no 'correct' or 'real' universe. It is only when we observe and take a measurement, that we find out where we are. The process of doing that necessarily means all other contending universes fall away from us.

This person, The Magician, is a multi-tasking, magical, powerful Renaissance man or woman. There is a lot going on in this card! Pentacles, cups, swords and wands are on the table so this person is across money, relationships, people politics and big ideas.

Perhaps this is the magic. The Magician is measuring reality with both arms (not unlike William Blake and his compass images. S/he is powerful. All-powerful, actually, because the entire known Tarot world of Cups, Staves/Rods/Wands, Swords and Coins is laid out on the table.

Using his/her arms as the yardstick, The Magician judges what is there to choose from, and with full concentration, expects and selects. The rest is reality.

You can see the dove of peace etched into the wood on the table. Red roses and white lilies surround the frame. Perhaps these symbols mean something to you.

The Magician is either burning the candle at both ends or channelling something divine, with that curious object in the left hand. The right hand points down to earth, grounding the magic.

This is Harry Potter, with his glasses hovering (at enormous size) a few centimetres above his head. The bandage hides his lightning scar. There is something magical about the J.K. Rowling story. Single mother, writing in an Edinburgh café, inspired by visions on a train, sets out on the path to fame and great wealth.

There is magic in the air or concentrated quantum selection of one's chosen universe, when this card appears. It takes tremendous self-confidence and certainty to be able to reach for what is there and discard all other known parallel universes.

The Magician is also a picture of infinity. The figure eight is of course - known to scientists. The snake biting its own tail on the belt also suggests eternal time here. No beginning and no end. Everything is possible in this card, once someone harnesses his/her energy and gets down to work.

The Golden Dawn, the secret society where Pamela learned astrology, and where Arthur, her partner in the cards, pursued his dreams - was genuinely magical. In fact, its most famous member, W.B. Yeats (who inducted Pamela) got everything we might assume he wanted, from it. His love rival was executed. Yeats himself won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Was that mere coincidence or was it Magic, capital M?

Like all Pamela's cards, you have to read every detail to get the full picture for yourself. Even the titles or names in her cards can reveal a hidden message. Magician = Magic Ian.

I once read for a woman whose husband's name was Ian, though nobody else knew that (he had changed his name). He was a politician who managed to not only survive adversity but also triumph over it, becoming ever-more powerful.

A great truth about this card is that so much depends on the state of mind of the person asking the question (which might be you) - or the person at the heart of the action. If one is focussed, certain, clear, confident and fully aware of the way parallel universes (The Multiverse) works, then it's just a question of trusting, believing, knowing, measuring and receiving.

The 'measuring' comes to us from the famous Double Slit experiment, but actually in astrology it is done with geometry. Astrology is a numbers game, based on a 360-degree circle, 12 zodiac signs, 12 houses and so on. The measuring is real. Aspects are geometrical patterns, like a sextile, square, trine and so on.

The Magician's arms form an opposition. S/he is illustrating two opposite signs of the zodiac, perhaps, or the MC (Midheaven) in opposition to the IC (Immunus Coeli). This may be a clue if you are looking at an astrological chart.

The Magician could be a man or a woman. Pamela Colman Smith was friends with lesbians and quite possibly was one herself. She was certainly a feminist. The bobbed hair of so many of her Tarot figures is a nod to equality. It is not only men who are magicians. Of course not.

What is also interesting about this card (a Major Arcana card, so it is of major importance) is the fact that money has no more importance than sex. Coins are money, cups are sexuality. Staves/Rods/Wands are ideas. Swords are actions. Both are also similarly equal.

The Magician has all of these laid out ready for use, it is just a question of getting the measure of what is possible, and as science proves to us some 100 years after Pamela first had this vision, by measuring something, The Observer Effect comes to pass. Or, 'you get what you expect' as some people say.

The Magician is channelling. Perhaps, channelling information or wisdom, from the spirit world. S/he may also be a lightning conductor, taking tremendous energy from the atmosphere and bringing it down to earth where

it can be used in a practical way.

The snake belt is similar to The Dragon's Head and The Dragon's Tail on astrolabes, beloved of Geoffrey Chaucer among others. This is the North Node (head) and South Node (tail) which go in a constant loop. This may be another astrological clue.

The asteroid in your personal birth chart, shown by a snake (coiled on a staff) known to the Romans as Aesculapius/Aesculapia is also here. The snake belt is a hint of that symbol in your chart, which is about miraculous resurrection and rebirth.

II THE HIGH PRIESTESS

Here we have one of Pamela's cards which is instantly recognisable as a female academic or professional. There is no sexual ambiguity here. This is most certainly a Julia Gillard, a Jacinda Ardern, a Margaret Thatcher or an Angela Merkel, in addition to the examples I've already given.

To each his own. This woman has strong ideas, powerful conviction and you may disagree, or agree, but you have to respect the intellectual power.

This is a symbol of the Third House and Gemini (the scroll is indicative of a newspaper or press release). However it is also a symbol of the Moon, which you can see in the foreground. The Ninth House of academia and education is also suggested here. There are quite a few astrological clues in this card.

There is always a sense of mystery with The High Priestess, because she sits in front of screens. Nobody really knows what B and J on the columns, refers to. Perhaps these letters have personal meaning for you. We will go further into the columns, later.

Behind the High Priestess, herself a symbol of the asteroid Minerva (wisdom), we have pomegranates, a symbol of Proserpina.

She was the go-between who connected her husband Pluto to her mother Ceres - and perhaps they are also shown by the black and white columns. Pluto and Ceres were both very black/white about their lives. They were passionate, obsessive and not given to compromise. Proserpina connected them.

The story goes something like this. Pluto fell in love with Proserpina. He lived underground in Hades and broke the rules, breaking the earth apart, to rise up and seize her. Her mother Ceres mourned her daughter after the abduction and then, enraged, went on strike. The four seasons under her rulership, ground to a halt. Eventually Jupiter intervened. He asked his brother Pluto to take part in a test of what was fair and just. Thus, Jupiter needed to know if Proserpina had eaten pomegranates (a Roman euphemism for vaginal sex) during her stay in Hades.

Proserpina replied she had eaten half a pomegranate. Very likely, gone half the way. The Romans had a very basic sense of humour about sex. As a response, Jupiter decreed that Proserpina should spend half the year with her husband (when it is winter and autumn) and half the year with her mother (when it is summer and spring).

There is rich symbolism everywhere you look in this card. The pomegranates are painted very clearly by Pamela on the Art Nouveau panel or screen, behind the clever priestess. Perhaps she is Proserpina herself. The Go-Between, to quote L.P. Hartley. The middle woman between two powerful entities, organisations or individuals. The B and J may hold clues for you there.

The High Priestess usually studies and gains qualifications. Or she is a writer. She may have a website or blog. There may be journals or books.

This card is about learning and being taught at the highest level. The pearl of wisdom rests in the High Priestess's crown. The Christian cross symbolises her faith. Pamela Colman Smith converted to Catholicism later in life; Arthur Waite started as one. This is about knowledge, but also spirituality. Real wisdom. You cannot get everything from a book.

The Golden Dawn, the magical secret society to which they both belonged, was notable for the number of intelligent, powerful, accomplished women in its ranks.

This card always turns up when someone is enquiring about a university or college degree – if they want to know if success is possible, this card says a firm 'yes' as you can see by the rolled degree in hand.

It is also of course a symbol of a brilliant female lecturer or Professor. There may be qualifications here, ranging from BA to MA to PhD.

Annie Horniman, who bankrolled The Golden Dawn with her family money, started The Abbey Theatre in Dublin on the strength of a Tarot card reading.

She later became an academic in England and is a good fit for The High Priestess, though of course it could have been any of the women in the Golden Dawn - like Florence Farr. This card tells you that answers come on the deepest level and that it is to the books you must turn, or the experts.

It is important to ask yourself who the go-between or middle person is, in any situation where there are two sturdy polar opposites. A Pluto and Ceres figure. Look at the New Moon cycles too, because that lunar symbol at the bottom of the card is not there by accident.

III

THE EMPRESS

One Minute Interpretation

Here we have the very image of domestic bliss. The Domestic Goddess, perhaps a Nigella Lawson type, or Vita Sackville-West, is immortalised in a lush Kent or Sussex garden. This is a Bohemian who has dropped out of big city life. It is a Hippie who has decided to redefine success as life on holiday.

The stars on the crown worn by The Empress will have special meaning for you. Perhaps astrology is her crowning glory. This may also be an old wedding tiara – The Empress still wears the triumph of her big day on her head. Maybe it is astronomy which rules her, intellectually, not astrology. Everything in Pamela's cards has a meaning, but it is usually there to be defined by you, in an intensely personal way.

The Venus symbol is on the heart (a strange concrete heart) wedged under this woman's chaise longue. We also see Ceres, the dwarf planet, symbolised by the corn at her feet. There is plenty of astrology here.

Ceres was the goddess of Roman agriculture who ruled the four seasons. In fact, she was discovered in 1801 when The Four Seasons made its debut. This composition reflects the synchronicity of the year: Ceres was in charge of spring, summer, autumn and winter. She ruled the harvest of corn and wheat, which depended on regular seasons.

The Empress is more than just a woman of leisure with stars on her crown and a Venus (desire) symbol in stone at her elbow. She is also reminding us of Ceres and the need to reap what you sow from a rich harvest, so that you can prepare for the future.

Summer does not last. It turns to Autumn and then Winter. The Empress is a reminder that you can live for the moment, but you also have to prepare for the future.

In the original story of Ceres, Pluto and Proserpina, it was accepted that whenever Proserpina (the beloved daughter of Ceres) was on her annual six-month departure from Hades, and her husband Pluto – the earth laughed in flowers. Ceres was overjoyed to have her daughter Proserpina back with her, and so Autumn and Winter were left behind, along with the lonely dark days of sole motherhood, to be replaced by sunshine, warm weather and the harvest.

The Empress is a cautionary tale, as well as a delight. Unless you leave the sofa and get to work, cutting the wheat and corn, and grinding it for flour – you may find there is precious little to feed you when the seasons change. You can literally interpret this card that way, thinking three months into the future, or six months into the future. A symbolic autumn or winter.

The Empress has the stars in her crown as we have seen (perhaps the stars are celebrities – it depends on your line of work) and she is holding a golden spoon, which is open to your interpretation. For some people this is a symbol of Wales, land of the giant and elaborate wooden spoons. For other people, the spoon is a nod to The Who and their song Substitute. ('I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth.') Other people do not see a spoon at all. They see a microphone. The Empress is a podcaster.

The cushions are beautiful and expensive – probably velvet. You can see the Venus symbol repeated on the final black-and-yellow cushion. As we have spoken about Ceres, it is only fair to mention the other Roman goddess, Venus. Both Venus and Ceres were intensely feminine archetypes.

Venus was beautiful and vain. Her symbol in astrology is a truncated hand-mirror. For some people, the spoon in the card is actually a strange little looking-glass for a dressing-table.

Venus was jealous of women who were as beautiful (or more beautiful) than she was. Venus seduced men, but was also seduced by them. She was married to Vulcan the blacksmith, but had sex on the side with Mars the warrior. Venus is very 20th Century Fox. You will see her in a lot of Hollywood films.

So, The Empress is not Venus, but she leans on her. Venus is on her cushion. Venus is also part of the furniture – the grey slab. Perhaps The Empress owes the garden to her marriage, her common-law marriage, her divorce or her separation. It supports her.

A river is pouring in. This is abundance! But it needs to be harnessed, used, managed and not left to fall away. This, together with the wheat which must be cut and ground into flour, is the second cautionary symbol in the card. This is a beautiful river and it will supply the garden all summer, but what if it floods? This is not the first time in this deck Pamela will create a waterway which is in danger of being all over the place, all the time, everywhere.

The Empress is a delightful symbol of a woman who has tremendous comfort, luxury, peace, quiet, solitude and harmony.

She is not feeling remotely alone, though, as she has that rather interesting symbol of love, sex and seduction (Venus) which is evergreen. Clearly a relationship, or a phase in a marriage, is there to be revived and recycled, if she wants to do it!

The only thing to say about this card is that like so many of Pamela's illustrations of fertile times and 'the good life' there is a need to stop lounging around, roll up the sleeves and get to grips with what needs to be harvested and set aside for the future. You should look at both Ceres and Venus if examining an astrological chart.

IV THE EMPEROR

This is a boss, senior official, corporate male or perhaps your father or husband. It may be you, if you have risen to the top of your profession and are senior (this is a grey or white-haired man). Capricorn and Aries are both shown here. Two masculine signs to be reckoned with. Capricorn the mountain goat climbs to the top and is a social mountaineer but also King of the Mountain (usually a skyscraper).

Aries the ram decorates the throne. The red colour suggests Mars, the aggressive ruler of Aries. The mountains are pure Capricorn the mountain goat as we've seen, but Aries the ram butts heads and can be a battering ram on the way to the top. This card is really telling you to look deeply into the soul, heart and mind of this man to figure him out and strike a deal. He is obviously receptive even though he is intimidating. And if this is you? Ask yourself if you want to stay at the top and why. And how you intend to do that.

Some people think The Emperor is holding what might be a Christmas bauble in his hand which also suggests Christmas, thus the Sun in Capricorn.

Other readers over the years have seen his golden helmet as a propeller head. Is this the C.E.O. or Manager in a high-tech company? Are we talking Steve Jobs here, or Bill Gates? The Emperor is on that level. A propeller-head is an old nickname for a geek, of course. Perhaps it takes that level of detachment and obsession to get to the top of a particular business, corporation or institution. If you're the Dean of a university, you don't get there by having picnics and going surfing.

Intimidating, powerful, influential and forbidding. The Emperor is an older man who is quite alone. He's made it to the top, but what can you do for him? What can he do for you? He seems uncomfortable in his position, so ready to give it or share it. Perhaps. If you strike the right chord or make the right approach. This card can turn up when you are seeking a promotion, or an extension on your exams. It can turn up when you have to talk to your father about a loan, or your girlfriend's father about her hand in marriage. There is a suggestion of the job interview about this card.

In old China The Emperor was the supreme ruler and was surrounded by all kinds of walls, gates, doors and locks. All kinds of protection. There is something so foreboding about men represented by this card. They are inaccessible. And yet, here we have the old man at the top, who seems available to you, primarily because nobody else is there. The question is, do you have what it takes to get up to him – onto his level – to begin the conversation?

This card is about classic male power, in that it can feel quite isolating to the man who has it, and in turn he can be very hard to reach – as inaccessible as the old Chinese emperors or only partly accessible, like an American CEO – to those in middle management.

Whenever we talk about Capricorn types we are looking at some kind of system, structure, traditional pyramid-tiered hierarchy or towering organisation. It frequently occurs when the headquarters is multi-storey, because The Emperor makes it to the top and can often literally be found in the penthouse office.

There is a great deal to be gained here by reading this man's mind, as has been suggested. Put yourself in his shoes. Does absolute power, corrupt absolutely? Is it a long way to the top, as AC/DC thought? Is it lonely at the top?

Of course this may be you! If so, you need to ask yourself what success means to you, what it has delivered and what it has denied you. What might success be like after this and what would it take to bring it to your door? Maybe you need another new mountain to climb or you'd rather like to retire or resign from this one, or delegate – or restructure, perhaps, so that authority is not so isolating.

The Mars/Aries and Saturn/Capricorn combination clearly seen in the symbolism of the mountain, but also the rams' heads, and the blazing scarlet robes, suggests someone tough, determined, stoic, rather aggressive,

fearless and persistent. This is a man to be reckoned with, but the reality of these kinds of structures or organisations is that there is always some young blood, pushing his or her way up from the ground floor, past middle management and on to the upper corridors of power. Perhaps this is what is so lonely about being The Emperor. You know that the system you have served for so long, and supported, and ascended is the same system which encourages your replacement.

This is an older man. A man nearing retirement, perhaps, or even with one foot in the grave, as the saying goes (and the television series). How does that feel and why does it affect you so much, too? You could have picked any of the 78 cards at all but something about you, your personality and your current situation has leaned towards this man. If The Emperor does happen to be you, then you have a great deal of deep thinking to do about next steps.

Here we have the very picture of a patriarch like Rupert Murdoch and his media and entertainment dynasty, or Prince Phillip. The mountain here has been built up over time. It is strong and sturdy, virtually concrete and as firm as Stonehenge. Even in stormy weather the mountain remains basically the same. It takes a great deal to want to be at the pinnacle. Understanding the psychology of power and ambition is part and parcel of understanding The Emperor.

V **THE HIEROPHANT**

The Roman Catholic church was important in the lives of both Pamela Colman Smith, the Tarot artist, and her mentor, Arthur Waite. He rejected it, she turned to it. This is the Pope with two monks. A symbol of Jupiter and the Ninth House, but also perhaps of Uranus, as the symbol in his right hand suggests the planetary symbol.

I always think the monks have enormous Y-front underpant patterns sewn onto their garments. You can't avoid thinking about sex when you see the Catholic church on a card and this is the Pope laying down the law about celibacy, and perhaps about the holy vows of matrimony.

The two fingers may be about to make the famous V for Victory symbol of Winston Churchill, or perhaps the V peace sign which became popular in the Vietnam war. The crossed keys show the Vatican. There are lots of questions here about what is right and wrong, good and evil, ethical and unethical, moral and amoral. Who or what is in charge and who or what must obey?

The word is the law here. Yet, Uranus is a symbol of a rebellion; a revolution; a rejection of the old order in favour of the new.

The Hierophant has been seen by Tarot author and expert Sasha Fenton as a symbol of conventional marriage, as opposed to living together. This is true. After all, this is the Pope we are talking about! In general, this card is a symbol of any orthodoxy or 'system' which represents the establishment, with the man at the top, and the rest at the bottom.

Pamela was friends with G.K. Chesterton, who created Father Brown and this card reminds us that priests can sometimes get into trouble with the church if they don't follow the rules. You have to ask yourself about 'the system' with this one. The monks are below the Pope, but they are also powerful, because without his monasteries, he is nothing. Neither is the Vatican.

The Golden Dawn, the magical secret society where Pamela Colman Smith was inducted by W.B. Yeats, had a rigid set of rules and its own leadership. Arthur Waite was one of its leading lights.

In this card we also see patriarchy. Male leader, male followers. Not a nun to be seen anywhere! So this card is very much about orthodoxy. The establishment, the system, the hierarchy. It all hinges on faith and belief, and perhaps pledges or commitments. Holy vows for holy orders. This card can be applied to a corporation or government as much as the church.

This may be a long-established university where the rules are laid down quite formally and heavily, and the students are obliged to obey. Or not. The way Pamela has drawn the Papal ferula (or rod), the pastoral staff carried by the Pope, nods to that.

Uranus is symbolised by a very similar glyph and it is a symbol of the revolution that leads to freedom and independence. There is an established order in this card, a tremendous emphasis on belief and trust, but also a question about loyalty, or disloyalty. In the end it comes down to faith, but perhaps it's also about practical reasons. Can one afford a departure or break with the leadership and the system? Can one afford to go out on one's own?

Given the strict rules of most religions on sex, drugs, alcohol (and even particular kinds of food) The Hierophant always comes with a message about temptation and freedom. There is a choice here, either immediately or eventually. It is principally for the 'monks' in the situation, but it is also true that The Hierophant himself can have a crisis of faith. What happens when, to quote Michael Stipe in R.E.M. you are losing your religion?

VI THE LOVERS

There is a higher power at work in this card, embracing the mere mortals who are in love, or rediscovering love. This goes beyond sex, which we find in The Devil in the Tarot deck. This is about something far deeper and more emotional. More complicated, too. The Lovers can show a second honeymoon in a struggling marriage. It can also show two people who have discovered each other, want each other and are wondering when, how, should we?

The angelic figure in the background is like God or Buddha, bringing two lovers together. It can also be a pagan figure. This is sexual as well as spiritual or emotional. The rather prominent volcano in the background is a geographical erection and about to explode. The snake on the apple tree is the serpent in the Garden of Eden and here you find Eve and Adam wondering when to act, what to do, how to do it, and what the repercussions will be.

The benign figure tells these two 'This thing is bigger than both of you' and the calm smile suggests everything is in hand.

There is confusion, though. The billowing clouds suggest things have to be cleared up before these two can hold hands and venture forth.

You can see the Sun in the card – Sun signs or sun transits may be important. This is, however, ultimately a card of Venus (who rules apples) and the Seventh House of sexual union, engagement, marriage and common law marriage. If you are looking for clues in either astrological chart, look to Venus herself, Libra the sign she rules and/or the Seventh House.

Forbidden fruit in the time of Pamela Colman Smith, when she created this card, was often sexual. A more permissive society would come about fifty years later.

She knew W.B. Yeats whose love life became the inspiration for so many poems and stories. He was obsessed with Maude Gonne, although they would never be permanently together.

Pamela was also aware of other interesting lovers in the Golden Dawn circle, like Florence Farr and George Bernard Shaw.

This card is a call to action. It always turns up when two people have just met and feel Cupid's arrow strike. In the astrological chart, you might also look for the asteroid Cupido as well as his mother Venus, for clues. The zodiac sign and aspects of Cupido and Venus can help fill in the gaps in information with this card.

The Lovers also turns up when two people are thinking about breaking up. It brings to mind so many songs. If You Leave Me Now. If You Leave Me, Can I Come Too.

The answer with so many of Pamela's cards is to 'cast' yourself in the role of the man or woman, and move the action in the card as if it was a stage set and you were directing a play. Pamela was, among her many gifts, a stage set designer for The Abbey Theatre in Dublin.

These two actors have prepared lines, unspoken, in their minds. They are on the verge of talking, seriously, or at least finding the words. Choosing a particular world to inhabit is often a case of directing the action in the Tarot stage set. So, now might be the time to look at different scripts.

There is a tremendous need for communication with The Lovers. Nobody doubts the passion. Everyone can see God or something like him, bringing these two together. You would expect there to be important astrological transits in the Fifth and/or Seventh House of either chart, which time things.

The snake or serpent in the tree is visible, as are the apples. Forbidden fruit. All the imagery and symbolism is there and it makes sense in the context of Romeo and Juliet, or Pride and Prejudice. This is Mr. Darcy and Miss Elizabeth Bennett searching for the words.

Sexual attraction or mixed emotions can make communication difficult, but here is a stage set where the words are the thing, not the props or the actors. Listening carefully and talking just as carefully, is the key to the breakthrough both of these lovers require.

VII THE CHARIOT

This is a great symbol of the Ninth House in the chart as it suggests astronomy and astrology (stars on the canopy) and the Egyptian symbolism suggests academia, The British Museum where Pamela's colleagues in The Golden Dawn gathered and foreign journeys.

You can see the symbol for the R.A.F. on the front of the chariot, which foresaw the air force which would be so important to Pamela's country, some 30 years after she created this card.

Many people identify a red spinning top just below the R.A.F. wings. This is a tale of two cities or two countries. Someone once told me 'The Charioteer has knowledge under his belt' and so he/she does.

There are also two New Moons hidden in the epaulettes. This is one of those cards you can take apart, detail by detail and it usually reveals an intensely personal message which can't be found in a book.

The reflective square on the tunic suggests a television, radar or computer screen. This is someone who is going places. It's a trip but also a head trip. This card is full of so much symbolism you really have to interpret it for yourself in quite a personal way. The black and white sphinx on either side can suggest questions about race to some people. There may literally be Egypt in the answer. I was once given a reading by a person who told me I would be travelling (true, the Chariot is the old-fashioned version of a long train trip) and that I had astrology under my belt (also true) as the man in this card has those symbols right there.

In the days of Zoom gatherings, we find The Chariot is confined to small squares on the screen, but the arrival of the guest speaker is always dramatic and can be life-changing. It's the same with a TED Talk. On comes the scientist or the philosopher, and in comes a close encounter with his/her wisdom and background.

This is The Eagles' New Kid In Town. It is also Jimi Hendrix bringing black American culture to London in the Sixties. We think about two cities or two countries with The Chariot and it can turn up when we have a NYLON resident (New York/London) or someone who is used to living between Los Angeles and New York.

A Tale of Two Cities is suggested here, too. It is important to note that the charioteer has to submit to a two-way process of education, if he/she is wise. Life is not just about landing somewhere and lecturing the population. It is about listening and reading. Absorbing and appreciating.

This is rather like Lawrence Durrell (Larry Durrell) moving from England to Corfu with his family and bringing his typewriter and English book collection with him. It was never going to be a one-way street and he ultimately drew as much from Greek culture, literature and language, as the local villagers did from him. The Chariot can show up as a Gemini-Sagittarius opposition in the chart, and Third House and/or Ninth House transits. The aspects will tell the full story.

VIII STRENGTH

Leo the lion is front and centre here. The Sixth House, which rules doctors, nurses, surgeons, dentists and healers may also tie in with Strength.

The word itself is a Virgo and Sixth House concept – getting your strength back after surgery or an illness, for example. The healing here may also be for depression or anxiety. Perhaps, other mental health issues. Strength is about a heart surgeon or a psychiatrist. A hypnotherapist or an acupuncturist.

The card shows absolute trust. The lion could maul the healer. The healer could hurt the lion. Instead something miraculous is occurring. This is a two-way street. There has to be deep tolerance and understanding on both sides if relief and release is to arrive.

This is a very encouraging card to see if you are about to have surgery or dentistry. It means the right person for the job is at hand.

If you are in the medical or healing profession, you just know that your next patient is going to be more than just another customer. There will be a profound interchange here and you may effect a transformation. You certainly won't be forgotten.

There is always the risk of 'ouch' with this card, though! Both must be aware of it. Rather like a vet taking a thorn out of a cat's paw, it can hurt and there has to be tolerance and great, great care.

Therapy is associated with this card and people who are heavily Leo, who need to be 'brought back to Leo' may find it's about a psychological process with a counsellor, for example. Leo is about leadership, particularly of the young, and if you have Leo planets, asteroids, points or angles in trouble (you are going through difficult aspects to these) then Strength may turn up, to guide you to this transit. Good astrology can show you when the transit will end and the ailing lion or lioness within can return to full strength.

Leo rules the Fifth House of parenthood so if there are issues with fertility, I.V.F. or virility then Strength is a sure sign that some of Marvin Gaye's Sexual Healing might be on the way, or perhaps a way through struggles with parenting.

On a broader level, Strength is about The British Empire and the healing process required for Britain in both the world wars after Pamela first launched these cards around 1910. It can be read on the broadest, national level (for a country in trouble) or in an intimate and personal way, if you just happen to be looking for the right doctor.

As the rather angelic creature offering help does not seem to belong to this realm, Strength is associated with spiritual healing. On a more mundane level, this can be the dentist who channels something more.

IX THE HERMIT

Quite alone, an old man (or a young man or woman pretending to be an old man) looks down at the snow, while holding an unusual lantern with a radiating star, suggesting something bigger than just a candle flame.

This is near Christmas in Europe and the birth of Jesus Christ the Saviour. In other cases, it is the 18th century and the Enlightenment of science, against religion. The Hermit is personal. It really depends on how 'light dawning' is defined. For some people it's God. For other people it's philosophy or multiverse theory.

The man is holding a stick, or possibly a mirror, or a very thin laptop. When Pamela Colman Smith created this image, laptop computers were not even thought of, but here it is, as clear as day. The internet contains a lot (an awful lot) of illuminating information about the Roman Catholic Church, Buddhism, Humanism, Judaism, Hinduisim. All the 'isms' in fact. This is a hermit searching the prism for the right ism.

He is honouring the bright star in the lantern without looking at it. What is in there would melt the frozen snow. It's warm, brilliant, glowing and the only point of colour in an otherwise bleak card.

This card relates to the Twelfth House of solitude in astrology and the Ninth House which rules beliefs of all stripes. The Twelfth house is ruled by Pisces and the Ninth House by Sagittarius and sometimes a square from a planet in one sign to the other, is reflected in this card. How do you square yourself with the truth?

The Hermit is often literal so there is a period of solitude or even a whole life which is spent alone.

I once read for a person who had decided to get his own apartment, avoid relationships of all kinds (quite happily) and devote himself to meditation and study.

Sometimes this card can appear if a person needs to take a sabbatical. He or she literally needs to go off on a retreat, or on a solo holiday, and find out who and what matters most. This is a card which reminds some people of the famous Pre-Raphaelite painting of Jesus Christ and the 'inner light' of his lantern which can be seen today in St. Paul's Cathedral. There is also a hint of Lou Reed singing "I'm beginning to see the light." As a person this is obviously a monk, or a loner, of some kind. As with all Pamela's cards you can see the whole illustration as a dynamic stage set. If The Hermit finds what he is looking for, spiritually, or intellectually, he can do other things. He might shave his beard off, and leave the scene. Find some new clothes for a warmer climate and restart his life with other people.

The card is there to be worked with. Sometimes people are content to let The Hermit be, though. They know they are meant to be alone (for example, in isolation in quarantine, or in a Buddhist retreat, or moving into an apartment after the end of a marriage). They also fully expect and welcome the process of 'finding oneself' which can only come when the dialogue stops with other people.

Listening to yourself, hearing your own thoughts, seeing yourself without the reflected mirror image that others project, is a huge process. The Hermit is a Major Arcana card because it represents a deep and important journey of self-examination and soul-examination. To quote Kate Bush - what is the Deal With God here? Perhaps there is no God for The Hermit. Maybe this is the search for meaning which ends with the conclusion that there is none!

The idea of being guided (Amazing Grace) is close to this card. Being lost and found, or finding oneself, happens in solitude. In Pamela's day, an oil lamp or lantern was a symbol of 'lighting' the way for Jewish people. Jews used oil lamps in spiritual rituals. The Temple Menorah is a seven-branched oil lamp.

