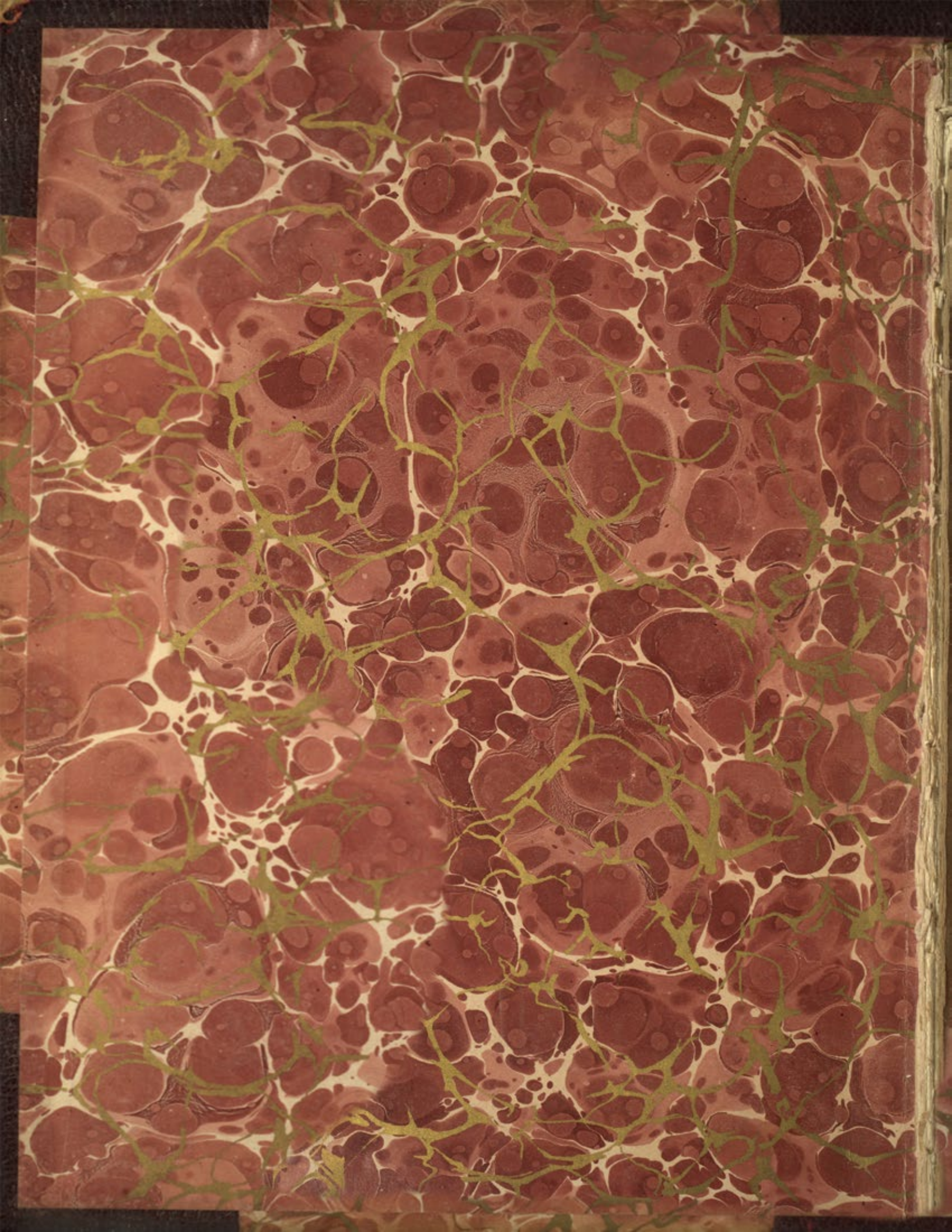


FORTUNES  
WHEEL



QUICKSTART





Beta edition 2015

Copyright 2015 Peter Hollinghurst all rights reserved.

Illustrations by Peter Hollinghurst or from public domain books  
at [archive.org](http://archive.org).

Layout by Suzette McGrath - [www.suzettemcgrath.co.uk](http://www.suzettemcgrath.co.uk)

For updates, news and information about related products and  
books or to make a donation to help keep this project alive,  
please visit - [www.fortuneswheel.co.uk](http://www.fortuneswheel.co.uk)

# FORTUNES WHEEL

ROLEPLAYING GAME  
QUICKSTART

ART & GAME DESIGN  
BY  
PETER HOLLINGHURST

LAYOUT BY SUZETTE McGRATH





# CONTENTS

**Beginnings..... page 7**

What You Need to Play.....page 9

Introduction.....page 10

**The Basics..... page 15**

Elements .....page 16

The Wheel.....page 20

The Tarot .....page 24

The Cards .....page 30

Edges and Distractions .....page 36

Fortune.....page 38

Creating a Character .....page 40

**Creating Stories ..... page 47**

Storytelling .....page 48

Settings.....page 56

**Playing the Game .....page 63**

Using the Cards .....page 64

Tasks.....page 68

Extended Tasks and Repairs.....page 72

Magic .....page 74

**A Turn of the Wheel.....page 81**

Improving a Character .....page 82

**Appendix.....page 86**

Quick Reference - Tasks.....page 86

Quick Reference - Fortune.....page 88

Tarot Card Meanings .....page 89

Correspondences .....page 92

Using Dice.....page 102

Character Sheets .....page 104

Quickstart Q & A .....page 108

# FORTUNA





# Beginnings



## What You Need to Play

This is just a quick list of the essentials to play a game of Fortunes Wheel.

You will need:

Ideally at least one Tarot deck (preferably one per player). A standard design of 78 cards with engaging pictures for every card (and not just symbols for the pip cards) is best. The Rider-Waite deck or one based on it would be a good deck to use. At a pinch you could play with a regular deck of cards., but there are also various online Tarot sites (such as tarotlore.com) and apps that will simulate simple card draws and spreads if you need them. Most Tarot decks come with a booklet describing the various meanings of the cards and these are really useful to have to hand when playing. You can also get books on the Tarot and it can be helpful if you have one or more of these to have them to hand when playing as well. Do not worry if you do not have one because there is also a basic run down of the meanings in this guide for you to refer to if needed.

If you do not have any cards at least one ten sided dice (a d10). Two would be better. You can also 13 blank regular dice (d6) and mark each face with a different card symbol (blank d6 are actually fairly easy to find online). It helps to have a cup you can use as a shaker that you can also block excess dice from escaping from (because you will only want some of the 13 dice to roll out, not all of them but you would have to shake the lot).

Some paper and pencils.

Something to use as counters for keeping track of changes to your characters while playing can be helpful but are not essential.

Character record sheets. You can make them yourself or use the ones that come with this guide. We also have a pretty Character Wheel for keeping track of your various points in game that you can print out and use counters on, but in play tests we actually printed them onto sticky CD labels we then applied to old unwanted or damaged CDs. We used different colour paper clips as markers. Printing onto stiff card would also work well, but we found using CDs gave a much more durable wheel.

Somewhere comfortable to play, ideally with snacks and drinks to hand.

A few hours of spare time. Maybe some other people as well, but you can actually play solo if you want.

Something to read it on like a laptop or tablet





## Introduction

### Tools Not Rules

We all tell stories. It is built into us, a part of being human to share our experiences, our dreams and our struggles in narrative form.

There has always been an element of participation - a relationship between the storyteller and their audience formed through the interplay of action and reaction, intent and the reception of the story being told. Participation reaches its peak when the audience becomes the storyteller as well, and then what you have is a role playing game.

Narratives can also be visual - comic books and cartoons for instance. You could construct a narrative from almost anything if you wanted so long as it has a narrative structure - a beginning, middle and end, characters and plot.

While you could construct a narrative and thus tell a story that is planned out very carefully in advance, you could also use random elements, visual cues or clues and construct one through the participation of several people. Fortunes Wheel is a framework for doing that. It exists first and foremost as an aid for playing role playing games (or "RPGs") that are both fully improvised and made up as you go along, or which use various pre-created settings. It can also be used to just tell stories or as a way of kick starting creativity and ideas or for resolving actions.

Most RPGs tend to fall back on giving you a set of rules, often fairly complex ones. In Fortunes Wheel the idea is instead to give you a basic system or tool set tied to some core concepts. In it there are suggestions of some methods, but these are not intended to be hard and fast rules, just possible ways of doing something to push the narrative along.

There are a few simple ideas that have some far reaching consequences at the heart of Fortunes Wheel. If you keep these in mind when playing they will help enhance both your enjoyment and understanding of it. Everything is flexible rather than hard and fixed, so if a method to do something feels right, use it, but if not, use something else (the 'rule' of common sense). This is not a rule book, it is an approach with some examples you can use. Before Dungeons and Dragons (the forerunner of most of these RPGs and story games) saw print instead of all the complex dice rolls one method used to resolve conflicts was playing rock, paper, scissors, stone. Sometimes complexity and rules can really help, but they can also get in the way and limit you.

