

*The Wise and Subtle Arte of Reading Cards*

*...as examined by a Witch who practices said Arte*

Reading cards to discern the future or answer questions has been a practice of witches, gypsies, and fortune tellers for several hundred years. It is true, of course, that the regular playing card pack is not as charming or erudite as her mother, the Tarot. Nonetheless, we have often found ourselves willing to trade the mother's unvoiced, wisdom-filled glances for the child's forthright and honest speech. Thus, it is well worth bearing in mind that finery and age are not inevitably marks of wisdom and knowledge, nor plainness and youth marks of foolishness and ignorance. It all depends on what you want to know. If you wish to discuss philosophy, approach the front door and ask for the philosopher. But should you wish to know what transpires in the philosopher's house, approach the back door and ask for the scullery maid.

The reading of playing cards has another advantage: They are so common; most people seeing them in your desk, on your table, or in your possession will not suspect the use to which you put them. Thus you shall follow a long-held tradition of witches of hiding in plain sight.

Many systems of card reading, both of regular playing cards and Tarot cards, are generally too rigid in their meanings and methods. This does not allow the reader to give full play to intuition, and consequently, detailed predictions, such as come only through the use of intuition, are lacking.

The following method is presented in three parts. A person studying it may stop at any part, although the Witch of exceptional memory will have more predictive material at her fingertips than the Witch of poor or middling memory.

To begin, we shall present the bare bones of the method for the witch of poor memory. Those with middling or exceptional memories must also study this material and practice it before moving on to greater tasks and abilities.

A standard deck of playing cards should be procured for this study. Please note that there are no "reversals" in the system. A card has the same meaning upright as reversed.

*The firstmost rule is easily had:*

*Red cards are good and black cards are bad.*

*The secondmost rule shall bring greater fruits:*

*It deals with the meanings of each of the suits.*

*The Hearts count as love, family, and friends.*

*Diamonds are money, wealth, means, and ends.*

*Clubs shall mean work, callings, and plans,*

*And Spades are the troubles that plague every man.*

*The thirdmost rule toward number inclines;*

*Just note the card's pip and read here their signs:*

*An Ace brings beginnings,  
And Two gives exchange,  
Three shows things growing,  
But Four does not change.  
Five is the body,  
Its health and its stead,  
Six shows a path  
That the Seeker shall tread.  
Seven brings troubles  
That Fate has assigned,  
While Eight shows ideas  
And thoughts in the mind.  
Nine heralds changes,  
And Ten is the end,  
While Kings are the symbols  
Of power and men.  
Queens are the emblems  
Of women and truth,  
A Knave is a message,  
A girl, or a youth.*

Even a witch of dismal memory may assimilate these rules over time, and having done so, shall have a serviceable oracle at her disposal.

#### ***Examination of the Firstmost Rule***

In order to begin training one's intuitive faculty, it is best to start reading cards in combinations right from the start. A single card, standing alone, is like a far-off whisper, or a sentence that has no verb. When combined with other cards, however, it is a fleet and adaptable messenger, speaking clearly.

We shall use groupings of three as our basis, as it is a very common usage amongst old Gypsy and European card spreads.

Draw off from your pack three cards at random, placing them in a row -- the first card on the left, the second card in the middle, and the third card on the right. In this row, time moves from left to right. Your task is merely to note the color of the three cards, whether red (**R**) or black (**B**). If you draw off many rows of three, or if you have facility with statistics, you will note that there are only eight possible combinations of two colors in a series of three. Below are the eight combinations, along with their generalized meanings. You need not memorize them by rote. If you know the firstmost rule, you will be able to figure out any of them.

<b>R B B</b>	a fair beginning steadily worsens and turns foul
<b>B B R</b>	a light at the end of the tunnel
<b>R R B</b>	a problem is on the horizon
<b>B R R</b>	a problem will be solved, things will steadily improve
<b>R B R</b>	a small delay or problem will be overcome
<b>B R B</b>	a temporary truce or rest. Do not let down your guard; appearances may deceive
<b>R R R</b>	all is fair and fine
<b>B B B</b>	beset by problems and hardship

Examine each of the combinations above and with reference to the firstmost rule, think through how the meanings given are derived.

