

CREDITS

**Artifacts of the Tarot
is created by the
following individuals**

Chris

Karl Meyer

Evan Buchholz

Glen Guyett

Cover art painted by Karl Meyer.
Card art public domain Rider Waite Smith
tarot set.

Creative commons place holder

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2

WHAT IS THIS GAME ABOUT?

In the depths of an ancient burial chamber, a mysterious artifact catches the eye of an intrepid adventurer. Her curiosity draws her in, and the inscriptions on your frame draw her close. As you entice her with images of power and wealth you wonder if she can accomplish what those who came before her could not.

She collects you from the altar and resumes her expedition. With each new host comes a new opportunity. Your journey begins anew.

Artifacts of the Tarot is a game about smart swords, cursed cups, pernicious pentacles, and other artifacts with agency. You are Will made manifest, an Item of incredible power, and you will pursue your goals by any means at your disposal. You will need to be acquired, transported, and coveted by a Hero you will inspire to accomplish your goals.

MATERIALS

4

Artifacts of the Tarot is a game for 2 to 5 players.

Gather these Items

Tarot Cards

Friends

Booklets for each player and GM

Pencils for each person

Coloring utensils

Snacks and Beverages

Notecards

Time

To play a session of Artifacts of Tarot set aside 2 to 4 hours.

Playing through a **Theme** will take 3 to 6 sessions.

Take breaks.

ROLES

In Artifacts of the Tarot one player will be the **GM** and the rest will be the **Artifacts**.

The GM

The role of the GM is to present the fictional world of the game with authenticity. Doing this they will ask questions, provide obstacles, and play the non-Player characters including the Heroes. The GM should be attentive and curious. They'll steer the session toward answering questions their group would like to see answered.

The Artifacts

The **Artifacts** role is to embody the Artifact they have chosen. To do this they will, overcome obstacles, initiate conflict, and use the Heroes and setting to their advantage. The **Artifacts** should be engaged and curious, driving the session to answer questions their group has been interested in answering.

GM TOOLS



6

Your tools for creating an interesting narrative with the **Artifacts** are the **Heroes**, the **Major Arcana Deck**, and the **Hand of Fate**.

Using the Heroes

Heroes are lead by their ambition. Use that ambition to put an Artifact further from its goal or test to see what they would be willing to do do to their heroes to achieve its goals.

Use a hero's Meanings as inspiration for their history and how to roleplay them. Create places connected to them with the examples provided in the booklet.

Using the Major Arcana Deck

The Major Arcana deck is a tool to generate new Heroes, something powerful and dangerous to the Artifacts, a setting for the next scene or, for regular old-fashioned inspiration. Use the meaning of Major Arcana deck to inspire you.

GM TOOLS

7

Hand of Fate

The Hand of Fate is generated from the Scenes in the Situation. It allows the GM to twist the narrative and make things more complicated or provide obstacles to the Artifacts pursuing their Purpose.

These twists are how fickle fate is against objects. To twist a player you need to play a card from your hand that matches their arcana suit and it should relate to the previous actions of the Artifact.

Artifacts may conflict against these by playing cards against the cards you play from your hand.

Ideas for Twists

- *Bring in an enemy of the artifact*
- *Place an Artifact in a comprising situation*
- *Split the Artifact and the Hero*
- *A new threat or challenge*
- *Have their Hero pursue their Artifacts' intentions*

THEME

A theme unifies each of the Artifacts under a common origin, goal, and environment. A theme provides the tools of setting up situations, special rules, and informs the group of what type of game **Artifacts of the Tarot** is.

Themes are composed of the following:

- A title
- A question the group looks to answer through play relating to the themes origin
- Who wields the Artifacts
- An origin for the Artifacts
- How the Artifacts can be destroyed

We have provided a theme for a more cooperative game in this booklet. We look forward to releasing different themes for different styles of play in the future. Feel free to write your own theme for your group.



**ONE TO
RULE
THEM
ALL**

ONE TO RULE THEM ALL

The players were all forged by the same Overlord. The Overlord was defeated long ago and each of the players found their way into the hands of someone of relatively low power.

They must reunite and return to the risen master and drive the forces of good from the lands.