What really brings Fortunes Wheel to life is that idea that everything tells a story. In many games you roll a dice and the dice tells you how many spaces to move or if your character hit his target and how much damage he did. In Fortunes Wheel it would give you clues as to why and what else might happen next and give some insight into what has happened. While you can use dice, Fortunes Wheel is based around using Tarot. Every picture can tell a story to accompany the numerical result that way. Ideally you should have at least one pack of tarot cards to play Fortunes Wheel and one per player is actually best. If you do not have any or cannot get a deck you can use two ten sided dice instead, but the pictures on the cards can be a big help with any storytelling in ways a numerical result or description might not.

Playing Fortunes Wheel can be as simple or as complex as you wish. It is quite possible to only use the bare minimum of the tools here as well and that can actually be a good idea, especially at first, until you feel comfortable trying out more of the system. Some people can run straight into using cards as prompts and inspiration improvising around them naturally while others might struggle a little. If you find it hard at first, concentrate on just using the cards numerical strengths and do not worry about their meanings until you feel more confident to experiment a little and start reading them. The actual core mechanics of the game are actually incredibly simple. You can theoretically just play the game using the summaries of these in the appendix. Most of this book is there to help you to do more with those core mechanics than simply find out if you hit something in a fight or broke down a door.

It is also worth keeping in mind that this is an 'indie' game. There is no big company or design studio behind this and no big team of people who are creating it. It is written, designed and illustrated by one person with the occasional help of his long suffering wife. To help ensure that Fortunes Wheel continues to grow, develop and expand we are totally reliant on people supporting us.

How can you support us? One way is by buying the various expansions and settings for Fortunes Wheel we have planned when they come out. You can also make donations on the Fortunes Wheel website at [www.fortuneswheel.co.uk](http://www.fortuneswheel.co.uk). There is also information on the website about other ways you can help. You can actually get involved and have access to all sorts of insider treats and rewards through sites like Kickstarter or Patreon. You can become a part that way in the ongoing creation of the game and have some very real input. If you have a game group, get the group onboard in supporting the ongoing development of Fortunes Wheel. The more people supporting it the more we will be able to produce and the higher the quality of the end product will be. Without your support it will probably all just dry up and die because we will not be able to afford to produce new supplements for it.

Remember as well that when playing Fortunes Wheel these are tools not rules, and have fun!



One more thing - we are going play a game of "let's pretend" with the game itself. What if this game was not just a game? What if it was actually a set of real methods and techniques to create worlds and enter into them? What if you could use imagination as an interface into their reality, where the story is more than a story but actually a way of stepping into people's lives and directing them and changing them? What if there was some sort of common story or theme running through all the various worlds that Fortunes Wheel might open up for you? Some sort of thread you will find clues to scattered across the various books and even in the tools you use themselves to something bigger?

As the writer of these game books I could just pretend it has all just come from my head and present you with a simple game system. I could do that, but what if it really all goes back to an unexpected legacy of some mysterious letters and diary fragments...

Part of a bundle of notes and letters tied together with a worn blue ribbon. Some staining and foxing is present on the paper and analysis of the staining reveals it is blood, though the blood cannot be identified as belonging to any known animal.

*London, April 1916*

*Do not be surprised if these notes have reached you by, shall we say unusual routes. As time passes and your understanding increases it will start to make more sense to you. For now it may be best to simply accept that by reading these notes you, and those you choose to share them with, are now participating in something very special and that you were chosen because you can make a real difference not just in our world, but in the many shadows and echoes of it scattered through the dark and waiting to be found.*

*There is a place, the place that was before all other places, that we have called the Erebus. It is a terrifying and wonderful place because in it all things that might be can be and what I am giving to you is a set of tools and techniques to waken and explore them. This is an invitation to step into that darkness and reveal hidden worlds and have incredible adventures within them. Sometimes there are people whose presence and activities become pivotal and unleash wondrous possibilities in these worlds and in our own. It is my hope that you and those you pass this onto might be such people. Perhaps your participation in the mysteries I hope to show you will come to benefit us all in some way, and perhaps one of you will unlock the many mysteries that as of yet remain unsolved. I certainly hope that this is the case and that you will avoid the darker paths that may also open up to you. I place my trust in you all on this point in the sincerest hope that you do not disappoint me. You may well discover that it is far from easy to avoid falling into the many traps, snares and deceits that arise when we take a twilight journey into the Erebus. Things are rarely exactly as they might seem to be at first sight and sudden and surprising reversals are not uncommon. There are many paths that you might find and wish to follow but not all will prove true or wise to take.*

*I urge you to find for yourself if you can a deck of Tarot cards. For us the cards have become a focus for the various techniques we use to explore and influence the many worlds of the Erebus. Where we are we can simply step into the Erebus ourselves, but it is a very dangerous thing to do and it is far better and safer to create proxies, or guises, that you can use to enter it. The place, let us call it the portal for now, that we have been using to simply step into the Erebus is also itself hidden and has been for many long centuries. For various reasons I am not about to reveal how one might find that place, so for you the cards are really the only way in. There are hostile powers that would be alerted to your presence if you were to come to use the portal and it is far too soon for me to play my hand and show my cards to them. Perhaps when you have*



*learned how to use the cards as a focus and have more experience of manipulating the worlds of the Erebus you will be ready to hear more about that special place. Until then it is far too dangerous. I do not want to lose any of my explorers and adventurers, my agents, in the Erebus. I want you to be hidden and safe, my eyes and ears and subtle manipulators of events*

*Icarus*

The identity of the author of the note, 'Icarus' is not revealed, nor is the place he mentions. I recently inherited his papers as a part of a small legacy from a relative I never even knew existed, a distant 'aunt', Lavinia, who was never mentioned to me by any of my family. I have tried to find out exactly how she was related to me or to this *Icarus* and who he might be with no success. The name looks like it is probably a pseudonym since *Icarus* was a character from Greek mythology and not the actual name of the person, which does not help. In many of the notes it is clear that this *Icarus* is writing to Lavinia. I have also tried to find the place that the box of documents and effects came from, Darkport in Witching, but the place is a mystery to me and I cannot find it on any map. Attempts to contact the solicitor who sent the box to me or the firm, Harlow and Fritch, have proved fruitless. It is almost as if they do not actually exist.

As it turned out I did not have to actually heed his (I am assuming *Icarus is a man*) advice about obtaining a pack of Tarot cards as there were several in the box already.

I set about reading the various notes and discovered they did indeed include a set of techniques for using them as some sort of storytelling tool. The author seemed to have the odd idea that the stories you could tell with them were all actually real, or happened in some sort of alternate universe having some semblance of reality there. Of course there really is no dark realm called the Erebus where he suggests our imaginings, stories and dreams become real.

My first thoughts on reading the notes was that this *Icarus* was quite mad, but the various methods of using the cards to create imaginary worlds and tell stories had a lot of potential for making a really great fun game or creative writing tool. So I set about turning his notes into this game I called Fortunes Wheel that you are reading now. I cannot however rid myself of a strange question - what if this *Icarus* was not mad? What if he was right? Playing the game myself sometimes it really did feel a little as if I was finding people and places that were already there instead of just creating them, or the places I created took on a life all of their own. In my dreams I found they sometimes haunted me and seemed to whisper to me that there were really there and waiting... and somewhere far beyond them in the dark something else was waiting as well.

From time to time I will include transcripts of some of the original text of his notes. The system for using the Tarot is based on these but I have also added my own thoughts, suggestions and a little bit of background research I have done over the years. Make of it what you will. I think it is really all just a game but playing along with the mysterious *Icarus* and what I am sure is just a bizarre and imaginative hoax might be fun and to echo what *Icarus* said, here is an invitation to you to play.







# The Basics



## Elements

Hand written on a page torn from a lined notebook.

*The year of our Lord, 1362 or so they told me. Somewhere in the dark. I am down to my last box of matches.*

*The elements are the key, the foundation of everything. I should have told you this right at the beginning so you would understand the Erebus better. When the four elements split from the prima material as the alchemists tell us they did, where did this occur? It had to be some place that was not a place, some sort of pre-existing point at which the possible could become the actual. The ancients thought of it as darkness, or chaos, some cabbalists thought of it as a sort of a hole in the oneness of God. We call it the Erebus after the Greek primordial of that name. It is the place where all the energy and matter is born and that all the energy and matter returns. It is the darkness that comes before light but in which the light is born and coalesces into worlds, universes and dreams. I would urge you to read the writing of the sages on this and acquaint yourself with the elements because they are the basic tools that help animate the Tarot, the key to accessing the Erebus and working magic there.*

The date on this notebook page is intriguing, but then perhaps dates in this place Icarus called the 'Erebus' vary? I do not think we are really looking at time travel here.

He does have some interesting things to say about the four Elements that I have adapted into this game.

Everything in the game can be described by the four elements, Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Each element has a set of associated qualities that describe their nature (Fire is hot and dry, Earth dry and cold and so on).

Fortunes Wheel uses cards as representations of the four elements at work in the game. Each suit represents an element. Wands/staves/clubs are Fire, Coins/pentacles/diamonds



are Earth, Cups/hearts are Water and Swords/spades are Air. If you are using a Tarot pack rather than conventional cards as recommended you also have a fifth suit (the Major Arcana) that acts as a 'fifth element' - the Quintessence or spirit of all things (the original point from which the four elements came, a sort of underlying perfection and symmetry to everything). Alchemists called this the 'prima materia' or first material. It is not strictly speaking an element.