Whenever you are examining a group of three, follow the firstmost rule first and note the sequence of colors. It will provide your first clue to the meaning of the group, and very often aid you in a troublesome interpretation.

### *Examination of the Secondmost Rule*

The secondmost rule deals with the meaning of the four suits. It is another layer of information to add to the firstmost rule. Your task is to note the suits of the three cards in your row. There are many more possible combinations here -- far too many to list. But you shall acquire the knack of it by example.

Always keep in mind that time moves from left to right in the group of three. The suit of the first card will show where you have been, the suit of the second card will show where you are, and the suit of the third card will show where you are headed as a result of the first two cards. The third card is usually the most important and should be given greater emphasis.

Let us first examine cards hemmed in by spades, for these are easy to understand:

♠	♥	♠	a troubled heart
♠	♦	♠	a troubled purse
♠	♣	♠	a troubled will; inability to act; feeling trapped; labor without gain
♠	♠	♠	trouble, trouble, and more trouble

The first two examples above fall in the BRB pattern of the firstmost rule. Thus, they show a troubled heart or purse that only ever receives temporary respite from problems. And just when one thinks that one problem is over, another takes its place after a brief interlude.

The second two examples fall in the **BBB** pattern, showing fairly constant trouble and stress. Even where the ♣ is the middle card, it hardly acts as a respite, for it shows the Seeker needing to expend energy on work before the next problem arises.

From the examples of spades hemming in a card, you can easily think through the following examples of a middle card flanked by two cards of the same suit. Refer back to the combinations of the firstmost rule, too, as you examine the examples below:

♣	♦	♣	much work, but only little profit
♦	♣	♦	money making affairs or financial activity
♥	♦	♥	generosity, a giving heart
♦	♥	♦	enjoying the fruits of one's labor with loved ones
♦	♠	♦	a financial problem is overcome
♥	♠	♥	an emotional problem is overcome (easily; see below)
♣	♠	♣	a problem is overcome at work or on a personal project

Let us continue with examining trios with spades in them. Look at the following examples, again keeping in mind the color sequences of the firstmost rule:

♣	♥	♠	working yourself into an emotional problem
♠	♥	♠	an emotional problem that you will work out of.
♥	♠	♠	an emotional problem that you will work out of, but slowly.

Note that because the first trio above ends with the spade, you are working into the problem. In the second trio, the spade falls first, so the problem is being overcome. In the third trio, the spade is in the middle, so the problem will be overcome, but the spade will slow down your efforts. Replace the hearts in the above examples with diamonds, and you will have the following:

- ♣    ♦    ♠            working yourself into a financial problem
- ♠    ♦    ♣            a financial problem that you will work out of.
- ♦    ♠    ♣            a financial problem that you will work out of, but slowly.

Let us examine a few more examples, this time with clubs starting the trios. These are very easy to grasp.

- ♣    ♣    ♣            working in the wrong direction; obstacles are ahead, so the goal
- ♣    ♦    ♦            working in the right direction for financial success.
- ♣    ♥    ♥            working in the right direction for emotional success.

Whenever a heart ends the trio, it is a very good sign. No matter what the first two cards of the trio are – showing stress or hard work or financial problems, a heart at the end will show that the problem will be overcome fairly easily. For instance:

- ♦    ♠    ♥            a financial problem is overcome easily.

Compare that example with one given above – ♦    ♠    ♣. Because the example above ends with a heart, the problem is easily overcome. When the trio ends in a club, more work will be needed.

Simply remember the easy meanings of the suits and that time in the trio of cards moves from left to right, and you shall hit on the correct interpretation. Again, do not simply jump in and begin interpreting the meanings of the cards. First note the sequence of colors in the trio, then the sequence of suits.

As you can see, with just the firstmost and secondmost rules, one can actually glean quite a bit of information from a trio of cards.

### *Examination of the Thirdmost Rule*

Now we come to interpreting a single card in itself. It is easy to do. Simply combine the meaning of the suit and the meaning of the number, and put together an interpretation.