In Christianity (Pamela Colman Smith became a Roman Catholic later in life) oil lamps are referenced in the New Testament and in churches were used to illuminate icons in the corner. In Hindu temples, oil lamps have

deities embossed on the back. Lanterns transport Holy Fire from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Great Saturday during Holy Week.

Lanterns have a protective enclosure for the light source. The Hermit reveals protection. You are never alone. A higher power is always with you, no matter if you call this God, or Buddha or All That Is. Wind and rain cannot extinguish the flame. Morrissey (The Smiths) sang "There is a light and it never goes out."

Lanterns also protect from fire. They were used on wooden ships below deck. Lanterns have also been used for signalling in naval operations. Trains also relied on lanterns.

There is a strong question about communication and signalling in The Hermit. Is the message from the light being received and understood? Is The Hermit hearing the spiritual, religious or philosophical message? The staff or rod that the Hermit leans on is his prop. That is the practical side of his life. He needs a walking stick to help him through the snow drifts. That's fine as far as it goes, but he is searching for the spiritual or meaningful. That is also fine, as far as it goes, but the inner search can only work if there is also something or someone to lean on. A voice on Zoom perhaps, or a letter from home.

X

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

You can see Taurus, Leo and Jupiter (the eagle) in this card, just as you see them throughout Pamela's deck. Aquarius, the wavy line logo, is hidden at the bottom of the wheel. The snake is a symbol of the asteroid Aesculapius in astrology. You can also see Virgo the Maiden in the top left-hand corner.

The books suggest the Ninth House or Third House. Most of all, the asteroid Fortuna (daughter of Jupiter) is what this Wheel of Fortune is all about.

Every low point becomes a high point. Every high point becomes a low point. Some people believe W.B. Yeats, who inducted Pamela Colman Smith into The Golden Dawn, was the secret third Tarot contributor hinted at by Arthur Waite. His most famous poem is *The Second Coming*, written ten years after Pamela's deck arrived. It begins

'Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold'

It goes on to mention other images you can see in The Wheel of Fortune. (What may be a falcon is in the top right-hand corner).

Here we find the 'lion body and head of a man' in his poem at the top of the wheel. The creature does look to have slow, solid thighs. The 'shadows of the indignant desert birds' can be seen in the dark cloud behind the falcon. Yeats mentions 'twenty centuries' which is twice the X card, the tenth in the Major Arcana. This is a powerful card. Was Yeats inspired by it?

This illustration by Pamela Colman Smith is laden with symbolism. Where do you start? It's for personal interpretation. You may be a Leo (bottom right-hand corner) affected by a Taurus (bottom left-hand corner).

Perhaps you are experiencing transits by Jupiter (the eagle in the top right-hand corner) or you have planets in Virgo under transit (top left-hand corner).

The world of books may affect you as a librarian, student, author, teacher, editor, academic and so on. The other creatures in this card are also rich with symbolism. The Egyptian sphinx is the keeper of a riddle, at the top of the wheel. She is holding a sword. The snake is said to be Typhon by some, but it could just as easily be the serpent entwined around the Rod of Aesculapius.

A canine creature – with human and devilish stylings – an Anubis - supports the wheel at the bottom, just as the sphinx holds it at the top. The wheel itself resembles a horoscope of sorts, but you can also see some capital letters here. O, R, A and T are spaced in the First House, Fourth House, Seventh House and Tenth House position of the traditional horoscope.

The Four Evangelists are the source of the Lion, Ox, Man and Eagle, but for you these might have quite a different meaning. It really depends on your religious background. This is one of Pamela's cards which lends itself to being moved around or stage-directed. How might you spin the wheel in your favour? The snake, falling downwards, is a reminder of Snakes and Ladders. In the game of life, there are ladders to take you higher and snakes to take you down.

The familiar clouds are there – is this Pamela peering into the future and seeing cloud-based quantum computing, and are these four creatures using a MacBook Air rather than a book?

The clouds are heavy and grey. Into every life, a little rain must fall – but rain also makes fertile soil for later growth. The readers and writers in the four corners are the real clue to the Wheel of Fortune. The hurdy-gurdy nature of life leads us to turn to our astrology books, Tarot journals, philosophical tracts, Bibles, self-help libraries or Shakespeare (who referenced Fortuna in his work). This card should send you to your personal birth chart for clues. The fixed signs in particular, Aquarius, Leo, Taurus – are important. Perhaps you can also find the Tarot itself with these letter spaced around the outside – O, R, A, T.

XI

JUSTICE

Sometimes the law, in terms of karma (ancient justice) or the legal profession, is bigger than you are. There is something comforting here about these meticulously balanced scales.

This is a potent symbol of Libra the Scales as they rule the Seventh House of partnership, separation and divorce and are in turn ruled by Venus. (Scales can also be seen in the Six of Coins as a symbol of Venus in her rulership of Taurus and the Second House of money). It is very common for this card to appear when there are transits in the Seventh House, or aspects to natal factors in the Seventh House.

The scales seen here are almost exactly aligned. The judge, lawyer, barrister or mediator is threatening anyone who dares to challenge the outcome.

There are some curious little symbols here, typical of Pamela's odd details. Is that a computer screen or hidden camera in the crown? Is that the Japanese flag on the gown? Why is only one shoe showing and why is it white? What is behind the brown curtain?

You will interpret these for yourself, and perhaps in different ways. It is one of Pamela's richest symbolic cards and it will say something different to every person who reads it.

Of course it turns up when a legal process is ahead and if so, one has to bow down to the power of Justice herself. Look at the tiny details to see what you are being shown or told. Arthur Waite, who guided Pamela Colman Smith to create her cards and commissioned the project, successfully taking it to Rider, was a Sun Libra man.

In the Tarot, we see art imitating life. It is fascinating to note that this most famous of all Tarot decks, the Smith-Waite, was a two-person endeavour, but for many years Pamela was never credited on the deck, even though it was her vision which dominates the cards we see today.

Well, in the 21st century justice prevails and Stuart R. Kaplan and U.S. Games Systems who produce the many variations of her deck, have ensured that Pamela Colman Smith is properly recognised.

Sexism is an expression of the Justice card and Pamela had to deal with sexism at the start of last century, which put her very much in second place on this Tarot project despite her doing the lion's share of the work.

She was involved in the Suffragette movement, volunteering her talents for their publicity campaign. She was also of mixed race parentage and so we need to talk about racism with Justice as well as sexism.

This card operates on two levels. Lawyers, barristers, juries and judges – in which case justice will be served, fair and square. Those scales are so finely tuned. It can also operate when you are going through a situation which is patently, blatantly unfair. I once read for a woman, many years ago, whose ‘friend’ had slept with her former boyfriend, just weeks after the break-up. This card, Justice, turned up and she yelled out in triumph when she saw it. The friend was shed by both of them, and actually her whole social circle, and never darkened anybody’s door again!

There is a strong message here to respect the law in all its forms. When Justice arrives, imbalance is corrected. Injustice is repaired. Unfairness is dismissed. If there is/was a marriage, professional partnership or two-way sporting contest (tennis at Wimbledon for example), then here we have an umpire or referee’s verdict. Justice often turns up when a verdict is close. Would anybody argue with the crowned figure who presides over proceedings? I think not.

XII THE HANGED MAN

Dangling upside down, stuck (for the moment) and going nowhere fast, The Hanged Man is a symbol of any retrograde planet. Retrograde means that normal motion is obstructed; the planet appears to stand still and go backwards. Mars Retrograde means action is reversed. Mercury Retrograde means communication is reversed. Do check your astrological chart if you see this classic symbol of a standstill.

When the time is right things move on, but first of all that has to be illumination and enlightenment. The Eureka moment of truth is suggested here. So is the Sun (Sun Sign) or aspects to the Sun as the human head here is radiating golden light.

This is rather like being forced to wait for an outcome with property or family (say) or citizenship. The roots and branches of the foliage above The Hanged Man’s head suggest where he has come from (either side of the family tree) or where he is going to. This is one of the ‘absolutely male’ cards in Pamela Colman Smith’s deck. Unlike some of the more ambiguous people illustrated, this is quite clearly a man.

I always think of the phrase ‘cooling-off period’ when The Hanged Man appears, as sometimes a house or apartment purchase comes with that option, should the purchaser change his mind. The enlightenment can be a brilliant breakthrough or realisation which changes the original plan.

On a more serious note, I read for a woman whose boyfriend had disappeared, when this card turned up. She feared he had hung himself – taken his own life – but none of Pamela’s cards ever show death, unless it is a known factor already. In fact, he was just ‘dangling’ and had no fixed address. He had lost his telephone. (The Hanged Man is upside-down so things fall out of his pockets). Eventually, he turned up.

The family tree on either side is suggested (Cancer, Fourth House) and the T shape of the tree may be a classic T-Square, which in astrology is a point of tension when three factors form 90 degree squares to each other.

When the time is ready, this person will untangle himself, reach up, and start moving. The whole purpose of the waiting game would appear to be a spiritual or mental wake-up call.

Look beyond the title. Look at the actual figure, who is all tangled up. This card reminds me of Bono and U2, and their song about being stuck in a situation you can’t get out of. It takes the most tremendous effort to do so, but it can be done. This card is also rather like Shakespeare’s expression ‘hoist by your own petard.’ You can be your own worst enemy here (or someone else is) self-sabotaging and stuck as a result of it.

The planet Uranus is associated with the world turning upside-down. In mythology, Uranus was thrown off his

wife, Gaia (the earth) having sex with her. He turned her upside-down. The shock of hair on The Hanged Man and the suggestion of electrocution, with hair standing on end, is a good pointer to a recent or current Uranus transit.

Uranus is the symbol of a world turning upside-down, and electricity (he was the father of electricity, and consequently shock). He is also the symbol of independence and liberation. At some point The Hanged Man will stop this state of suspended animation, and find the strength and willpower to free himself. The sense of space and autonomy after such a long time spent trapped in mid-air will probably feel quite Uranian. A revolution. A revelation. Liberation!

XIII DEATH

Sasha Fenton, a very good Tarot reader and best-selling author, once observed that Death confronted people when it turned up in a reading. It certainly does, and it also confronts the Tarot professional. It is a rare card; Major Arcana, so it shows a major ending.

This card shows Pluto, the ruler of the underworld and Roman judge of the dead, with skulls and crossbones on his horse's bridle. Pluto is associated with the colour black, because he was the god of the underworld, or Hades. It was where the coal was, deep underground, and sunlight never crept in. Pluto also rode on a carriage led by horses, usually shown as black. Check your chart. Is there a Pluto transit? Or a transit to natal Pluto?

You can see the 'golden dawn' between two towers up ahead. Even as one era is closing, a brilliant new era is in store. There is always hope and new life.

The Golden Dawn, the secret magical society which drew Pamela Colman Smith and Arthur Waite together, is symbolically pictured here.

The towers Pamela shows, are a common theme in the entire deck and can also be seen in The Moon, another Major Arcana card.

New York readers saw the Twin Towers shown here in the Death card on September 11th, 2001. Pamela's Tarot can be uncanny. They represent the death of the ruler (in this case it would eventually be Osama Bin Laden but also Saddam Hussein) and the reaction of the families. When you look at the figure on the ground and the grieving children, you are shown patriarchy, symbolically, or the end of male leadership.

Death can be a political card, or a philosophical card. It can show regime change. The 'death' of the Ronald Reagan era of politics, or the Margaret Thatcher era of politics. When you look deeply into this card you can see the immediate drama and loss, but also a vast space of middle ground, which must be crossed by land and sea (a big voyage, symbolically) to get to the brand new day and the brilliant promise of the sun, up ahead. The sun has a double meaning here. As The Sun in Pamela's deck, it shows an infant astride a horse, in glorious celebration. Death hints that The Sun may once again turn up, months or years into the future.

Of course, this card is open to personal and wide interpretation through the ages. Death saw this card play its part in what must have been millions of readings during The Spanish Flu; The First World War; The Second World War; The Vietnam War.

The dead king here in the card may be King Edward VII who passed away in 1910, one year after this deck went on sale. Perhaps Pamela had him in mind.

The grieving children are ruled by Leo and the Fifth House. The inheritance of the crown, which they may or may not collect, is Scorpio and the Eighth House. The Bishop is one of many Christian icons in the deck. You will have to decide what he represents to you.

The Tudor Rose on the flag reminds us, again, of war: The Wars of the Roses. This is the end of a battle, sometimes. It can show a divorce and a decision made about child custody. Thus, the father is 'dead' to the children and they are responding.

Death is typically a symbol of 'death of the old and birth of the new' and it can be about house renovations, or the end of an era at a film studio in Hollywood with new owners. Yet, the renovations would have massive emotional impact on the owners. And the film studio would trigger huge loss. Death is not just about 'mere' endings. It has a pull on the soul.

You will find in this card, exactly what you need to see. The tiny details of the card are the clue to everything and Pamela had a gift for sending messages in (even) the angle of a child's head.

The key to this card is to note the dazzling sight of the sun rising between two pillars, or towers, in the far distance. This is the future. The future is bright. Every journey begins with a single step. Yet, you would be amiss, if you were not seeing the middle ground. This is a voyage. You don't get to the horizon until you get across the river. There is a necessary long transition.

There is a great suggestion in this card about lowering the histrionics and reducing the drama, attention-seeking or reaction. Perhaps someone is being childish. A huge reaction of grief at the beginning is understandable, but if a situation is being milked in a theatrical way, perhaps it's time to be mature about it. Death is a fact of life and much as we would love to avoid it, we cannot do that. It is as natural as birth.

The answer comes here from religion, spirituality or philosophy. The Bishop. You cannot negotiate with Death because everything has its organic ending. Yet, you can bring peace and calm to a situation by drawing on ancient wisdom. This may be Buddhism. It may be a simple note of philosophy. The sun also rises. Life goes on. Tomorrow is another day.

More than anything else, this card is a reminder to let Death ride on. He's on horseback, you see. Let him go and he is vanished from the landscape. Bury the past or recycle it. Then begin the journey. The future is bright.

XIV TEMPERANCE

If you are looking at your astrological chart you will be focussed on Aquarius and the Eleventh House of societies, groups, communities, clubs, teams and associations.

This is a pure Aquarius symbol as we have a water-bearer with the wavy Aquarius logo being poured from cup to cup. The pool below shows 'pooled resources' and the Roman Baths which gave the whole community a place to swim and was fed by an Aquarius – literally a water-bearer of the time.

This is also a Virgo and Sixth House card as it shows healing. This is mental or physical health, balance and harmony and it's a wonderful card to see.

This may be a doctor, surgeon, Reiki master, nurse or dentist. The yellow Iris in the picture is also known as Yellow Flag or Water Flag. That may be another clue for you. The crown above the mountains shows potential victory or special status and position above Capricorn the goat's Tenth House peak of achievement, but it has to be reached after a long journey. With Temperance, you begin right now, with help from a friend or group (one which helps your good health, mental health, peace of mind, wellbeing or happiness on some level) – then you set forth. You can't conquer the world unless you are in good shape.

Note the yellow triangle, or Grand Trine shape, on the angel's robe. This is another astrological symbol, as a trine is 'flow' in astrology and this whole card is about flowing. A trine connects Fire signs (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius), Earth signs (Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn), Air signs (Gemini, Libra, Aquarius) and Water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces).

Perhaps there are others born under your element, in this group, or perhaps the friendship shown by the Aquarius symbolism is also joining you with someone born under a compatible element. The Fire signs and Air signs flow. The Earth signs and Water signs flow.

So, for example, you may be looking at a group of friends and acquaintances in Fire-Air, which helps your fire sign self go with the flow. Aries, Gemini, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius, Aquarius may all be involved, or perhaps just some of those signs involved – but there is a feeling of everybody pooling their resources.

Look carefully at the feathered wings for more typical Pamela clues and signs tucked away in the folds. I really recommend that you go to these cards with a magnifying glass if you have one. I also recommend to students in particular that they hold the cards sideways and upside-down for a better look. Obviously you can only go so far with this, using a computer, but if you have invested in a deck of Pamela and Arthur's cards, you can do this at home. What is tucked away in the dense, inky illustrations?

The phrases 'testing the water' and 'getting your feet wet' may also apply here. Temperance is of course the old-fashioned word for abstinence from alcohol as I mentioned at the beginning of the interpretation. This is another really rich and complex card and you may find your answers in the tiniest details on it.

It frequently turns up when people are asking about a year off work, or time to recuperate. You also see it when people are coming off alcohol and joining Alcoholics Anonymous. It can turn up if someone has been through an awful period of mental or physical health problems and is a lovely sign that they are now in calmer waters. Less dramatically, Temperance turns up when you are detoxing or doing Dry July.

XV THE DEVIL

This is a famous card. It speaks of Libra (marriage) but also Scorpio (sex and money). The devil as an archetype has a huge list of interpretations and this card is best understood personally. Who or what is the devil to you? Who or what is evil? Who or what represents sin? This is about your own soul.

Uranus is suggested here, as he is the 1781 symbol of liberation, freedom, independence and the beginning of the end of slavery in the United States. If you look at your chart you might find Uranus in transit, or being transited. However, you also need to look at Libra and/or Scorpio as discussed, and possibly the Eighth House, which is ruled by Pluto, who in Roman times ruled Hades, or the underworld. For Christians after Emperor Constantine, the myths meant nothing, but the idea of darker realms came to mean Hell.

We do have a Pluto archetype in the Devil. He dominates. Pluto also sought to dominate. He has taken over this trapped couple, or has he? The reality of Pluto is that he is always demoted! This happened to him in astronomical circles in 2006. Do not be fooled by the big, bad wolf. I know it looks rather scary in a 20th century cheap-TV way, but in fact this vision of Pluto dressed up as Satan is a reminder that nothing is that powerful.

If you give your power away, then you become disempowered. This couple are doing that. They have promoted Pluto by refusing to own their own potency, and strength. If you take it back, then you are free. You can flee the scene.

Pluto was and is associated with sexual obsession and naked passion in astrology, because he fell in love with Proserpina and had to own her at any price even if it meant breaking the rules of nature. This is one of Pamela's few overtly sexual cards.

The chains binding this couple are surprisingly easy to slip. The card shows sexual bondage and as sex and money are both ruled by the Eighth House and Scorpio this card links to them. Perhaps it's time to shed the mortgage, the bank and the bad marriage.

The Devil has the Aries horns. The woman has Bacchus (grapes) in her tail. Fire signs (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius) are suggested by the blazing torch. There is a great deal to work with here, if you look at your chart.

The Devil is of course about sin and evil and in early 20th century Christianity, adultery was certainly a sin. This card also tallies with the Seventh House which rules marriage and affairs. The trick with this card is for both people to realise that 'the devil' is just a point of view, an attitude or a belief.

When Pamela created this card, homosexuality was against the law and of course the Catholic church recognised it as a sin. She could not even illustrate these two past, present or potential lovers as same-sex because it was 'the love that dare not speak its name.' Oscar Wilde, whose wife Constance was involved in The Golden Dawn along with Pamela and Arthur, was jailed for his passions.

Pamela herself was (perhaps intimately) involved with high-profile lesbians in the British theatrical world of the 20th century but the closest she ever comes to showing lesbian love is the Three of Cups. She did in fact know the major players in a ménage a trois and all three women had their own cottage within the grounds of Ellen Terry's property - Smallhythe was also where Pamela probably drew the cards.

What we have here is a man and woman, naked and chained, before the very devil himself. Yet, as I mentioned, this card is for personal interpretation.

Today gay, lesbian and transgender people in much of the modern world are treated completely differently. The phrase 'better the devil you know' is suggested here. So how does The Devil pan out in real life, in a Tarot reading?

I have drawn it for clients when two people are unhappily married and need to break up but are too frightened to do it because of the children and the apartment.

It also turns up when a married woman is having an affair and does not know what to do. Freedom's just another word, for nothing left to lose - to quote Me and Bobby McGee. The truth is, these two could easily slip their chains and walk away. If you really examine Pamela's drawing closely you will see that it hardly takes much effort at all for the woman (say) to liberate herself from the clanging metal work and then liberate the man as well.

This is the interesting part. What happens then? Do they sleep together? Separate and go in different directions? Seek a therapist who will help them sort out their ideas about sin? In Pamela's day, The Golden Dawn was full of intriguing women who had the most complicated relationships, at least in the eyes of polite society. The time has come to examine what and who is so wrong, with this card. And above all, how to get away. How to break free. How to understand that nothing and nobody has ultimate power over you, unless you hand it over.

XVI THE TOWER

The Tower confronts people because it looks like a disaster striking. It is a great deal more than that. Yet, if you are asking 'Will my business succeed within 12 months if I launch it today?' the card is unequivocal. Avoid!

The Tower is useful as a portent of doom if you are asking about, say, a forthcoming engagement or the purchase of a property. For more on practical and intelligent ways to work with a difficult card like this, please see my guide, Pamela's Tarot.

Yet, it can also be so useful if you ask about an event after it has happened, seeking meaning or guidance. I am sure you realise how often The Tower might turn up in a year like 2020, for example, when we are all confronted with COVID-19 for the first time and its sudden, shocking impact on our lives. In 2020 we have seen the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson contract the virus. The American President Donald Trump and his wife Melania both contract the virus. Prince Charles...it is one shock after another, in a year of many such

shocks.

So what are we to do with The Tower? If you look closely you will see the actual tower is a grey, depressing, heavy, bleak structure. Sure, it represents The Known World to its falling inhabitants, one of whom has a crown (the head, or the leader, of the family or business) but is it really so bad?

Pamela had a great gift of drawing figures halfway through a scene. It's rather like a play which is interrupted when you enter your seat left. Yes, the inhabitants of this uninviting, sterile building are falling. They are reeling in horror as they are thrown out of what used to be their castle. (An Englishman's home is his castle). Lightning has struck the peak and the crown has come off. Everything is on fire.

What if the characters here, one of whom represents you, or the people in your world, fall safely on the ground? What then? They can go back later and rebuild what they had, or walk away and start again. It is amazing how often The Tower appears when people realise, with a start, that they have no desire at all to go back to what was there, and relish the chance to break free, and create completely new worlds of their own. This would be action set in another card!

This is the card so many Tarot readers claim to have seen before the dreadful events of 9/11.

Of course, it could describe any of the destruction of both world wars which came after Pamela created this vision in 1909. Moving away from the literal to the symbolic, the lightning bolt or thunderbolt suggests both Jupiter (who threw thunderbolts and is a symbol of great opportunity) and Uranus, his grandfather, who is linked to electricity and lightning. It is terribly important that you check your astrological chart for Uranus in particular, either by transit, or in terms of transits to the natal placement. Shock is his calling card and it can feel like a jolt, or a thunderbolt.

We have both planets in this card, as Jupiter is the thunderous sky and Uranus is the jagged bolt of electrical phenomena - so there is shock, upheaval and quite revolutionary change (Uranus) but also an opportunity to go back and rebuild a bigger, better structure, or walk right away and commence something new and superior.

If the characters do return to the tower and start again, perhaps they might paint it a more cheerful colour. Maybe they will add greenery; solar panels; Sanderson curtains and a waterfall. Maybe they will fill it with interesting new people.

And then there is the option for the ejected residents to just turn their backs and leave the scene. Maybe they were never particularly happy in the old world. Those towers can be fortresses which imprison as well as concrete affirmation of success. We all know very successful families with impressive homes who have never felt free, the whole time they have been under lock and key. We all know about rich corporations with miserable staff.

Uranus is a symbol of the song 'And the World Turned Upside Down' and the person on the right is inverted. This is a flip. A dive. People often 'flip' during a Tower card experience, or find themselves diving for cover. Once the blood has stopped pumping so fast, though, and there has been time to calm down, it is clearly the moment to start again. That is actually the really interesting question here. What comes next?

The other obvious issue here is that whatever 'towers' in one's life has to be built to last. This situation, place, organisation or person could not take the forces of nature. It was inherently unsound and was just not built to last. The message of hope here is rebuild, repair, improve or move on, build again. This structure was just far too vulnerable to the vagaries of fate and fortune and so it was never really secure at all. What seemed to be watertight and cast-iron never really was this is a moment whose time has come so look to the astrological chart to see what is transiting Uranus, or how Uranus is transiting. That will give you an enormous wealth of information to work with as you make the choice to go back and rebuild, or just walk away and invent something quite new. Something better.

British Vogue published its COVID-19 edition with the word 'Reset' in August 2020 with a soothing photograph of Carbost, on the Isle of Skye, on the cover. This is a really good example of the kind of thing the Tower represents (especially as Scotland is full of them).

Do you reset, rebuild, recycle, restart? Perhaps if you think the original structure is worth the massive effort involved. It is just as valid to reject what was there before, though, and instead of a Reset, think about a Revolution. I find it really interesting that so many of my readers swept up in the drama of COVID-19 in the year 2020, wanted a radical new beginning. They wanted no part of the old system at all!

XVII THE STAR

This is a terrific card to see if you are joining a group, rejoining a group, or launching a project with a group. If you were a member of Pussy Riot in Moscow a few years ago, wondering how your quest for world fame might go, The Star would have vindicated you. It's the same, even with largely male organisations, like builders' trade unions. The Star tells you people power is a remarkable thing, once you all work out who the star of the show is (but you are all twinkling stars).

Feeding a community with what it needs, is essentially the role of an Aquarius type. That sign is likely to dominate your chart in this reading, or perhaps somebody else in the community has an Aquarius chart signature. We think about Germaine Greer and the Women's Liberation movement of the 1970's for example, or Yoko Ono and her Plastic Ono Band (she is also an Aquarius Sun). John Lennon had an Aquarius Moon and The Star might just as easily be about The Beatles.

The blonde figure in the centre of the card is often quite literally shown in your life. Again, using the above example, the flaxen-haired maiden might have been Linda McCartney and the circle of stars might have been Wings. It is amazing how often we see a fair-haired person play the star, with this card. I have seen it turn up in readings for members of the Conservative party and the blonde has been, hilariously, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson or at least his sister Rachel.

In Rome, this impressive maiden would have been an Aquarius (water-bearer) supplying the communal baths. Aquarius is very much the sign to associate with those who feed the needs of the group without ever actually getting too involved.

There are questions here about who is the 'star' within the group and who are the satellites. Yet, with care, this collective can work together. Ask yourself what the bird in the tree represents. Pamela's birds are always important. Perhaps this is Twitter (birds tweet) and the circle is purely online. Maybe 'A little bird told me' means something to you, with this group of friends. Birds have intensely personal meaning. Really look at this winged messenger in the tree and give it some thought.

The naked woman (purely because she is naked) may also be meaningful for you here. This is one of Pamela's sexualised cards. It really depends on you and your circumstances perhaps there is your lover. Maybe you can see the potential sexualisation of a situation but it does not really matter. It is bypassed.

The bird may be a guide or voice of wisdom if you let it speak to you. The Star is one of those cards you really have to decode for yourself, and it can defy any book of interpretations!

The Star is also about how a group functions. One person must always be upfront, front-and-centre, like the brilliant star here, yet everybody shines together. This makes sense. England did not win the World Cup in 1966 without blonde captain Bobby Moore. So many groups need a leader. The Spice Girls might have tried for democracy but Geri Halliwell invariably ended up wearing the platform boots.

This is a really encouraging card if you are in a team, association, society, club, ensemble cast or similar. It shows pooling resources, which is an Aquarian concept (in the pool) and in fact, there is abundant supply here of whatever the group needs.

You can see both jugs flowing. Her cup runneth over. The dazzling, beautiful, bright, brilliant background must surely be a reflection of Pamela's own joyous experiences with her friends (of whom she had many). The star in her firmament was future Nobel prize-winner W. B. Yeats, but some might say Pamela was the true star. The trick with this card is to understand that constellations depend on the individual stars within, to make any patterns at all. Everyone must shine, can shine and does shine.

Accepting the Oscar, the sensible actor thanks the cast and crew. S/he knows there is more to this than just one voice or face. Kurt Cobain was the blonde star in Nirvana but he was a generous musician, writer and singer who shared the space with his bandmates. When you hear Nirvana you hear all three of them.

The water in this card is flooding the space. That is quite important, for as much as The Star is about Aquarius and the Eleventh House, it is also about Neptune. Neptune has no boundaries. It rules rivers, the ocean and the sea. It can also reveal floods and a lack of boundaries.

Pamela's cards are to be worked with, using active imagination and focussed intention. How could this water be managed better? How could the resources be saved? Perhaps the bird has some advice. It is not enough to keep pouring, at some point you have to start watching and acting. Pouring (time, energy, talent, money, goodwill, ability) into a shared pool is a wonderful thing to do, and it can be an oasis in the desert (or a band like Oasis in the music industry).

What about the waste, though? There is no point in this formidable maiden pouring herself and her resources into this overflowing pool, if she is seeing half of it run away into random outpourings. Have a look at the way Pamela has illustrated the water in this card and start to think about Neptune by transit, or transits to Neptune, as this is a clear message about dissolving boundaries, and that is very much the astrological territory with this planet.

XVIII THE MOON

The lobster here is often taken for a Scorpion, thus the zodiac sign Scorpio. Scorpio rules sex and money (marriage and mortgage) but also death and property (until death do us part). This looks like a scorpion waiting to bite. The two dogs cannot see it and are quite unaware of the pressing urgency behind them.

The two towers and two dogs suggest Libra. Pairs and partnerships. The dogs are identical in shape and breed, so perhaps Gemini the twins (the brothers). It's all highly symbolic of 'two' and your chart will reveal if you are looking at Libra and/or Gemini in terms of transits.

The Moon itself is the biggest clue, of course. This is a Full Moon but rather a serious one. On a Full Moon, the Sun and Moon are in opposite zodiac signs. Here the two dogs are opposite each other. They are at cross-purposes even though they are the same. Same sort of person, different type of person! The dogs are different colours yet identical.