Each of the four elements corresponds to some aspect of human nature and experience:

Fire is will power and creative force, Earth is practicality and material issues, Air is thought and communication, Water is emotion and subconscious mystery.

Each element in Fortunes Wheel has a numerical value - the higher that number the more powerful and focused it is. Powerful elements usually result in a greater chance of success in tasks that involve them, but this comes at a price, as the more powerful an element it the more influence it has in a characters life for good or ill. Your greatest strength can also become your greatest weakness. A character with a high Fire element has great will power, but can also become an obsessive tyrant, unable to control their own abuse of their power. Each element can be tempered by its opposite, so Fire would be tempered with Water. A character with high Fire and low Water would be more likely to become a tyrant than one where the two are closer in strength.

The nature of an element is more pronounced in stronger cards. A high numbered Fire card is fierier, more concentrated in its effect than a lower numbered one. The more concentrated something in the game is, the more powerful it is. The more powerful it is, the less flexible it becomes as it is harder for other, weaker elements to affect it.

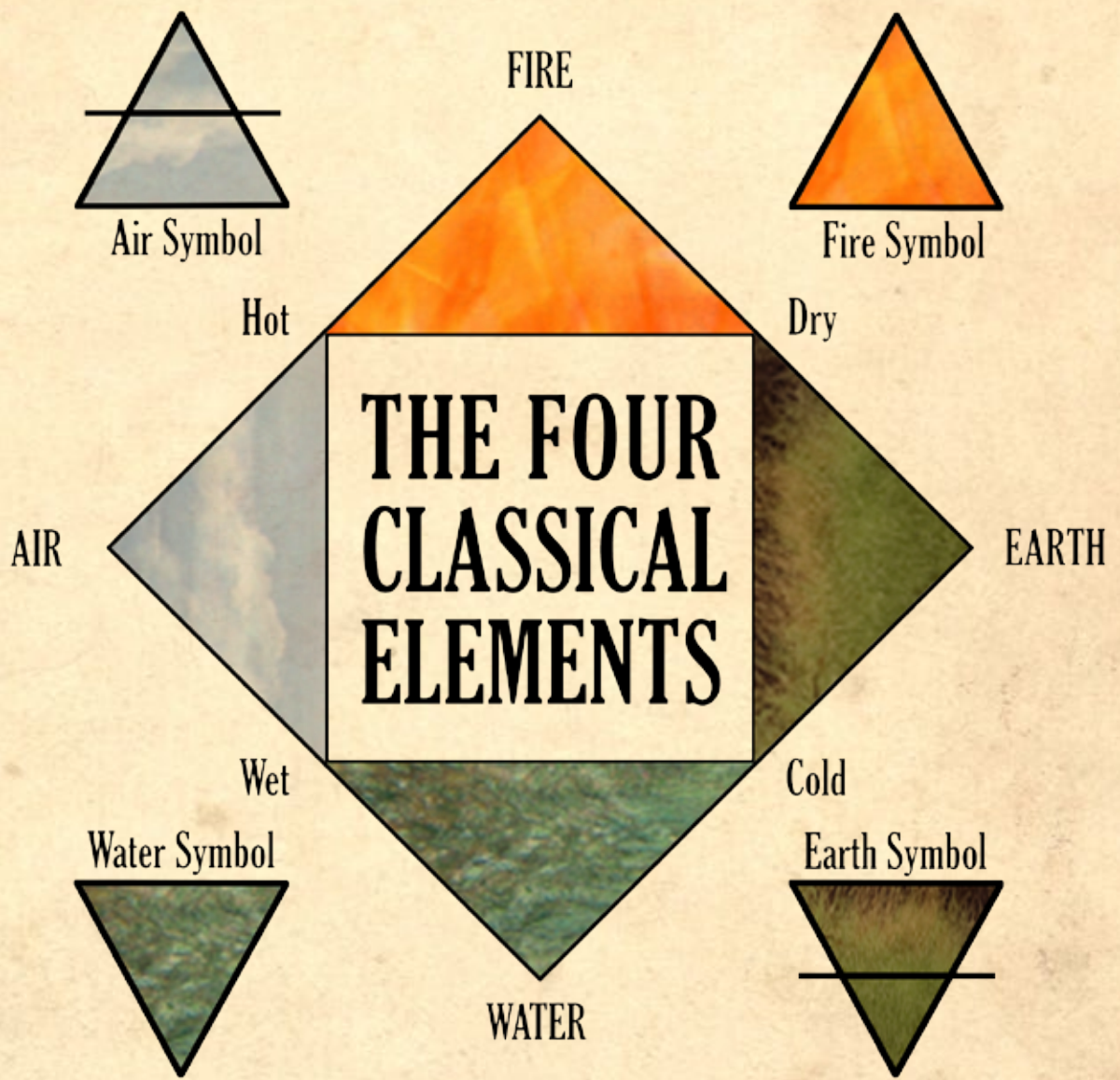
Much of the game can thus become about balance and imbalance. A single strong element in the game can become a tyrannical and oppressive force that causes conflicts and problems.

The highest numerical value for any element is 10 because in Fortunes Wheel you do not count the court cards when creating a character's Elements (they serve a different role).

In play you will find Elements can go down (and be 'healed' back up again). Everything will have a fixed numerical value (a ceiling) and can also have a point track (its Elemental Energy) to mark any decreases or to mark when it goes back up. The fixed value can be improved with experience or work but will not fluctuate up and down as much the points on the track. Think of each Element as a pool of energy. The pool has an upper limit or ceiling but can also be spent or damaged, so the pool can and will fluctuate while the upper limit will remain the same. If the pool was a liquid, the fixed ceiling would be a flask to keep it in that determines how much energy can be held when it is full. You can change the size of the flask but a flask of a given size will always have the same capacity.

There are also states where the elements interact with each other (hot, dry, wet and cold). These are represented by Smoke, Stone, Steam and Ice (or the para-elements). Some concepts that include ideas of para-elements do so by combining the two adjacent elements so for instance water and earth make mud. But for Fortunes Wheel the main principle is that the point between the two is cold so it is represented by ice - a point where water solidifies (or fixes/becomes earthy/stable) in response to a drop in temperature. The four classical elements are the base of everything though and these additional para-elements are really just an indication of what happens when they meet.





Applying these to the game it means that every card you draw will be related to an elemental principle of varying strength. This is really handy for quick readings of the cards - instead of going deep into the traditional meanings for a card you can simply use the element as a guide for interpretation. You can even build relationships between cards. Are the cards being played in opposition to each other or an Element they are being used with or do they complement each other? If they are adjacent cards how might their relationship (the para-element) affect play?

The quintessence or 'fifth element' works rather differently. It is all about evoking archetypes - powerful imagery that can have a much deeper effect on the game than the four regular suits of cards will. They have a value from 0 to 21 but where possible the card meaning should really take precedence over their numerical power. As you can see they have the potential to be much more powerful than the regular Elements and the highest level any Element can be for a normal character in the game. Think of it a special 'boss value' that means there is always the possibility there is something out there stronger than anything you might find in the everyday world. Some things just have a bigger 'flask' than a player's characters will ever get.



When it comes to interpreting the Elements in play, rather than using fixed definitions a series of correspondences can be used. These are charts or diagrams showing some of the things each element might relate to (effectively they act a little like synonyms for them that show something of their nature). One of these charts is built into the Wheel diagram at the back of this book. You can also ‘free associate’ connections as correspondences, making links based on whatever the Element brings to mind for you. For example, Water can be related to obvious things like fish that live in water, but also to the idea of water as life giving and thirst quenching. Water can thus be represented by a cup as well, because it can hold water to drink. The cup could also be a product of fire and earth (metal from ore, or baked clay to form the vessel) and so there can be a relationship between water and the vessel. Instead of being a static thing, the elements slowly start to tell stories of their own. Just from imagining connections and correspondences you already have the seed of a story. It could be describing a characters quest to capture the source of life by finding or forging a vessel to hold it. This could be seen as the essence of the quest for the Holy Grail. You have the possible beginnings of a story there already and you have not even begun to play yet. The deeper you go into exploring these connections and relationships, the richer and more satisfying the stories you will tell and uncover together in the game will become.





## The Wheel

It makes sense for a game called 'Fortunes Wheel' that there is a wheel somewhere, connected to the idea of fortune or fate, which has an important role in the game. *Icarus* actually said little about the Wheel Itself. He did have this to say though:

A torn and partially burned scrap stuffed into a metal pipe tobacco tin

*Fortuna is always messing things up! Why does she have to be so terribly fickle? Whatever I might do to try and gain her favour seems to end up proving utterly unreliable, and yet she also gifts us with the raw energy from our achievements to go on to achieve great things. They say we are all on her wheel with our fortunes rising and falling but what they do not usually tell you is that the wheel was also a medieval torture device! I know that we do not speak of people as having been 'broken on the wheel' as referring to Fortuna's mercurial device but we might as well do because it certainly feels like one sometimes. Everything had been going very well for me and I was sure I was finally close to uncovering the hidden hand I have been looking for and then everything changes and this...*

The scrap is burned at this point and the rest of the text lost.