CREATE A QUESTION THAT YOU WANT ANSWERED FROM THIS THEME

The question should be something you are all interested in exploring, and will be able to answer in the time allotted to play. You will answer this question by creating situations that you play through.

Situations are composed of scenes.

Scenes are composed of conflicts and role play.

EXAMPLE QUESTION FOR ONE SHOT

*CAN WE DEFEAT THE FORCES OF GOOD
WITHOUT OUR MAKER?*

**ONCE YOU ANSWER THIS QUESTION
THE STORY HAS ENDED.**

TITLE

12

UNIFYING THEME
ONE TO RULE THEM ALL

THE QUESTION

HOW WERE YOU CREATED?

HOW ARE YOU DESTROYED?

SITUATIONS

Each session you play of **Artifacts of the Tarot** you will create and play out a **Situation**.

These **Situations** are played in pursuit of answering the **Theme's** question. To aid in that pursuit you will ask a question about the **Situation** that the group will all work towards in **Scenes** to answer that question. Once you answer that question your **Situation** is over. In **Scenes** we role play, ask questions, and resolve **Conflicts** in the fiction.

Play out scenes in till you resolve the situation question.

Once the question has been answered move on to divination to connect this situation the larger theme.

After a situation is over collect all the scene index cards, hero cards and keep them together with the situation index card. This way you have a history of play as you make your way through your theme.

Collaboration

Each session of play starts with the group collaborating on what sort of situation they would like to explore tonight. This can be a situation that continues from a previous one or one that goes in a new direction the only requirements are

1. Everyone is excited about answering questions relating to that situation.
2. It relates to answer your unifying theme question.

SITUATION CREATION

Write a question that is at the crux of that situation on an index card.

Once that question is answered your situation is over.

Place the card where everyone can see.

Deal 1 card from the **Major Arcana deck** to each player, each representing the Hero in possession of their Artifact.

Place two more cards in the center of the play space.

These will be relevant to the situation in some way.

Each Hero should have an index card where you record their information.

Go clockwise around the table and have each player create a Hero out of each Tarot card, using that card as an inspiration. To create a Hero give them a name and have their name be the answer to one of these questions.

Who is descended from the Overlord | Who is jealous of what another has | Who is attempting to rise in power | Who has overextended | Who wishes to destroy the Artifacts | Who called the council | Who has the knowledge of the Past |

After you've given them a name and answered a question, shuffle that card back into the deck.

SITUATION SET UP

15

Once the Heroes are completed we'll start on a setting. Continue around the table creating a community and a location that are important to each Hero.

Record this information on the Hero index cards.

Have each person at the table give a Hero a quest. Then connect the Heroes together by giving them each an enemy and an ally among the other Heroes, or extra 2 cards. The quest is what that Hero wants out of that situation. The enemy is an obstacle to their goal, and their ally who can help them achieve their goal.

Have each player draw a card for each Hero in play. That player writes a Meaning of that card in their booklet. These meanings are based on legends known by at least one NPC about that Artifact.

Meanings are a single word that encompass the essence of a power of that Artifact. Moments and Manifestations of those Meanings are the instances and events that have transpired because of those powers.

Afterwards take a 5 to 10 minute break.

After the break craft your first scene in the situation. Make sure it involves the situations and the Players artifacts.

The GM should collaborate with the players to figure out what would be an interesting scene. Scenes should be always in pursuit of the situation question. Scenes could be vignette of smaller scenes that all have to do with one another or a large a climatic moment . Set scenes in pursuit of the hero's goal. Each Player can set one scene per session based on their Temptation Make the players work to accomplish their agenda within those scenes.

To create a scene do the following

1. *Name the scene.*
2. *Define what type of scene this is.*
3. *What is at stake, how does this relate to the situation.*
4. *Who is in the scene.*

Example type of Scenes

Survival of the Fittest: Hero's lives are at stake. At war threatens the things.

Whispers on the Wind: conspiring against or with the hero's, maybe to inspire allies or generate infamy.

Creation: Someone is making something or working on something that affects the world at large.

Social: Meeting and forming of relationships, maybe its bartering. This forming of a relationship should be important to the setting.

THE HEROES

Heroes provide a challenge for the players.

Use the **Heroes** as your of crafting scenes and exploring what lengths the players will go through to accomplish their purpose.

Respect the heroes and follow their agenda despite the players machinations.