This card commonly turns up when people must decide to get married, move in with each other, or separate. It is the property market and the financial realities that make them say yes or no thus Scorpio snapping at their heels. If they dither for too much longer, the value of their apartment may drop. If they 'moon' about for too many more weeks, an incredible job offer for one of them (in a distant high-rise building) may vanish.

This is a good example of the quantum mechanics in so many of Pamela Colman Smith's cards. The dogs can take the same path together or go in opposite directions. Quantum uncertainty is explained by most scientists as a multiverse. Multiple universes rather than one, absolute 'reality' to live with. You and another person (the other dog) must now choose where to live, or where to work.

Parallel universes are based on parallel choices. Left and right. Yes and no. This card is associated with a certain amount of stuck confusion, especially if a couple does not know if they should stay together or break up. You will get so much more from this card if you realise the dogs can do anything. They do not have to take the obvious, central path. There is nothing stopping them from exploring other possibilities. And they do not even have to stick together.

Like so many of Pamela's cards, you can work creatively with this, using your imagination to visualise different outcomes. The dogs are actors – how would you direct the action? What about the scorpion/lobster? I strongly recommend looking for factors in Scorpio in your chart, or somebody else's, when you pull this Tarot card. Scorpions kiss and kill. When they breed, they can cannibalise each other, or sting each other to death. The old astrologers had a sense of humour and knew that marriage was so much more than romance.

It really depends on your situation. This may be a divorcing couple who have forgotten 'until death do us part' was promised in church, or that breaking up can be so expensive. It can also be the passion, intensity and obsession of Scorpio love, which risks everything. What is interesting is that this scorpion lookalike is so close to the dogs, but they are so blind to it.

Pamela often created blind eyes in her subjects. Here we have two rather blind dogs who cannot see each other, cannot see what is coming up behind them, and are thus unable to make a move. There is a great need here for communication, honesty and probably a wake-up call, if the situation is to be sorted out.

You also see The Moon turning up when people have just fallen in love and cannot decide which apartment should be the nest – or if there should be a commitment towards just one property.

The Moon in all her phases is about menstruation and pregnancy and that may be writ large when this card turns up. The lunar cycle of 28/29 days is the same as a woman's period and of course, periods stop when babies arrive. This card can also appear when a couple realise a child is on the way and it's time to think about a better-paid job, or a bigger home.

Looking at the Moon in your chart/his chart and also the transits of particular Full Moons and New Moons to either chart, can be very useful.

XIX THE SUN

Whenever this card turns up it puts a smile on your face, or your Tarot reader's, because it is a shot of pure joy, delivered by Pamela Colman Smith all the way from 1909. So much energy is poured into this illustration it radiates years later. It is, of course, about a child. It can also be about someone old enough to be your own child. So, you could be 60 and this younger person may be 40! This is unusual, though. Mostly, we have a message here about welcome turning points and celebratory moments involving children or teenagers. Sometimes – a pregnancy.

This is pure Leo and Fifth House symbolism. Leo is ruled by the Sun – which shines here among sunflowers. The play on words here is also evident. The Sun can be 'the son' and so, the son and heir. It is amazing how often this card will turn up when a couple are going through IVF treatment and hoping for good news. The son and heir is on the way, even if this is an adoption.

We also associate sunflowers with 'son flowering' and the blossoming of youth. This card appears when children do well at school, or a girl becomes the captain of her netball team. It can be quite literal, in that a nephew does well at the local gymkhana.

This sign rules the next generation. Sons, daughters, godchildren, young relatives or just younger faces to be mentored, guided or entertained.

It dazzles with its radiance and happiness. Look at the horse, the flowing red fabric (right) and the wall behind for clues. Look also to the face inside the Sun and the child's headpiece. Pamela's cards work best when they are used as psychic triggers and just sitting with the imagery here and letting it speak to you can be useful.

Leo is associated by rulership with The Fifth House which rules the heirs to the throne. The son or daughter who inherits the 'kingdom' or influence, insight and inspiration of a parent, godparent, grandparent, step-parent, aunt, uncle and so on. The Sun rules Leo the lion, in the zodiac, and it is interesting that both J.K.Rowling (Harry Potter) and Beatrix Potter were born under this sign. I mentioned the play on words with Sun/son and the idea of a son and heir. The Royal Family has a high Leo count.

This card has traditionally been associated with a 'yes' answer if the question is about pregnancy or adoption, as I've mentioned particularly with IVF. It can also turn up when a branch of the family tree turns up again. This card has a summery, celebratory feel.

Children can make everything seem new and different exciting and there is such joy oozing from this card. Pamela Colman Smith never had children, but she had a flair for communicating in a childlike way and a gift for understanding folk stories and myths.

This card is also 'the golden girl' or 'the golden boy.' The sign of Sagittarius is hinted at too, with the horse. In fact, all the horses in Pamela's cards can reveal a Sagittarian theme exploring and having adventures learning and growing. Sagittarius rules the Ninth House of the chart, which is associated with education and academia, books and libraries, websites and the expansion of the mind. Perhaps you have factors in Sagittarius under transit now, or you may be experiencing a Sagittarius transit.

XX JUDGEMENT

This card confuses Tarot readers who don't accept mediumship and life after so-called death, because to understand it, you have to accept that we don't die! Perhaps you know this to be true already, in which case Judgement lets you know that there is a huge shift taking place with your family or friends (perhaps partners) in the spirit world. There may be a transition taking place, so someone has just passed away, or crossed over to quote my friend John Edward.
What you see is what you get with this card.

Two families rise from their coffins to embrace an angel, judging them from heaven. This card is linked to the Eighth House, home of the last will and testament, legacies and any inheritance.

The trumpet was often used by mediums in the early 20th century to communicate with the spirit world. This card is a powerful symbol of transformation, redemption and rebirth. The asteroid Aesculapius may also tie in here. He is a symbol of what lasts forever what resurrects and returns.

Psyche is another zodiac symbol who was given immortality. This is a card of the next stage in a soul's development as part of a family group of souls perhaps two of them and thus suggests people who incarnate and reincarnate together as family groups.

Judgement can sometimes be quite literal as a card, revealing a judgement to be made. Perhaps a spiritual, ethical or moral judgement, rather like being 'assessed' at the pearly gates. Your soul is weighed as you rise from the coffin you are measured by a greater force. Note the red cross here too. That may have personal meaning for you.

It can be seen as the Red Cross aid organisation or the St. George's flag of England. You have to return to the people rising from the coffins, though. This is about new life from old. And it's about families. Ancestors are very important when Judgement appears. You come from a long line, but a long line of what and whom? That

lineage is now having an impact on your life here in the real world, as substantial transformation takes place with those who came before.

As you can imagine, there are sometimes really heavy karmic stories played out with Judgement. It may be the case that a whole generation of souls tied to a particular religious group, or family tree, or business organisation, or similar, now goes to the next level because events on earth make it possible for them to ascend.

Purgatory is the holding zone for souls but here we have a large group of them rising from their coffins and going to the next spiritual dimension, perhaps. I have seen this card associated with haunting (earthbound spirits) because it has been impossible for a large number of people affected by one tragedy to accept it is time to move on.

Judgement is a dramatic card which will have intensely personal meaning for you. I am sure you can see how it might turn up in situations when a great many people have lost their lives in one single tragedy (thus connecting all of them) and have been waiting for an event here on earth to set them free. This all sounds rather morbid but actually Judgment is about liberation. The angelic realms are calling. Heaven is ahead and on high and at last the signal has come. The idea of release and relief is close to this card. Depending on your belief system, reincarnation, too.

XXI THE WORLD

This card is really about too much choice, and it's international in nature. Just as much as the central character (probably yourself) must select from countries, this card is about choosing nationalities.

World travel in Pamela and Arthur's day was not on budget airlines. Embarking on a round-world trip was overwhelming which may explain why the woman (centre) does not know which way to turn. As you might imagine, it is a time for concentration and focus, which can help a smart decision. Pamela and Arthur were both migrants and later on in her life, Pamela in particular became tied to London as much as New York, so even though this card was created in 1909 it has a very modern feel, as the world emerges from an age of globalisation.

This is a card about the worldwide web, world travel and 'the big wide world.' Thus we can interpret the symbols in geographical terms.

The lion stands for Great Britain. The bull for Spain. The eagle for the United States of America. Who is the flaxen-haired person in the top left-hand corner? A symbol of Australia and Asia together? This face has an Australian's sun and sea bleached blonde hair, but oriental features. Perhaps we are looking at Oceania.

Pamela's characteristic clouds surround the four corners of the earth. They are a symbol of cloud-based quantum computing which teaches us about quantum information. Everything is a possibility! Science has proven that quantum uncertainty is our reality. There is no single objective reality. Everything is a cloud of potential until we make it so. This is true of all Pamela's 'choice' cards and you are being shown a world, where all worlds are possible and actually unfolding right now in another country.

This card relates to Jupiter (the eagle), Leo (the lion), Taurus (the bull) and the Ninth House (travel and foreign people and places). You would certainly be looking at transits to Sagittarius factors in the Ninth House, or transits from Sagittarius factors.

The world is an incredible card which never fails to impress in readings as it can be so literal. I have seen it turn up for clients who almost fall off their chair, because they have only just bought tickets to Barcelona or London. You see it when people are confused about emigrating, or uncertain about an import/export program.

The trick is always to bring the attention back into the self, away from the distraction of who or what is in another country.

It's a fantastic card to see if you want to expand, explore and emigrate. To take a gap year. To go deeply into a new relationship with somebody from a foreign or unfamiliar culture.

What does this card say to you? It can sometimes raise the issue of sexuality and female seduction. This may be Lady Ga Ga or Madonna, wooing the entire world, and having fun doing it. Pamela only put a very few naked people into her cards, but this is one of them. The image was very likely copied from one of the saucy postcards of 1909, showing actresses in various states of undress, covered only with wispy scarves to cover their modesty.

The person at the centre of the card is you, or someone you know. The primary relationship has to be with the self, and not with The World, in the first instance. Unless you know yourself, and have sorted yourself out (stop dancing and start thinking) nothing can really shift, here. Everything remains an untapped possibility and none of the four corners of the world can be explored. There has to be a commitment, because you cannot be in four places at once. Nor is it necessarily possible to travel to four places at once. Choice means rejecting some outcomes, but you cannot really reject what you do not know (or whom you do not know).

This card is about settling down, taking a deep breath, doing some research, but also very much about that old maxim 'Know Thyself'. There is no point in just grabbing at the first face, space or place overseas that beckons. It's time for self-knowledge and clear intention. That way, the choice is made with full awareness of the repercussions. It is useful to look at the faces of the bull, lion, eagle and 'angel' figure too. What can you read into each expression? Your psychic ability should give you some inside information here about the United Kingdom, or Spain (or perhaps Europe, or the European Union).

ACE OF CUPS

This is one of those cards which makes every heart leap because at first glance it transmits so much joy and energy. It is a terrific Tarot card to see if you have been going through a hard time. It often turns up before a baby is Christened, but it can also appear when there is a relationship phase, a friendship phase, or a brand new involvement which is the gift that goes on giving.

There are many symbols here. The letter W is on the cup. The Christian cross is on the Holy Communion wafer. The dove of peace flies overhead. The Tibetan Buddhist lotus flower floats on the water. As always with Pamela's cards you should interpret the symbols in a personal way. Perhaps you know a William or a Williams, so the letter W is significant. Maybe the 'W' in Pamela's 1909 illustration stands for WWW today and this card is about a website venture which is emotionally and creatively rewarding.

The Holy Grail is certainly hidden in the cup symbolism so perhaps you are involved with Arthurian mythology or even Monty Python! As I said, this card is rich with symbols which are best interpreted in a highly personal way. The lotus flowers which are dotted on the water may have particular meaning for you if you are involved with Tibet, or Thailand.

The cup itself is about emotional or sometimes sexual fulfilment and this one is overflowing as we've seen. There is no end to what pours forth. Your cup runneth over and the cups were associated with water signs in the original Tarot, so this is Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces.

It's all potential, certainly, and unrealised to date. You have to make this happen, by trusting the Tarot card and believing that the time is right to take what is on offer. It is yours to enjoy and time is of the essence as it's not certain how long the offer will remain.

The cloud is classic quantum uncertainty and Pamela Colman Smith's cards are full of it. Billowing clouds of potential delivery and hypothetical reality. Nothing can happen until this is made real. This is really part of the Tarot experience; there is no point drawing cards in a cynical way, as the trick with quantum reality is to accept,

trust and 'know' things to be true. When you step into Pamela and Arthur's world of Tarot, you have to enter completely. There is no point distrusting the experience or being sceptical about what is there. This card is about buying into what and who is on offer.

At the moment, for all that this card is so joyful, it is an unpoped universe. Christenings are often suggested by this card, as I've mentioned, or there is a spiritually fulfilling and emotionally rewarding passage in a relationship or family situation which feels as if something has been 'Christened' or blessed and brought into being. It's a lovely image. Refreshing, promising, deep and complex. Reach for what you see.

Something sacred is on offer here but it must be brought down to earth and integrated into your life. The imagery of water suggests the water signs, as well as the cup; Cancer is mother's milk. Scorpio is the blood, sweat and tears (and other bodily fluids) of a passionate marriage. Pisces is just tears.

The tremendous emotional and spiritual surge of the Ace of Cups is profoundly moving, because it describes something that is so deeply felt between two or more people. This is the stuff of great music or poetry; great art or spiritual experiences. It is also of tremendous religious importance to some Roman Catholics, as this imagery ties in with Sunday Mass.

On a more basic note, a gold cup is a gold cup. This can be the sportsman's victory, held aloft, no matter if we're talking The World Cup in football or The Grand Prix. The winner of The Melbourne Cup or any other cup is suggested here, depending on who you are, and what your question is. This is so much more than a win on the board, though. It transcends the metal in the hand, and becomes so much more than it is, spiritually. You might say England's 1966 World Cup, in Bobby Moore's hands, with Her Majesty the Queen in attendance, on British soil against Germany, twenty years or so after the war had that kind of resonance.

II TWO OF CUPS

We all recognise this moment between lovers in the card (or potential lovers). A couple who have argued are about to make up, if she agrees. Two people who are dating and attracted need to cross the bridge between each other, to find intimacy and trust. This is about unspoken communication, as much as it is about finding the right words. Yet, there is so much potential for happiness in this card. An engagement or marriage. A child. Perhaps just an amicable split if the relationship is on the rocks and needs a decision. Agreeing to differ, can be one outcome of this Two of Cups card. Getting together is another! It really depends on what your question is and where your life stands, when you pull the card.

Leo the lion is overhead with his rulership of the Fifth House, which in turn describes pregnancy, stepchildren, shared godchildren, nieces and nephews - adoption - and parenting. You should look to Leo and the Fifth House in your chart, or the other person's.

Leo the lion is about sexual relationships which might produce babies, or lead to step-parenting. It is also about decisions made not to have children, but to adopt nieces, nephews or godchildren as one's own. The pretenders to the throne, as well as the heirs to the throne, are shown by Leo. Thus, this card can appear when a couple are deciding to spend money on I.V.F. treatment, or if child custody in a separation is a key question. Then there is the matter of having babies at all, and making the commitment of marriage. The lion hovers over the couple, impossible to ignore.

Leo the lion and the Fifth House are also associated with unplanned pregnancy and abortion. The sign and the house are equally linked to infertility. You have to remember Leo is the King of beasts and the imagery of the sign in this card is quite powerful. The King can have children out of wedlock. The king's heirs and spares are integral to any marriage. We also associate kings with court, and thus courtship and being courted.

This is a card of courtship, as one person tries to pay court to the other. Just look at the body language. There is tremendous hesitation here, but also the sense that something/someone bigger than both of you, is dictating

what will happen. The entire situation is surrounded by a Leo and Fifth House question; who succeeds either or both of you on the throne and how is that to happen? Will it be a godchild or your own sons and daughters?

A characteristic Kent cottage (Pamela created her deck in the countryside there) is in the background, representing a lovely home. Background details always matter in these cards. The question of property is part and parcel of what must be discussed or agreed. Thus, the association of this card with two people moving in together, or breaking up and selling the apartment.

The asteroid Aesculapius is shown by the snakes entwined on the rod which also looks like a DNA symbol the double helix. You might look for that in the charts. This asteroid is about what comes back from the brink. Who or what has been written off, but comes to life again, rather miraculously. Thus, this card can show reconciliation. Two people have parted company but, amazingly, given all that has been said and done they are now ready to talk about making up. A child may have been involved, or the question of pregnancy may be unavoidable.

Cups are sex and emotion in the Tarot. They represent the signs of Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces in the tradition of the Tarot cards. What deal are these two making? You might want to look at Cancer and the Fourth House (family and property), Scorpio and the Eighth House (legacies and finances) but also Pisces (spiritual beliefs and religious convictions).

This card also works as a Gemini symbol (the glyph is the Gemini sign) and all pairs of 'twins' or twin souls are Gemini. One person stands firm. The other is hesitant. It really depends on your personal situation. Gemini is a pair, just as Libra (below) is a pair. The difference here is that Gemini is about communication, or a lack of it! You can see the faltering, hesitant attempts to speak a language that can be understood by both sides, in the Two of Cups. It is about listening properly and hearing correctly. Also, allowing the other person to say his or her piece without judgement or interruption. Perhaps it is Gemini-based, Third House communication issues between both parties that got us here in the first place.

This card also symbolises the Seventh House and Libra – couples who have to negotiate having a child, moving in together, separating or reconciling. Libra is about the scales (literally the two cups or bowls held on a single chain or stand) and how to make them symmetrical. This brings us back to the idea of deal-making, no matter if the deal is to come together at last, or part company. Using one or both horoscopes can really help if you are looking for zodiac sign or house clues. Is this a Libra question about equality and the law, or a Gemini question about communication? Perhaps it is both. You would certainly be looking at Leo and the Fifth House in either or both charts to see what the bigger story is. There may be a transit to a Leo placement, or there may be a transit in Leo. As with all Pamela's cards, the illustration is a stage set with props, actors and a supplied script. You are free to direct your own life by moving all these elements around until you get what you want and need.

III THREE OF CUPS

Here we have an archetypal experience of feminine triumph known to Bananarama, The Supremes, The Slits and other all-female bands. This reminds me of the days when our anthology of short stories, *Girls' Night In*, beat both J.K. Rowling and The Beatles in the bestseller lists. It was edited by myself, Chris Manby and Fiona Walker – three women who liked a glass of wine or two. We did in fact use our harvest and the books kept on coming for years. This card has personal meaning for me, but it will also have intensely personal meaning for you. Which group of women is this?

Tarot designer Pamela Colman Smith was close to the theatre world suffragette and lesbian Edith Craig, who from 1916 was in a menage a trois with Christabel Marshall and Clare 'Tony' Atwood. The three women here may well be feminists or lesbian lovers.

This is also an image of female solidarity so it may bring in the Eleventh House. Cups are related to sex and feelings so this may be a solid bond of sisterly friendship or something more.

Halloween is suggested by the pumpkin. Perhaps these are witches. This card is suggestive of *A Dance to the Music of Time* (Poussin) and astrology itself as the women could dance in either direction, hinting at Retrogrades in the chart. The mood here is happy, celebratory.

The Eleventh House is of course ruled by Aquarius and Pamela herself was a Sun Aquarian. She created illustrations for the nascent Suffragette movement at the turn of last century and of course, her sister did indeed win the vote. This zodiac sign is associated with community, equality and diversity. Also asexuality! It is possible that not every person in this circle of three is female. There may be room for a man here, with his back to us, but with feminine locks. We may be talking about Boy George in Culture Club celebrating fame and fortune with female friends, after the success of *Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?*

Pamela's card is quite pure, here. There is nothing lurking. The harvest has been picked, and this might be the C.W.A. (Countrywomen's Association) in Australia enjoying a Good Year for the Roses. There is no competition between these women. There is no secret agenda; just honest solidarity and sisterhood.

Cups are emotions in the Tarot and describe the signs of Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces as well. The three women make three sides of a Grand Trine; in astrology these three signs are always automatically part of this aspect together. It shows ease, flow and natural harmony. This is a delightful card to see if you are hoping for a good outcome with an all-female project.

Just remember that if the champagne is to keep flowing, there has to be continuity. That pumpkin should be made into scones, perhaps, or soup – but the seeds should be carefully replanted so that the harvest is ongoing. It really can be, as I found out for myself, all the way back in 1999 when *Girls' Night In* first appeared. It was an exclusively female venture with writers who went on to become very famous, like Marian Keyes. Today, past the year 2020, it survives as a series for children (a spin-off) called *Kids' Night In*, but the ebook goes on making money for the children's charity War Child.

This is a Minor Arcana card so it may not transform your life, but its impact can be substantial, all the same. Our series made \$3 million for War Child. There is abundance here, a sense of 'there's more where that came from' and the fruits of the women's labour, spread out all around them, suggests that what is gained could become the first step towards something that returns, every season. Minor is not always minor. What starts small in Pamela's Tarot can grow, with care and attention, and tremendous patience, into something really big.

These are three bridesmaids at a wedding banquet who have something special; loyalty, friendship, trust. From that, could come anything at all, in the years ahead. It's the Matildas, the Australian women's football team, celebrating an early win. Cups are so often trophies in these cards and this may be a netball team too.

So many of Pamela's cards are agricultural in nature, perhaps because she created them (partly or wholly) at Smallhythe in The Garden of England – Kent.

This card is about planting the right things at the right time, in the right place, then attending to them until they come to fruition. Life gardening is very important, though, as it's not enough to just celebrate and move on. What a waste of vast potential that would be; what is all around these three women should become the basis of something much more. Using the astrological charts could be useful here if you are watching the transits of Jupiter, which is associated with abundance, reward and happy endings.

He moves in 12-year cycles so perhaps this is a twelve-year program. Maybe it is just the conjunctions, sextiles or trines of transiting Jupiter which you need to watch here. The chart itself will give the clue. Has there just been an exact aspect involving Jupiter? If so, you can set your watch by it, as this planet will move around the horoscope, always referring to the original harvest.

The Romans associated Jupiter with the oak tree and the acorn. From little acorns, mighty oaks do grow. There is a suggestion of this about the pumpkin that comes from the seed. To really work with the potential in this group, look at the Jupiter placements.

IV FOUR OF CUPS

Cups represent emotions (feelings) or sex. Here we have someone who is being offered a potential relationship, of whatever kind – while being quite blind to the three solid-gold relationships which are there.

It's so easy to blame everything on the quality (or lack of quality) of particular friends, or lovers, or potential dates, or work colleagues, or family members. Here we have a clear case of someone being quite unclear about the fact, that the issue is this or her, own state of mind. They are rejecting who and what is there because they are ungrounded (note the hovering position, several feet above the air) and very closed-off. Note the body language of the crossed arms and legs. They are on the defensive.

Note the tree (family tree) behind. This is one way out of the whole problem. This person needs to get back to his or her family roots. To ground. To centre. To focus. To feel the earth beneath his or her feet and take shelter in the family itself, or at least to grasp the origins. Remembering who you are is about remembering where you come from. Perhaps the family is the hidden core of the issue. A bit of digging might reveal that. Or is going back to the family, the solution?

There is Neptune symbolism in this card as he rules both clouds and blindness. You might look for Neptune by transit in the chart, or transits to natal Neptune. There is a certain unreality about this person. How can he or she be so blind to such solid gold potential?

Note the way the person here is in the lotus position but not grounded – floating in mid-air. As I've mentioned, the crossed arms are stubborn, resistant and unhelpful. This is blocked energy, in terms of Reiki, which requires you to be open, with palms facing upwards, to receive healing.

This is an archetypal experience shown clearly by Pamela's vision, perhaps of herself; certainly of other people. A lack of enjoyment, a lack of appreciation, a lack of gratitude; awareness; perception. Everything is shunted onto the emptiness of particular relationships or friendships (empty gold cups) but the fact is, one never knows if the cups are full or empty, until there is some effort and investigation! How can you discover anything or anybody when you are not even on planet Earth with the rest of them?

People who pull this card usually instantly recognise themselves in the song *Satisfaction* in the portrait, or they quickly see that this is a picture of someone in their world, who may be mildly depressed, apathetic, unmotivated or feeling lost. The cups are all around but nothing is good enough. If the person changes, that can change. The cups can be enjoyed.

There is work to be done with the Four of Cups. Pamela's cards are really about transforming reality by transforming attitudes. Everything here can be changed with effort. The rather unimpressed, flat, somewhat sad figure could open up, relax, unbend. Surely this is a candidate for yoga (proper yoga, not the kind that leads to feeling defensive or ungrounded) or just sport. This is mild depression as a *physical* condition, because the person who is so removed from the real world, and so distanced from other people, is in knots. Pamela occasionally portrays people caught in such a way: The Hanged Man is another.

It's time to stop sulking or wallowing and start getting physical. Going for a walk is enough. The countryside all around is lush and inviting. Perhaps then it is time to go and talk to a medical professional, or just to understand that mild depression or low mood can be addressed by all sorts of alternative methods, from Reiki to running.

The person, in short, has to work on himself or herself, before we even get to the three or four relationships/friendships on offer. The tree behind is a tremendous clue. Look to Cancer and the Fourth House, which is associated with the branches on the family tree, as well as one's historic, cultural and local roots. Literally, where you come from. There are some real questions here about the parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and grandparents in this story.

You can see how much happier this figure under the tree would be, if the arms and legs were uncrossed, the feet were on the ground, the family tree was seen as a shelter (not just unseen background) and the glittering cups (three people, with a fourth potential face) were enjoyed, appreciated and examined for all they offer. The landscape around is there to be explored as well. This is a card which shows someone who does not appreciate all he or she has been offered in life, because of a lack of perception and grounding. An action plan is called for with the Four of Cups, far more than many of the cards in the Smith-Waite Tarot.

V FIVE OF CUPS

The cups describe love and sex, and sometimes bodily fluids. Here we have three fallen over, maybe kicked to the ground, and we can see toxic green fluid (poisonous emotion or bile perhaps) on the ground along with blood.

This might be a woman getting over the end of a marriage (one person) and a complicated situation with two children. It might be a man who has been let down by three former friends. Pamela did not randomly create these cards. Here we have blood, which is a dramatic symbol of 'that bloody man' or 'that bloody woman'.

It can sometimes show bereavement so you have to take that into account as well. This may be an accident which has taken someone, or more than one person.

This card has an awful lot encoded in the illustration, from the relief and release of the river, which might wash the cups (clean up the relationships) and return them, like new, sparkling and solid gold. There is also the option to just get rid of what remains. To turn one's back on what did not work out, emotionally, no matter if it is love, children, family or friends. This character in black could kick the cups into the water so they sink to the bottom, forgotten.

The cloaked figure is downcast, hidden and apparently in mourning – or a vampire! Pamela Colman Smith knew Bram Stoker, author of *Dracula*, well and he may have been in The Golden Dawn, the magical secret society which also included Pamela's collaborator Arthur Waite.

Vampires feast on blood. Emotional vampires feast on other substances. Perhaps you feel you are one of the solid gold people here, kicked to one side, or waiting (ignored) in the background, while some kind of human Count Dracula prepares for the next victim. This card can really be open to wide interpretation. Maybe you feel like a bit of a vampire! Do you eat people up? Chew them up and spit them out?

Look at the green fluid which has spilled. What does this mean to you? This is Chartreuse, perhaps, or Absinthe. Maybe it is poison. Sometimes poison is released when a relationship falls over. Maybe it is Crème de Menthe.

Two cups, glittering gold (solid gold, precious) are still upright and intact as we've discussed, but the brooding figure cannot see them.

The bridge and castle are important, as I've also mentioned, for their sheer potential. So is the river. The cups are just waiting to be cleaned in the water – or – will this figure walk away altogether and cross the bridge to a new life?

There is strong visualisation potential in this card, which can be 'directed' like all of Pamela's work. She was a set designer as well as a powerful psychic. Much of what she was picking up in 1909 would become the new science of quantum mechanics. Everything is a cloud of potential until we enter into the experiment and make it become, what it will be. These cards are interactive. Move the character, the cups, with your mind. Enter into the new potential home; cross the bridge.

There is emptiness here. The cups contain nothing, though they once did. There is also a sense of someone just waiting to shed a skin. To get rid of an outer layer of depression or grief. Dark thoughts, perhaps. The sense of self has gone. We cannot even see this person's face – all we see is the black robe.

Aquarius is the sign we associate with rivers (the water-bearer) but also Pisces (ruled by Neptune). A bridge is Libra, because it connects two sides. The blood might be Scorpio, associated with death and sex. The waiting castle is Cancer. Take the card apart and see what it means to you, as each of the signs will have very particular meaning, depending on your chart, and perhaps the charts of the other people involved.

This process of mourning, adjustment and 'the journey' will take time. It may take months or even years. There is no schedule for any human being and the response to loss can only be dealt with individually. In this card, we might see someone who acts very quickly, hurling the stained cups into the water, pulling off the robe of mourning, turning to gather the two remaining cups (solid gold people) behind – and racing across the bridge pelting towards a new future.

Some people can stay stuck in the mourning, grief or loss stage for a very long time indeed, but that seems like a waste, when everything one could possibly want to make good and start again, is right there. This is one of Pamela's cards which just cries out to be worked with. Whatever/whomever is therapeutic and healing could be the difference here, as it can be hard to shed the dark, heavy, robes of grief by oneself. A counsellor might be really useful here, or perhaps a Reiki master or yoga teacher.

VI SIX OF CUPS

This is one of Pamela's 'children' cards, The Sun being the other one that people know best.

Here we have the innocent exchange of feelings – not sex, just emotion – and done with pure charm and trust. It's child's play, as I've mentioned. Children like to go to birthday parties and give each other presents, but also to swap objects. When I was at Mowbray Heights Primary School we swapped playing cards, but also our Christmas presents. The idea here is "One for you and one for me."