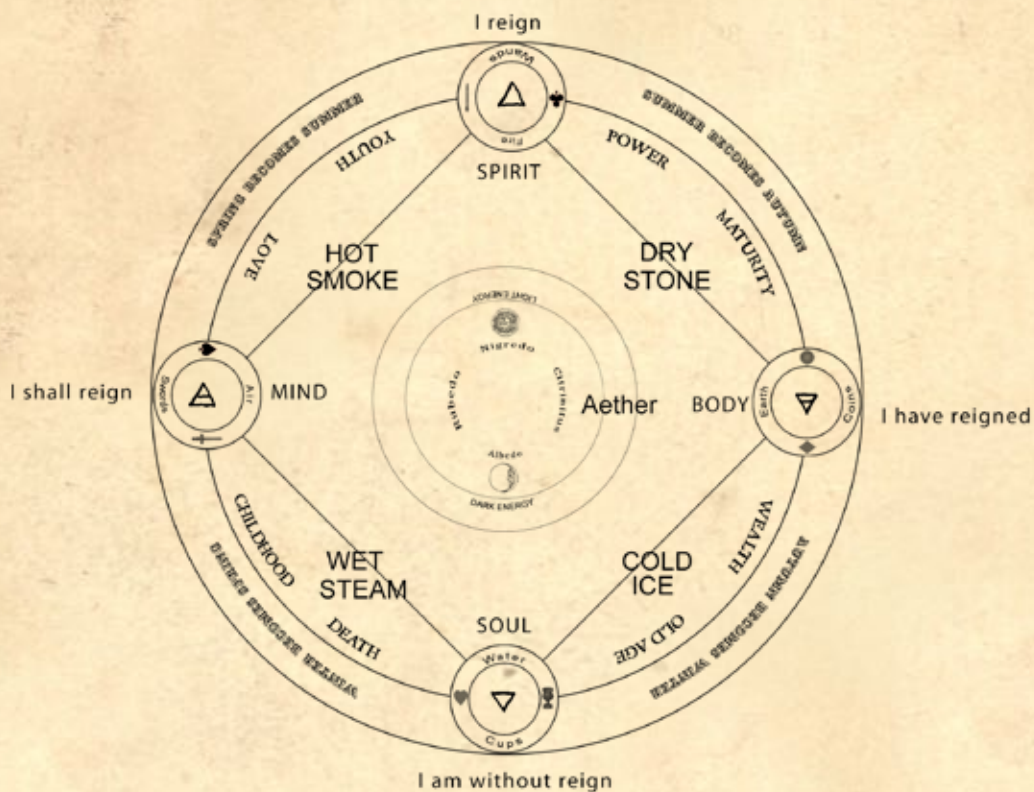
The Wheel is actually based on a medieval concept, the wheel of Fortune, which shows the ancient goddess of fortune (or the embodiment of the idea of fortune if you prefer) holding a wheel. The wheel when illustrated usually shows four people with inscriptions; on the left, *regnabo* (I shall reign), on the top a crowned figure *regno* (I reign), on the right as the wheel descends *regnavi* (I have reigned) and on the very bottom as the figure is crushed by the wheel *sum sine regno* (I am without a kingdom).

The wheel belongs to the goddess Fortuna, and when she spins it peoples fortunes rise and fall. Ideally you wanted to be at the top of the wheel with your fortune having risen to its greatest height, not at the bottom. It was used as a moral illustration that everyone is subject to the capricious nature of fate and that the great will not always stay on top and the lowly might rise. A person's whole life is on the wheel and while moment to moment you can rise and fall and rise again, the wheel of life follows a pattern from youth through maturity to old age and ultimately death. The story of someone's life ultimately always ends at the bottom of the wheel...

The idea of there being a wheel of fortune stretches back long ago to ancient philosophy. It is also sometimes called by its Latin name, the Rota Fortunae. Originally it was actually a sphere. Pacuvius, one of Rome's greatest tragic poets wrote in his 'Scenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta':

"Philosophers say that Fortune is insane and blind and stupid, and they teach that she stands on a rolling, spherical rock: they affirm that, wherever chance pushes that rock, Fortuna falls in that direction. They repeat that she is blind for this reason: that she does not see where she's heading; they say she's insane, because she is cruel, flaky and unstable; stupid, because she can't distinguish between the worthy and the unworthy."

The ball eventually became a wheel as the idea was Christianised. It was a very popular and commonly used idea in the philosophy of the Middle Ages and though today it has largely fallen out of use as a theme you can still see it referenced from time to time. These days the wheel of fortune has become an idea in a game show since wheels that could be spun to tell a fortune became very popular. Emblem books where you would find a picture with a moral tale or fortune from a random number on a wheel were very popular in the sixteenth century.



The wheel can also be seen in the zodiac and the idea that the stars influence our destiny, and there is a wheel of fortune tarot card. Medieval and renaissance thinkers related these ideas together as a part of their picture of the world and Tarot cards simply reflected that world view. In the middle ages they tended to concentrate on the way the wheel could bring the mighty low, perhaps because social mobility the other way was quite unusual and perhaps because most of us like to see the mighty knocked down a peg or two sometimes.

It is also possible to see correspondences between the wheel of fortune and other patterns and especially other cycles such as the seasons (Spring rising, summer at the top, then autumn falling and finally winter at the bottom). It fits rather well with the idea of dramatic structures generally, giving us a four act drama with a rise and fall ending in tragedy.

The wheel can also be used to show the progress of the hero in the hero's journey using the Tarot both as a story and as the characters overall development as they grow and develop as characters from story to story.

The wheel in 'Fortunes Wheel' is also an arrangement of the four Elements at the compass points of a circle; top (North) of the wheel is Fire, on the right (East) is Earth, at the bottom (south) is Water and on the left (West) is Air. The Wheel shows you the relationship of the elements to each other and to their corresponding themes. You can also use the wheel to represent other things by a series of correspondences, so top becomes the ego, right becomes a material thing, bottom the subconscious and left abstract thought or anything else that seems to fit. Air can become the past, Earth the future, Water memory and Fire action. Or it could represent the creative cycle - with air as the conception of an idea, fire as its inception (the necessary steps to begin creating it have begun), earth as realisation of the idea (it has physical form) and water as its maturation (the results are assessed and assimilated ready for a new iteration or creative act).

Fortunes Wheel will be right there on your character record sheet for the game as a 'Character Wheel', your own personal tool for keeping a record of the characters abilities (their Elements), to keep track of each element's available energy as it fluctuates and of a player's Fortune Points during play, and also to serve as a conceptual guide indicating the relationships between the elements according to their position on the wheel. In effect it is actually the key to play, to your characters and the basic correspondences and symbols that underpin and animate the game. It ties everything together, linking the Elements, the cards, your character, the progress of the story and it acts as a picture or map of it all.