The meanings of the numbers, themselves, are easy to remember. Just think of these clues:

Aces are beginnings because they begin each suit.

2's naturally suggest pairings and exchanges.

3's are the number of growth – the third thing produced from the union of two things.

4's remind us of the stable, unchanging, solid square.

5's are the body because we have 5 appendages (two arms, two legs, head).

6's are a path because the way pips are arranged in the cards makes them look like paths.

7's are troubles because there is a blockage added to the path of 6s as you look at the pips.

8's are ideas and thoughts in the mind because 8 is traditionally the number of the mind.

9's show changes because the number 9 is related to the Moon, which is ever fluctuating.

10's show goals achieved because they end the number sequence before a new cycle starts.

*(The 10 is almost an ever-renewing influence, so whatever its suit, it*

*shows that influence at a pinnacle almost continually. )*

Kings as power and men is fairly easy to remember on its own, as are Queens as women and truth, and Jacks as messages or a child of either gender.

Deriving the card meanings from suit and number may seem difficult at first, but you will quickly get the hang of it as you begin to interpret. Each card will have more than one interpretation because you will be able to combine the suit and pip in different ways: Let us take some examples:

Ace (beginning) and ♥ (love, family, friends): the beginning of a love affair; a new friendship; a birth or addition to the family.

2 (exchange) and ♠ (trouble): argument; separation; inability to get along.

3 (growing) and ♦ (money, wealth, means, ends): a raise in pay; greater financial security; profits.

4 (will not change; stability) and ♣ (work, callings, plans): goals are on a firm footing; job security; "same old, same old" at work; boredom; plodding along.

5 (the body/health) and ♥ (love, family, friends): sexual relations, the hand of friendship, good health (because the heart is a good card).

6 (a path) and ♠ (trouble): headed in the wrong direction; wrong choice; running with the wrong crowd; difficulties while traveling; ill-advised journey; a journey from which no profit comes; walking away, abandonment

7 (trouble) and ♦ (money, wealth, means and ends): financial difficulties, profits down, the means will not reach the end sought.

8 (thoughts/ideas) and ♣ (work, callings, plans): thoughts about work; thinking of changing jobs; practical plans.

9 (changes) and ♥ (love, family, friends): change for the better (because the heart is a red card); traditionally the "wish card" (see below)

10 (end/goal achieved) and ♠ (trouble): tremendous amount of trouble; evil; violence; grief (see below)

King (men or power) and ♦ (money, wealth, means and ends); a man of financial means; wealthy man; financial power, so possibly a bank or profitable business.

Queen (women or truth) and ♣ (work, callings, plans): a practical or driven woman; a business woman or career woman; a true calling; a job that fits you perfectly; well-laid plans.

Knave (message, child) and ♥ (love, family, friends): a boy or girl child in your family; a love letter; a message from a friend; a compliment, "thank you", or bouquet of flowers.

Keep in mind, too, that hearts and diamonds are generally good and spades and clubs are generally bad. Clubs are not intrinsically bad, but they call for effort and work. Spades, of course, are the worst.

There are also some brief traditional meanings for a few of the cards that you should memorize:

A♥ the home or family

9♥ wish fulfilled

A♦ a letter

9♠ wish denied

A♣ a goal or opportunity

10♠ worry

A♠ a decision, a death

Q♠ or K♠ divorced person

3♠ something lost, loss

7♠ tears (trouble trouble)

Each of the suits also has certain colorings associated with them, which will help you in interpreting the court cards. Diamonds are very fair people, Hearts are people of medium coloring, Clubs are people of darker coloring, and Spades are very dark coloring. Thus, the Knave of Clubs may be a child of darker coloring, or a practical, work-oriented child.

### *Full Examples*

Now for some full examples of interpreting some trios in terms of the three rules so that you can grow accustomed to doing it yourself.

#### *Example 1*

K♣ 3♦ 6♥

The pattern for the first rule is **B R R**, a problem will be solved or things will steadily improve.

The pattern for the second rule is ♣ ♦ ♥ This shows working for financial success, and because the trio ends with a heart, the success will come easily.