In your horoscope, or that of another key person, we find something familiar. This card represents Leo and the Fifth House. The Fifth House describes the entertainment, education and activities which bind the generations together. Young and old. This is where might find theatre, music, riding, or a particular kind of book, like Harry Potter, which can be read by all the generations.

As I've said, this card is usually about children in a literal way. So we might be talking about your niece and nephew here, or two children in your class. It sometimes turns up if there is a childish adult relationship. So, for example, if two people are all about little presents and innocent friendship, even though the cups are involved (and cups are always about stronger emotions – being linked to Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces). This card can turn up if a woman wants a man sexually but he wants to play at being pals.

If we take this card purely as a child's world, or a teenager's universe, then we can see the escapism of a youthful reality. This is a bubble for these two younger faces. They are completely removed from the adult real world, with all their flowers and cups, in this little corner of the garden in what appears to be a very grown-up estate.

This might be the young Prince Charles and Princess Anne at Buckingham Palace in the 1950s or 1960s, left to their own devices, getting on with childish or adolescent pursuits while the adults are involved in the very serious business of managing the royal property and business.

Look at the man with his spear striding off to the left. Why is he leaving the scene? Your answer to that will be quite important as this card is open to such personal interpretation. Is this the father of your children who has dropped them off to you, for the weekend? Perhaps you get from the children what you do not get from the man. This card tells you to really relish and appreciate the children here, because they are not young forever.

Take into account the blossoming flowers in the cups at the front of the card. What is growing? How can growth be encouraged? There is something so promising about all that you see before you, here. The two young souls, who look as if they have escaped from a fairy story. The trust between them. The solid gold cups, which always show precious and valuable relationships. The rather impressive surroundings – is this a school, or a house, or a future university?

There is a coat of arms here and perhaps it means something to you. I have seen people take it as a symbol for Scotland.

As I've said, if children or teenagers do not ring a bell with you, then this may be about the inner child in you, and another. There is nothing adult here at all – no grown-up intimacy, no money, no mortgage, no mature dialogue. No sex at all! It's playful, naïve, heart-to-heart contact.

This can sometimes show the Second House or Eighth House. Exchange. What one gives to another, just as one sibling leaves to another, or swaps with another. Most of all, the signs here are Cancer (the property and perhaps the siblings in the family) or Leo (children, or teenagers, as a whole). What is it telling you? There is so much here to enjoy, if you are an adult who is watching the children or teenagers from a distance. With appropriate timing and care, you could ask to be included in their game. Their child's play.

VII

SEVEN OF CUPS

This is the most important card in the Tarot created by Pamela Colman Smith and Arthur E. Waite. This surprises some professional Tarot readers, because it is a Minor Arcana card. It is also less striking, say, than cards like the Two of Cups, or the Ten of Staves.

The card shows a person in silhouette, in the shadows (that is the first clue: everything and everybody is a shadow projected on a wall) who is confused by a billowing cloud of rich symbols, ranging from diamonds and pearls, to a skull and snake.

It took me several visits to Dublin before I understood this card. Pamela Colman Smith, who created it, was mentored by W. B. Yeats. Both were involved in magic. Magic spells and their outcomes are expressions of quantum reality. In other words, there is no single, objective reality. Science tells us (in fact has proven) that until we measure what is 'real' it can exist in at least two states at once, and logically, many more. It's like Doctor Who. Many words. Many universes.

What you measure with, defines what you find. What you measure with, is in your head. This is how astrology works. So many people do not understand that astrology is science. Quantum mechanics. The multiverse theory, which proposes that what we get, is what we see. A flipped version of the famous saying.

Astrology which rests on angles and aspects, divided from a circle of 360 degrees, is a yardstick for a particular sort of reality. A certain kind of universe. It's quantum uncertainty writ large. No wonder astrology has not just survived, but thrived, over the last 2000 years or so. It's a beautiful fit for multiverse theory.

The realisation of dreams, wishes and hopes by supernatural means is one way of defining magic. W.B. Yeats (very likely, the third man who worked on the Smith-Waite Tarot) lived a few doors away from – not a magician – but an outstanding scientist whose emerging 20th century field of quantum mechanics was also about mystery. Quantum uncertainty.

Across the square, Merrion Square, in the heart of Dublin, there is a plaque to Oscar Wilde, whose wife Constance was a magical acquaintance of Yeats in *The Golden Dawn*.

Across Dublin itself was the theatre impresario Annie Horniman, who founded her company on the back of a Tarot card reading – more magic and mystery. The Golden Dawn members had extraordinary lives. It could be said that W.B. Yeats used magic to win a Nobel Prize. Who knows? Only Yeats.

This is a card dominated by a cloud. Unpopped possibilities. Competing parallel universes. A multiverse full of ghosts, poisonous people (snakes), palaces, diamonds and pearls, victory and dangerous dragons. None of it is real. It is all a projection. The imagination, hope, fears and daydreams of someone living in a quantum world. Time to pop what you want in favour of what you don't want. Nothing is real until you look for it, and measure it. It is the act of measuring that decides which universe you get, and so the measurements you use (astrology, perhaps?) become extremely important. The most obvious measuring device non-astrologers use is memory, based on apparent years or months; birthdays; old calendar dates. Time is a construct. There is nothing real about it.

So, if you really want to get into this card, which for me is the most important in the entire deck, you'll begin by considering what you assume to be true about the past. Your past measurements of time. It is on this that you base your projections of the present and future so it's worth a much closer look, if you are projecting all these rich fantasies and horrid visions!

The person in silhouette here is nothing to herself/himself. Just a slide projector whirring in the dark while the 'show' takes place on the facing wall. The trick with this card is 'Know thyself' and to understand that nothing is real. There are only realities to find. You may want to use measurements that serve you, when judging what is 'there' for you.

VIII EIGHT OF CUPS

Just Walk Away, Renee! This card brings to mind a lot of songs. *She's Leaving Home* by The Beatles is another one. This is an archetypal experience. Breaking up with a shared household. Breaking up with a social circle. An organised group of people. A family. Perhaps leaving 'everybody and everything' behind.

The downcast face of the Full Moon suggests that the lunar cycle has reached peak squeeze. The Sun is always opposite the Moon on a Full Moon and here we have someone who is not exactly leaping for joy on his/her journey, but going because there is nothing left, emotionally. This is a classic case of there being quantity but not quality. There are people all around, but as Cold Chisel's Jimmy Barnes sang, 'You've got nothing I want, you've got nothing I need.' We might also think of Elton John and Bernie Taupin's classic, *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*. A disenchanted man, probably gay, tires of big city life and goes back to the countryside.

When this card turns up, look at the lunar cycles, aspects to the natal Moon and (in particular) eclipse cycles going back months or years, in the same zodiac sign. The Moon is a symbol of mothers, breast milk and fed babies. Here we have someone who is not being fed, emotionally. In fact, he or she is being starved. The cups should be full and fulfilling. They are stacked high but there is nothing there, that we can see. There is certainly nothing there for this departing figure.

The 8 cups here symbolise friends, family, lovers, former lovers and show solid gold people. The issue is the emotional climate, the lunar cycle and the times. When this person returns it may be a New Moon, a sunny day and things may look and feel so much happier. This case of mild to severe depression, anger or even deep rage, could become history, by the next turn of the lunar cycle. And – conditions can change.

Who is not fulfilling promises or potential? Who is an empty vessel? Who is devoid of (insert some quality here)? These cups say it is not just one person, but all of them. Yet, times change and people can fill up again. They can become fulfilling. Cups are water signs in the Tarot. So, Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces. Mother's milk. The sweat, semen and occasionally the blood of Scorpio sex. The tears of sympathy, sensitivity and compassion that come with Pisces.

For all that they are empty on departure, the cups are solid gold. These are precious people or valuable relationships with enormous worth – and could return so much more, another time. Perhaps. Maybe.

Will there be a return? Sometimes people don't come back. Some authors feel Pamela Colman Smith, the creator of the cards, was depicting a famous eclipse of 1909 in this card.

An eclipse is a blind spot. This person cannot see how precious and valuable these eight relationships or friendships are. His/her back is turned. Pamela herself did this, turning her back on British literary, artistic and Bohemian society and leaving for the coast of England and a simple life away from W.B. Yeats and his family. Her visitors' book in London, once so full, stopped – and she departed for the sea and the countryside, Catholicism and anonymity. Very few people in the village of Bude, where she passed away, knew who she was. So, given that Pamela herself is the creator of this card, we have to say there is a decent chance that you, or someone else, will never go back.

All the cards can be directed like a stage set, however, as Pamela was also a set designer for The Abbey Theatre among others. You are the director. Perhaps you want to change the lighting. Bring other cast members onto the set. Urge the central figure to alter the script. This card has tremendous potential for redemption, final reward and reconciliation. If you want clues about how this could happen, then pull another card.

IX NINE OF CUPS

This card is a warning. Given that all the cups cards are Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces (the emotional water signs) it may be that these signs are actually involved. There are many of them, and the cups all look the same. That's a trap. If you regard people as a faceless mass, and make assumptions that they are backing you, sooner or later one of them may break apart from the group, and when he or she falls, the rest can topple sideways or off. Attention must be paid, to quote Arthur Miller. No matter how self-absorbed and self-congratulatory someone feels about 'all this' and 'my people' it really is time to get off the chair and pay singular, individual attention to each solid-gold person, behind. Treating people on a case-by-case basis, checking that they feel fulfilled, have all they need, are in a sturdy potion – averts what could be quite disastrous, at least at one end of the group, or the family.

Let's look at Pamela's card from the outside looking in. A smug, rather fat man poses in front of his nine trophies. These are cups, which represent sexuality or emotions. Water signs, as I've mentioned.

Look again at the cup in the right-hand corner which is about to fall off. This man is so wrapped up in his own achievement, he is not paying attention to the individual people who 'have his back.'

One of them does not! Like *Ten Green Bottles*, if one should accidentally fall, it means many of them might. The fabric can be pulled away and other cups, topple over. So much depends on just one person, but this one person is not even on the fat man's radar!

This card hints at Aquarius and the Eleventh House, with its emphasis on the group. This card reminds us of the phrase 'He's got your back' or 'She's got your back' or 'They've got your back' and is very much about being supported. The semi-circle reminds us of football supporters at a Chelsea game in the stands, with the rich Russian owner beaming for the television cameras. Sports teams do turn up with this card because there are so many players, substitutes or supporters and so often, the stands are circular or semi-circular. It's the same with the theatre; if you think about the cast and crew, the seating and the director or star, you get a sense of this card.

The key to success for the person at the front, who may be you or another, is to remember that such a wall of solid-gold support does not happen by itself.

At some point you have to stop basking in the backing, and actually actively pursue each and every face as an individual. Put back into these people what they need. Try to enrich, expand and improve the separate relationships and people. Of course this may be a message for quite another person; not you! The ability to stop basking and start rolling the sleeves up, and pouring time, energy and attention into the individual is enough to turn this picture around. With care, with sensitivity, with time and effort, this impressive wall of support and backing can indeed become hard to topple.

The central character needs to remember that he or she is the first line of defence. The front line. "This far and no further" might be the message. Every group needs a leader, protector and defender. That is really the purpose of this person. Less smugness and more sharp awareness of this huge responsibility will also help turn the picture around. That wobbling cup on the far right-hand side of the picture can be stood upright again, and the whole, returned to completion.

Pamela and Arthur were in The Golden Dawn for long enough to see the membership fractured and divided. Pamela also worked with Dame Ellen Terry, and was familiar with Shakespeare. This card is not unlike Henry V, with its 'few' and band of brothers. It is an archetypal experience; how often have we seen Prime Ministers or Presidents get so lost in their own position and magnificence, that they forget about the individual? This is a great lesson for our times, as we go into Jupiter, Saturn and finally Pluto in Aquarius, the sign of group solidarity and the orchestra of community.

X **TEN OF CUPS**

Cups are sex or emotion and here we have ten, forming a rainbow ('Somewhere Over the Rainbow' and 'The Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow'). A rainbow is a peculiar thing; a beautiful illusion. Walk to the apparent end and it vanishes out of your grasp. There is a nice message here from Pamela, who created this vision (even though she never married, nor had children). Basically, keep it real. The rainbow is too much. At the end of the day, the children need to be fed and have their laundry put in the washing-machine. Husband and wife will grow older and have to deal with the realities of long-term marriage. Houses need repairs and rivers flood. And yet...

The couple are close, the children are happy. The house looks like a dream British 1909 cosy cottage. There is celebration here. The couple throw their hands in the air; the children are dancing happily.

This is a classic card for family and property joy. I have drawn it very rarely in readings for clients, but every time, the woman concerned has gone on to marry, have children and establish a happy home and garden. As I mentioned at the start, I read for a woman who had divorced a drug addict and she went on to meet the man of her domesticated dreams, settle down, enjoy a stunning house and in fact had three children, not two. The rest of the story is private and hers to tell, but remember a rainbow is an illusion. The rest is real.

In astrology we associate this card with the Fourth House of property and clan. Thus 'My people and my place.' You might also find the Fifth House here (children), the Seventh House (partnership and marriage) or the Eighth House (property as family legacy). Perhaps you, the other person or the children are going through transits to all these houses.

Cancer is the crab who carries the home on her back. Taurus is the valuable real estate. Leo is the children. Scorpio is 'Until death do us part.'

This card is fascinating because it's all about the space. The environment, rented or owned, lent or mortgaged, is part of the family. You cannot separate husband and wife, or children, from the garden, the local area and/or the home. It's a part of them. It has an emotional presence. So, we'd have to say that the zodiac sign of Cancer and the Fourth House really matters. This goes beyond falling in love with a husband or wife, or giving birth to sons and daughters. The ecstatic response of the couple to the home, and the joyous children, suggests the material world is a really big part of the relationships between all four of them. You cannot do this without taking into account Mother Nature but also priceless (or expensive) security and beauty.

This card is 'beginning' and not midway or end. It is the very start of moving in together, buying a property, inheriting a property, or finding a dream space to rent. The rest comes later and is ongoing. The children will become teenagers and young adults. The couple who are so tied to being parents, will find different roles in 20 years or so, and that could mean massive shifts in the marriage, as the whole point and purpose of them coming together in the first place was a son, daughter, or 'two to start' and then more.

Let us not be cynics, though, and say that all good things come to an end, but that does not mean life becomes less than it was; it just becomes different. The celebration, radiance and joy of the very start of married life is here. The rest is a journey, to be sure, but 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' is not just Judy Garland in full flight. Eventually it becomes the memory of something so precious, rare and unforgettable that it helps create the bedrock on which the future emotional life of this couple rests. Into old age, with a little luck, they will never forget the start.

PAGE OF CUPS

Here we have a fascinating, original, interesting young man with Pisces and the Twelfth House emphasised in his horoscope. He may be spiritual, religious, interested in astrology, the Tarot, mediumship, Buddhism or some other 'ism' that is his personal belief system and philosophy.

He floats through life, dancing with the moment, never really settling down or growing up (at least for now). In Tarot we traditionally accept the Pages as the most junior people in your world but sometimes you can enquire about a childish man (even a childish man in his senior years) and the Tarot will joke with you and show you a perpetual adolescent or schoolboy.

Pages are always younger than you, so this boy/man is your junior. He is showing Pisces (the fish in the cup) and Neptune, the ruler of Pisces (the sea behind him). He is effeminate or in touch with his feminine side, thanks to the pink and blue outfit. He would understand the Blur song, *Girls and Boys*.

He has something to give sexually or emotionally as Cups rule both. The fish itself is associated with the phrase 'plenty more fish in the sea' in respect of the dating game. There is something lacking in commitment here, and certainly seriousness. This is not someone to settle down with and have children with, because he is himself a child.

He's fun, never dull, not remotely in the real world and you need to know what to do with him!

This is a puzzling card but there are some clues. The sea behind him is also the usual Aquarius 'pool' and people pool resources in that pool. Yet here we also find Pisces (the other fish, of the pair in the zodiac sign) and all its spiritual depths. This may be Christianity, or it may be another philosophy he holds.

This is not a suit and tie man, or schoolboy (no uniform for him). A creative dresser with a tremendous feeling for colour and style is in front of you. He may be musical, artistic or theatrical. He is inviting you to join in the dance of life, rather than make any proper attempt at harvesting abundance yet the possibility of abundance is there one fish may be part of a salmon source perhaps a nod to Beluga caviar in the depths.

You have to wonder if he cares at all about catching anything, as he seems more caught by the moment. It would be up to someone else to stride in and start talking seriously about a business. Perhaps John West is waiting in the wings, symbolically speaking.

You may know men who are keen on fishing and who always throw their catch back. This page seems to be on the verge of doing just that; meanwhile the fish is gasping. There can be something cruel about playing with fish like this, or people come to that. Not taking anything or anybody seriously can be an issue with strongly Pisces men who have not grown up in the real world, and it can be tricky in a sexual relationship.

Within a family this is Peter Pan who never grows up. In fact, Pamela's world was populated with people like J.M. Barrie and she certainly had her fair share of creatives and Bohemians around her in 1910 when this card was created.

Escaping from the real world is what the Page is all about. He's about the vacation from reality. The fish is 'a fish out of water' and needs to go back in. Ask yourself who or what the fish represents in this card. He could keep it and cook it, but you have to wonder if he has any interest at all in getting into a kitchen, or anywhere near a recipe book, come to that.

With time, maturity, life lessons and the encouragement of other people, the Page of Cups can develop into someone who has so much to give. There can be a leaning towards conservation and the environment here; perhaps Sea Shepherd or Greenpeace. The Page of Cups is entertaining, but there is tremendous untapped potential here too. I am always reminded of Kurt Cobain (whom I interviewed) when I see the Page of Cups; not necessarily because he was younger than me (he wasn't) but really because he was a Pisces who played with life. He was an incredible dresser, a musical genius but had no interest in the material world. The swimming pool on the cover of *Nevermind* with the baby is a variation on the theme you see with the Page of Cups.

You would certainly look for Neptune transits to the astrological chart if this card appears, but also transits to natal Neptune. There is something not quite real about the world represented by the Page of Cups.

KNIGHT OF CUPS

The Knight of Cups is always good to see in the Tarot. Here is someone who is solid gold and who is also steady. He has stamina, a sense of purpose and something valuable to give you. That is, perhaps, why you should do at least half of the running here, so that he is not forced to make the journey to see you unsupported. He's come a long way, but also has rather a long way to go – and a chap needs help sometimes.

Straight and true, this is a man on a mission, wearing Mercury's characteristic wings on his helmet and shoes. Sagittarius is suggested by the horse, but Mercury is riding it. There is a lot of astrology hidden in this card. This may literally be Mercury in Sagittarius, natively or by transit. There is the wavy Aquarius logo, but also Pisces the fishes, on the armour. So we are talking three zodiac signs here, and one planet – potentially.

The cups are always a symbol of sex or emotion. He has something to give, but he needs to get there, to give it. This man can be courting you, or off to meet you for the first time after a period of internet dating.

In other cases the cups have nothing to do with the heart, or romance, but everything to do with a family relationship. This is the young soldier returned from combat on his way with presents to put under the Christmas tree. Unlike some of the men Pamela created in her illustrations, he is firm, focussed and steadfast.

He is a man on a mission. The Third House (short journeys) or Ninth House (global travel or emigration) is suggested here. Will he settle down? He might. If the exchange was the right one! There is a suggestion here of a new relationship, or a renewed relationship.

This may be the backpacker on a Gap Year who wants to resume a holiday affair. It can be the new face hired by your company who is moving from another state or county. This is an attractive, interesting man. Nothing can really be decided until he has reached his destination and settled down. You have to ask – is his whole life like this, shifting from place to place – or is this the last leg on something that looks like permanence for both of you?

You might say there are 'Many Rivers to Cross' for the Knight of Cups as he has quite a journey. Like all cups in the cards, this is a solid-gold symbol of something special, emotionally, which is being offered up, either for exchange or as a gift from the heart. This is an archetypal image of quest and delivery; he might be Sir Walter Raleigh returning to Queen Elizabeth I or the young Prince Phillip returning to Queen Elizabeth II after his travels.

QUEEN OF CUPS

I have seen women change their lives when they draw this card, as they recognise that all their dithering is getting them nowhere and that something or someone must be physically moved to a space or place, where there is a purpose. Women who are affected by drugs and alcohol (even prescribed medication) can sometimes feel quite spaced out, dazed and confused – and be vulnerable to the sort of scene we see here, where everything and everybody is ‘all at sea.’

You would look for a Neptune transit, but also a transit to natal Neptune. The sea is self-evident in this card and getting in over your head, is one outcome of wasting time puzzling over a particular person, without doing anything about him or her.

This is clearly a woman worth our respect (a Queen) who has a precious, unique relationship she does not know what to do with. If it was on *Antiques Roadshow* it would be priceless.

It is a cup, like all the cups in Pamela Colman Smith’s deck, but not any cup you have ever seen. It is fine, detailed, rather odd, and we would suspect a one-off. So, this person in the Queen of Cups’ life is not commonplace or everyday. Nor is this person particularly easy to get to grips with, but something must be done here, or the tide may turn.

In her past we find pregnancies that did not come to term, or the baby phase of her grown-up children. She is unconscious of this but it is the foundation upon which she rests. These babies are above her and at her feet, cast in stone. This is a woman who is quite unconscious about her abortions, or miscarriages, or the stepchildren she never took on, or the orphans she never adopted. More commonly, it is a woman who has built her world on being a mother, but is quite unconscious of the fact that she has permanently parked her adult son or daughter in infancy, somewhere at the back of her mind.

The Queen of Cups is all at sea, cast adrift, not living in the real world, far removed from what people back home would call normal living. This might be the late Elizabeth Taylor pondering Richard Burton, or the late Princess Diana wondering what on earth she is going to do about her latest admirer.

Of course, the cup can be a friend; a family member; a colleague. Yet in all cases the person concerned would be about emotion and feeling, for this queen, who is herself likely to have the water signs Cancer, Scorpio and/or Pisces prominent in her birth chart.

This is a picture of Kent with its beautiful white chalk cliffs, where Pamela Colman Smith created her card. Our Queen is drifting further into the English Channel as the water laps against her feet and she forgets about the real world.

This is a card showing the Fifth House of parenthood and relationships, and also Neptune, that symbol of drifting unreality.

The solution is to put the cup down and go back to the village or town with it tucked under one arm, where the relationship (a cup is always a relationship) can be found an appropriate place. At the moment it is a distraction from the real issue – babies that came/didn’t come, quite some time ago. The Queen would be happier with dry feet.

This is a trophy or a collector’s item. It may be a ‘trophy’ boyfriend or husband who is good-looking, rich or successful. If it is the woman’s son or daughter, there is something here that is so hard for her to deal with, or come to terms with, but still very special.

Actual movement – taking action – gives the cup a home somewhere in one of the villages or towns up on the cliffs. The Queen needs to gather up her skirts, hold the peculiar but golden relationship fast, and set about finding the right environment for what she has.

It may be a museum. Perhaps this is a former husband or live-in partner who belongs to the past, not the future, and until The Queen of Cups puts him behind a glass case she will never get on with her life.

Perhaps she needs to pass the cup on! Maybe there is someone in the nearest town who would make far better use of this than she ever would. Maybe it is time to let go of a valuable but puzzling friend who one never quite moves into sexual territory with; this sort of platonic pal might be the ideal wife for a single man out there, but until the Queen lets go, nobody will ever know. The trick with this card is to realise that it is about the environment not the cup itself. It is about finding the right place for such a person or relationship and that requires some common-sense, self-discipline and a bit of shoulder to the wheel.

KING OF CUPS

Communication is the key to this man. If you can make him listen, or read, and engage him in a conversation about changing his position in life, you'll get what you want, which is presumably some action and outcome. The ship in the background could be near his floating throne at any moment and he could jump aboard. You could join him. That ship could take the pair of you anywhere, into a whole new life. Yet, so much depends on him. The King of Cups can be infuriatingly detached and if he is not interested in listening to you, it is hard to see how he will ever organise himself.

The King of Cups can float forever. Our Tarot creator Pamela was identifying someone here who was either going through a Neptune transit, or having transits to his natal Neptune.

The King of Cups is pure Pisces and Neptune. The cups are symbols of the water signs anyway; Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces. He probably has one or all three signs emphasised in his natal chart. He has a lot to give, emotionally or sexually. Perhaps, just spiritually. However, he does not inhabit terra firma as the rest of us do and he is very hard work if you want co-operation and collaboration. He is living proof that 'No man is an island' is quite wrong; he actually is the entire island, all by himself.

This card appeared in a reading about The 2018 World Cup on my website and one powerfully psychic reader immediately predicted France would win. The Jules Rimet cup is in hand! Perhaps we have a football obsessive here who cares more about his favourite team losing on the weekend than he does about the fact that your son needs his homework checked. You can also see why fishing could be the obsession, with the King of Cups, or sailing, surfing, scuba-diving and so on.

Football or aquatic pursuits aside, this card is about a man who does not inhabit the real world, because he does not have to. He is all at sea but he appears well-fed, so he has everything he needs. He may be fishy. So slippery, hard to catch; elusive. Very likely, the only environment he would accept, is an island (another escape from the real world) or perhaps that ship, just out of sight. Whatever environment he wants, it will have to accommodate his tremendous need to escape. To go with the currents.

He represents a holiday from reality for you, which Neptune also does. Perhaps it is you who has the Neptune transit to your chart, or natal Neptune under transit. Women often fall in love with this King because he has nothing to do with mortgages or the housework, but everything to do with a vacation from the ordinary and the everyday.

If you want to get close to him you will have to come over to his side of reality, which is the trick to the communication between you. You cannot possibly swim up to the King of Cups and start chattering about the price of milk or the Dyson that doesn't work, because he has absolutely no connection at all with the mundane or the 'too real.'

Note, too, the fact that he has left no room at all on his floating throne for a partner. It's all about him and he takes up a lot of space. He is impressive. Substantial. Intriguing. Can he accommodate a wife or husband, boyfriend or girlfriend? Perhaps for a short time, but as I've mentioned, your best bet here is the ship. This is a symbol of an environment and a journey that you can both enjoy. It would be a massive departure for both of you. A real commitment for both of you. That takes communication and a lot of luck.

Does he want to get off his floating throne when he finally sights land? The ship is just behind him, perhaps ready for a rescue mission but maybe he will reach the shore faster. Will you be there to greet him on dry land? Can you see this current drifting period in his life as just an episode?

As I've mentioned, the big cup also suggests alcohol or this may be a pestle and mortar to grind drugs. Pisces and Neptune have long been associated with substances that alter reality.

The other possibility here with your King of Cups is that he is just going to dive straight into the ocean. His toe is pointing towards the water. Maybe he's about to throw it all away in favour of immersing himself in something else. Is it practical? Of course not.

There is a certain sort of King who is on the verge of total escape or complete disappearance. I need to mention this to you. Perhaps the King's face will speak to you, with this card. You do sometimes get this with a minority of heavily Pisces/Neptune types, who are so completely drawn to the other world of non-reality, or even oblivion, that they are forever on the point of suddenly disappearing from view.

ACE OF SWORDS

This card is full of power, strength and energy. *The Crown* on Netflix is a good way to think about this card. It is full of changes in the balance of power. Some are there to be seen (the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II after the passing of her father) and others are less obvious. If you think about the transfer of power when Prince William was born (the heir to the throne) that is officialdom – yet subtle developments like the increasing popularity of Diana, Princess of Wales in the media against Charles, Prince of Wales are less visible.

This is a card that tells you exactly what it is. A crown has been taken by force and is there for the choosing. The King is dead, long live the Queen. Or ... any way you wish to play it.

Victory is possible, but Pamela has shown one of her characteristic clouds, so this is a picture of quantum reality. The big win is an unpopped possibility or unchosen universe, at the moment. We are in the rather odd position of seeing something that has happened (a leader has been deposed and his or her title is up for grabs) and yet the clouds tell us, we have to believe in it, and accept it, before it becomes historic fact.

Clouds can also mask things so that nobody is really sure about what is going on. If a foreign power takes over the presidency of the United States by secretly blackmailing or threatening the leadership, there will most certainly have been a dethronement but nobody will ever know, because it has been covered up by clouds of 'masking' public relations.

It's pure potential, this card, with all its promise of new power and prominence for the taker - and it has to be made real.

The crown, symbolising the top job or leading role, can only be taken here by force. Swords are symbols of aggression. There is a Tenth House connection here, backed up by the mountains (Capricorn the mountain goat rules the Tenth House).

Mars rules the sword itself. Aries is ruled by Mars, of course, so there is a cardinal sign, Aries-Capricorn focus on this part of the Tarot. We might be looking at William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings. We may be looking at the liberation of Paris by the allies against the Nazis. What happens is swift. If we go back to 1781 and Yorktown, the Americans dispensed with the British rapidly.

There is a sense of anticipation, liberation, excitement and tremendous challenge with the Ace of Swords. The King is dead, long live the Queen, but how are things to proceed now that there is a transformation at the top? So much about this card is potential to be filled. All Pamela's cards lend themselves to active imagination, focussed intention and stage direction. By that, I mean she was a stage set designer in Dublin during part of her career. Thus, her cards are full of props (the crown) and often, vacant stages for characters to enter a scene. How are you going to play this particular part of the drama?

The scattered yellow leaves may describe the group around the situation, which is the Eleventh House, ruled by Aquarius. This card is so reminiscent of any election for Prime Minister, President or Premier. Losers lose, winners are victorious and the political parties involved break apart, with reshuffles and departures. Elevations and arrivals.