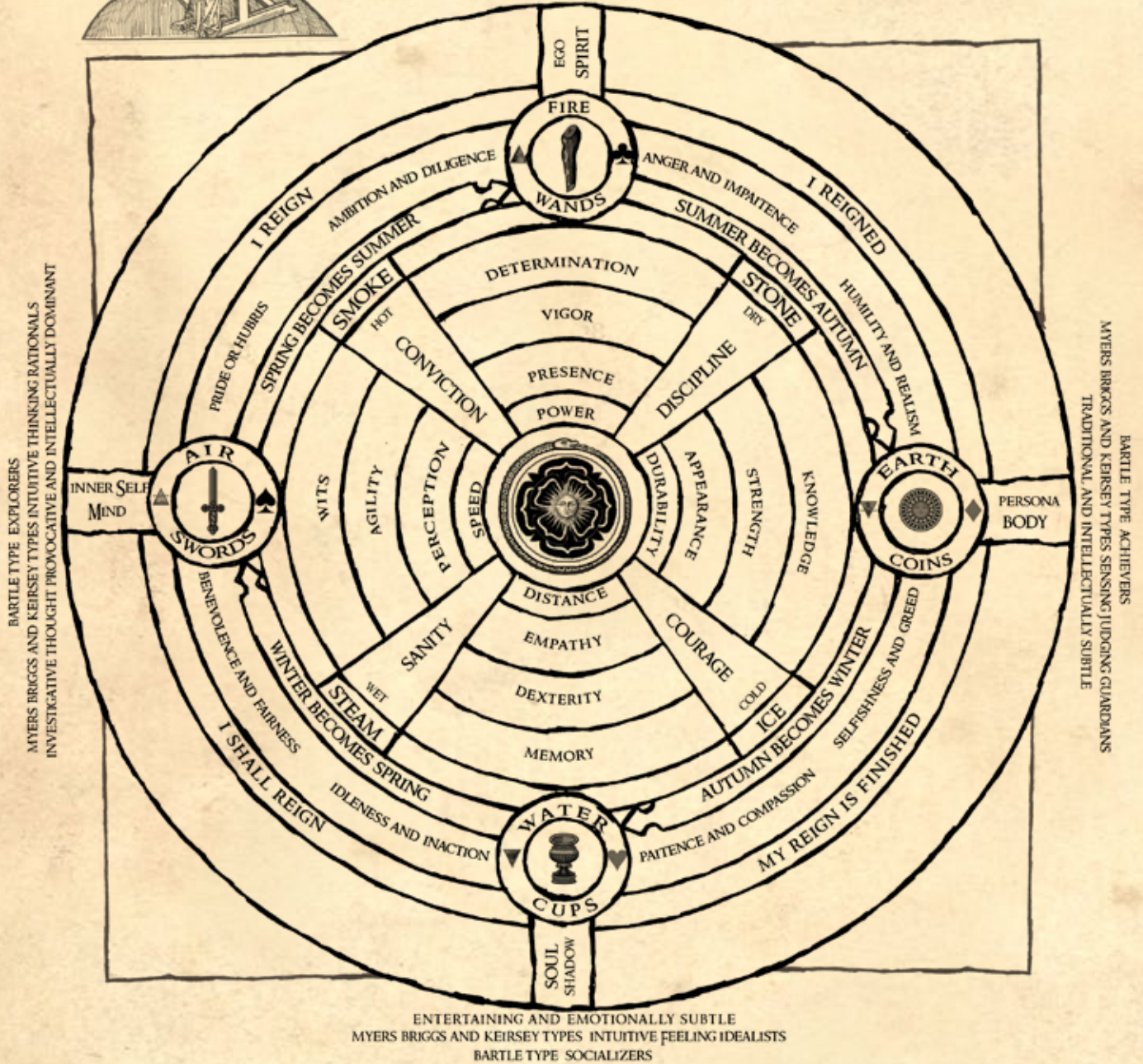




# FORTUNES WHEEL

FORTUNE IS SO VARIANT AND THE WHEEL SO MOVEABLE THERE IS NONE CONSTANT ABIDING AND THAT MAY BE PROVED BY MANY OLD CHRONICLES OF NOBLE HECTOR AND TROILUS AND ALISANDER THE MIGHTY CONQUOROR AND MANY MORE OTHER WHEN THEY WERE MOST IN THEIR ROYALTY THEY ALIGHTED LOWEST

BARTLE TYPE KILLERS  
 MYERS BRIGGS AND KEIRSEY TYPES SENSING PERCEIVING ARTISANS  
 ENERGETIC PARTYLOVING AND EMOTIONALLY DOMINANT



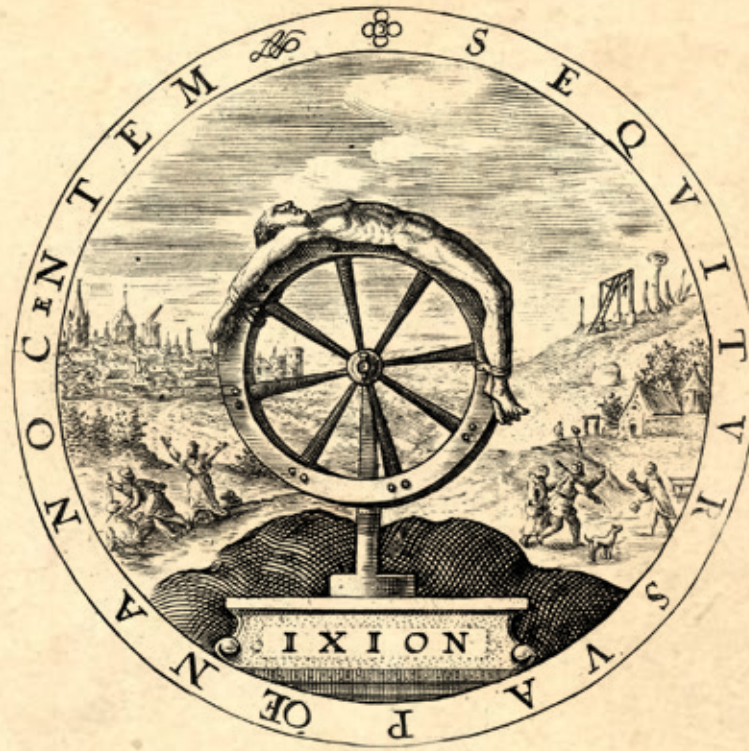
WANDS ARE THE SUITE OF PASSIONS AND INVENTION  
 ADVANCEMENT AMBITION GROWTH AND PROGRESS  
 TRADITIONALLY IT REPRESENTS THE PEASANTS

CUPS ARE THE SUITE OF EMOTIONS AND TRADITIONALLY IT REPRESENTS THE CLERGY IT REPRESENTS LOVE AND THE HUMANE PERSON IN EACH OF US IN ADDITION CUPS ALSO REPRESENT PSYCHIC POWERS VISIONS AND ILLUSIONS AND ALL THAT IS HIDDEN IN THE DEPTHS



SWORDS TRADITIONALLY REPRESENT THE NOBILITY THINKING AND HAVING AUTHORITY TO ACT - ALSO PROBLEMS AND TROUBLES - A SWORD CAN BE USED FOR EITHER ATTACK OR DEFENSE - IT IS THE SUIT OF JUDGEMENT AND REASON

COINS ARE THE SUITE OF THE PHYSICAL WHICH INCLUDES THE BODY AS WELL AS THE MATERIAL WORLD OF WORK THE EVERYDAY AND WEALTH TRADITIONALLY IT REPRESENTS THE MERCHANT CLASS



## The Tarot

*Icarus* did not seem to see any point in explaining what the Tarot is. He just seems to have assumed that Lavinia and anyone else would know about it. I have added this section because I think a little background knowledge about it could be useful to you in playing. The only reference I could actually find to the Tarot's history in his writing was a brief suggestion that he thought they were invented by an old recluse.

The recluse lived in a magical cave long ago where he carved images of the Tarot archetypes. Centuries later an English mercenary took the designs to Italy where a noble family decided to turn them into a deck of cards. He was really rambling at this point though so I do not think he was making much if any sense and it certainly does not tie into any of the histories of the tarot, even some of the wilder and more speculative ones, I have read. I have reproduced them here partly so you can see for yourself, and partly to further persuade you that *Icarus* was clearly rather disturbed and we should not take anything he says seriously. This was scratched onto a rather heavy slate that I dropped when I took it out of the box. It actually broke into several pieces and I think I lost a few of them. It also made a nasty gash in my foot through the slippers I was wearing at the time (nobody warned me I needed to wear steel topped work boots when I went through his legacy). There was a bit in the text about where he thought this cave was but unfortunately that is one of the bits that broke beyond recognition. All I could read of it was something I think said it's in the middle of everything. There seemed to have been something about ponds and ripples as well but it really is just a lot of nonsense.

*O to have been in virtue's cradle those long years and seen the great and mighty visions that beset the mystic hermit there! Such wonders that he was compelled to carve upon the crystal walls of Lucifer's emerald breast. That something so detestable and low should shelter such virtue and insight is a true marvel! There he saw the great car move across the heavens, the tamer and the moon and lo they danced with the child and the sea creatures and laughed at the Devil. All to rest in the worlds breast and find completion. He saw it all entire (the lucky fellow) and when they found his*

*treasure my foolish ancestor and his brothers simply squandered it. Chivalrous knights they were not. They put Plato's cave of shadows into a book and locked it down for far too long. What suffering and evil has befallen us because they caged it so that left un-caged could never grow? I do not know. The Hawk took it to Italy where he saw service of arms to a great family and some wise soul there realised it was better to simply tear the pages out so the pictures could be rearranged as needed. Clever little Italian that. The book is no more and the powers can dance again as they did in the hermits aching head flickering in the light as it played amongst the crystals and so the real magic begins! Like a zoetrope it can spin and turn and project the shadows for us to see!*

The Tarot is a type of deck of playing cards that seems to have appeared sometime in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably in Italy. The connection with Italy is actually the only bit he mentioned that makes any sense historically. It has nothing to do with hidden caves in England, hermits, knights or mercenaries. Plato's cave is a philosophical idea suggesting we only ever see shadows of real things. It relates in to the idea of archetypes and original pure forms' of things. We shall get back to that a little later when we look at the major Arcana and using the cards.

The Tarot was commonly used to play card games such as Tarocchini and is still used to play them in many countries. In English speaking countries using the Tarot for games is considerably more unusual and they are generally thought of as being for fortune telling.

The decks were originally called 'Trionfi' an Italian word meaning 'trump' or 'triumph'. What set them apart from regular playing cards was the addition of a separate suit of trump cards. Both regular cards and the Tarot shared the same set of basic suits and though the four suits in a regular deck may look a little different and sometimes be called things like 'wands' or 'pentacles', they actually match the suits of regular cards - wands were originally batons or staves (clubs), pentacles were coins (diamonds) swords were spades (in fact espada is the Spanish word for sword so there may be a connection there) and cups are hearts.

There are various theories about the name 'Tarot' for the cards. Cards or card combinations beating other cards and combinations being a common part of card games it could just be derived from that, but theories have also been suggested that the Tarot developed out various ideas and practices popular in Italy at the time, such as Petrarch's poem 'Trionfi' about the successive victories of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time, and Eternity over each other. There were also popular parades at the time called Trinofi where various virtues were portrayed on elaborate carnival floats. There does not seem to be a direct match between the images of the Tarot and these other forms of triumphs popular at the time, but the same sort of general idea does seem to connect them all together. Later theories that they are far older and more exotic seem dubious, though captivating. Though the parades and Petrarch's poem could allude to the Roman practice of having victory parades as it was a time when many Italians were caught up in what would later be called 'the Renaissance' which was a resurgence of interest in the ancient world and its writings.