How cards work

Your cards are valued from 0 to 21. This is their raw power. This number is an abstraction of their will to influence the world. When **Heroes** conflict with one another use the number value of their cards to see who gets their way.

When Hero's team up, aided by twist cards or by their artifacts add the total value of the cards played for that side in the conflict.

Do not be afraid to end a Heroes part of the story or bring in new ones if that is what the fiction demands.

Use the meanings of these cards to understand who this hero is, what they want and do not be afraid to use their power against the players.

POWER: 0

MEANINGS

A Vessel No Goal

Jester - Theatre -
Mocking of the
Tyrant



THE FOOL .

TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 1

MEANINGS

Influence Not trusted

Hidden Savant -
The Church -
Unlocking inner
potential



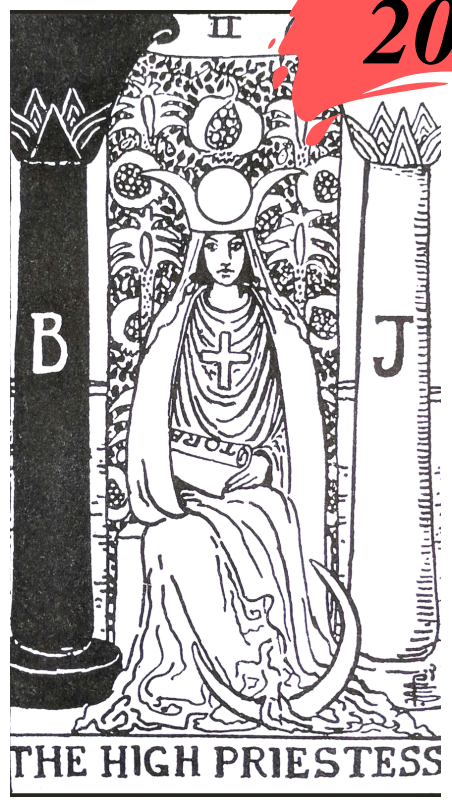
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 2

MEANINGS

Care for	Not
a heir	Respected

New Heir - Body
 of water -
 Guarding Secrets



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 3

MEANINGS

Easily

Order

Bullied

Society

Famous Artist -
New idea taking
hold - Death of
Royal



THE EMPRESS.

TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 4

MEANINGS

Hard Order
headed Military

King of Kings -
Unyielding Army -
Throne Room



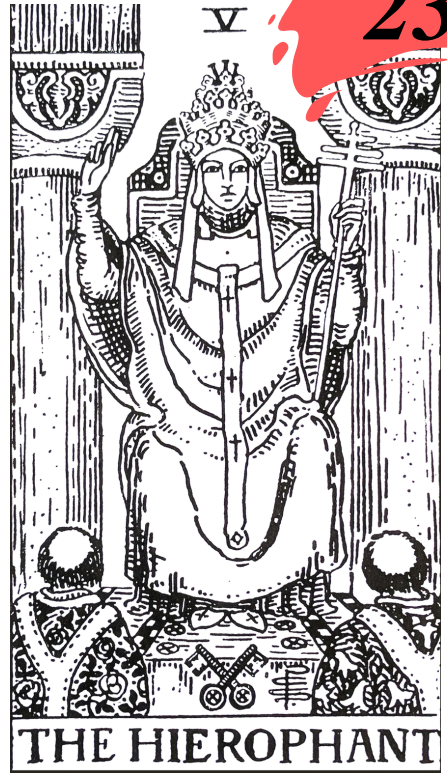
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 5