This card can describe Pluto as well as Mars. Pluto is always about a change in the balance of power. Astrologically, it is a mixture of signs and planets if you are looking for clues. Yet, a Pluto transit, perhaps a transit to natal Pluto, is very likely. The crown can be Leo (King of the jungle) or you can see it as a crowning achievement, or the peak/pinnacle of a career, so we may be talking Capricorn, as I've mentioned.

Here, a statement is being made, or a gesture has been struck. The cloud is the giveaway – it's all hypothetical until you put it to the test. Pamela worked with images of quantum uncertainty and her clouds are everywhere in this Tarot. Cloud-based quantum computing, as seen from an artist in 1909! What you compute about this card is what you will find. Was there a change in the line of succession or not? Did power change hands or not? Will anyone take the crown or will it remain hanging?

The challenge for leadership or the top job is not 'real' as such, it's a maybe situation. And perhaps it happened, and perhaps it didn't – it really depends how much you can see through the clouds. It's amazing how often the machinations at the top of power are covered up. It takes years for voters or the general public to discover what was really going on.

The laurel leaves you see here meant a military victory to the Romans. To be crowned with laurel leaves was the honour bestowed on a conquering commander. Swords are about battles and perhaps wars. This is Oliver Cromwell but also Margaret Thatcher. It is the English Civil War, but also the Wars of the Roses, the First World War, the Second World War, the Vietnam War. It is interesting that there are no people in this card. It's all about the honour; the title; the position.

II TWO OF SWORDS

Decisions, decisions. Is this woman right to be on guard, likely quite paranoid, about both sides in a situation where she is stuck in the middle? She has no idea because she cannot see. It may be that there is no threat at all, but she really needs to put down one or both swords, at least long enough to take off the blindfold so she can actually get the true measure of the perceived threats.

We have to be realists here and say she may very well be at risk from people against her on either or both side of her life. If so, it is imperative that she is quick and clever. The blindfold needs to be whipped off, both swords handled swiftly and a battle plan followed. There is huge emphasis on plotting, planning and strategy with this card. Rather than just sitting there paralysed by inaction and trepidation, this woman would be far better off tuning into the situation with her remaining senses (including the sixth sense) and coming up with a game plan to get away, fight back or perhaps – put her swords down if there is no threat. She is also in a position to flee the scene.

The lunar cycle is important here. This is a New Moon, emerging or just recently gone. Thus, it is a new beginning but things are on hold. Have a look at the moon's transits to your chart, or transits to the Moon. The Moon is about maternal instinct, mothers, babies, and its root 'mo' can be found in mom and mother.

It is not unusual for the quandary to be about having a baby (or not) or the role of motherhood with a particular son or daughter. The two sides, can be her side of the family, and her husband's.

Yet, the moon can also show 'the mother of the nation' or the mother figure in a corporation, business or company. This may be a caretaker or employer who finds herself in a very heavy and rather tense situation. There is always a sense of piggy-in-the-middle with this card. In some cases it can show Proserpina in the chart, or transits from Proserpina, as she was in danger of being 'Shot By Both Sides' – her husband Pluto and her mother-in-law Ceres, who had her in their lives for half the year, each.

As discussed, this woman needs to take her blindfold off, so she can see where to head next. The rocks will give her a path to the promising landscape in the distance. She can leapfrog her way forward. Yet, nothing can happen while she cannot see.

She is on the attack or defence, on both sides which is a very difficult position to be in, when you can't see what is going on, if it is happening at all. Defending herself here, is not just about one threat, but two. Is she right or wrong? She won't know until she can see.

Pamela's cards are all about action. Stage direct what is happening here. Work the script. Supply props or new characters. There are so many ways to alter what is going on and to introduce improvements.

To see, the lady in the Two of Swords needs to come up with a strategy whereby she puts one sword down, defends herself with the other, and quickly takes her blindfold off. At least then she can move left, right, to the front or behind and protect herself or get away. She could even smite her opponent.

The other fascinating part of this card is the potential for fantasy - illusion. Perhaps there is nothing and nobody there to threaten this woman at all. She is imagining or projecting a problem which does not exist. She will never know until she puts one sword down (leaves herself defenceless on one side) and takes away what/who is blinding her to the truth of her situation.

This is a card of chopping and changing, so it suggests Saturn who castrated his father Uranus, or Uranus himself, who was chopped and changed. It is also a Libra card - Libra describes both sides of a situation. The scales on both sides.

You can also see how heavy the swords are. She would be so much happier hurling them into the sea and going for a swim. There are so many options for relief, release and recovery in this card. What would happen if she called for help - yelled for assistance? Perhaps other people could fight her battle, if there are genuinely enemies on one or both sides of her life.

There is more empowerment in a silent strategy though, and this is the best way out of a very testing and difficult situation. She can't sit there forever, weighed down by all that metalwork. At some point, acting has to be better than not acting at all. A woman who is embattled can sometimes find this Tarot card speaks to her about what to do, and when to do it.

The large body of water behind her suggests Aquarius the water-bearer might be useful in her chart, or people with Aquarius planets could be of assistance. Here we have Her Majesty the Queen at the passing of Diana, Princess of Wales, with her media critics against her on one side, and members of Diana's family against her, on the other. Flying blind or 'feeling your way' at such times isn't really useful and it just prolongs a rather stuck and difficult situation. It is far better to have some kind of battle plan and be proactive. Then the guesswork can end and action can begin. The sort of action required really depends on staring the apparent opposition, threat or enemy in the face, on both sides, and understanding who and what is there.

II THREE OF SWORDS

Three can be very difficult when the heart is involved. A love triangle, usually, with two partners in a painful situation with a third person. Perhaps an ex who will not go away, a mistress, or a romantic rival.

The perfect cure is in the extraction of all three swords, at once, to promote heart healing. This is the marriage of Diana, Princess of Wales and Prince Charles with various third parties. Camilla Parker-Bowles was the most famous face in the painful saga, but of course Diana also had lovers.

It is unusual for three people to all simultaneously resign from a painful situation for the human heart. Yet, if you are the questioner here, it is clearly you who is the third sword and you can act alone if you must. Perhaps, encourage at least another person to leave with you!

Closer in time to 1909 when Pamela Colman Smith illustrated this card, Alice Keppel was the most famous mistress of King Edward VII.

This card can also describe two parents and a child in a bad marriage. I have seen just that, with a father whose wife and daughter gang up on him.

The trick, yes, is all three antagonists withdrawing their weapons at once – but to reach that point involves tremendous communication breakthroughs, trust, and transformation. Much as we would wish that were the case it is not always humanly possible.

Time is of the essence here, so the card invokes Mars. Have a look for that in any of the three astrological charts, either by transit, or by aspects to natal Mars. Mars is the god of war and the phrase ‘All’s fair in love and war’ springs to mind, though it frequently feels so painful it can be like heart surgery.

Unless ‘surgery’ is actually performed – emotionally, spiritually, psychologically - this heart will fall or fail. It’s really just a matter of time, isn’t it? We also think about ‘bleeding hearts’ with this card and sometimes there can be one of the three people begging for sympathy and wringing things out emotionally. That has to be said. It can happen.

The Seventh House is the house of marriage but also divorce and separation - and is suggested by the card. I have seen this card appear when three people are stubbornly fixed in a toxic three-way situation and nobody will withdraw (withdraw his or her sword).

Sometimes that can happen partly because people are terrified that the heart (representing all three of them) will suffer. Yet, if all three would withdraw collectively from this unhealthy emotional situation, at least the wounds could be healed. Life could move on. If that is not possible the onus is on you, to be a realist about this drama. Ask yourself how you contribute to it. How do you enable the second and third person to continue?

You might also look at Vesta in the charts, or Vesta by transit, as in astrology she frequently turns up when one man plays two females off against each other, so he can stroke his ego or gain some kind of power. This card is often a sign that Vesta is around. She is an astrological symbol (an asteroid) of the Temple of the Vestales in the Forum, where one man, the Pontifex Maximus, controlled all the virginal females. The gender politics was quite toxic.

The word ‘withdrawal’ comes with this card. Withdraw your sword. Withdraw the swords, plural. You really have to step back and look at the wounds and the potential for healing. Healing is going to take time for this heart, isn’t it? But whose heart is it? Yours, or the second person’s, or the third person’s involved?

One thing is sure. This is not a happy heart. It is not a healthy heart. There is something utterly doomed about this if all three continue. The only hope is extensive healing, and that will take time. Nothing and nobody can heal until one, two or all three of you remove the aggression, the attack or defence from the situation. Swords are a symbol of a battle; a fight; a war. That can be as engaging as love, can’t it?

Yet, once you step back from this card and look at it dispassionately, you should be able to gain the detachment that tells you; this is never going to function. It is utterly dysfunctional in every way, and even though what you three have is the stuff of rock ballads, operas, soap operas and French literature, it is hardly what you want in your lives, day in and day out.

IV FOUR OF SWORDS

With enough time, everything and everybody can heal and that is what this card is all about. There needs to be a long period of rejuvenation before life can begin again. This is not unlike Dr. Who between incarnations, is it? Waiting for Jon Pertwee to become Tom Baker. There is also a bright message of hope and renewal coming

from the mother and child in the stained-glass window, as I've mentioned. That is where the light is getting in through the cracks.

Now, this might be you as a child with your mother. It may be you, one day having a child of your own, or teaching an infant or teenager. The Fifth House is implicated here, ruled by Leo and the Sun in your chart. The Fifth House is about your own and other people's offspring, from babies to young adults – Millennials who are old enough to be your own children if you are the right age.

Rest, repair, recovery, recuperation and resurrection are the rules now. This card also tallies with the Twelfth House in astrology, which is ruled by Neptune, discovered in the same year that anaesthetic was first used in public. Have a look at Neptune, Pisces and the Twelfth House in your chart, as religion, spirituality, Reiki, meditation, Buddhism, Christianity and so on, often link to this card. 'I am the life and the resurrection' is a phrase that springs to mind. In Buddhism, reincarnation is of course suggested by this sleeping survivor.

The swords are heavy and hang all round the sleeping person. There have been attacks here. Perhaps an attack on the immune system. Perhaps surgery, as a surgeon goes in with knives, to remove what ails you. The attacks may have been from critics, or opponents, or even on the level of psychic attack.

It's all a memory. It's all been turned to stone. Like memories of battles past in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral, here we have memories of long-ago feuds and conflicts.

The Fifth House is also shown here, as I've mentioned, as the stained glass window streaming these brilliant primary colours reveals a mother and child. The phrase 'primary school' links to these primary colours for some readers.

I have seen this card turn up when a woman has had an abortion, must recover, and the chance of one day becoming a godmother is there, thanks to a female friend. As I mentioned, it is intensely personal and to be read for yourself and nobody else. What you see in the card is about you and may be unique.

All the Mars (the swords of conflict or aggression) rests in the past so you may be looking at past Mars transits to the natal chart, or transits to natal Mars which are now behind you. Now it is time for a rebirth.

The stained glass window holds the potential for a rich and colourful adult-child relationship. Teacher and pupil. Mother and son. Godmother and goddaughter, and so on. Yet, nothing can be made real until the transition is complete. The image is like all Pamela Colman Smith's glass and light – here to be actualised and made real. Prayer can be powerful with this card. She did, in fact, create the deck within walking distance of a tiny local church at Smallhythe and later in life, became a convert to Roman Catholicism.

The Fifth House and Leo, shining in the window, remind you about this part of the horoscope as home to the teacher, mentor and guide - who sets an example – and leads – a younger generation. Nothing can happen unless there is a deep and powerful turnaround for the sleeping or resting figure, though.

Aesculapius, which is an astrological symbol of resurrection, can sometimes be implicated with this card too. The Romans took people on the brink of no return to his temples and overnight, those who were in desperate need of healing found recovery, resurrection and the miracle required for restoration. This asteroid may also be worth checking in your chart, by natal placement under transit, or by actual transit.

V FIVE OF SWORDS

Mars is at work in this card. The god of battle and war. You can also see Neptune in the sea. There is a great need here to escape from the reality of recent conflict. Someone is hurt. In the foreground a fiery type (Aries, Leo or Sagittarius chart signatures, shown by the ginger hair, red shirt and trousers, and mustard boots) takes the swords away – smiling! This card is wide open to your interpretation as the action could go anywhere. How will this resolve? A sense of humour and a cheerful outlook can remedy most situations, no matter if there has

been conflict. It's rather like a grown-up striding into a situation where children have been fighting and hurt each other. 'No then, now then, what's all this about?' is the classic phrase, shortly before things are sorted out and the children are playing happily together again. On a more serious, adult note – here we have a wounded person, the antagonist or attacker – and the peacemaker. The key thing is that the swords are removed or it could all start up again.

The Five of Swords is about two people who have fallen out and a third who can save the day. Prevent future conflict or hurt. It is quite clear here that someone is a victim. The second person may be the offender. The person nearest to the 'camera' in the Tarot is the good-humoured peacemaker.

All of Pamela's cards are like stills from a film, or theatre sets, to be populated by actors and props. This scene can be changed with your vision. You can play with the possibilities. Perhaps the two in the background could shake hands and make up. It is quite true that where there are no weapons (or causes for further pain) there can be no future aggression. The situation is detonated or defused. You might call it pre-emptive strategy.

Pamela was herself surrounded by politics in *The Golden Dawn* so perhaps this card has personal meaning for her. The water behind looks very inviting! It seems silly that three people who obviously need to cool off, calm down, or relax are so close to the beach and so far away from doing that. Yet, the water is a symbol of future hope. Things could go swimmingly again, once hurts have been healed. An apology may need to be made. Even if that is not forthcoming, and the victim refuses to stop playing the victim (as much as the aggressor fails to make good) – the swords can be removed.

It all comes back to the central figure in the foreground who can see the silliness in human nature perhaps, or has a 'Chin up' attitude. We have to remember that this Tarot deck saw two world wars and the role of the cheerful arbitrator was really important to all the battles. War, what is it good for? Well, exactly. The situation only has three people at the moment but it may involve more, if a call was made. That way lies a really complicated situation which is why it is important to remove whatever is being used to attack, or whatever counts as ammunition, and get rid of it. Bury the hatchet. The last thing anyone wants is for this to escalate. It should be resolved as swiftly and easily as possible.

VI SIX OF SWORDS

This is a classic picture of a family who has had enough of 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' and decided to emigrate to a country they have never visited. A lot of British families did that in the 1970's. This does not have to be a family, of course. Those people in the boat are really symbolic, not literal.

Emigration, travel or moving away often happens because it is the last straw. The only option. The body language here suggests downcast people or even depressed people. Refugees, perhaps? Maybe you are in the boat, or just assisting. This card can turn up when you are helping a friend leave a bad marriage with her children.

It is always good to look at what is literally shown in Pamela Colman Smith's illustrations.

Here we have a miserably huddled woman and child being helped across the water, hopefully to better times (they are downcast as I've mentioned – the body language is clear) by someone who has the strength. This may of course be the husband and father, yet it may be an outsider. Note the Aquarius symbol to the right. A group, team, community or club is close by. We sometimes see this when the United Nations assists with the movement of refugees in war-torn countries.

This can easily be 'new friends' or old friends helping a move, too. This is the case when people switch countries and are given a list of phone numbers and names to contact at the other side. Friends help friends, by introducing friends-of-friends. When one moves, starting again is made easier by the immediate joining of, say, football teams or cricket teams.

The Aquarius wavy lines are prominent below the boat. Aquarius (the famous logo shows circulating air, as Aquarius is an air sign – but also the ‘pooling of resources’) is actually the title of a Roman water-bearer who supplied the communal baths. Note how Aquarius carries the load.

The future (the destination) has no colour. It is for the woman and child to colour in. Thus, the idea of a blank canvas. The distant shore reveals nothing. Pamela left it almost white. In time, other Tarot cards may show the possibilities and potential of the new home town. The new homeland. It is there to be painted.

Look at the swords in the wood. If they were removed the whole thing would sink. Thus, the swords – always a symbol of conflict, and possibly Mars by transit, or transits to natal Mars in this card – are serving a purpose.

They are being used to help carry the people away from what has obviously been a dismal situation. I have seen this card turn up when a woman has left a bad relationship in a hurry and flown to another region to start a new life. The swords have hit the boat but they also plug the holes in the boat!

Pamela repeats this idea in other swords cards. The swords serve a practical use. The ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’ have a function. Without them, there would be no travel or transport in this card. The boat would leak and sink. So, for all that the people escaping feel they have been threatened or attacked, they are in one piece, and the swords now help the departure and relocation.

The biggest focus in this card should probably be the mental health of those moving or escaping. There is depression here. Possibly, anxiety. Apart from anything else there needs to be tremendous focus on medical help; healing; Reiki; hypnosis; exercise; yoga; therapy; meditation. Something on this list, or even new to this list, will get the escapees into the right frame of mind to make a go of it, in the new place.

This card can occasionally turn up if there has been a rotten experience with an employer or business, and thus all concerned are moving to a new work place or even an entirely different industry or business. It is more commonly associated with personal or family departures, but it can happen.

The Beatles’ song *She’s Leaving Home* is one way to think about this card. An unhappy daughter leaves the family after feeling alone for years. Pamela Colman Smith herself fled London after miserable experiences that we will never know: she kept the story to herself. She found a very happy new life, as far as we can tell, living on the West Coast.

The great thing about this card is; there is not far to go. There is not long to go. These people are going to make it, just in the nick of time. The Split Enz song, *Six Months In A Leaky Boat*, might also point to themes in this card. Lucky just to be afloat. But these people *are* afloat, and the future is calling.

VII SEVEN OF SWORDS

Removing the means to future conflict can be a breeze, which is why the person in this card is grinning. How can there be a battle, feud or even a war if there is nothing to fight with? It is unclear if there has already been a stoush, or if there is the potential for one, but a sense of humour can help anyone, avoid anything.

Unlike the rather shady characters in the distance, this hero or heroine of the hour, is upfront, front-and-centre and feeling good about life. Energetic and positive. Hopeful and strong.

It is time for the weapons to be removed, so that the chance of any more conflict can be removed, too. This is a classic picture of the aftermath of the Second World War, when the United Nations was created and the big clean-up began in Europe.

There were questions about territory and staked claims. The tents represent temporary entitlement to some kind of space or position. Who owns what, or who belongs where, or who has the right to be anywhere in life? These are pertinent questions. The issue here, is what belongs to whom?

There is a definite risk here, however. The eyes are closed, if you look carefully at the features of the leading character in this drama - and this person is going to tumble and perhaps suffer injury unless there is less joking around and smug satisfaction with oneself - and a bit more awareness.

Time is of the essence, too. Leave it much longer and the huddled group, clearly carrying swords (as this is a swords card) could descend. Pamela Colman Smith was close to Shakespearean actors and was strongly influenced by Dame Ellen Terry, who was her hostess at Smallhythe, where the deck was partly dreamed up in 1909. Thus, we see shades of Macbeth here. Perhaps, Henry V.

Then, as now, the key to evading future conflict or escaping from potential battles, was swift action. This card is telling you or somebody else to get a move on, but also not to drop the bundle. Move fast but take a bit more care, or something could go wrong, here.

Five swords are too much to carry so the amused peacemaker will have to do this in two trips. What is at stake? The tents suggest territory, as I've mentioned. Ownership. It may actually be about a house; an apartment; a garden; a block of land. Perhaps, other sorts of property. Intellectual property. Now that's an interesting question.

This rather sinister group of people, disguised in silhouette, plots and plans in the far left corner, in the shadows. Black hearts under a grey cloud.

This is an uncannily prescient card, because Pamela's illustration foreshadowed the late 1930's and future British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and the appeasement of Hitler and the Nazis. Anyone who beamed about 'Peace in our time' was not looking properly. Chamberlain wriggled away with an agreement which allegedly avoided war, but Hitler lied. Chamberlain did not look before he leaped. The territory in question was Poland.

There is fantastic potential here for smart strategy - if one is smart. The issue of timing (how fast to move, before the shady group descends?) has to be weighed up against the effectiveness of the strategy. As with all Pamela's cards, there is room to move. Props can be brought in, or new characters. What or whom is inside the tents? Pamela created her cards at a time when the reality of quantum mechanics was descending on science. Her images are full of possibility for a parallel outcome.

The running figure with the swords is headed in one direction, but there are more. The idea of 'burying the hatchet' is very strong here. Also the word 'disarming' and the idea of disarming the enemy. You invariably look for natal Mars under transit when this card shows up, or you are looking for transiting Mars, aspecting an important planet, asteroid, point or angle in the chart. There may be transits of the Fourth House, involving the zodiac sign Cancer, as the tents are a pointer to territory and turf. Equally, as tents go with camping, and the great outdoors, and adventure holidays - you may be looking for the Ninth House and Sagittarius. It really depends on you and your personal situation.

VIII EIGHT OF SWORDS

A blindfolded woman is surrounded by fallen swords, which create a jail for her. She is also tied up. A castle is in the background - not too far away. She could cry for help but that might take weeks. The damsel in distress is here but the answer is not always a distress call. She would be much better off using her initiative and sensing when she is out of danger - then using the swords to cut the fabric that binds her arms and hands.

This card usually turns up when a woman (sometimes literally with dark hair) is trapped emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Don't get too fixated on the hair colour or the gender, but in my experience as a hands-on Tarot reader in my twenties and thirties, it is often a wife in a bad marriage, or a career woman in a bad professional situation.

If you look closely at the card you will see the swords are only just lodged in the sand and mud of the receding

tide. If she waits long enough the tide will come in and the swords will float away. That could be dangerous, though. If she cannot wriggle free, she risks drowning. So, even though these swords (representing the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune) are wobbling, she can't afford to hang around.

This is real Action Woman hero stuff. Once her hands are free she can take away her blindfold and see just how close the castle is – and other options, not seen in the landscape of the card. The castle is a symbol of a new house, apartment or work space. Perhaps, just a really good holiday – the kind that transports one. There is quite a distance to walk, climb or journey, but it is not so far that she cannot sense it.

This card encourages you or someone else to use intuition and the sixth sense, because when one cannot see (blindfolded, symbolically) there is only the inner, psychic sense to lean on.

Use who or what hurt you to break free. That is the message of this card. It is a symbol of Mars (action) but also Uranus (the process of liberation). So, transiting Mars or Uranus may be involved, or there may be transits to your natal Mars or Uranus.

It may be seen in the light of the Suffragette movement of 1909 which Pamela Colman Smith, the creator of the cards, was involved with – or Women's Liberation in the 1970s when her deck had its rebirth thanks to U.S. Games Systems. This is woman ('hear me roar' to quote Helen Reddy) but there is not much roaring going on. There is no point squeaking 'Help! Help!' because there is no evidence at all that there is any figure in the castle on the cliffs, or even just out of sight, beyond the margins of the card, to save one.

Instead, this woman must set about the determined task of using who/what hurt her, or threatened her, or encircled her, to break free. If this was an episode of Doctor Who, and we were looking at Sarah Jane Smith trapped by the antics of Daleks or Cybermen, we would be giving her stage directions. Shouting instructions at the television.

If the woman in this card senses she is safe (and she should; we can see no further threats in the picture) it is time to wriggle over to the swords and use them to chafe the ties that bind, until they are broken. The blindfold can then be removed, and the woman will see just how secure she is. Just how non-threatening those swords, thrown a long time ago, actually are. Just how free she is to make her move. To leave the scene. To embark on the journey. To head for that new home or exhilarating holiday.

This card advises planning, strategy, some caution, some persistence, determination and stamina. Yet, there is absolutely no reason why a woman who has been trapped in a miserable situation, psychologically, should not be liberated from all the restrictions and given the gift of clear vision, to make her way onwards and upwards. And far, far away from a mental prison.

VIII NINE OF SWORDS

The person with insomnia or even illness is using the first position in Reiki. This Japanese healing discipline asks people to put their hands in one of a sequence of poses. This is the first. This card is a very good example of Pamela Colman Smith's intuitive grasp of quantum mechanics. There is no single, objective reality. We find reality when we measure it. Every sword is in this person's head. It is all a memory, construed in a particular way, or a fear of what is to come. Swords are painful, sharp, threatening. So can the imagination be, or the memory, but nothing is real. The whole point of Pamela's cards, guided by Arthur E. Waite, was to empower people to take control.

The bed is comfortable, even luxurious. It's shabby chic. The bed itself (the wooden panel below the mattress) shows past conflict or a complicated relationship. That is what underlies everything. So, this is a case of 'making one's bed and lying in it' and the figures in the decoration are at odds with each other. One has to face the past, to get on with the present and the future. There is no point in 'sleeping on it' if there is something troublesome in the past. It never really goes away and here, it is at the foundation of what keeps someone awake at night or gives them nightmares. Thus, this card suggests it might be useful to face what one has 'laid to rest' but is still

very much there. Counselling can help, or a good friend or family member. Sometimes it helps to just pick up the phone and call The Samaritans.

Look closely and you will see zodiac signs on the bedspread. Pamela Colman Smith was required to learn astrology as part of her Golden Dawn training. You can see the glyph for the Sun here, but also Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Taurus, Libra, Gemini and more. Astrology here is a comfort; that is the suggestion. This is what Americans call a 'comforter' and elsewhere it is called a quilt. I find it interesting that the zodiac signs are so blatantly illustrated on what would normally be a piece of patchwork. How is astrology a comfort?

The greatest comfort of astrology is this: the cycles of time have an end point. Even if you are worried about your past, present or possible future, the challenging cycles of Saturn, for example, can be timed with a clear end date. And it helps to have astrology's wisdom and ancient knowledge, as a tool to handle life. Just knowing your chart, in the eyes of an astrologer, gives you protection and comfort. Like a good quilt.

The swords are memories or perhaps imagined attacks, as has been mentioned. There may be psychic attack. It is worth considering that, particularly if you do work in the field of astrology, Tarot and so on.

Nothing is real; it is all in the person's mind. That is the key to this card. Turning grey with worry is not something anyone wants to do – this person has grey hair and perhaps stress is responsible as stem cells can be affected by anxiety. The solution is Reiki, which uses the palms-on-face pose you see here, as the First Position – that is an amazing synchronicity, unless Pamela drew it deliberately.

We might also talk about spiritual healing, hypnosis (Paul McKenna has generously given his talents free on YouTube) or an appointment with the doctor (of course) or a relaxation technique to make sleep better. There are more options, of course, and everyone has her or his road to a good night's rest. Without the floating imaginary swords this person would actually enjoy a good night's sleep in what appears to be quite a cosy sanctuary. It is so important to understand that Pamela's cards worked as a stage set, to be directed by you, the reader. Remove the floating, imaginary weapons, bring a candle into the room, a cup of herbal tea, perhaps a friendly cat or dog – and this is the very picture of domestic harmony and a good night's sleep.

X TEN OF SWORDS

One of Pamela's bleakest images. We might think of 'the many against the one' with this picture. It can be a classic illustration of a peer group engaged in bullying at a school, or a political party which turns against its own leader and forces a spill for leadership. This is also the footballer whose team becomes critical, en masse, of their captain. It can be a symbol of mutiny. However, it can also be a picture of the odds being stacked against one, from a situation where the numbers are unfair.

It is important to remember that Pamela Colman Smith created this deck, on Arthur Waite's instruction, with perhaps posterity in mind. It was to be a deck for the ages. Thus, it had to see Tarot readers through two world wars. This may have been a picture of a lone soldier, pilot or sailor, trying to survive a collective attack by the enemy.

Look at the new day dawning in the background. This person is not finished yet. The hands show crossed fingers (perhaps luck is with them) or the Buddhist Vitarka Mudra symbol, which means debate, or discussion. Will this person rise again and walk away? It's up for debate.

Crucially you need to look at the group of aggressors who stabbed, not from the front, but the back.

The Golden Dawn is literally seen over the mountains. As a magical group it was notorious for its in-fighting and some of the people in Pamela and Arthur's circle did feel a sense of betrayal.

Look to the Eleventh House of the astrological chart here. It rules the collective. The Tragedy of Julius Caesar by Shakespeare may be referenced here. Pamela's life in theatre saw her moving in Shakespearean circles. *Et tu, Brute?* is a Latin phrase literally meaning 'and you, Brutus?' or 'also you, Brutus?', often translated as 'You as well, Brutus?' or 'Even you, Brutus?'.

Caesar utters it at the moment of his assassination (stabbed in the back) by his so-called friend Marcus Junius Brutus, recognising him as one of the pack.

The choice belongs to the figure on the ground. A new day will dawn. The sun will rise again. The landscape will look brighter, lighter and clearer, and there is a chance to get up and walk away; to begin a new life. There is also the sea – perhaps a boat can arrive and transport the survivor to a new existence. The choice is very much with the prone figure. Are these 'flesh wounds' to quote Monty Python and is this much worse than it looks? So much depends on the person who is crossing his/her fingers or striking a meditation pose. It's really about willpower; the capacity to heal oneself, or request healing (the prone figure can always yell for help and hope someone comes).

It can also go the other way. Faced with such a mammoth task ahead, rather than revive, recover and relaunch the victim of this group effort may decide to just give up and call it a day. This card holds a very clear choice.

PAGE OF SWORDS

Pages were young male servants in the theatre of Pamela's day. This is a younger male, with the red boots of Aries (its colour is red) and the sword of Mars, the ruler of Aries. Of course girls and young women can dress up as young men. Who is this person? Perhaps it is a youthful and energetic part of your own personality, as much as a real person, as I've mentioned. Perhaps look to Mars in your chart, natively or by transit. Mars Retrograde, or Mars in square or opposition to other chart factors, can result in this kind of green light/amber light mixed signal.

We might associate this card with 'Up and atom' or 'Up and at 'em' depending on how you read it. There is a certain amount of testosterone here, if the person in question is a young man or boy. The weather depicted by Pamela in this card is significant. This is not a calm, quiet, sunny day. It is really a day of tremendous gusts of wind, blowing us around, in search of a new direction. West, East, North or South? The page is unsure.