A result of this was a lot of imagery that was popular at the time appears in the Tarot and especially in early Tarot decks where you will sometimes see additional cards representing the Greco-Roman muses and gods and goddesses. Various philosophical, social and astronomical ideas also got incorporated into decks and it is possible to see the cards as a sort of cultural map of the Renaissance world. You have a sense of the medieval social order showing ordinary people, monarchs and religious leaders, you have angels and the



last judgment all mixed in with ancient Greek concepts. Because the religious tone of the decks seems a little irreverent and included controversial figures like a female Pope figure (the High Priestess) and all sorts of ancient pagan ideas some have suggested they were influenced by heretical Christian sects of the time. Perfectly orthodox Christians at the time did also refer to ancient pagan ideas and people could be just as irreverent as they can be today while not being heretics. Renaissance humanists might draw moral tales and ideas from ancient gods and heroes, but they didn't worship them or think those gods were real - they were used to using symbols as just that, symbols; visual stories and cues. One theory is that early decks may have been used to play a symbolic game with the cultural aspects of the cards - they were usually not numbered so putting the cards into some sort of sequence or power relationship to each other could have occurred naturally when playing with them - just as Petrarch showed that chastity would triumph over love, death triumphed over chastity, fame over death, time of fame and eternity over time in his poem the medieval Tarot could be used to play with the idea that there was a natural order in the universe and put it in what would have been seen as its correct order. In a sense by relating the cards to Petrarch's poem the Tarot could be used to tell a sort of very basic story.

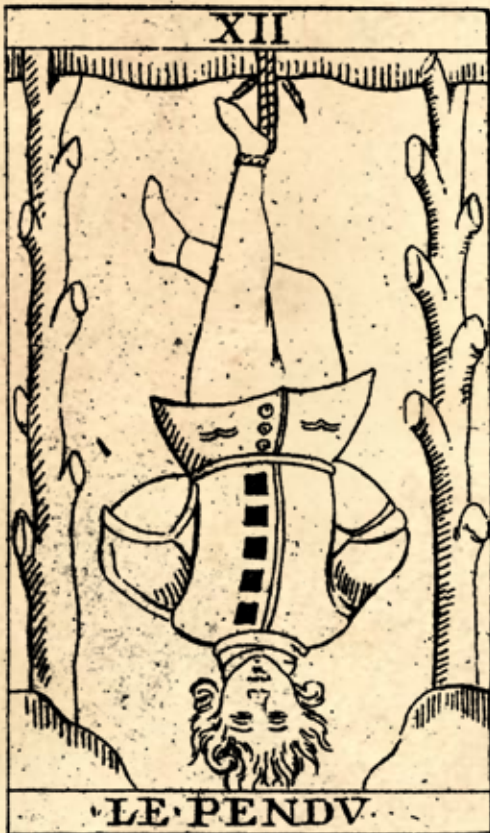
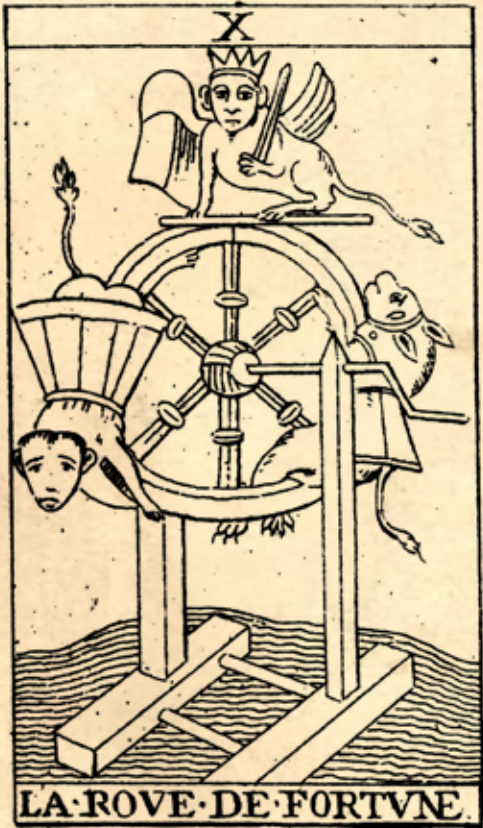
How did the Tarot get from being an ordinary card game and a cultural map of the late medieval world to being a fortune telling tool though? Playing cards had been used for some time for fortune telling (as have dice and all sorts of other things - clouds, bones, books, even the Bible have all been used for divination). The practice of using the Tarot for fortune telling is generally dated to the 18th century, though there is some possible evidence of them being used for this earlier it was generally not based on any sense of specific cards having a meaning that could be read. Before the 18th century Tarot cards were usually just used as a random method to select a pre-written fortune. Similar methods were in use in the 16th and 17th century in 'Emblem books'. These would have an image and a motto or poem. Most were intended for study and reflection, you would look at the emblem and think about its meaning and how that applied in life, but some also had a fortune telling aspect with a table or wheel in the back to randomly determine an emblem as your fortune. Theories that hieroglyphs worked like emblems appealed to occultists who built on this idea of the cards all having deep and ancient symbolic meanings to transform the Tarot that was used to play card games into what sometimes gets called 'the occult Tarot' which was shaped into the structure of many decks today with a set of traditional meanings that could be applied to both divination and guided imagery. Possible connections were also drawn with mystical traditions like the Kabala (though they required changing the order of a couple of the cards to make the Tarot fit).

Fortunes Wheel brings this all round full circle and uses those restructured decks with their set of established symbolic meanings to play games instead of tell fortunes.

I should stress again that contrary to anything *Icarus* wrote, this is really just a game. It really is nothing more (unless you want to use it as a creative writing tool).

Before we move on to looking at ways of using the Tarot in a game of Fortunes Wheel we should really take a quick look at symbolism. This is something else *Icarus* took as a given and assumed his readers would all understand already. People in the medieval and even the early modern period related much better to symbolism than many people do today - we live in a world that is inundated with signs, we are used to using them for road safety, identifying brands and so on. But they have very simple and direct meanings - unlike say, a heraldic device.







A sign is something that refers to something else, an emblem, logo or instruction like road signs. A symbol is deeper than that, it does not simply equate to something, it tells us about the inner nature of the thing it is used to represent. It relates. A symbol of a hand does not mean 'now wash your hands' - an open hand can mean sincerity and honesty. We may be used to seeing a sign of a deer indicating 'deer ahead' but a deer on a heraldic device does not mean 'deer ahead', it is symbolic. It refers to relationships and ideas that the owner of the device wants people to think about when they see it and associate the bearer with. Stags can symbolise Christ and purity in heraldry and the bearer wanted to be associated with that. People in the middle ages people believed they trampled on snakes (a symbol of the devil) and because they shed their horns they were also symbols of renewal and resurrection. Another creature you often see in heraldry is the unicorn, also a symbol of purity and Christ in the middle ages. In Fortunes Wheel, if a real unicorn turns up it would still act as something symbolising those virtues in some way. It is really all about seeing deep connections between things, correspondences. A stag is not just a stag, the unicorn is not just a horse with a horn on its head; it corresponds to various things in a sort of chain of connections. The chain for a unicorn stretches from chastity, purity and innocence through the feminine principle, and the moon to guardianship of the tree of life, to perfection, moral virtue and Christ.

Playing Fortunes Wheel depends on making such connections and building these sorts of relationships between things as you play. On one level you can use existing meanings ascribed to cards, but you can also simply make them up inspired by the cards. You do not have to feel bound by traditional interpretations of the Tarot - they are a springboard, something to work from as you dive into playing with the symbols and the relationships you can see and make with them. Do not worry that you might need some sort of expert knowledge of symbolism, you really do not. Some traditional symbolism will spring to mind anyway because it has got deeply embedded in our culture and reflects common ideas, like the association of dogs with faithfulness. Keys to meanings of the cards are in countless booklets that come with the packs and just about every book you can find on the tarot, and we shall also give you summaries of them in Fortunes Wheel.

You can also just feel free to make them up though - in fact we would encourage you to play around with whatever connections spring to mind. If the Strength card makes you think of lion tamers and thus of circuses and danger, and circuses make you think of scary clowns, feel free to introduce a dangerous circus full of killer clowns.

That is not what the card traditionally means, but if you get somewhere from the card that works, go with it.

This is the key to the entire game of Fortunes Wheel. The basic idea is that you can follow a series of intuitive visual and imaginative connections between things such as elements and symbols to find new related things. Within the game these are used as either a source of inspiration in a story or as a way of describing something. This is very much like the game of 'word associations' where one player starts with a word and the next says the first word that springs to mind that they associate with it and so on until you reach an entirely new set of words with different meanings. You can also play around with synonyms and antonyms (inverted 'night' cards), similes and metaphors to form chains of associations. In Fortunes Wheel you use the cards and the corresponding elements as your initial starting point and build on from there. You can also use other visual cues as well. If you want to base a story around an old photograph, or the contents of someone in the room's pockets you can do that. The Tarot is really just being used as a helpful tool full of built-in meanings and relationships and a number system that ties everything together.





## The Cards

Extract from a letter, undated and addressed to my mysterious relative 'Lavinia'.