MEANINGS

Influence Church Dogmatic

The Prophet -
Bridge between
heaven and earth -
The balance of Law



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 6

MEANINGS

Seduce Attain the
 unobtainable

Love Triangle -
Consequential choice
- A Toll



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 7

MEANINGS

Glory Mislead

Grand General -
Using new power
with care - A long
road



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 8

MEANINGS

Resilient Stubborn

Animal Tamer -
Society Foundations
crumble - Quarry or
Mine



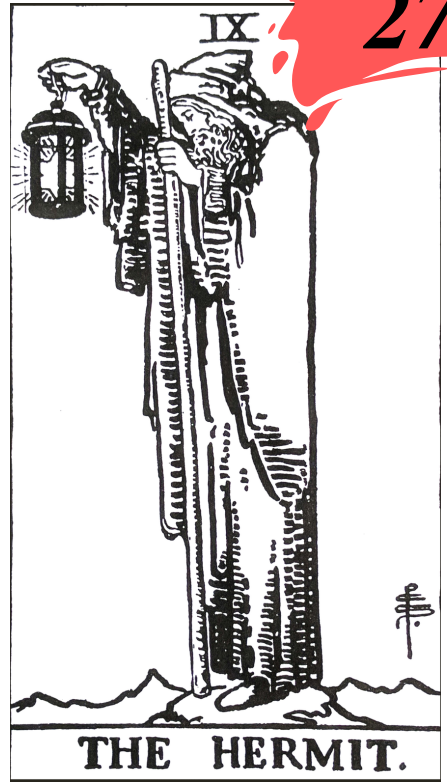
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 9

MEANINGS

Unseen Isolated

Truth teller - Narrow
Path - Something
hidden



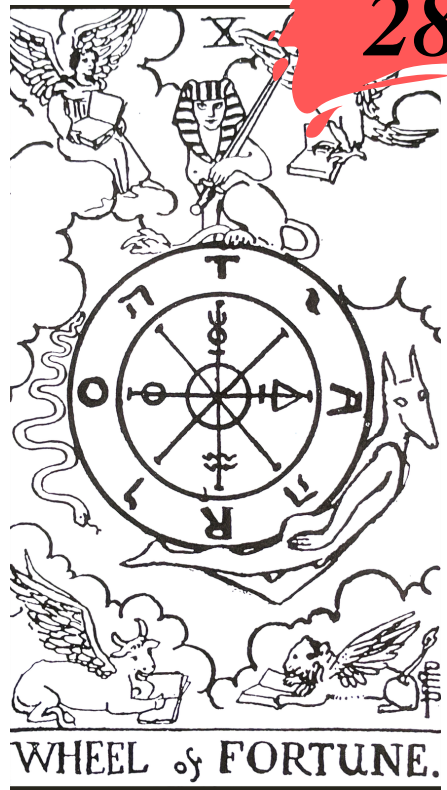
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 10

MEANINGS

Natural Order Countinue

Circle of life -
Medicine Man -
Place of Healing



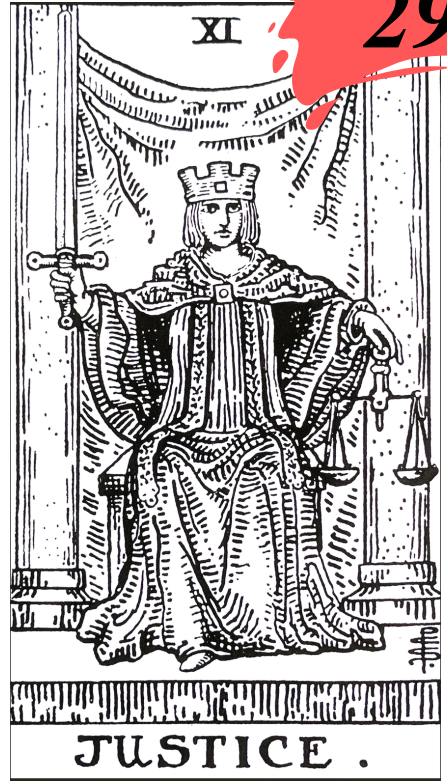
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 11

MEANINGS

Status	Seize
Quo	criminal

Marshall - Court or
 Jail - Making
 something right



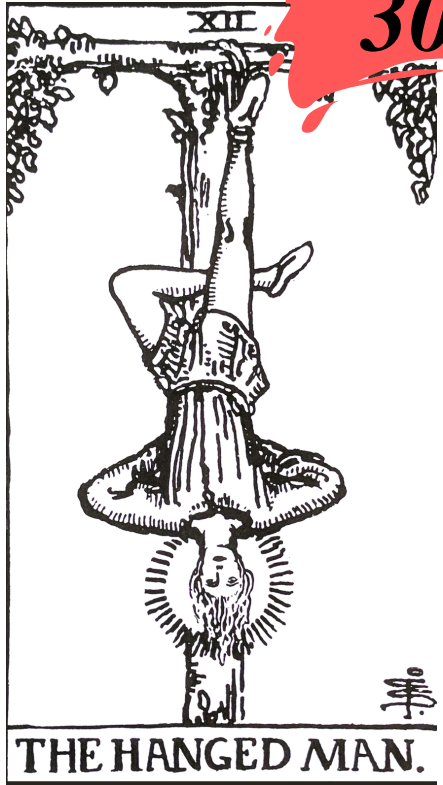
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 12