*For the third rule:*

King (men or power) and ♣ (work, callings, plan): a man of darker coloring; a practical man; a man at work; a man of authority at work; a well-laid plan sure of success; company equity

3 (things growing) and ♦ (money, wealth, means and ends): a raise in pay; greater financial security; profits

6 (a path) and ♥ (love, family, friends): pleasant path, trip with family or friends, celebration with family or friends, progress in general.

Now we have all of the building blocks to make our interpretation; this one should be fairly clear.

Interpretation: The trio shows the Seeker's boss giving the seeker a raise in pay, perhaps because company profits have increased recently. The raise may come as a surprise (the heart ends the trio, showing something coming easily to the Seeker), but it will be a welcome improvement in the Seeker's life. It is a cause for celebration – maybe something as simple as a trip to dinner, but also maybe something larger – like a family vacation.

#### *Example 2*

2♣ 8♣ 7♥

The pattern for the first rule is **B B R** A light at the end of the tunnel.

The pattern for the second rule is ♣ ♣ ♥. This means working out of a problem at work or in a personal project. Because the heart falls last, the problem will be worked out without too much effort on the part of the Seeker.

*For the third rule:*

2 (exchange) and ♣ (trouble): argument; separation; inability to get along

8 (thoughts/ideas) and ♣ (work, callings, plans): thoughts about work; thinking of changing jobs; practical plans.

7 (trouble) ♥ (love, family, friends): a troubled heart; unsettled emotions; dissipation of trouble.

Now, before we get to the interpretation, let us spend a moment on that 7♥. What happens when you have a number with a poor meaning, like a 7 (trouble) combined with a suit like a heart, which generally has a good meaning? As you can see from above, it can be interpreted in two contradictory ways – a troubled heart, or the dissipation or ending of trouble. Which is right? Strangely enough, both are. Sometimes you can work in both interpretations. It all depends on where the card falls in the trio. This is where the first and second rules will hold you in good stead. Because the pattern is BBR, we know that the 7♥ must signify an improvement of some kind, and in the second rule, if a heart ends the trio, we know that the problem signified by an earlier spade will be worked out without too much effort.

Interpretation: The Seeker has clearly been having trouble with someone at work, and thoughts of the situation have been occupying his mind and troubling his heart. Perhaps the situation has been so bad that the Seeker has been contemplating looking for another job. He should not do so just yet because there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The problem will be resolved, and without much effort on his part. One inference is that the person who has been causing the difficulty will apologize to the Seeker.

### Example 3

A♥ 8♦ 6♣

The pattern for the first rule is RRB: a problem is on the horizon.

The pattern for the second rule is ♥ ♦ ♣. We have not covered this combination before. Can you work it out by what you have learned so far? A spade ends the trio, so there is a problem coming up. What kind of problem? The diamond is next to the spade, so it will be a problem of a financial nature. The heart starts the trio, so you are beginning from a happy place. A possible interpretation for the second rule: a financial matter to be dealt with. What is interesting about this trio is that no club is present. From that we can interpret that perhaps the Seeker isn't really working toward the goal all that vigorously or perhaps no amount of work will remedy the problem. Compare this to one of our examples above ♦ ♣ ♥, a financial problem is overcome easily.

Ace (beginning) and ♥ (love, family, friends): the beginning of a love affair; a new friendship; a birth or addition to the family; recall the traditional interpretation, too, of a home, family, or family member.

8 (thoughts/ideas) and ♦ (money, wealth, means and ends): thoughts about money, financial plans, budgeting, how to make ends meet, either in time or money (because our time is often money).

6 (a path) and ♣ (trouble): headed in the wrong direction; wrong choice; running with the wrong crowd; difficulties while traveling; ill-advised journey; a journey from which no profit comes; walking away, abandonment.

Interpretation: We can do quite a bit with this one. This Seeker wants to make some new beginning in her home or family – perhaps expanding her present home or moving to a new home. Or perhaps she wants another child. Maybe it is both of those things. She is, however, in no financial position to do either. Either option would be ill-advised at this juncture. She (or her family) needs to save more money to make her goal workable. Reaching the goal requires longer-range financial planning and budgeting...and more work on her part.