*Of all the things I want to share with you this is perhaps the most important. Those of us who are initiates have been using the Tarot for a very long time now. It really helps to acquaint yourself with them and to study them diligently, but we have found that even if you do not it is possible to get helpful results from even a very cursory knowledge of them or even just the images on the cards and the associations you can make with them. For obvious reasons your own initiation is not going to be possible nor is that of anyone you pass these notes onto. You will at first have to just explore these in the dark so to speak just as I am actually exploring the dark itself. You learn to feel your way around, experiment and observe others doing the same. Do not be afraid of making mistakes. I shall show you how to construct proxies or guises to explore the Erebus itself when you feel ready and these will keep you safe. You will be there in spirit, animating your guise to do your bidding and explore for you and it is your guise, not you, who will experience any ill effects of your mistakes or failures to guide them well. Loses can be end up as leading to later gains as well though and your mistakes and failures can help you reap later benefits that make it all worthwhile. More on that later Lavinia, for now though you should learn the basics and that means learning about some of the ways you can use the cards to manipulate the energies of the Erebus and to transform the potential into the abstract and then ultimately a semblance of the actual that can be made flesh.*

Taking his advice it really helps to read up on the Tarot, but I shall give you some information to get you started here. If you want you can then read more about them in the many books that have been written on the Tarot, but everything you actually need to use them to play Fortunes Wheel and as *Icarus* suggests 'manipulate the energies of the Erebus' will be here. I have struggled to understand what *Icarus* means by 'a semblance of the actual' and the closest I can come is the idea of the virtual. So really, to me at least, he seems to be talking about using the Tarot as a tool to build virtual worlds of our



imagination. At least, I hope he just means that. This is all part of his more 'loopy' writing because of course we all know you cannot actually use a deck of cards to make real things appear or events occur as you want them to (and it has never happened when I or other players of Fortunes Wheel have used them, so do not expect them to either).

The cards can be seen as a single deck, but also as two, the Minor and the Major Arcana. Each card can be read numerically or symbolically (or both). A numerical reading is all about how powerful a card is. High numbers are more powerful and trump (beat) lower numbers in contests. A symbolic reading is used to help inspire players creatively within the story. This can be both an individual act of interpreting what the card might mean and a collaborative one between players.

Cards that are 'right way up' in Fortunes Wheel are called Day cards in his notes (symbolised by the sun) while ones that are inverted are Night cards (symbolised by the moon). Day and Night in the game can correspond to 'Light' and 'dark', but do not always mean 'good' and 'evil' or even positive and negative (though they can do). It is better to treat them as open and revealed versus hidden and secret unless a more dramatic reading seems appropriate.

With a little bit of practice you can resolve tasks or actions and play cards using their meaning as well as their value. You may even find instances where it makes more sense to use a particular card for its meaning than another card of a higher value, or even to deliberately fail in a task so you can apply the meaning of the card. Playing to fail a task but win some future benefit is just like losing a battle to win a war, but to people used to playing to win all the way it could seem a little strange. There are various ways that you can use a card meaning - for instance you can apply it there and then when the card is played, or you can use it as a seed for later events. Sometimes it can be a bit of both. Failures can bring new challenges and difficulties, but also present new opportunities that are ultimately more valuable in attaining any long term goals.

Tarot card packs usually come with a little booklet suggesting some basic common meanings for the cards, and there are also many books that go into much greater detail. It would be rather daunting to learn them all so it is a good idea to keep one or more of these handy in case you want to refer to it while playing or have a copy of the summary sheet at the back of this book to hand. It is however perfectly possible not to use them at all and just use the impressions you get from the card or the elements involved and a bit of imagination or guesswork.



## The Minor Arcana

The Minor Arcana is usually seen as dealing with ordinary everyday things. With each of the four suits corresponding to one of the four Elements, just as the Elements are the manifestation of the prima material in the ordinary world, so in a sense is the Minor Arcana. Meanings of the numbered Minor Arcana follow a basic progression. Each card also has its own individual meaning by its suit as well though through their corresponding Elements. In essence the nature of each suits Element is combined with the progression.

- 1 The beginning.
- 2 Two things come together and either connect with or oppose each other.
- 3 Oppositions are resolved, or come to fruition.
- 4 Stability and security are achieved from the opposition.
- 5 A change or challenge from outside.
- 6 Challenges are overcome, resulting in stability.
- 7 A change or challenge from within. To avoid stagnation, venture out.
- 8 The venture succeeds. The experience leads to recognition, establishment and commitment.
- 9 The patterns are understood, and transcended, resulting in true satisfaction.
- 10 Collapse and disintegration result in a completely new beginning.

## Court Cards

Extract from a letter to Lavinia.

*The man who showed me the best way to meet with the Hanged Man turned out to be the King of Cups himself, or more accurately a very ordinary fellow who the King of Cups was guiding to help me. Forgive me here Lavinia, I just realised I had not told you that this whole process of using the cards and guises works both ways. Just as we use the cards to animate guises, so do some of the cards themselves, especially the court cards and the Major Arcana. You might think it a little peculiar but it is well worth keeping in mind that you are not only person, or entity, that can play around with the stuff of the Erebus. The court cards can be good friends who introduce you to deeper things than the simple number cards can and they can unlock a lot of energy for you to use. Keep in mind though that they are not always our friends and when they introduce you to the Major Arcana, to the ancient archetypal forces it is not always because you have initiated that meeting. Sometimes they are serving the ancients bidding, not yours. I still do not know to this day if I met the Hanged man because it was my will to do so or because it suited the Hanged Man's own plans.*

There are four Court Cards in Tarot decks rather than the three you will see in a regular deck of cards. When a Court Card comes up you can use its numerical power (from 11 to 14) to give a boost beyond the range for any Element being used. The game is all about flexibility though so this is not the only way you could use them though.

In Fortunes Wheel the Court Cards can also be used to form a bridge between the everyday and the archetypal worlds of the Minor and the Major Arcana. One approach to them would be to separate the cards into two decks when playing (after creating any characters), a Minor and a Major Deck. Players then only draw from the Major deck if you have drawn a Court Card from the Minor deck. This means you will not get Major Arcana





cards quite so often resulting in a less epic and more mundane 'ordinary life' game, and they are generally introduced by or relate directly to a person. It also means that you have a set of numbers in the Minor deck from 1 to 10 that correspond to a ten sided die (d10) which is very handy for anyone who has dice but no tarot cards! See the section on using dice for more on that.

The Court Cards are usually taken as representing actual people. Court Cards can also be taken as implying a person of specific gender (and sometimes pages are taken as being female) but you can actually have male characters represented by a queen, female ones by a knight and so on as it is the characteristics that are most important, not the actual gender on the card and you can use them to suggest people in touch with opposite genders characteristics in themselves.

The Court Cards also reflect a hierarchy within a medieval Kings court and also the maturity of a character - pages are knights in training who learn by serving a knight so are generally young, a bit immature or children, knights are the queens champion and tend to be young adults and 'go-getters', Queens are more mature, caring and nurturing and serve the King who is generally older and in charge of the court as well as being in charge of their own feelings, emotions, thoughts and actions.

If you are using this approach of using a split deck you can also treat court cards as giving a player a temporary or one off edge from one to four in power depending on the card (pages = one, knights=two, queens=three, kings=four). If you would like to do that, the player just takes the court card and hangs onto it (making sure they keep the card orientation the same) until they would like to use it. Perhaps the court card has given them a powerful memory to draw on that helps them in the future, or the person indicated by the card gave them a handy gift or information they can use. It can be a good idea to decide what form the edge is going to take when you have drawn the card because it can be easier than trying to connect it back later with an explanation.

Note this also decreases the chance of drawing Major Arcana cards still further, as every court card held by a player is one less that can come up in play until they are used and shuffled back into the Minor Deck.

## The Major Arcana

*Now Lavinia I shall tell you of my meeting with the Hanged Man. I am not ashamed to tell you that I was terribly afraid at the time as he is one of the more troubling archetypes and has all sorts of deep connections to betrayal. They say that they used to hang traitors upside down in Medieval Italy where the first tarot decks were made, hence the image on this card, but I fear the archetype goes back much further than that to a very ancient betrayal indeed. I have been assured that it was a betrayal made with the very best of intentions, but you know what they say about the road to hell being paved with good intentions! I needed his perspective on matters urgently otherwise this is one encounter I would never normally risk but on talking with him I got the distinct impression it was all actually the other way around and that my decision to meet him was actually his idea not mine. The Major Arcana often work like that though. It can be hard to tell if you are using them or if they are using you. As it was he did share with me several useful insights that so far have served me well. I must play my cards close to my hand here though and not reveal what he actually said to me. My hope is that because so far the meeting has been for the best it implies the Hanged Man is, at least for now, a friend or that our objectives are shared somehow.*

These are the heavy hitters of the Tarot. *Icarus* was clearly both respectful and more than a little afraid of them so of course I had to find out more and share it with you. Where the Minor Arcana corresponds to the four Elements through the four suits, the Major Arcana corresponds to the fifth suit and fifth Element. It ties into more esoteric and spiritual things instead of the worldly and mundane things that the Minor Arcana relates to.