MEANINGS

Wanted Liberated

Traitor -
Hardening to life -
Gallows



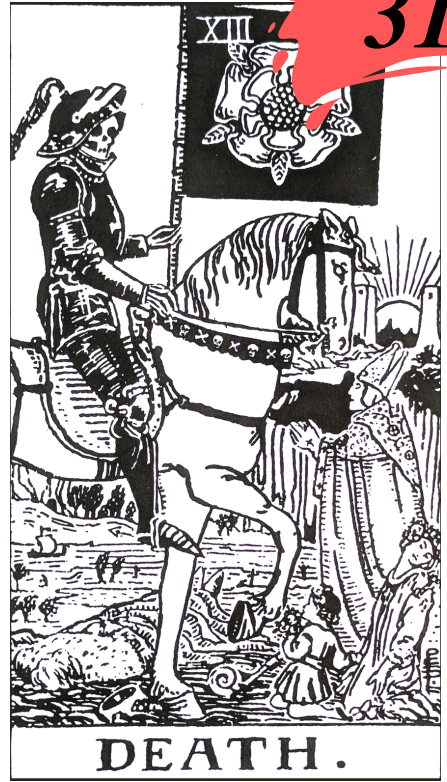
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 13

MEANINGS

Cold Vengeance
Blooded

Revolution/Rebirth -
Rider on a white horse
- A Plague



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 14

MEANINGS

Calm Prohibit
 Indulgence

a Gambler - A fortress
- Withstanding
opposition



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 15

MEANINGS

Disrupt Treasonous

Seducer - Harem -
Reality based on lies



THE DEVIL .

TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 16

MEANINGS

Truth Selflessness

The Enlightened one -
A Tower - A Crisis or
Disaster



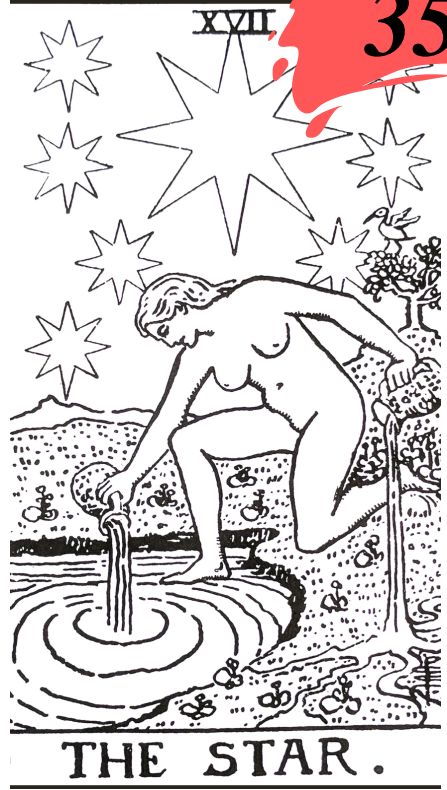
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 17

MEANINGS

Resist Expand
Corruption Reach

A Monk - A
Monastery - Mass
Dreams



THE STAR .

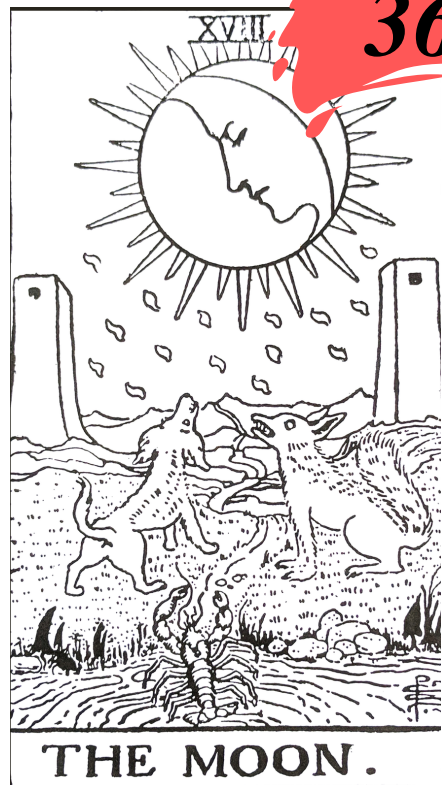
TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 18

MEANINGS

Transformation
Lose Control

Someone from the past
- Old ruins -
Evolution



THE MOON.

TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 19

MEANINGS

Commander
Code of Conduct

Shut in
-Contentment-
Desert



THE SUN .

TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

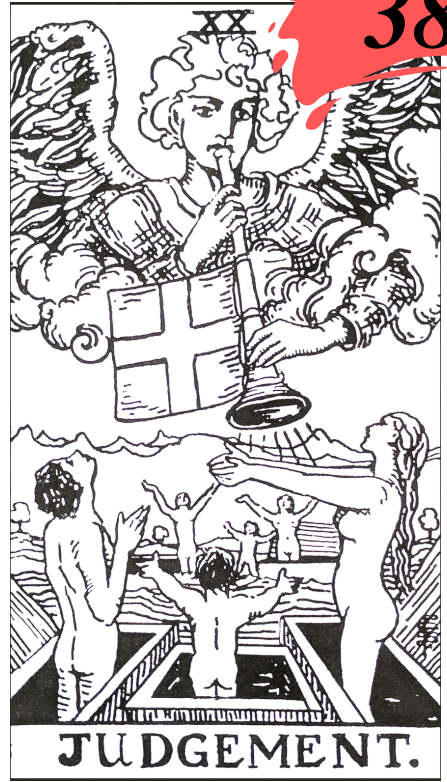
POWER: 20

MEANINGS

Arbiter

Arcane Knowledge

A Glutton - A prophecy comes to pass - A Tavern or place of intoxication



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

POWER: 21

MEANINGS

Nature/God
Maintain Power

An outside Nation -
Foreign Monarch -
Healing



TIME & MANIFESTATIONS

CYCLE OF PLAY

Collaboration

Each session of play starts with the group collaborating on what sort of situation they would like to explore tonight. This can be a situation that continues from a previous one or one that goes in a new direction the only requirements are

1. Everyone is excited about answering questions relating to that situation.
2. It relates to answer your unifying theme question.

Resolve the Situation

The GM sets the first scene to kick the situation off with a bang. The group should work together to resolve the first scene and subsequent ones until the situation feels answered by everyone in the session.

Divination

Once the situation is resolved.

We zoom out and do the following.

1. Past: Advancement
2. Present: How the situation relates to the Unifying Theme.
3. Future: What is portent of things to come. What does the group want to see in the next session.

Divination

Past: This phase the players claim if they hit either of their advancement triggers. If they do follow those steps. Collect the cards from the table as you talk about hitting your claim.

Present: The Players discuss how this session relates to their Theme's question.

Future: The players discuss what they're excited to do next or, if they have completed the unifier quest or are ending the session the GM sets the epilogue. The epilogue is the last scene painted with no conflicts as an overview of the campaign and how it ended and what might happen in the future. Each should contribute on where their Artifact has ended up in realation of this final scene.

Hero Names

Bunzil, David, Muhammad, Hayk, Ce
 Acatl Topiltzin, Śakra, Gwydion, Ptah-
 hotep, Beowulf, Tyrrhenus, Ilmarinen,
 Prometheus, Hunor and Magor,
 Viracocha, Karna, Red Horn, Apanuugak,
 Kintarō, Iktomi, Kukulkan, Enkidu,
 Bödvar Bjarki, Changing Woman, Kaknu,
 Nanabozho, Kaveh the Blacksmith, Māui,
 Aeneas, Dažbog, Yanauluha

Example Meanings

Chaos, War, Peace, Order, Law, Unrest,
 Love, Sex, Infatuation, Jousting,
 Invention, Alchemy, Science, Debate,
 Thievery, Double Cross, Business,
 Gambling, Grace, Spying, Silver tongue,
 Craftsmanship, Scouting, Dragon Slaying,
 Carelessness, Zealotry, Conviction,
 Commanding, Sailing, New lines of
 thought, Saving your work.