Sometimes more than one interpretation for a trio of cards will occur to you. That is true with the present trio:

A family member or close friend is headed towards financial difficulty and may need assistance with budgeting. That 6♠ (headed in the wrong direction), to me, would be an indication that using too many credit cards could be a problem.

Financial delays on a home improvement project.

Renovation to a bathroom (beyond your interpretive capacity right now, but the 6♠ can mean drains, and hence, bathrooms – can you see why?)

If the Seeker is a young, single male, these cards show that he often neglects love affairs to focus more on making money.

Now we will do several more brief examples. A final interpretation is given, but endeavor to think through all the three rules, as above, so that you get the most out of them.

6♦ Q♣ 5♥ This divorced woman is focusing on her financial goals and will make progress with regard to them. However, she is feeling tired and may need to take a vacation. She is overtaxing her body somewhat.

2♣ 7♠ A♣ Partnership is a source of worries till a common goal gives birth to new beginning

3♦ 2♠ 9♣ An increase in wealth will cause a split, with the result that what you most wish for will be denied to you, keep your priorities in perspective

7♠ J♥ 7♥ The seeker's troubled mind will be calmed by a letter from a loved one

K♦ 3♦ 5♠ The man of wealth must learn to value his health more than his possessions

8♠ 5♣ 4♥ The Seeker has an active mind that focuses more on negative things than positive; a regimen of physical exercise will help him or her restore emotional balance

8♠ A♣ A♦ Seeker will have a promotion and salary raise at work. New duties bring money

5♦ 9♦ 8♦ This Seeker has money to burn. It shows a much shopping for clothes, furniture, etc. They want a makeover of sorts, uses financial resources to make it happen

9♥ 10♦ 4♦ Seeker's wish for financial independence and a large bank account will be fulfilled

10♥ 7♥ K♥ All is fair and fine in this family man's life. He has reached a stage of happy emotional security; any troubles that arise are easily resolved or quickly solve themselves

J♣ 2♣ 8♦ This young person will need some financial assistance and may seek a loan

A♥ 4♦ 3♦ This trio shows the value of the Seeker's home appreciating in value over time

### *Readings*

We will keep things simple at this stage as far as readings go.

#### *The Simple Trio*

If you have many readings to do, use this spread to give each Seeker a quick glance at the future. Have the Seeker shuffle. Then spread out the cards on the table, and have the Seeker choose three cards at random. Then interpret the three cards as a trio, as we have done above.

#### *The Square of Nine*

For longer readings, have the Seeker choose 9 cards instead. Lay them out thus:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

You can actually get quite a bit of information out of just 9 cards. There will be eight trios to read:

**123, 456, 789** are the first three trios.

**147, 258, 369** are the second trios.

**159 and 357** are the final two trios.

The interpretations of the trios will largely deal with present and future circumstances. Because you are reading each of the cards as part of more than one trio, sometimes the meanings of the trios will be linked, but sometimes they will not be. Be guided by your intuition.

Only on rare occasions will the past appear in a trio, and the Seeker will usually alert you to the fact by asking, "What you just described...could it be something that has happened already?" You should respond in the affirmative, but advise the Seeker that the consequences of that past event are not yet completed. Then look at the cards to discern what those consequences may be.

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*Example Square of Nine*

10♦	9♥	K♥
Q♠	9♦	3♦
5♠	J♥	10♣

Even one glance at this Square of Nine shows the workings and doings of a family. Let us say that it is the mother of the family that has sought our counsel. Let us take a closer look at the trios involved. Redcards predominate over black cards by two to one, so the fortune is generally quite fair.

**1-2-3**, 10♦ 9♥ K♥ The father of the household is a family man and can show his emotions. He will soon score a big financial victory, probably sealing a large financial deal, in accordance with his wishes. In his world and his mind, all will be fair and fine. To make other predictions with the K♥, look at **3-6-9**.

**4-5-6**, Q♠ 9♦ 3♦ The mother of the household is feeling somewhat down, perhaps lonely, since she is represented by a spade. The change in finances, and her growing purse will certainly cheer her up for a time...but for how long a time? She should be counseled to enjoy it while she can because the feeling of isolation will return. See trio **1-4-7**.