The family tree to the left is blown sideways. This may be significant, if relatives or close family members are switching direction, or if there is some kind of disruption. Perhaps someone has come home to stay, or there is a departure. Maybe there is family politics, so the tree of one's ancestors is being shaken. This seems to be part of the story, although it is in the background. It may be a background issue, or belong to the past, thus influencing the drive, personality and mixed feelings of this Page of Swords.

The group of birds, symbolising the Eleventh House, is scattering. In Pamela's cards, read every detail. She knew groups very well, having been in The Golden Dawn (which indeed scattered its membership) and also involved in the Suffragette movement of early last century. She was quite sensitive to the hive mind, or group mind, and it shows up in quite a few of her cards. Here we see it as a flock, disrupted by the winds of change. This is another background feature, so it may belong to the past, or be an element of the situation approaching from the future.

Note that yellow, the colour of fear, is here too. The colours in Pamela's cards really matter.

Saturn is a pale yellow colour and symbolises delays. This page is hesitating. Stay or go? Thrust and parry or head back? The winds of change are urging the page East but one foot is still turning West. This idea of turning on one's heel, is really important if you are looking at the astrological chart, because we may be seeing a retrograde planet somewhere; likely Mars, but possibly Saturn (yellow) or even Mercury. There is a feeling of 'Should I Stay, Or Should I Go?' here, like The Clash anthem. If he goes there will be trouble, but if he stays it will be doubled...

KNIGHT OF SWORDS

The Knight of Swords is a younger man, who drives fast on his motorbike, or in his car. In his speed boat or on his jet ski. In Ancient Rome he would have been galloping on his horse, of course. He lives for the moment and responds in the heat of the moment, too.

He is a symbol of Mars and Aries in astrology. An energetic, fierce, fast and furious man wearing red (the Aries/Mars colour) hurtling at breakneck speed towards some kind of attack, or defence. I mentioned circumstances and context. You have to fill in the rest of the picture, here. Is he part of a United Nations Peacekeeping Force? Is he 'the enemy' as far as you are concerned?

Very occasionally this card can be you. You will know immediately if this is the case. You will recognise your fast and furious intention and the impact that adrenaline is having on you. There is not a great deal of thought or contemplation here. Just pure heat.

The trees on the left-hand side of the card are being bent backwards. This may be a comment on a family in the picture (family tree). Perhaps that is part of the issue. The Knight of Swords is charging in to defend a family member, or perhaps attack one. There may be strife in the clan. You can see Braveheart in the Knight of Swords.

The family tree may not be a directly connected part of the story here; it may be pure background or history. Perhaps the Knight of Swords comes from a troubled background where male aggression was the norm. This is really for you to interpret. Maybe he has ancestors who fought in the First World War; the Second World War. That legacy stays with him in the background.

The horse cannot see; flying blind, all it can do is try to keep up. Who or what is the vehicle for the Knight of Swords' energy? Perhaps he has attached himself to a cause. It may be a 'blind' cause and so those involved may lack awareness or insight. They cannot see what you can see. That happens too, in war. And in peace.

There is a healthy warning here about driving too fast, or driving oneself or other people too hard. Accidents can happen as Elvis Costello noted. What we really get from this card is a sense of rushing, not thinking. Not seeing or understanding much, beyond the central, core mission. Or just the immediate reaction. That can lead to speeding fines or worse.

The rider is also rather blind. Look at the eyes and you will see the Knight of Swords is in an altered state. You might call it frenzy. The heat of the moment. We talk about 'seeing red' when we are angry.

Are there other ways to fight the good fight or seize the day than this? And what is the motivation here? What on earth is at stake? You can see the Aries glyph on the reins. Aries is a really good way into this card. Aries the ram is a symbol of male aggression where there is territory at stake, or the need to compete, fight and win. Aries the ram is linked to the idea of a battering ram – an ancient weapon.

Aries is of course ruled by Mars, which Pamela Colman Smith would have known. She created this image a few years before the First World War but accurately portrayed the rush to the front, which of course involved horses as well as riders, which claimed the lives of so many young men of her generation. This card was dreamed up in 1909 under the guidance of Arthur Waite, Pamela's mentor and employer, from *The Golden Dawn*.

This is the Charge of the Light Brigade, but it is also the Vietnam War, which was there when Pamela and Arthur's cards were popularly revived in the early Seventies by Stuart R. Kaplan.

The idea of harnessing energy and controlling feelings is very close to this card. Even if you are racing into an emergency, there must be time – even a few minutes – to plot and plan. To pause and strategise. Not everything has to be done in a single streak of raw energy. There is a saying: "He who hesitates is lost" but in this case, I am sure you can see that even a modest amount of hesitation could help the Knight achieve what he wants in a

more successful way. There is something so reckless about this flight of his.

The rest of this card really has to be interpreted by you as it is so personal. Some of the Seventies readers of this card (popular among the hippies of California) would have been in the peace movement and strongly disapproved of Vietnam. Others may have had quite different feelings about the war and found the Knight of Swords to be a valiant force for good worth encouraging.

QUEEN OF SWORDS

Is this you, or someone else? If it is yourself you will have instant recognition; you are clearly a tough cookie, or currently forced to be on guard, keeping people or situations at bay. This is a formidable woman who is immediately recognisable in history as well as modern politics. Strong boundaries. An intimidating presence. The colouring is red/orange so here we have someone who has the zodiac fire signs – Aries, Leo and/or Sagittarius – emphasised in her horoscope.

What is really interesting about the Queen of Swords is that she is also spiritual. Are those rosary beads on her wrist, or a traditional Tibetan Buddhist bracelet? And how can you be tough but spiritual or religious at the same time? This is the interesting conundrum about this particular queen. She is open, inviting the world in, but also defensive, keeping people at arm's length.

As mentioned earlier, the butterflies of Psyche, the Roman goddess of immortality, are hidden on the Queen's throne and in her crown. This asteroid (Psyche) in your astrological chart is a symbol of what or who lasts forever, despite tests and trials. In mythology, Psyche was put to tests and trials by Venus, her jealous mother-in-law. Psyche passed them all and was rewarded with immortality by the Gods.

If we take Queen Elizabeth I or Queen Elizabeth II as archetypes for the Queen of Swords, we can see some of this enduring power. Good Queen Bess goes on in art, in history, in literature, in film, in television. Like her modern namesake, she was a religious woman. The current Queen will go on forever, if only because her features are on the currency of Commonwealth nations – not to mention the legacy she will leave.

This, then, is no ordinary woman. No matter what happens to her, the beat goes on. She is also a survivor. Psyche put up with all kinds of torments from Venus, who resented her great beauty. You get the impression that the Queen of Swords has made it through various conflicts or battles, feuds or spats. No wonder she is so determined to maintain her defences, with her mighty sword. She has been tested. Now, she puts others to the test. She decides who comes into her space.

The baby's face hidden in the stonework reminds us of the zodiac sign Leo (the Queen to a younger court) and the Fifth House of pregnancy, babies and childhood. She may have transits in Leo; horoscope factors in Leo; cycles which were/are important in the Fifth House. A great deal of who this woman is, rests on the babies and infants from her past – or the pregnancies. Perhaps, the godchildren or stepchildren, the small nieces or nephews – as well as her own son or daughter. We can also see the ghost of lost pregnancies hidden in the throne. It really depends on who this person is, or who you are, but it all forms the foundation this woman rests on, even if she is entirely unconscious of it.

The sword is pure Mars. This is a posture of defence. You can approach Her Majesty but only so far. She will smite you if she wants to. She will put the sword down, but only if she wishes. There is a strong message here about turf and territory.

On the left, the family tree is blowing sideways – the winds of change. This has happened and is still affecting her, or is taking place now. Relatives may be displaced, for example, or there could be separations, departures, arrivals within the clan. Differences or difficult episodes, showing some kind of turmoil. It's very much in the background but it adds to the picture and expands the information about this woman. Again, we are reminded of both Queen Elizabeth I and her sister Mary, and the current monarch and her family dramas.

Our Queen of Swords wears either a Roman Catholic rosary, a Tibetan Buddhist piece of jewellery – or perhaps a red string bracelet, which is a sacred Hindu piece of jewellery which wards off evil. The idea of being protected, is strong with this card. Here is a woman who cares deeply about feeling safe and being safe, too, on the spiritual plane as well as the earthly one. So, with this card, you really have to look at her tactics, tools and strategy.

Pamela's quantum clouds are on her robes and in the sky and a single bird flies over her head. The clouds may also be smoke, a symbol for the planet Neptune. This card, thus, lends itself to stage direction, conscious creation and deliberate choice. All Pamela's cards are examples of quantum uncertainty and the reality of parallel universes.

The Queen of Swords can be adjusted. Her props can change. Others can come into the card. Her furniture can be altered. Everything about this picture suggests there are many, many ways to feel protected and be defended. Perhaps that big, heavy sword is a burden and there are other possibilities? And who or what is unseen, beyond the margins of the card, to confront this woman so much, that her entire being is devoted to filtering who can come in, and who must stay away?

KING OF SWORDS

This man can axe people (sack them) or make budget cuts. That is what his sword is for. He is powerful, intimidating and confronting. There are quite a few cards in Pamela's deck which suggest Mars in astrology and this is one of them. There is cold and controlled anger here. This man is a coiled spring. He is the kind of human being who populated the war that arrived in Pamela's lifetime, but also the Second World War too. We talk about 'bloodless anger' and the pallor of the King's face suggests that this is someone who has felt all the emotion but tightly marshalled it. What we are left with is someone who is potentially lethal.

Of course, in civilised modern life (and we would hope you and he have a civilised modern life!) the King is just the tough former husband; the difficult partner; the intimidating boss; the hard taskmaster father. It is unusual to find the armed services here, although it can happen. The brutal businessman is a good example of the King of Swords today. The property developer who does not care who or what he destroys.

The butterflies on the King's throne suggest Psyche, a horoscope symbol of what lasts forever. Psyche's representation, the butterfly, can also be found on the Queen of Swords card, too. Perhaps it is the strongest and most formidable people who leave behind, the longest legacies. This is certainly true if you think about military figures past; The Duke of Wellington sculpted in stone and lending his name to a New Zealand city as well as a famous kind of boot!

The Queen and King of Swords, with their butterflies, remind us that what is carved out, endures. Like his female counterpart, the King of Swords hacks out a reputation, or cuts his legacy.

The story of Cupid and Psyche is being told on his throne and perhaps the asteroid Cupido in astrology is also part of his past. To the Romans, Cupido was the lover of Psyche, who was put to tests and trials by his mother Venus, and rewarded with immortality. This intensely romantic story has been captured in sculpture and it's there in his background. Part of his back story involves a love that never died, or never dies. The King of Swords is not conscious of it, no, not at all – but it is there, forming part of his background.

You can see another couple (a pair of love birds) to the right of him. It's interesting that someone so apparently cut off from human emotions, should be surrounded by so many symbols of past or potential future romance. Perhaps that is what has made him, the way he is. The King of Swords may be divorced and angry, deep down. He may have been disappointed in love, or just married and entered into family life, but lost the passion that began it all. Thus, the feelings have gone, to be replaced by this classically old-school masculine pose of control and strength.

The family trees of both his mother and father are shown to his left and right. This is interesting, if you know the story of either family, as it suggests that there is an explanation from either or both sides, as to his character

and life to date. The family trees are there for a reason, even if the King is not fully aware of them. Perhaps he is descended from the Army, Air Force or Navy on one or both sides.

Note the clenched fist and furious, yet restrained, expression. A good man to have on your side when things are difficult and you need a champion or hero. A terrifying man to have against you unless you can persuade him to negotiate peacefully.

This, like all of Pamela's cards, is there to be 'worked' although it is rather more difficult than some of her other Tarot theatre sets. How do you change this character? You cannot. But you can introduce people, or new props, which make it less important for this intimidating king to hang on quite so tightly to that enormous lethal weapon. You get the impression this king would have to be dragged kicking and screaming to the therapist's couch, and yet any psychologist would have a field day with his psyche. This brings us back to Psyche (capital P) and the question about who or what lives forever – endures – about the King of Swords or his life.

ACE OF PENTACLES

If you believe that you want, need and deserve a large amount of money, and are prepared to reach for it, then you can have it. This lump sum or substantial piece of cash flow can be used to travel with, relocate or improve your current residence or premises. Those are just three options, though, and you may want to donate it to a good cause. Your attitude towards money really matters when you interpret this card personally.

A huge amount of money is on offer if you bring it down to earth and make it real. This is money saved or money made. Much depends on the question, but if this card is a general snapshot of the present, you are potentially in line for a bonus; an inheritance; a pay rise; an advance; a commission; a generous bank loan.

This card just came up yesterday when a friend of mine generously waved her usual fee for a charity project she will potentially save us several thousand dollars. It can translate into 'money saved' as well as gained. As with so many of Pamela's cards, this is a cloud of possibility. It exists, but only if you make it real. Money presents all sorts of mixed feelings, despite what you might think. Perhaps it should be obvious that a lot of money is a good thing; a welcome thing. This is surprisingly not the case for many people, and the way that you talk about money is revealing. Do you see reaching for savings or profits as grasping or grabbing, for example? Do you associate greed with money?

This point of view or mindset is important. Developing a healthy relationship with abundance is the start. It is quite true that some corporations and individuals give a lot of money a bad name. However, if you think about responsible business, ethical investment, generous philanthropy and so on, you can remove any mental obstacles to trusting and accepting what is possible. If you go back into your family's experiences with money, wealth, poverty, business, recessions and depressions, boom and bust (right through the family history on your mother's side or father's side) you can often uncover where family attitudes towards finance come from. This card alone can prompt you to do that.

This card is usually about a bonus, tax refund, legacy, pay rise or profit as I've mentioned. It can be used to improve the garden, perhaps build a shed or conservatory, or fund a trip away to the mountains. It can be nice to daydream, but then to actually set goals. If you have asked about the outcome of a particular professional plan, this card gives it to you straight. It could potentially deliver a great deal to you, financially.

The trick is believing in it, knowing you deserve it, and doing the work to make it happen. Until then it remains a tantalising unopened quantum possibility. You have ended up in a universe where you could gain, and not just a little, but a lot. This universe is as real as any of them and the next step is pulling down the lump sum to save or make, from the cloud of hypothetical reward. Yet – why shouldn't you do that? Why couldn't you do that? Money is, after all, the road to freedom. In this card it makes all things possible, no matter if you want to explore ahead, or stay put and use it at home.

II TWO OF PENTACLES

Some years ago I went to Bude, in Cornwall, where Pamela Colman Smith spent her last years. I visited the pub where she lived upstairs, and saw a stunning painting of a famous shipwreck which is part of the history of the town. This was an astonishing piece of synchronicity as Pamela frequently painted ships in her work, both inside and outside her Tarot deck. Her own life was occasionally financially stormy or insecure.

This is Scorpio and/or Taurus in astrology and the Eighth House of other people's money, but also the Second House of personal budgets. This man (as a symbol of yourself, or someone you know) needs to focus, centre and ground himself.

The money going out and coming in keeps him off-balance. The ships in the background show you Neptune. The economy is all at sea, tossing and turning, in his city, country or perhaps between nations. Rather than jig around, expending enormous amounts of energy trying to shuffle money from one hand to another, this person needs to breathe, pause and take control. To stop reacting to uncertainty and insecurity in the moment and to actually have a plan.

The hat looks rather like a condom. Is someone being a dickhead? A fine Australian word, but also represented in America as LOMBARD ('Lots Of Money But A Real Dickhead.') You get the impression from this illustration that Pamela knew one or two such men. The fact is, adopting this stance, where money is never really controlled, but always in motion, tends to make it the centre of one's existence. There is nothing else to do but think about it, talk about it, focus on it.

As with all Pamela's cards, created under the guidance of Arthur E. Waite, there is tremendous scope for personal interpretation. I will give you an example. The Mobius Strip shape (the figure 8) also resembles Elton John glasses, at a distance. Who or what is being blind about money here? Elton John's relationship with money, shopping and charity is well-known. Perhaps you are seeing something completely different, though. As with all the cards, you can step back from the computer screen, or the telephone, and see it from a slight distance. Reading things into the card is exactly what you are meant to do with it.

Pamela's cards are also very much about active imagination. She worked as a theatre set designer and you can direct this image as you please. Stage directions might instruct this figure (is it you?) to stop trying to make ends meet and instead trust the situation long enough to put the money down, sit down, and draw up a budget. A proper budget with more coming in, than going out, might be the solution here. There certainly needs to be time and space for other things in life, than making the money-go-round.

The tossing ships in the background can be representative of world economic trade. Have a look at that when you interpret this card, too. Storms do not last forever. The ships will perhaps be wrecked here, but there is also a chance the weather will settle and the journeys will continue. This card raises so many questions for you about what is possible; what will happen; what you can see happening; what you can make happen. Two gold coins or pentacles, might show two sources of profit (even) but a temporary inability to manage the same. Or, taxes to be paid, which is a very common scenario. Does a professional need to be brought into this picture?

III THREE OF PENTACLES

Missing money, assets or wealth, in the form of cash, property or precious objects. Where is it? Perhaps it's not even there. These people are in the dark. I would look at eclipses when this card turns up. Eclipses in astrology conceal, they never reveal. They obscure what and who is there. The darkness in this card; the shady depths; the blackout is really important. You can carry a torch, if you like, but how can that expose and reveal every nook and cranny? You also have to wonder at the tools being used for the search. You can almost hear one of the three explorers here saying 'It might be there. Then again it might not be there...'

This is a treasure map, but what a map – it looks more like a cartoon. The man holding one corner is a jester. A joker. The other person is a monk. The third person is rather short. Dwarfed. I find this interesting as an astrologer because dwarf planets like Ceres and Pluto are associated with searching; questing; exploring; seeking. She spent an age looking for her daughter, who was hidden in the depths with Pluto. Pluto himself is associated with all that is buried, so coal (fossil fuel) but also diamond and gold. A lot of people spend a lot of time and money searching for gold in Australia, long after the famous Gold Rush of the 19th century has gone. It can be fruitless. It depends.

Yet, what depends? Well, look at the three people and see if you think they are up to the task. Would you trust these three to work together? Perhaps not. They see like an odd trio. Maybe these are bands looking for a hit gold record. It might be The Jam or The Police in the 1970's and a great deal depends on the band staying together (neither did, though they did find 'gold').

The saying 'Two's company, three's a crowd' might apply here and the way Pamela has drawn the three characters suggests huge contrasts. The dwarfed man with the apron is a worker, is he not? The court jester is a clown; comedian; theatrical type. The monk is just that, a simple monk. A great deal depends on how you read the symbols or themes and apply them to your question and the situation.

For some readers this card has suggested the Jimi Hendrix song *All Along the Watchtower*. The joker and the thief looking for a way out. Reading the card personally is the solution with the Three of Coins/Pentacles as the situation may trigger all kinds of 'Aha!' moments of recognition and realisation, once you go into the message. For one reader on my website, for example, this Hendrix song was reminiscent of the film *Withnail and I*, where it appears on the soundtrack. That film was famously about a search for funding, at the time, and the central theme is the acting life – poverty – and the search for paid work in a guessing-game profession!

There may be theft here, or perhaps the 'soft' theft of an organisation or department not giving a refund when it should. We think about greedy banks and their insurance schemes who deliberately draw out the process of claims. We might also think about airlines making the process of refunds deliberately complicated so that customers will be put off their claims. Money can make some corporations or government departments pursue a strategy of quite conscious consumer confusion. The mystery here may be part of a corporate structure, designed to stop the public from ever attempting to gain a payout or their money back.

The monk has surely taken vows of poverty, but the Catholic church in Pamela Colman Smith's day was hugely wealthy. She herself became the hostess of a holiday home for the Catholic church. You may find a message in the monk. The Vatican and its views may be the story, here. Perhaps the monk is just symbolic of non-attachment to money. Why is a penniless spiritual man even involved in a quest for the three coins, though?

The role of a comedian in looking for missing money is questionable. Of course, funny men and women (entertainers) are forever on a quest for the hit show, or number one box office smash, that will make them rich. It only takes one success and the royalties roll in forever, or that's the idea. Maybe the person with the jester's outfit is not a professional comedian or comedienne, but in personality terms, is a bit of a fool. A joker. Not someone who takes himself (or is it herself?) all that seriously. A Dolly Parton type, maybe, or a Christopher Biggins. I find it interesting that the search for a sharemarket hit in 2020 (led by pharmaceutical companies who claimed to have 'vaccines' for COVID-19) was led in part by entertainers either funding it, or backing the jab.

Shares go down as well as up, don't they! The search for a silver bullet for COVID-19 (a simple solution to a complicated problem) is a really good example of how a real situation can be applied to an illustration that was created in 1909, over a century later. As I said, this card is personal to you and a great deal depends on how you apply the symbolic nature of the three explorers, to your own situation.

When is buried or hidden treasure, not? When it is tied to the sharemarket and what was valued very highly, crashes, because the product is found wanting. If ever there was a symbol for Wall Street and The Motley Fool, this card is it – but how could Pamela possibly have known?

The third person has the torch and is a hard-working member of the middle or working class (the apron) but is rather short. Perhaps this person falls short for the task at hand. The Second and Eighth House of finance, business and property, or Taurus and Scorpio are suggested here.

There is a tremendous need for the right people and the right strategy. Not the wrong plan, the flawed mission and entirely unsuitable people in charge of the search. Really look at that piece of paper in hand. What do you see there? It's at the very least a rough sketch. What is important about this card is the lack of delivery or reward. There are so many coin or pentacle cards which actually show solid gold, in the hand, or at least at the fingertips. This is not one of them. Buyer beware.

And you know something? This treasure hunt could go on forever. Perhaps this card reminds you of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It's intensely personal. Maybe it's the search for a cure for the Common Cold, or a vaccine for HIV-AIDS or COVID-19. Money in the bank if you ever find it, but what if you never do?

IV FOUR OF PENTACLES

Sitting pretty or looking greedy? It really depends on your point of view. The Cancer symbol is hidden in this man's encircled arms. He is hugging the money, standing on the money and it even adorns his crown. As with all Pamela's illustrations, this man can be you, even if you are a woman. Here we have a picture of the Trump family, don't we? Those must be Trump towers in the distance and the clinging to cash is characteristic. Perhaps you see quite a different symbolic message. This card is for personal interpretation on the deepest level. Is this Scrooge? Perhaps it is you, with four sources of income, wondering who to pay, or where to donate profits.

Behind this character, as we've seen is property. The fact is, if you don't let go, release and invest (or spend) you can find that the cash value of what you have and hold is irrelevant, compared to the rising value of houses or apartments or business towers. That is one message about this card. Bitcoin is all very well, but what about the skyrocketing value of particular towns or nations, or specific listed buildings?

This man is grounded, yet also not grounded he is floating in the air, if you look carefully. He's *Eight Miles High*, to quote The Byrds, or *Ten Feet Tall*, to quote XTC. A great deal of money can be a high point; it makes us high; we hit the heights of success; we gain from investing in high-rise (spreadsheets in the sky) or perhaps we speculate on investing there. This could be any of the four Beatles at the height of their wealth. As Ringo Starr observed, he got high with a little help from his friends.

The grounding comes from the feet on the coins/pentacles and the astrological association with Taurus, an earth sign, and money. Capricorn, another earth sign, is associated with high-rise apartments and the penthouse suite or top floor. (The mountain goat who climbs to the top of the mountain). This is a mixed message. One is grounded in money like any good, materialistic, practical earth sign Taurus is typical. Yet, here we also have someone whose feet do not touch the ground.

This card is also a symbol of the Fourth House ruled by Cancer (property) the Second House ruled by Taurus (cash flow) and the Eighth House ruled by Scorpio (assets) too. You can see the zodiac sign Cancer hidden in the curled arms. They resemble the Cancer the crab glyph.

Money can make us grasping, of course. The metaphor in this card is 'To have and to hold, for richer, for poorer' (he is holding on tightly, isn't he?) We think about clutching our money, or hanging on to our values, perhaps. Safeguarding, protecting but also grabbing are suggested here. We talk about 'money-grubbing' and maybe that is also here!

Happiness is here, though. This wealthy man seems satisfied, full, secure, abundant you would have to say it's a rich symbol of someone who is really well set-up.

The trick with this card is to ask yourself how best money can be managed. Hanging on and holding on is one strategy, but the buildings behind hint at the possibility of an investment in property or premises, as we've seen. You also have to wonder at what holding on to money so tightly, does to a person's life and character. Somewhere in that far-off city behind him is poverty. In Pamela Colman Smith's day, especially (in the Thirties, which she lived through) the towns were full of the poor. Perhaps this person is on the verge of transforming his attitude towards money and will give one of the four coins or 25% away. Maybe all of it.

The two big features in this card to interpret are the tightly folded arms and the feet on the ground/not on the ground. What are you being shown here and where can you take the card, in terms of directing the action or adding props, characters and backdrops?

V FIVE OF PENTACLES

Two people in a very bad way are in the freezing cold, one on crutches with a head wound and the other depressed with a downcast head. We think about feeling down with depression, be it mild or severe. Feeling downcast, being down in the dumps and so on. The other person is crippled by something, or someone. It is very important to interpret the two people in terms of your own situation, or that of a person you are concerned about. Are they co-dependent? Perhaps they are strangers thrown together by their situation. They may be two homeless people who have met on the road. Yet, this card can also show a long-married couple whose partnership rests on one being ill or having chronic conditions, and the other being burdened with mental health problems – depression or anxiety, for example. They go together, because they feed or supply each other with the necessary attitude, mindset and psychological loop.

Both are desperately poor, because in freezing conditions, surely you should have a car to travel in, or at least be indoors? This is the Britain of 1909, when Pamela Colman Smith created her card, and there was no modern welfare state. Winter is also a metaphor for being out in the cold, being left in the cold, finding cold comfort, being frozen out by society – or other people.

And yet, and yet there are five glowing, brilliant gold coins or pentacles in the stained glass window of the church they cannot see, or will not see. Then as now, the Roman Catholic church was a huge source of wealth, abundance and also charity. No matter if the source of potential donations, handouts or benefits is a religious institution or a bank (which also has its high priests and following) there is shelter here, at least. Beyond shelter or sanctuary, there may also be money.

This is about a blind spot so an eclipse may be involved. Eclipses are very common when something or someone is hidden in plain sight. These two people are walking straight past the obvious; the church with its collection plate for the poor and its central creed, which is the care of Jesus Christ for the impoverished. The Good Samaritan ethos.

Neptune also distorts vision as well as eclipses, if you are looking at astrological charts. Money is Taurus and/or Scorpio and the Second House and Eighth House of the chart. We may be looking at Virgo and the Sixth House, too, which rules illness, injury, chronic conditions – but also depression and anxiety. Virgo also rules the remedy and cure for all this, too.

The solution is for these two poor souls to step inside the church and ask for charity, which it is there to provide. To get there, they will have to come up with a different strategy.

The depressed person is the prime mover here. You might think about the crutch you see in the card. Is someone acting as a crutch to lean on?

This card turns up when two people are in a co-dependent relationship with both believing suffering is a way of life and there is no way out. One person is able to walk, at least, and there is no physical complaint – but there is depression or anxiety. The other person depends upon him/her just to keep going. You would assume the person on crutches has been helped along, here, but is now trying to go it alone. Both are so embedded in

their drama that they are putting one foot in front of the other, not very successfully, and completely ignoring (but perhaps, just not seeing) the obvious, glittering, source of warmth and potential financial support under their very noses.

The truth is, both could help each other. The person on crutches is a symbol of a human being who 'needs a crutch' which may be alcohol, drugs or the companion, here. Some marriages can function like this. The chronic invalid married to the person with depression. There is loyalty here, self-sacrifice and love, which is priceless (you cannot put a 'coin' price on compassion and allegiance) and we are reminded of the marriage vows. Until death do us part. For richer, for poorer. In sickness and in health. For better, for worse. Perhaps the church is a reminder of the wedding ceremony of the past, when these two were joined in the eyes of God. Now, the stained glass windows are here with a reminder. This card can certainly be taken in that direction, if it suits your situation.

The person with hunched posture is in a better position to act on the option of sanctuary, assistance, financial support, comfort - perhaps immediate accommodation or emergency help - although anxiety or depression will need to be tackled, first.

The brilliant, beautiful coins or pentacles in the stained-glass window symbolise a building, home or organisation which is not just rich, secure and constructed with a spiritual purpose - it is wondrous to behold. There is glory here, and 'the light' as well. Pamela was a Roman Catholic later in life and in her day, as now, nuns were the backbone of the church, giving all they had to support those in need.

This may or may not be a message about, say, the work of St. Vincent de Paul, or Buddhist monasteries which feed the poor, but whatever institution, organisation or person is represented by the church or cathedral windows, emits light. Amazing Grace is a hymn that springs to mind here. Lost and found.

I visited Bude, where Pamela Colman Smith spent the last years of her life, and found the church where she may have been laid to rest. On a chilly Autumn night, when all around was dark and cold, the church doors were open and inside, candles were lit, wooden pews were warm and there were messages of hope.

The stained glass windows could also symbolise a government department or benevolent family here. If you think about windows of opportunity, that may help with your interpretation.

The message with this card is - change your attitude - look up and you will see an answer to your financial prayers - work on your attitudes - get moving - make help happen. On a purely practical note, you'd have to say the key is the lead figure, literally leading the way, and his/her mental health. If that can be tackled, then all else is possible.

I sometimes have readers drawing this card who have no money, no job and no hope. They are living with a dependent family member who cannot afford proper health care and have drawn a blank. I suggest free YouTube healing and hypnosis sessions from generous professionals like Paul McKenna and Reiki Grand Master Sandip Jain, because although there are no guarantees that every expert will work for every reader, there is hope that one might.

This is very much a card about hope and also about generosity of spirit. People can and do seek meditation, distant healing, hypnotherapy or counselling to help with depression and anxiety or even get rid of it. Thanks to the internet, a great deal of it is free of charge and might just be the key that turns the lock in the door, that lets these two into a dazzling and promising sanctuary.

VI SIX OF PENTACLES

This is a symbol of Taurus and the Second House and/or Scorpio and the Eighth House. It is also very much a symbol of Libra (the scales in the rich man's hand). It's Robin Hood, isn't it? Or Mackenzie Scott, the former wife of Amazon's Jeff Bezos, donating billions to people suffering in the 2020 Pandemic.

When you give money away you create a power-based relationship. When you beg for money you also create chemistry based on powerful feelings. Beyond the simple truth that money will be given away here (or perhaps lent; this could arguably be a banker) there is a big question about what money does to the soul.

There is a principle at stake with this card. Justice or fairness (the scales) and perhaps a legal ruling. Pamela Colman Smith quite deliberately put those meticulously balanced scales into the image. Libra rules the Seventh House of astrology, which describes former, current and potential partners. The partnerships can be personal (marriage) or professional (business). Who are the two recipients of generosity? Is there a partnership here and what does it count for?

Beyond Libra and the association with former, current and potential partners, we find Venus, the ruler of Libra, and thus the scales, in the picture. Venus is about the cost of marriage and the price of adultery. It is also about the value of beauty and the 'reckoning up' or settlement that comes with issues about justice. Fair play. Sometimes, legal rulings.

The gap between rich and poor here is extreme. What will the beggars do when they have their cash? Is begging a lifelong pattern? Would the rich man let go of his wealth if it meant the extreme gap between rich/poor was less so?

I have seen this card turn up both when someone is in the wonderful position of being able to pay others, in a less fortunate position, or even donate to them, or lend them money. It also turns up when people are down on their luck and are about to enjoy the relief and release of someone helping them out, with a hand-out. The only issue, as I say, is the motivation of the giver. There is also the common-sense question – when people get back on their feet, as you hope they will, how can they sensibly repay the original benefactor? Will there ever be a repayment?

Here you have a neat picture of capitalism. The rich, who are excessively rich, because they are at the sharp, top, pointy end of the system – and the huddled masses down the bottom who have almost nothing. These are coins being handed out, not notes. And the poor are not being covered in coins, they are receiving just a few. Given that the millionaire, multi-millionaire or billionaire (perhaps multi-billionaire) in question has so much, one has to wonder why those in rags are being given just a little.

There are more questions here to ask. Perhaps if those with nothing get too much (too much 'something for nothing') they will never know the value of money. As with all the Coins/Pentacles cards we are led back to Taurus, the sign which rules values. Your moral, ethical and philosophical value system is intensely personal and bound to be triggered by this card. Not everyone likes taking charity. Look at the expressions on the faces of the recipients. Then again, some people live on benefits and quite deliberately play the system, according to some.

Look at the face of the donor. Look at the attitude and body language. There is a tremendous message in this card, behind the mere fact of giving or lending. As with all Pamela's cards, you also need to see if you can add stage directions. How could you direct this scene, add or remove actors or props? How could you turn it to your satisfaction, if indeed you have issues with what is being shown? This is *Live Aid* and *Band Aid*, isn't it? As always with this card, you also have to wonder – what happens next?

VII

SEVEN OF PENTACLES

This is a Taurus and Second House card, because of the waiting game. Taurus the bull moves slowly – his field is in the background. It's about what you plant, what you nurture and cultivate, that turns into financial reward. The potential here is vast but it's really about being clever, aware and careful. Thinking long-term. This card is a challenge to anyone who is financially or business-minded but it also raises questions about 'Now or later?' as a little can be accessed immediately, or perhaps the whole lot – but at what cost to the glittering hypothetical wealth of 'later'?

This is about money growing on trees – if you do the work. Nothing in Pamela Colman Smith's work is accidental or randomly placed. The gardening tools are just that: tools in a kit, for productive hard work. You reap what you sow. You rake in profits, with a rake. You dig for victory (Pamela's cards carried many Tarot readers through the last war) and you dig for buried treasure, too.

So, this is not easy money, but it is certainly money. Yet there is also a detail at the base of the card worth paying attention to. The coin or pentacle, not seen. There is something valuable right at this person's feet, but he is so dazed from hard work, or daydreaming so much about future wealth, he is missing the point. He cannot see the wood, for the trees.

There is Neptune in this card too, perhaps, as Neptune rules blindness and distorted vision. Eclipses also rule blind spots or things hidden in plain sight. The person here cannot see the money at his feet and so he is missing the point and missing profits. He is too busy daydreaming about what might grow for him as we've seen, or perhaps he has perspiration in his eyes, after a sweaty day of dedicated gardening. There is a useful message in this card to look twice, three times and look again – until you or someone else realises what potential abundance or value is being missed.

Should this character just take the lot? Take the money and run? Common sense says, if the conditions are right (the climate) it is far better to put some work in here, reap the rewards and reinvest.

It is harvest time, and time to put back into the company, for example - not time to grab and go, or even less productively, fantasise. Doing, not dreaming, is really required here. Cultivating assets is tiring, and farmers do it tough, but you cannot lean on your spade forever and escape from the real world. Sooner or later, if you want to protect your assets or do a lot, with a little, you have to get back to hard work. This raises another question about the value of financial reward versus the cost of effort and labour. What is the point of making money if you spend all your time making it, and none enjoying it?

This is a card which reminds us that money does not grow on trees, but it does grow over a long period of time. So much depends on that alchemy between the right economic or business climate; the right professional setting – and the effort applied.

This card can appear when someone has worked hard and is waiting for the projects or tasks to pay off. It is very important that the coin underfoot is recognised and put to good use, as I've mentioned.

I have seen this turn up when people have forgotten, or do not realise, that a bestselling book could be repurposed as an audiobook and made to make more money. It has also turned up, oddly enough, when a client has been asking about how to lose weight. As only vegetables, nuts and fruit grow on bushes, the answer was to lose meat, fish and dairy! (The jury was out on sugar, which is also a plant).

You can personalise this card to suit yourself, just as much as Pamela Colman Smith's other cards, lend themselves to highly individual interpretation. Analogies involving farmers ('Selling the farm') and gardening ('I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden') and fruit ('The fruits of labour') are all useful with this Tarot illustration. You can also add people, props and other elements to this stage set using the technique of active imagination.

VIII EIGHT OF PENTACLES

This is a symbol of Virgo (hard work) but also Taurus (s/he works hard for the money). The saying 'Money does not grow on trees' comes to mind here as I've mentioned. It has to be earned by churning out products, goods, services or projects. They are all the same, but there is pride in good craftsmanship here. This is the card of an artisan or craftsman. Perhaps, someone on a production line, but there is great beauty and value in each gold coin or pentacle.

The property in the background may be a fine hotel or a desirable home but it is within reach – it can be purchased or leased – if the money is there. There is an old-fashioned message here about the Protestant work ethic, and 'no gain without pain' although there is not much that is genuinely painful here; perhaps back problems, though, if time for regular breaks or exercise is not allocated. Pamela Colman Smith's cards work together in stories, as well as single card readings, and there is a direct link between this card and the potential spinal problems you see in other illustrations. This is surely someone who needs a standing desk or at least a balanced lifestyle. This card reveals the natural trine between planets in Virgo in the Sixth House of workload and work-life balance – and Taurus in the Second House of money earned. It is a down-to-earth picture showing the earth sign mentality. Grounded in practical common sense and sheer graft.

Virgo and the Sixth House are associated with the body. Poor posture, which this figure has, leads to back problems as I've mentioned, but perhaps you can see other issues with this very physical depiction of a hard-working, hunched figure.

The tights are passionate red, the colour of the sacral or sexual chakra. There is a question here about the body and its needs, as opposed to 'human as machine.'

Pamela Colman-Smith was a freelance artist who lived and worked in a period of history when her illustrations were very much in demand. However, she was also obliged to almost become a one-woman production line, to produce them all on budget and on deadline. She did, in fact, become a 'machine' as a freelance illustrator, managing to create all 78 Tarot cards, one of which you are looking at now. There is always something of her life and times in every card.

There is a major question here about the money one is paid for – and the value of that money in terms of the property in the background – whatever that may be. So, this is card about price tags and values as well. It's not just about the health and fitness of the hard-working, industrious figure bent over the products or projects, it is also about weighing the value of pay-per-hour or payment-per-job against the value of free time. One also needs to look at the cost of owning or renting a house, perhaps an apartment or premises, clearly shown in the distance. This may be geographical distance or 'the distant future.'

IX NINE OF PENTACLES

This woman is abundant, with a rich vineyard, coins at her fingertips and a lush property in the background. Who or what is the falcon on her hand? This may have personal meaning for you. It can be interpreted as an eagle, the bird of Jupiter. In astrology, Jupiter is associated with opportunities, growth, optimism, expansion, generosity, blessings and largesse. There may be aspects to natal Jupiter when this card appears or transiting Jupiter may be making aspects, too. You might look to the Second House ruled by Taurus or the Eighth House, ruled by Scorpio.

As I've mentioned, pace and timing really matter in this situation. Just look again at the slow-moving snail Pamela has popped into the foreground as well. This can be a slow market, or slow-growth investment. The snail tells us so much. It may represent a person or organisation you know. Patience is associated with the snail. Is there sloth or laziness there or just 'slow and steady wins the race'? There may be snail mail here, or a snail's pace. The point is, the lucky lady cannot see the snail or is ignoring it, yet God is in the details. This matters.

Everything in this woman's garden is lovely, but until she stops her reverie and comes back down to earth, nothing will grow. This is a symbol of the urgent need for investment, re-investment and thoughtful expansion and management.

Without immediate care and attention, the grapes are going to wither on the vine. What a waste of a vintage year that could be. Grapes refer to Bacchus, the asteroid, in the astrology chart, too. Bacchus is a symbol of pure pleasure.

Here we have a falcon as well, in his hood, which as mentioned, can be interpreted as the eagle of Jupiter, as this is the bird which sees the big picture. There is a suggestion here that the lucky woman needs to rise above her current good fortune to also see the bigger picture. To expand and explore beyond her own immediate domestic or business bliss. If she were to see her garden from a higher perspective, she might gain a different view of its potential. As the astrologer Patric Walker used to write, "Let distance lend enchantment to the view." There may be a person or organisation who plays the eagle or falcon, here. A messenger, observer or middle person. An agent or go-between. Perhaps technology is symbolised by the falcon, which could provide the broad scope of research and enquiry required to sweep the worldwide web for possibilities. Yet, much depends on the lady.

This card turns up when someone enquires about the financial potential of a project and is told 'This is going to make a large amount of money.' The grapes suggest Bacchus as a horoscope symbol and also Jupiter through the possible eagle in hand – and Bacchus was the son of Jupiter.

This card also reminds us that you have to grow grapes to make wine, but you also have to sell wine to make money – then keep replanting the grapes. This card lends itself to active imagination. Perhaps a gardener or two could be brought in. The snail clearly needs a safe sanctuary among the leaves so there is no risk of being trodden on or swept up. Sometimes, over the years, I have seen chocolate in this card. I did in fact turn it up in a reading for a woman who had made her fortune from the chocolate industry.

You can imagine a financial advisor could also be brought into the card, but there is also a great deal of monetary value placed on freedom, escapism, relaxation, bliss – nothing to do with bean-counting – by this woman. She clearly finds escaping from the number-crunching to be far more important than the calculator and profit margin.

There is also deep joy in her surroundings here, so this is literally 'everything in the garden is lovely'. It may be a symbol for rainforests or wilderness, preserved from logging and deforestation, and that is quite priceless. Snails are obviously a delicacy in French restaurants, but it really depends on how you interpret the card; the meaning is much more likely to be slowness/delay/timing as an overlooked but important detail of the greater whole. A snail is part of a wider ecosystem and its presence shows the larger health (and thus great value) of a thriving property or farm.

X TEN OF PENTACLES

This is the Eighth House, Scorpio and/or Fourth House, Cancer card. It shows family money. There is a legacy here. Property and money to be shared between three generations (and two dogs). Like all Pamela Colman Smith's illustrations of floating money, the cash to be saved or made is hypothetical. It is all potential until the moment comes, or the people in the card notice what is there, reach for it and claim it.

It may be useful to take each person in the card as a separate entity and reach the face and body language, the attitude and mindset, individually. The child is grasping the dog. Is this a symbol of a greedy child, teenager or Millennial in the dynasty? This may be the RSPCA making an appearance. Perhaps this youngest family member wants to make sure the family pets or livestock is included in the financial sharing-out. So, not grasping, but trying to be inclusive. It really depends on the family or assorted household, or group of family and friends, you are dealing with. Think about the personalities and the issues.

The dogs may be a symbol of Diana, the asteroid goddess who raises issues about marriage and children and the rejection of the same in favour of freedom. There are many astrological associations with this card, including Diana by transit, or transits to natal Diana. Her dog was indeed the greyhound. Diana never married or had children so her money had to be left to...whom or what? This card turned up once when I read for a dear friend who had not made a will, nor ever did. She had no dog, but liked them, and was certainly a Diana type. She had nieces and nephews but no offspring of her own, and the boyfriend she lived with, departed.

Is that a sales graph or a yacht repeated twice on the left-hand column? This is one of those highly detailed cards that speak volumes, once you peer into all the fine pen-and-ink work and personalise the message for yourself. The buildings in the card may speak to you. Perhaps the child does, or the dog just mentioned.

The old man may be 'my old man' (my father) or a symbol for Saturn, who is the bearded, white-haired god shown with a scythe or sickle. Saturn is associated with old age, defences, protection, vulnerability, caution and the realities of life beyond a certain age. We do not live forever. Wills and legacies must be made. Saturn by transit, or transits to natal Saturn, may be an issue for you or a key person in this reading.

The family members in this card are oblivious to the money (the couple in particular seem to be ignoring it, or quite blind to it) but it is abundant - £10,000, £100,000 or more, in Pamela's day, when she created this card. The digit 10 may be significant to you as part of an overall sum in this card.

The money goes around in this Tarot card as I noted earlier, even though the people concerned cannot see it. They could in fact reach for it and make it real at any time. Perhaps this is a legacy and nobody wants to face it, or deal with the reality, which is that older family members will eventually pass. I have seen this card turn up when the grandfather in a family has passed but his widow remains. She is 'out of sight, out of mind' in a care home but he remains as a spiritual presence, concerned about her while his son and daughter-in-law only have eyes for each other and the children are too busy playing with the dog.

This card can be (and should be) read in a personal way, unique to you, as it will reflect what is truthful for you or the people around you and nobody else. This may not be the case at all for you perhaps we are talking about a couple who are highly engaged together, because they have literally just become engaged, and the grandfather is part of a branch of an extended step-family.

This is a card symbolising the old-age pension or superannuation, but also the last will and testament, as we have seen, or dowry.

There is a fundamental emotional disconnection between the generations who seem set apart from each other. That could be changed. The relationships could become closer and literally richer, but it may take an understanding of the financial story here, to make it happen. The finances are obscuring the family. That is quite deliberate. They need to be organised. The individuals in this household or clan should and could be closer. There is another explanation for this card and that is, the spirit world has 'many mansions' and it is possible for some of the characters in this card to have passed away, already. That may explain why there are so many bubbles here. Nobody can see or hear anybody else. The idea of a 'bubble' as I finish writing this at Christmas 2020, is also relevant as we go into the Twenties, and so there may be questions here about family and friends, and the realities of the pandemic, and the serious issue of greater vulnerability among much older people, to health care issues. There is a huge amount in this card which is important because it pulls in three generations and two species.

PAGE OF PENTACLES

There is great reverence for money here, as if it held religious or spiritual meaning for the young man in the frame. I'm sure you've known men like this, who are enraptured at the thought of saving or making money. They may work in a bank or business, or a charity. It may just be a phase a particular man is going through. It is important to note that a page can be a girl, though. Or perhaps this is an aspect of your life and personality. The cash 'sings' though. From The Beatles to The Flying Lizards, to Pink Floyd, money has always been music to our ears.

The question is, what is to be done with the cash? It could be used to tend to the field in front, which surely holds good crops and possible future harvests. This is the Jupiter side of the card and it may turn up when natal Jupiter is under transit, or transiting Jupiter is aspecting the natal chart. From little acorns, mighty oaks do grow, eventually. And oak is a rich substance. Some priceless, listed buildings are made of the stuff. It is amazing to think it all began with a small acorn.

This field is a symbol of career or business building, or literally gardening. The family trees on the left are healthy and look quite inviting. Perhaps a relative can help. This is a solid family tree. Not all the trees illustrated by Pamela Colman Smith were this sturdy, but here have a family which has survived and thrived. It has weathered all sorts of storms and stands, firm and true, in the background. This may be the Page's clan, or the relatives of someone important in the story. A family firm, perhaps.

The mountain, a symbol for Capricorn the ambitious mountain goat, is also in the picture. Money can help the greatest journey to the top begin with a single step. Decisions, decisions!

The foot turned left suggests an unconscious or unexpressed leaning towards the relatives, or one's roots – the origins of the family tree on one or both sides. This suggest the Fourth House and Cancer just as the mountain suggests Capricorn.

The actual coin is of course Taurus or Scorpio – thus the Second House or Eighth House. This is one of those Tarot cards which instantly mirrors the chart. This can really help with timing, as in 'When should I invest?' or 'When should I negotiate the deal?'

Money is lovely but it is not a religion and it is here to be used. This coin, in such young or inexperienced hands (a page is always a younger person or less mature person!) should still be used in a sensible way, if it is to really go a long way.

This is the young Sir Richard Branson making cash from his student magazine, lost in daydreams – but he could so easily use it to start Virgin! In fact, that is what he did. You might also say it is the young Michael Eavis at Worthy Farm in 1970, daydreaming about the future. Glastonbury Festival must surely have appeared in thousands of Tarot readings in that beautiful town, over the years.

KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

It is amazing what money or business can do to people. Perhaps because this man has been burned before, he has become quite protective and defensive about what he has earned or all that he owns. This is a man on a tight budget – take it or leave it – perhaps. It may also be a debt collector or rent collector so he cannot afford to be nice. In astrology, look to the zodiac signs Taurus and Scorpio and the Second House and Eighth House, as with all the coins/pentacles cards.

This man is on a mission to pay or do a deal. You will have to negotiate. He is guarded, defended and hidden as have seen. He is probably not up to the task (he is too short for his horse). This may also be a brilliant symbol of the dwarf planet Pluto, which rules Scorpio, and thus the Eighth House of insurance, pensions and superannuation, legacies and wills, banks and the sharemarkets. Pluto literally rode a black horse. A dark horse is also something we might attach to this man and his character. He's a dark horse, alright. He doesn't give much away.

The sense of tight control, a power-packed person and lack of height/ dwarfism is true of Pluto too, who was a controlling God and in astronomy as well as astrology, is a dwarf planet.

In the 21st century you would be looking at this man's car, as well as a horse, which may be too big or powerful for him. He's all about his exterior which conceals his interior.

He may be young or inexperienced. Yet, you have to strike a bargain. Look at the fields which need maintenance. That costs money. What needs to be nurtured with cash? I mentioned the vast potential all around and doing a lot, eventually, with just a little. You can see this man sizing up the odds. Calculating the costs and price, but also the possible rewards.

Money can make some people uptight or too heavily guarded and that's a fact of life. Yet, everybody needs to make a deal and you do too. If this card turns up in connection with a relationship or marriage, it is very clear that man involved is not feeling remotely romantic. His priority is his side of the mortgage or rent, and likely your own. A deal must be done. Or not. This man could ride off into the sunset and not look back, if terms are not sufficient. This card classically turns up when a man has a set price in his head but gives nothing away, hoping to get a bargain from you. A good literary agent or film and television agent, will behave like this, of course. Bluffing is very much part of this man's process. A poker expression here (a poker face) also suggests an old-school gambler.

KING OF PENTACLES

This is an established Taurus type and the card is a symbol for this sign of the zodiac (you can see the bulls hidden on the throne). Look to Taurus and the Second House in this card. Investments, shares, property or cash has given this man a certain position. He is hard to get to, rather intimidating and also 'surrounded' by all that he has. To be honest it has entombed him, alive. There is not much freedom or space in this card.

Taurus is a fixed, earthy, stubborn sign which finds it hard to budge. This man (older than you, or your age, if you are older!) is stuck.

The grape vines are keeping him trapped and although Bacchus the asteroid of self-indulgence is suggested here (he rules grapes) and there is pleasure on his face, at all that he possesses, he is trapped by his wealth to the point where problems may begin.

There is a fine property in the background but he cannot see it. He is either ignoring it or has become quite blind to what is there. For this reason you might also look to an eclipse, which always delivers a blind spot. Neptune might also be a clue in the chart, natively or by transit, as it distorts vision. You cannot see what is in front of your face in certain Neptune situations.

He holds a gold spoon, magnifying glass or mirror (depending on your point of view). Maybe, to quote The Who, he was born with a plastic spoon in his mouth (Substitute). For some people this is a Welsh spoon. For others it is a cocaine spoon. For some, it is not a spoon at all, but a magnifying glass, and this man collects valuable stamps. What is this card telling you?

His garden needs weeding and he needs to start moving. We can see the Second House, Eighth House and/or Fourth House of property and land here, which often turn up in Pamela Colman Smith's Tarot cards, as so many people in the troubled 20th century had questions about finance, security and property. She created this picture in 1909 and 20 years later, the markets crashed.

This card must have turned up over and over again, between 1909 and the Wall Street Crash of 1929 as a warning to a particular sort of man to get a life, have a life and start living by spending, not hoarding. By getting rid of who/what has grown up all around him, to the point where he is only living half a life, because of it. There are tremendous questions here about self-worth, tied to monetary worth, but also the value of 'valuable' shares if the market crashes and the apparently precious product or substance is worth less.

This man is ripe and ready to negotiate with the right person at the right time. He actually needs to or he will become choked by those vines and slowly lose all power to move. This is where the card becomes most interesting because it is about power. It can be empowering to part with money over the right deal, with the right person or organisation.

With a little imagination you can see a rich businessman like this, hiring Marie Kondo to 'Spark Joy' in his life

by getting rid of the clutter. The key to this card is to direct it like a stage set. Create a script, in particular. What needs to be said, here? Communication is terribly important. Being heard, read, understood and paid attention to – and swaying, persuading and converting another – is central to its potential. Why on earth should this man give you some or all of his money? What is it about you and your life that is somehow shown by this King?

QUEEN OF PENTACLES

Note the rabbit in the corner. Beatrix Potter was 43 years old, when Pamela Colman Smith, also a gifted illustrator and artist, created her famous Tarot cards: what would later become known as The Smith-Waite.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit had come out in 1902, four years previously and even today, thanks to the film, it makes money for the Beatrix Potter estate.

The rabbit is also a reminder that you can have money, but perhaps you also need sex. (Rabbits can produce a litter a month, though, so be careful). Playboy bunnies, so sex again, are associated with rabbits. Being ‘at it like rabbits’ is associated with frequent sex and we can also associate this creature with vegans. Rabbit food is a nickname for a classic vegan diet. It really depends on where you locate the rabbit or bunny in your consciousness. It can be quite literal. I have known more than one well-off woman with a rabbit and I’m sure you have too!

Sometimes this Queen turns up if there is a wealthy single woman enjoying her garden or the local wilderness, parkland or woods – but sex won’t go away. In fact sex keeps nagging at her until she does something about it. The issue with ‘just sex’ though (rabbit impulses) is that it’s not really about making a good marriage, or finding a soulmate, and the rest. It’s just about the physical side of life. She may have to pay attention to that, sooner or later. Unless the rabbit hops away, of course. Yet – what if it jumps into her lap? That rabbit holds a key to this entire card.

Some women I have read for (readers on my website) identify with the rabbit as a sign of divorce, because they gain a divorce settlement and sex ‘goes away’ and runs off. Down the rabbit hole. Alice in Wonderland sometimes holds meaning for people reading this card because of the White Rabbit and his pocket watch. Being late, for a very important date, can be another hint that one can be well-off, financially (everything in the garden is literally lovely here) but also miss out on dating. For some people, the rabbit/bunny is ‘a bun in the oven’ or pregnancy, and single women with enough money to have a child by themselves, can pull this card. In fact, the bun in the oven is the next step, after she has counted her pennies.

This is a contented woman gazing at her wealth, to be sure. This is a Taurus, Second House, Scorpio and/or Eighth House card. Capricorn the goat is hidden on her throne, so have a look at that. Perhaps her career (Capricorn) has made her secure.

A baby’s face peers out from the stone. Again, this is a hint about sex, in the background, in one’s history (a pregnancy that did or did not happen) and nods to the rabbit. There are a curious amount of cherubic heads in the stonework in Pamela and Arthur’s Tarot deck, the Smith-Waite. In astrology this can be the asteroid Cupido, or Cupid, but over the years I have found women relate to the idea of historic pregnancies, abortions or miscarriages. They are always unseen by the Queens in these cards. Forgotten, suppressed, ignored. Adult children and their babyhood sometimes show up in this Queen’s past. That was then, this is now. She’s moved on and she’s interested in the money instead.

Romantic roses surround her and she has, unusually, a bright green cloak. The colour of conservation and the environment. What is this woman going to do with her money, why and when? You will find more tiny details and clues, personal to you, here. She may work for Greenpeace. She may want to donate to The Wilderness Society or The Bob Brown Foundation. Nature is very close here and she is at home in it.

The Queen of Pentacles is one of many figures in Pamela and Arthur’s Tarot who is pondering money. Lost in daydreams. Basking in the moment, which is financially secure. Yet – this needs to be invested or put to good use. Something has to be done with this money; one cannot sit gazing at it forever. And of course you cannot

handle the cash and the rabbit at the same time. You will have to put the money in a safe place, or spend it, or donate it so you can be liberated enough to catch the rabbit before it hops away. Time is very much of the essence in the card if this woman does want to start a sexual relationship or even have a one-night-stand.

ACE OF WANDS

A big, bold, brilliant idea. It might be Obamacare. Perhaps is it this Very British Tarot deck itself, created by Pamela Colman Smith and Arthur Waite in 1909. Staves, rods or wands are symbols of paper, and the pulp from trees that used to make books and newspapers, journals and posters, over a century ago. In the Tarot they show possible websites or podcasts as much as they show likely song lyrics or computer programs. Formulae for scientific breakthroughs.

Unless this massive concept is brought down to earth and made real it will remain forever a dream or fantasy. Like all Pamela's cloudy illustrations, this ideas and its success is in the realm of parallel possible universe. Yes this could happen. It is close to becoming real. Yet, unless you and/or others act and secure this somewhere it can grow, it may vanish with the next weather pattern.

Live Aid and Band Aid had to be moved from the pub to the meeting room and then to the world, via Wembley. This massive, groundbreaking charity enterprise began with Paula Yates and a message on her fridge door. Some things never happen at all without practical, down-to-earth thinking. She was a Taurus who inspired her then-partner, a Libra.

Time is of the essence here, because leaves are already falling from the branch. This thing has to be planted at the right time in the right place and soon. It also has to be planted in the correct environment so it is time for research and homework. Maybe, asking around. Auditions for a secure future, you might call it.

As we've seen, this Ace is also part of a typical quantum cloud, seen often in Pamela's deck. She did not know it at the time but she was channelling the new world of quantum uncertainty, proven by science in the Double Slit Experiment.

Everything is in the uncertainty field of reality until you make a choice and make it real. Once you measure what is there, it becomes that. So measure your chances of transporting this from the realms of imagination or conjecture, into a solid place for success. Like all branches this can become a tree (perhaps literally the branch of a franchise) and then become a mighty forest, or hectares of woodland, in the years ahead.

You'd have to guess that the building in the background (what some call The White House) is the right place to park this. What is the building and who inside can help here?

In Pamela's day this would have been the Rider publishing company who made Arthur Waite's vision happen. It found another home in America in the 1970s with U.S. Games Systems. Not exactly the White House but 'the right house' for the dream of a modern reproduction of Pamela and Arthur's old deck.

II TWO OF WANDS

Here we have Mercury the messenger without a leg to stand on. The first thing to say about this card is that it's not enough to have budding brainwaves or concepts with potential, or qualifications to show. You need to come back down to earth, ground yourself, centre and settle down before you can begin the quest. Where is the second leg here? Exactly. It's missing.

This is a clear symbol of Mercury Retrograde, perhaps, or Retroshadow. Maybe it is just Mercury blocked by other planets. This is not inevitably the case with this card but it is very common. We also find Mercury under transit in your natal chart as he is the planet of ideas, messages, the worldwide web, export, relocation, travel, brainwaves and so on.

The time has come to take a big idea or qualification across the world. What is remarkable is the total lack of awareness of the second option, which is ignored. It's all about 'the one' idea and not both together, or even both separately. This, together with the missing leg, brings a couple of useful reminders. One is to ground oneself and the project or plan. The other is to wake up and see that this is a duet or double-act. A pair: One is not more important than the other. This could also be two versions or two drafts of the same idea.

This is a big leap forward if it comes off. The roses on the left suggest the four compass points, and East and West are red, North and South are white. The 1-2 concepts could be planted much closer to home, if research and homework reveal other regions or countries are unsuitable. There is only one way to find out. The time has come to check and check again. To ask. To read widely and really size up one's chances.

Just look at the lush pasture in the foreground! Does this really have to travel all the way across the planet? It's time to think locally, as well as globally. But not too long. Things wither and die unless they are planted on fertile ground, nurtured and nourished. This will not last forever without a great deal of rapid work and practical hands-on knowledge-gathering.