**7-8-9**, 5♠ J♥ 10♣ The youth of the household is like his father and has his father's coloring. He will have a minor physical illness to contend with in the near future, but it will not last long (a heart follows spade). The youth is also working out an emotional problem, although the cards do not reveal the exact nature of the problem. There is certainly a lot of work upcoming for this youth. It may be that school is overtaxing his energy and causing him to be run down. The 5 of Spades can also imply that the body is overtaxed through too much drinking or partying. If you were to lay out this trio with cards, you will note that the Knave faces the 5 of Spades and away from the 10 of Clubs. Here is a clue to his emotional trouble. He has work to do...in fact, it will be piling up and log jamming soon...but when faced with the seeming choice of doing some of the work or going out to party, he faces away from the work. So his emotional problem is how to motivate himself to do what he knows is right. His mother, the Queen, should be keeping closer tabs on him.

**1-4-7**, 10♦ Q♠ 5♠ The fact that the Queen shall have greater financial capacity does not appear to be much consolation for very long. For what was once pleasant turns steadily more foul. Her sense of loneliness increases (she is a Spade, and she is followed by another Spade), and it is likely that it will manifest in some physical ailment. That is one of the ways that people being ignored or shunted aside seek attention. (Note Well: Although beyond your predictive capacities at the present, the high Diamond cards near the Queen and 5 of Spades indicate that the physical ailment will be centered on "nervous" headaches).

**2-5-8**, 9♥ 9♦ J♥ The youth is only too happy that there is a beneficial change in financial circumstances coming. After all, he has a wish, too. Would it be too much to ask for his father's giving, generous heart to spread the fortune all around? You can be certain that this youth will be wanting something and will very likely receive it. The cards do not specify what, but we can infer from knowing the nature of youth...it will be bigger rather than smaller, dearer rather than cheaper, faster rather than slower, and wheeled rather than stationary. The two 9s

falling together emphasize the idea of change, so whatever it is that the youth wants, it will effect a large change in his life, more or less. If the youth wants no specific material object, then it will be an increase of periodic payments to him, i.e. his allowance or stipend.

**3-6-9, K♥ 3♦ 10♣** The financial deal shown in trio 123 will bear the King of Hearts increased profits. His finances will be growing steadily according to the Three of Diamonds. He must be aware, however, that as his finances grow, so shall the amount of time he must spend on work. The Ten of Clubs indicates a great deal of business activity coming up for him. Even those that reach the top must labor hard for their gains. Because the pattern of the cards is **R R B**, the Seeker may not realize that last point until it is looming large in his life. Still, all will go well if he can adapt to increased work. See 357 for the final comments about the King of Hearts. (Note Well: Although beyond your predictive capabilities at present, this trio also shows the King traveling a little bit in connection with his business deal, particularly since there is a 10 in each of the trios **1-2-3** and **3-6-9**).

**1-5-9, 10♦ 9♦ 10♣** Confirms the financial change bringing additional business trips for **K♥**.

**3-5-7, K♥ 9♦ 5♠** Be careful what you wish for! The change in financial status brings greater potential for overworking the body, which can lead to illness. Note how the King of Hearts is surrounded largely by diamonds. Although he is essentially a family man with a good heart, he is focused on monetary and financial matters at this time. He is probably trying to give his family every financial advantage that he can.

This Artful Witch would counsel the Seeker to gently remind her husband that families are not built on financial advantages, but hearts and spending time with one another. Perhaps he will find the truth (Q) of that statement unpleasant (♠), but she should speak it anyway. Because the King is a Heart, he will be receptive to the statement.

Do not, however, make a mountain out of a molehill in this reading. There are many good cards here, and they outnumber the bad cards. The only two spades are the Queen and 5, and those largely indicate that it is the mother that needs to either adjust her attitude or adjust her circumstances. The Seeker should also be counseled to be thankful for what she has.

This ends card-reading for the witch of poor memory. We will go more into depth in card meanings for “The Wytch of Middling Memory” in the next section.