A useful thing to do now is a yoga pose that centres your base chakra on the floor, or the ground. Walking barefoot on the grass can also ground you. So can any meditation which balances your base chakra. This card can show someone who is living from his/her throat, third eye and crown chakra (in the head) with no connection to the lower chakras, which pull us back down to mother earth. So, along with the research about location, location, location you also need to make sure you have that other leg to stand on. This also means backing, support, credentials, qualifications, back-up. You 'need to have a leg to stand on' if you are going to convince and persuade others to support you. Otherwise all you really have is the idea. This is rather like angel investors wanting to know who are you as well as what is the big idea?

III THREE OF WANDS

There is a strange mixture of haste and paralysis here, as the person with the three ideas, plans, projects or qualifications (suggested by Three Wands) is stuck fast on the cliff, looking out to sea, but has racing car checks on his/her cloak. Perhaps it is through lack of experience the shawl is green. I have often seen this card in readings on my website when the person concerned has a ton of good ideas, a lot of nervous energy, some anxiety about losing an opportunity, but also anxiety about going out there and making something happen. You often get a red light, amber light, green light rapid rotation with this card. It is fixed by active imagination. Perhaps other people need to come into the scene. Maybe the position needs to be adjusted (the stance and attitude of the key person). What can be done with the actual three staves, rods or wands, which are symbols of something on paper, or on the computer?

With 'three' we can get three drafts of the same script, or three competing ideas, or a trio of compatible products. Or we can get two versions of the same concept and a third, outlying idea. All should be taken as one, as the whole. It's all part of a mixed bag but don't forget or neglect one or two, to mono-task. Try to get the whole lot in front of you for assessment.

This card is about mixed feelings regarding the export of ideas, and the distant shores of the worldwide web. That's the Grand Prix checks you can see (faster, faster, break the record) but the rather stuck, planted, rooted nature of the pose. Wants to go, does not want to go!

Nothing can grow in the current location. There may be much better odds somewhere else. There may even be a race on, or some kind of 'Gold Rush' as the three ships in the foreground are racing for a distant location. This may be about the need to compete and catch up, but the fear of losing or coming last. You see this card when there is a competition for, say, cryptocurrency or an attempt at a vaccine for a virus.

There are any number of reasons for not joining the race or getting one's feet wet. Fear of failure. Fear of success. A bit of analysis goes a long way with this card. Nobody doubts the potential of the idea or product but the issue is the location; the timing; the competition; the personality of you/the key person.

If the person in question does not make up his/her mind, things may never grow. There is a need here to remember the one or two projects or qualifications not 'held.' The short trip is Gemini, the longer journey is Sagittarius. The Third House is the hop across to another city or region; The Ninth House is the foreign exploration. These can also show up in the chart. You may also get Saturn by transit or transits to natal Saturn as this is a symbol of delay, fear and sometimes self-sabotage in the chart.

IV FOUR OF WANDS

This card is possibly about the Fourth House (family and share households) and the Fourth House also rules housewarmings, homecomings and house parties. That is associated with Cancer. Of course it may also be about the Tenth House and Capricorn, which rules it, because the staves are likely plans, concepts, qualifications, which are the gateway to achievement and good times.

The staves/rods/wands in Tarot are generally about the Third House and Ninth House too; so brainwaves and courses. The key is the fact that one cannot enter the celebrations without going through the paperwork, the agreement, the plan, the notion, the degree or similar.

This is about two sides of the same family, or two branches of the same social circle, coming together. This is likely a party, wedding or other celebration and as I've said, it can be the nuptials after a long-distance relationship conducted on Zoom and by e-mail.

Abundance is here and there is lots to share and enjoy. If you were a soulless creature you would say this was a good opportunity for 'networking' but far more likely is the kind of occasion across one day, or maybe an entire week or two (if it's a holiday) when people who are coming from the same or similar positions - shared ideas, thoughts, plans, projects - help each other out.

The dance in the background could be the Hokey Cokey or Nutbush City Limits but the welcome mat is out. You occasionally see this card for party political conferences or corporate bonding weekends. The paintball is not pictured. This can be the dual efforts of two branches of one company involving 2-4 people which results in a gathering at the end. The wands look like telegraph poles connecting cables and so there is a sense here of a strong telephone presence and frequent, good communication.

The garlands of flowers suggest abundance, a happy atmosphere, and all that thrives and takes off. This is a lovely image of strong prospects, good feelings and something to enjoy at the end. A transition is indicated. You pass through and across to get to the other side. The property or premises in the background may also be significant here. You can see why this card shows up when a house is being purchased by two parties and their agents, with the housewarming party once it's all over.

V FIVE OF WANDS

This is the band about to split because of musical differences. It reminds of every fractured rock band in history, from The Beatles to The Rolling Stones. It is any group, actually, because all groups have to deal with the central problem of who is the leader/the star (look at the shouty person on the left) and who is so wildly different to everybody else that he/she is on the outer (the person in the blue patterned tunic).

If you read the history of The Beatles you find creativity and brilliance born from individual eccentricity and difference. The fifth Beatle was Sir George Martin. At other times the fifth Beatle was Yoko Ono or a passing presence like Magic Alex. It is only when the four/the five found common ground that they were able to raise an album. The albums reflect what was going on at the time: productive tension.

You Never Give Me Your Money, Nowhere Man, The Two of Us, all tell the story of The Fab Four, but within a group of four, plus one, you can get pairs and solo acts. It's all rather hard to manage.

This is why bands have managers and it is amazing how often this card comes up with musicians and their tour manager, or business manager. Or, in Spinal Tap style, you may find yourself with the odd 'creative' girlfriend or dodgy A&R man to deal with. There is something funny about this card. Perhaps Pamela Colman Smith saw the humour in the frankly bonkers behaviour of some members of The Golden Dawn, the magical secret society she belonged to with Arthur E. Waite, her co-creator in the Smith Waite Tarot.

We also have someone rather angry or overheated in red, in the centre. There is real potential for a split here. This is Mars the red planet if you are looking to the astrological chart, and of course the group itself is the Eleventh House, ruled by Aquarius. Some or all of this may show up in the transits, so at least you can tell when the end point is, and what the potential for resolution is. The sensible answer, as mentioned, is for two pairs to form, who co-operate, then the pairs to unite, and an accommodation of sorts, for the fifth person. A great deal comes down to communication of the tactful but truthful sort. Someone here looks like he/she wants to be loudest, upfront and central. Is that really the case, though?

The ideas, theories, concepts or plans are all similar. That's the giddy joke of this card. The actual notions or brainwaves are virtually the same. The rods/wands/staves look so much alike. Everyone wants to be a musician. Everyone wants to be a politician. Everyone wants to make a film. The individual personalities are really different, but what they are talking about, or putting on paper, or online, is very samey and so the potential is there for unity.

Nothing can be built until people set their differences aside, along with their narcissism or anger, and co-operate. One person here has a spotted or polka-dotted costume. A leopard never changes its spots, or does it? Together these people will raise a barn or make a great album. Like this, they are a shambles and those ideas are not going to last long. They need to be planted. The potential is vast here but the problems are real. Without a secure place for what is on paper, or online, nothing will ever grow and the whole thing will fall over sideways. This is The Troggs in the studio on a famous bootleg tape, or the state of Australian politics for quite a few years, with leadership spills disrupting both the main parties. Look to Mercury in the chart too, as Mercury rules communication. Listening skills. Hearing as well as talking, or shouting. Negotiation!

SIX OF WANDS

Victory, success and a big win on the board. This card delivers exactly what it shows. The Romans used to weave wreaths for triumphant leaders. Here we have a winning idea – actually, a winning project, plan or argument which is composed of many similar ideas. Many voices on the same hymn sheet. You can see two people in the army or team on the left who must have been involved, or who have either backed the plan, or perhaps not – I will leave it to you to judge the expressions. There is certainly a star here, as there always is, when one wins the war or an election. Yet nothing happens because of one person. And 'the crowd' or the masses must be considered.

The leader, hero or heroine is front-and-centre. The horse looks rather smug and coy and this may represent a person or 'vehicle' for the victor.

Jupiter is in this picture because he rules oak leaves and oaks. This is an opportunity waiting to happen, which Jupiter is also associated with. Natively or by transit Jupiter may now be central to the chart. This card feels big. Jupiter rules whatever is huge, like a really thundering landslide, such as won by President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris in 2020.

Jupiter also rules Sagittarius the archer and of course here we have a man on horseback, looking rather Sagittarian. It may be a woman; Pamela Colman Smith worked with Shakespearean actors and their friends and colleagues, where gender was fluid to say the least.

This is the procession or inauguration, the ticker-tape parade or the grand celebration. Now what? All those ideas, projects, concepts, plans and voices can now be put to good use. Great leaders or victors are not above the others. They may be 'higher than' and in an elevated position for a time, riding high and all the rest, but sooner or later one has to realise that every single face in the crowd matters.

Don't rest on your laurels is the message here. The acorn shapes on the horse's bridle also suggest 'From little acorns come mighty oaks.' This is very much a card to look for if there is a Jupiter transit coming up, or transits to natal Jupiter, as it shows where and when the big finish might come from. Jupiter is forever associated with the grand finale and quite often with the massive relief and release that comes after a long period of not knowing. It is really important to identify who the figure on horseback is, though. Look for clues.

VII SEVEN OF WANDS

This is what happens when someone is living in their head (Air signs Gemini, Libra and Aquarius live in a world of theories and ideas). Look for those signs prominent in your chart, or the person who is at the heart of this conflict.

This person is not grounded and practically being pulled apart, with one foot East and one foot West. So there may be a lack of earth signs in the chart (Taurus, Virgo and/or Capricorn). There's nothing settled about this position, it's quite precarious and geographically split, or intellectually/emotionally divided.

This card can appear if someone does not know where he or she stands, or there is no fixed address, or there are two business or work centres on opposite sides of the country, or town, or the world. It's divisive.

Without a centre to work from, how can any opinion, plan or concept ever hope to get off the ground, still less hold its own against the ideas of the wider group? The irony is that the words or ideas are all pretty much the same, as I've said.

The Golden Dawn, illustrator Pamela Colman Smith's magical society, was similarly split down the middle and it must often have felt like 'one against the many' even though all the ideas were similar – based around astrology, the Tarot and so on.

You can see the remedy here. The person doing battle with others' points of view needs to come back down to earth, stop reacting or imagining, and actually put faces to names, and faces and names, to opinions. This is a classic internet fight card. You have a face on your Twitter feed, but 'the many' are anonymous and call themselves numbers, and use cartoon heads!

This situation is untenable and depending on the state of mind of the person being pulled in two, it can be quite difficult and even risky. My issue here with this card is the land under the feet. What happens if there is an earthquake or earthquake? Not literally, perhaps, but thematically and symbolically? A leadership split can split the ground beneath your feet, but if you don't have a leg to stand on and do not have your feet firmly on the ground, you can fall into the abyss or fall off the edge. Fall between the cracks.

This card sometimes turns up when a person has become distracted by the debate, which can be on social media as well as in the real world, and forgotten it is just about words. This card is literally about what is on paper, in the newspapers (particularly the disgraceful, unethical kind) or online. And the internet, as we know, can be a real quagmire. There is nothing physically going on here, and sticks and stones can impact bones, but words can never hurt, unless you let them.

He or she at the centre of this war of words, or intellectual opposition, does not realise that the lack of stability or agreement stems partly from his/her own position, which is temporary, unstable and split between two places, or two camps. The answer often lies in fixing oneself and one's situation. From there, negotiation and agreement is possible as I've mentioned.

This can be a man coming back into the fold, as David Beckham came back into the fold in football, despite being persona non grata for a time. This card tells us, rifts can close, balance can be achieved, unity can be found, harmony can be achieved. It takes a lot of work on both sides, but mostly on the part of the person who is so divided and also quite divisive.

VIII EIGHT OF WANDS

This is an Eleventh House or Aquarius card as it shows a group of ideas, a community of plans, a collection of concepts. Look to transits of the Eleventh House, or transiting Uranus, which rules Aquarius, or just a fleeting stellium in Aquarius, the sign of the water-bearer. An Aquarius in Rome was the man who supplied the Roman baths with water. He gave the community or group what it needed. This sign inevitably shows up with this card.

Will everything fall in a heap or are we looking at this card the wrong way? Perhaps they are falling upwards and will be caught by their creators, or other innovators and inventors, to be built into something practical. No barn was ever raised, nor holiday log cabin built, without construction. For that, it helps if everything is whole, with a soft landing, in the same place. Bits and pieces are not useful and neither is a scattering or randomness about direction. The phrase 'picking up the pieces' after a messy descent by a group, household, band, political party and so on, can refer to the situation suggested by this card.

Ideas, theories and thoughts are 'of the air' and 'in the air' until they are brought down to earth. There is a lot of space between the wands. They are not particularly close or intimate. This card suggests the element of Air in astrology and so Aquarius, Libra and Gemini. Aquarius I have already mentioned because of its association with the Eleventh House of groups and communities. Friendship is linked to the Eleventh House. Not intimacy. Not closeness, physically. A light, bright, airy, breezy, cool and easy 'space' defines air sign connections. Yet, this lot are too disparate. So apart, so gappy, that nothing and nobody is united.

Unless something is done to plant and nurture the branches, nothing can grow or be progressed. At some point everything must be brought together in a united way. If you are one of the idea-makers, plan-makers or opinion-makers in this group you need to talk, swiftly, and get at least one person on side, so the two of you can pull the rest together. I don't think you can do it alone (or at least it would take a Herculean effort). Find one or two allies then do it together.

There is an urgency to the Eight of Wands. One has to act swiftly, securing agreement between all those people, with all their opinions or projects, so that instead of falling to pieces, they 'fall up together' and unite in flight to explore the possibilities of a new environment to ground their notions and nurture their plans. Someone needs to research the lay of the land rapidly. Where is it safe to descend? This is so much like the last war and the R.A.F. who depended heavily on their navigators on the ground. Communication was absolutely essential, and thus radio operators, too. Today we would talk about the internet or telephone. The web in particular is so rapid that it surely has to be your first resource in finding the right place to land and also in getting everyone together, united in a common plan and navigation.

This card often turns up when a group project is in danger of going nowhere fast, which would be a shame, as like all wands, these are budding new trees for the future, and trees can be used for anything at all, from a mighty ship to a fine wooden building. It's a symbol of potential growth for the ideas on paper, or online. There can be something mighty built here, with a bit of luck and effort. What is most impressive of all, though, should success come is the testament to your staying power and willpower, and that of others involved.

IX NINE OF WANDS

A wounded, suspicious and annoyed (perhaps angry) man holds his wand (a symbol of communication) tightly to himself. Rods, wands or staves show what is on paper or online. Words. Sometimes images. This is a card of rejection, because he has rejected them, or they have rejected him. The planet Uranus is a symbol of rejection so you might look for it natively or by transit. I think we can all relate to the man with the headache. Haven't we all been there, with a group of people? This can be peer group pressure or mob rule. It can also be the disenfranchised position of someone with former friends, or former allies, who finds himself in disagreement with them.

This card turned up repeatedly during the Brexit Civil War 2016 to 2020, and in the same period, the Donald Trump Resistance. You can see why my readers frequently saw it appearing; these were times when people

really did feel as if they were on the outside, and everybody else was against them. Polarised situations are often shown by polar opposites, so in astrology this is any opposition by transit, or natal opposition under transit. A Full Moon, with the Sun opposite the Moon, can often bring push to shove, in such a situation.

This man has been hurt. He looks hurt. His head hurts – and the head is where the ideas begin and opinions are formed.

Ironically the others in the group, or community, have remarkably similar thoughts to him. Those wands, rods or staves are rather similar. Wands are tree branches, symbols of paper mills, which in Pamela Colman Smith's day, produced newspapers, posters and journals. Books and scripts. What is interesting about this card, compared to others in the same suit, is that it shows physical outcomes of cerebral differences. In so many other cards nothing really physically affects people; it is just ideas, or words, or views. Here, we have someone who is bandaged.

This brings to mind words like 'injured feelings', and 'head not heart' and 'losing my mind' and the rest. I am sure some will come to mind – and that in itself is a phrase you might use with this card. Mind over matter. Aries rules the head, brain, and in fact the ram's charge: head down, horns forward. You might look to Aries and perhaps Mars, which rules Aries, and the First House (appearances, reputation) too.

Everything depends on this person putting strong emotions and wounds to one side and focussing on the ideas. Collectively those ideas could unite everybody and together, these people could build something good.

As I've mentioned, there is a tremendous need for healing and recovery time here. You can see the pain and also the frustration on the main character's face. This may be you, or another you recognise immediately.

Resentment grows and festers. People quit the scene or split completely or they can hang around for years, feeling worse as time goes on.

Someone has to speak up and speak out – and reach out – from the group. Then at least some kind of negotiation or peace agreement can be reached. Maybe even a reconciliation. This card is Winston Churchill in The Wilderness Years with the Conservative Party in Great Britain, as I've said and long after they had lent their names to this Tarot deck, Arthur E. Waite and Pamela Colman Smith saw it all. James Dean in Rebel Without a Cause is reminiscent of this card. The bruised outsider, cruising for an intellectual bruising, is an archetype seen here quite clearly. Yet, imagine what power there would be, should this person go back into the fold. And imagine how much more productive each individual (represented by an idea) would be, if they were to learn from this other person.

What is interesting is that this card is so redolent of the internet itself. You have a face, or the protagonist has a face, but everyone else is faceless. These are just words. These are just a queue of laptop computers, filed sideways, or a stack of pamphlets. Look for Mercury-Mars patterns with this card, too. Mars-Mercury translates as 'War of Words'.

X TEN OF WANDS

This is one of Pamela Colman Smith's easiest cards to understand and interpret. Overload! Stop and delegate, reschedule, or jettison what is there, or there will be a physical toll, as the human body is not a machine, a robot or a computer. There may even be back issues.

Too many projects, ideas, emails, websites, social media messages. Too much to carry. The person here is stumbling blindly forward towards what he/she assumes is the goal.

As I've mentioned and you can see, this may be a house or apartment to be purchased or paid off one day. To be renovated. Perhaps, a hotel or holiday home. You have to wonder what the point is, when the journey is so difficult. Is the destination worth the struggle?

This card is about the need to delegate or ditch and quite urgently so. How on earth did it even get this far? Talk about ignoring your better instincts, or even ignoring your body.

Nothing is going to work if the person just ends up stopping halfway or dropping everything. Time to pause and look for a strategy. Time to ask for help, perhaps, or offload. This is a Sixth House and Virgo card (life-work balance), but also a Tenth House and Capricorn Card (ambition). It is also a Fourth House card (Cancer, the house or apartment, or premises, up ahead).

It is quite clearly a portrait of the person who is overworking and risking his/her physical health. This is backbreaking burden and of course, the back is always the first to suffer when somebody is overloaded.

Apart from anything else, if you sit hunched in a chair over a computer all day, your spine will not thank you. The solution here as we have seen is to stop, rest up, review, rethink, ditch, delegate and strategise.

When the internet was first launched this card would turn up a lot for clients who were shouldering the new burden of too many emails and not enough hours in the day. You also see it when a person is psychologically and emotionally overloaded with too many mental or spiritual burdens. This is the Prime Minister who has a new baby, and a new term, and one or more crises to load onto his back. It is also the student who has taken on a part-time job, a relationship, exams and God knows what else.

You tend to find people with difficult aspects or transits in their Sixth House drawing this card. Maybe you are one of them, but you know the solution. There are some big decisions to be made here about weighing the value of the house, holiday home or apartment, against the price tag you need to fix on actually having a life before you reach your goal. This card can be stage-managed like all Pamela Colman Smith's cards. Bring in people to help. Perhaps, bring in a caravan or tent so this person can take a break for the weekend. Maybe bring in wild winds, to blow away some of the rods/staves/wands in the collection. Does one really need to throw so much mud at a wall, in order to get some of it to stick? Maybe that approach is quite wrong.

PAGE OF WANDS

This younger man is lost in his own self-admiration, or perhaps it's just the beauty of a good idea (not a great idea; a good idea) which entrances him. If it was great, then it would be flowering, blossoming and blooming. It's just good. It has potential greatness in it, but time will tell. It's rather like planting a gum tree in Australia. You just never know and it really depends where it goes, when it goes in and how you manage it.

If he doesn't get a move on and plant this concept, theory or project on fertile ground, it will die. He is in the wrong place for it to grow, that is for sure. Pyramids suggest trines (a trine is in the birth chart or emerging) and that will help. Sometimes trines involving Neptune can result in too much 'ease' or flow, though. One goes with the flow so much that one does nothing at all. There is no action. No effort.

Yet, this Page with his rod/wand/stave is on sandy ground and nothing will grow, thrive, flourish and prosper until he stops daydreaming and starts moving in the direction of the right town, city, region or country. Research required, as I mentioned. He needs to find out rather than just imagine, or even worse, get distracted by his simply marvellous on-screen plan, to the point where he forgets the real world exists as well.

He has a feather in his cap. What is it for? We talk about having 'a feather in the cap' when there is some achievement, qualification or award to wear proudly.

This fellow may be you or another you know. It may be a younger student, for example, or a student of life who is below you in years. If so, you may be the one to lead the way to show why it's not enough to be in love with

an idea or a talent. It has to be planted somewhere it can actually succeed. It is really clear that this wand shown by a branch will not thrive or grow unless something is done quickly in terms of bringing other people into the card, and thus the situation. It may dry up and fade to nothing in that arid environment unless you work the card with your active imagination and bring in allies; friends; colleagues; helpers.

Movement is required, most of all, because those are not hospitable conditions. Something or someone around the situation is dry. A dry personality perhaps? Or just barren, arid conditions. A hostile environment for anything to grow. This page needs to take this somewhere else, fast.

KNIGHT OF WANDS

This is all about preparation, focus, clarity, vision and direction. Navigation and thought. This man on a mission (who may be you, female or male, but it is probably a man) cannot see properly – look at the eyes and you will see they are a little milky. Yes, he is a man on a mission and God knows there is a lot to admire here, with all the heat and blazing brilliance. Yet, he could fall off. What he is carrying could be dropped, or get lost on the way. His vehicle may not carry him.

For example, a Hollywood film may be the vehicle for a song, but if the songwriter is on drugs and does not know what he is doing, the project could fall sideways. That is extreme but it has happened with this card.

Perhaps contact lenses or glasses need to be found, or this may be a metaphor for someone who is not seeing straight. Look for Neptune by transit or transits to natal Neptune. I have worked in magazine and book publishing long enough to meet a few characters like this, who are impressive, passionate, on their way and all the rest, but on closer inspection you realise they have really confused vision. And crucially, what/who they are ‘riding on’ to take them ‘somewhere’ (they don’t know where) is equally unfocussed. So, this can be a publisher who is also lacking direction, for example, with an author who has not taken the time to have a good long self-talk in the mirror.

This is actually part of the solution. Both what/who this idea is ‘riding on’ and the person in question, need to talk to themselves in the mirror, or write things down honestly in a journal or have a cracking meditation session. Quite honestly, sitting down with the Tarot and a notebook to really analyse the project, concept, qualification, plan or brainwave (and oneself) could save a great deal of time and trouble and even save a film, or a book, or a website, or an invention, or an application.

The big idea, message or campaign is firmly in hand. It must be planted in the right place (the desert sands of Egypt are not useful) or it will wither on the vine, like so many of Pamela Colman Smith’s wands, or staves, or branches showing budding leaves. Phrases like ‘branching out’ and ‘flowering’ and ‘bursting open’ and ‘seeding’ and ‘seed money’ and ‘protecting’ are appropriate with this card. Also, of course, ‘vision.’

The horse is a symbol of Sagittarius and the Knight may be a symbol for Chiron. Sagittarius also suits the idea of exploring foreign lands. Chiron was of course a music teacher and the Knight is holding a baton.

The fire signs Aries and Leo are also hinted at here along with Sagittarius, thanks to the flaming orange and gold colouring. So many of her wands cards about about ‘from little acorns, mighty oaks do grow’ and here we have an acorn which has turned into what might become an oak tree one day, if only it could be planted, nurtured and carefully tended. Acorns and oaks are ruled by Jupiter, another horoscope symbol and of course Sagittarius (the marksman on the horse) is ruled by Jupiter too. There’s a fair bit of Sagittarius/Jupiter about this card. The luck is with this person, as the image is impressive, the energy and drive are there, and the possible success really is hypothetically...possible. Yet it’s all down to approach.

You have to admire the sheer chutzpah of the person on the mission with it, but it’s not enough to be bold, daring, energetic and charismatic. You have to do the work. You do see this card when Jupiter is around as everything is really big-picture and wow-factor but Jupiter by transit and natively can also be a big fizzer. Big start and small finish is not what this rather magnificent human being deserves. And it may be you.

QUEEN OF WANDS

This card is a good example of just how much Pamela Colman Smith there was in the cards and just how little there sometimes was of Arthur E. Waite, wonderful though he was. (Without him, this Very British Tarot would never have seen the light of day).

Pamela was instructed to illustrate leopards here, for this card, following old occult ideas about the Queen of Staves - and instead rather cheekily came up with a black cat Snuffles, according to some authors who lived at Smallhythe, where she created her cards in the stunning Kent countryside, in 1909.

This is a Leo card, as I've mentioned, with lions flanking the throne and appearing on the backdrop. Sunflowers ruled by the Sun are also Leo's blooms, as this sign is also solar-ruled and there is a lot of solar power in this card, symbolically speaking. The ramrod posture of Leo so often described by astrologers is here. The Queen holds her head high. Dignity is in the posture and body language. Nobless oblige. The bob is something Chanel sported, and she was a Leo with lions on her tombstone. I doubt very much Pamela knew about Gabrielle in the summer of 1909 but this card is also her, to the life. Maybe Chanel, who used the Lenormand Oracle cards, knew this deck too and was inspired by it.

So, using Chanel as our model for this Queen, here we have a woman who has never had children herself, but who leads with her designs and business concepts, held firmly in her hand like a magic wand (actually sheafs of paper) to pass on to one young generation after another. You could say Karl Lagerfeld was the heir to Chanel's throne.

You could look for Sun transits and transits to the Sun with this card but also the Fifth House, as Leo women are Queens to a younger court, no matter if you're talking The Duchess of Sussex, The Queen Mother or Princess Margaret. This is really Meghan with her hair up, isn't it, with her son (the sunflower/sun flower) blooming in her world and the latest charity mission or Netflix project grasped in her fingers.

There is pride here in the face. Leo is a sign associated with pride, because lions also move in a pride. The attitude is regal, confident, expectant, entitled.

This may be her own or other people's younger offspring, suggested by the seeds in the sunflowers/son flowers.

The wand/rod/stave is the online, media or paper idea, project, plan or qualification. Our Queen has already done very well with one that is the sturdy sunflower in her right hand. She'll need a collaborator (a right-hand man?) or assistant, colleague or staff to create the next success. Queens need staff. They need courtiers. Allies. Using active imagination, bring into the card the extra people the Queen needs to make this next 'plantation' a success for everybody.

Note the tiny ginger cat brooch pin that holds the cloak together. Leo, of course, rules all kinds of felines and this is another of Pamela's tiny hints. The black cat itself will be an intensely personal symbol for you. Make it your own or find out what it means to you.

KING OF WANDS

All the wands or staves are tree branches or trunks. Pulp for paper mills in Pamela Colman Smith's and Arthur E. Waite's day, they symbolise paperwork, newspapers, books, magazines, scripts and speeches. Smith and Waite were surrounded by journals, poetry, theatre notes, and the like. Advertising for Horlick's (Waite worked there) or stage notes at The Abbey Theatre (Smith worked there too, alongside W.B. Yeats who inducted her into The Golden Dawn).

So here we have a figure Pamela likely knew. It could easily have been Yeats or Waite. Bram Stoker is another male writer she worked with and she also knew J.M. Barrie. This man seems almost alive, with his tense, expectant body language and his anticipatory expression.

The message is the thing here so look to Mercury in the chart and Mercury by transit. Mercury is the ruler of all communication. The messenger of the Gods. There may also be transits in the Third House and/or Ninth House of media and publishing.

There are lions (Leo) on the throne and a prominent lizard. Look at that lizard again, because details always matter in Pamela's cards. What does this lizard mean to you? Perhaps it's the place the Lizard. Maybe it's Kerry Packer, who was known as the Goanna. Maybe it's a band named after a lizard.

Lizards are territorial males fight other males and use bright colours to attract mates. So these lizards are all rather like this king. Colourful, never dull, and possibly on the lookout for his Queen of Staves, or wondering where she is (in another story in his life, no doubt. Another reading may reveal her).

He is stuck or suspended. The branch needs to be planted in order to grow but if he does not get moving it will wither and die. His own paralysis of action is thwarting him and may endanger the success of the project. He can't just sit there and look hypothetically successful. He has to get on with it. That means leaving the throne unoccupied problem! Some schedule, some scheme, some plan and certainly some allies or supporters, must be found.

The idea or message will not work until someone helps him ground the project or message somewhere useful, or he gets up from his throne and gets a move on and entrusts the royal seat and presumably its power, to an heir, or to his partner. This is really interesting because he may abdicate to pursue his plan. To chase his concept or qualification to its logical ending.

More commonly, Kings leave someone else in charge, don't they, when they go to Windsor at Christmas, or are they just rulers in absentia?

Our eyes go back to the lizard. We might also see a newt from the salamander family here in this card it depends on your point of view.

Salamanders regenerate lost limbs. In myth, they were believed to be born from fire. There is a fiery hint in the red hair and orange robes of the King so, Leo, Sagittarius and Aries are written in the illustration and may be factors in the horoscope to consider. Aries is fast and wants action. Leo wants to rule. Sagittarius wants to travel and explore. The crucial thing is that the King not waste this idea. That would, you sense, be a real problem for him, emotionally or psychologically. Kings are born to succeed, not to fail.