The best way of looking at them is as archetypes, powerful symbols that tap into deep subconscious and cultural ideas. In the ancient Greek philosophy of Plato they were the primal forms of things, a sort of pure form that embodies the ideal for something. He suggested that what we see are copies, shadows of the real thing. So if you pick up an apple it is actually the shadow of the archetypal pure apple. The apple you can pick up is imperfect where the archetypal form is perfect and embodies everything there is about 'appleness' that makes an apple an apple. The shadow apple we can touch and eat gets its 'appleness' from the archetype, as do all apples. In effect it is the pattern for an apple. Jung took that idea and suggested that there are primal patterns of unconscious ideas and thoughts that we inherit. He was describing cultural patterns of things that are important to us - an archetypal father figure for instance. The term archetype has also come to describe any reoccurring motif or pattern - for instance the idea of a 'femme fatale' in films.



While you can just see the Minor Arcana card meanings as descriptive, the Major Arcana can be seen as deeply significant and powerful influences. They represent a stepping out of the everyday world and into the world of legends, myths and heroic stories. When the Major Arcana cards come into play something BIG is happening or being pointed to as having happened or being about to happen. While you can use them as a part of a more mundane game or story with numerical powers of 1-10 as shown on the table for using dice, they actually have numerical powers from 0-21 which means that they can have a big effect on a task when using that full, epic, range. Where sometimes you might not bother much with the meaning of a pip card, it is a good idea to always consider the meaning of a card from the Major Arcana.





## Edges and Distractions

A note attached with a paperclip to a business card for Harlow and Fritch, Solicitors, 107 Cathedral Street, Darkport, Witching.

*I really need an edge and quickly Lavinia! Harlow and Fritch have an old photograph I can use to help me overcome any distractions and resist the Cabal's influence.*

*Fritch will know the one. Get it me quickly or I may be lost to you. I have made arrangements with them should I fail, and so should you. Do not let this all die with us or everything we have worked for is lost. Arm yourself with something as well - at your level of experience I would suggest a simple weapon would be all you will need as an edge. A revolver or better yet a sturdy sword would be ideal, something durable and reliable, high on Earth.*

### Edges

An edge is anything that can be used to give you a greater chance of success in a task. This could be a weapon or armour used in physical combat, a set of lock picks, a piece of incriminating evidence, a book of spells or even something abstract like a piece of information or a memory. Edges can be found, bought, won or created. An edge can be stored away or held ready to use. If held ready it is assumed it is being either held in a hand (in the case of a physical object) or kept to mind (in the case of a spell or memorised information).

Edges can be found and when found can also be manipulated and improved by enchanting the narrative (see the section on magic) or they can be made as an extended task.

Any scene or setting you enter will be filled with possible edges that can be 'found'. You can create these with a simple card draw for each Element or just the main one needed if you are in a hurry, as you can always draw the others later. You are effectively creating a character for the edge.

Short of making them or enchanting the narrative they will be as good or bad and as useful as the card draws indicate they are though and will be things that would logically found in the setting. So you can easily find a barrel in a distillery, but would be incredibly unlikely to find a nuclear missile. Finding a nuclear missile in a distillery would be accomplished with magic. One drawback with this though is that you can get some oddly over or underpowered items, so it is usually better to simply assign it values for the four Elements.

The elements need to be tied to properties such as speed (Water), power (Fire), durability (Earth) and range (Air). You might find some edges only need one or two of these and others more or different properties, depending on the nature of the edge. Higher values are better than lower ones. You can be creative with these and try not to forget that sometimes you might get possible issues with opposing Elements or benefits from complimentary Para-Elements such as high Earth and Fire making something extra hard like stone.

Speed is added to your Initiative if you need to find out who acts first. Power is added to any attack, durability is its defence if the item is attacked and range is how far away it can affect anything.

So a sword found in a medieval armoury might be given Water/Speed 1, Fire/Power 4, Earth/durability 6 and Air/range 1. When you hit someone with it the edge added would be its power of 4. If you give a weapon the same speed and range it allows for the ability to get an attack off before someone gets too close, but obviously for melee weapons they do still have to be close enough to hit.

To actually find the item assign it a difficulty for an extended task equal to the sum of its Elements, so the sword in the above example would have a difficulty of 12 to find.

Use Air for the attacking element in the task and 12 as the defending Element. If you find it you can use it in the scene but to take it with you would need to spend 5 FP to 'fix' it. Otherwise you just put it down without thinking and forget about it and it may not be there if you come back. If you force an item into a setting that would not logically be there it costs a lot more Fortune (because you are using magic), so this is the cheapest way to get yourself an edge in game.

## Distractions

Players might also experience (or use) Distractions. These are things that make doing something harder for anyone affected. Environmental effects like strong winds, extreme temperatures, slippery floors, annoying insects and injuries can all count as distractions. They are normally the result of aspects of the story, for instance cards played previously may have led to the conclusion it is a windy day or that a vase of flowers was knocked over leaving broken glass and water on the floor. The simplest way of handling a distraction is to simply assign it a numerical power of 1 if it seems minor and take that off anything done by someone affected by it, or for strong distractions just draw a card and use the card value. Sometimes you might want to get a sense of something like an area of effect for a distraction in which case either make it the same or divide the points between the actual effect and the area. Clever players and groups might find ways in play of turning a distraction into an attack. What would happen if we threw the glass from the broken vase into the incredibly strong wind? Might flying glass actually cut someone? You could then turn the distraction value of the broken glass into actual damage to anyone in the strong winds.

Damage to Elemental Energy counts as a distraction equal to the total amount lost. Both edges and distractions can be cumulative and some can affect several people at the same time.





## Fortune

Note taken from a damp stained diary page. Several pages are stuck together and some are unreadable as the ink has run.

*Fortuna has really blessed me today. Having achieved one of my goals very successfully I felt she was smiling on me and it inspired me in my efforts to create that spell I was working on to re-establish the Tower's field strength after all the damage it had suffered. With more of her blessings perhaps we can get into a spiral of good fortune and achieve even greater things as my confidence grows. I know it can be a fragile thing though. The slightest failure might destroy my current mood and see Fortuna turn her back on me again. None of us can really afford this happening. So here is to Lady Fortuna, may she keep on blessing me!*

Having already established that Dame Fortune is a fickle lady, just how does she play a role in Fortunes Wheel? *Icarus* sometimes speaks of calling on Fortuna to help him and also sometimes thanks her. For the game I have translated this into a simple set of principles for players to gain, loose or spend their Fortune.

Every player's character will have a Fortune Point score; for the sake of the game I have represented this as a number from 0 to 100. This will go up and down according to how successful they are in the game and if they spend it on doing something. The starting fortune for any character is the value of their combined Elements + a draw. Fortune points have a ceiling level or upper limit. Unless a player has limited it when creating a character it is normally 100 FP.



When the ceiling is reached you no longer gain any Fortune until some is spent.

There is a separate summary for changes in Fortune Points when using magic.

### Fortune goes up:

- 1 FP each time you gain a significant story goal
- 1 FP for taking a real risk or gambling on something
- 1 FP for inventiveness that surprises or impresses the group
- 1 FP each time you reintegrate a story feature
- 2 FP if the reintegration is pivotal to the story
- 3 FP if the reintegration is unexpectedly clever or witty
- 5 FP for completing a story
- 1 FP per point of excess to any number needed to succeed at something

### Fortune goes down:

- 1 FP each time you fail a significant story goal
- 1 FP per point of each Element when you make something
- 1 FP per point you failed something by (Only use this if you want a more challenging game).
- 5 FP to 'fix' a narrative enchantment or the effects of something you have made
- 2 FP per point of Elemental energy restored.
- 1 FP per point of Elements current strength in +10 to advance an Element
- 5 FP to change a card orientation or suit when advancing an Element





## Creating Characters or 'Guises'

*Icarus* spoke of creating what he calls 'guises'. These seem to translate rather well into the idea of having a character you play in an RPG or one in a book. In essence they are your vehicle for playing through a story or adventure. You control one or more of these and their actions affect the story and the world around them. I think *Icarus* saw this as a bit like creating a secret agent or spy who could sneak into magically created worlds (or to me story settings) to observe what happens in them or to force events there. You can actually use the same methods to create anything though, including a world.

Taken from some pages retrieved from the damp stained diary.

*Creating guises is really important Lavinia. While you can create them fairly rapidly it is far better to take a little time to make them as convincing as you can. You want your guises to fool the locals and especially to fool any powers that may be active in the world you are entering. If your guise is powerful it will stand out more, but a good and convincing back story where you have subtly and deeply placed a guise in the world can fool all but the most observant unless they already suspect you are active in their realm. That back story should include people who can vouch for your guise as someone they know, parents, siblings, friends and acquaintances, even the occasional enemy. There is nothing more convincing than other people corroborating a story. Sometimes even a really outrageous claim someone would normally think was false will be accepted if it is corroborated. Creating your guise is down to manipulating the four elements, weaving them into a body in the Erebus and stepping into that body. You can do this by focusing on the cards, the act of drawing cards and focusing on them as you place on them on Fortuna's great Wheel (that is assigning them to each of the four points of the compass in a circle) focuses energies in the Erebus that give your form flesh and allow you the power of agency in an Erebral realm or world. If you can gather together a good reliable group of people, your own little Ordo of sorts, then you can also explore an Erebral realm together and even share or swap your guises. You do not have to do this alone Lavinia.*

I was really not sure at first what he meant by an 'Ordo' but after a little digging and reflection I think it would best be described as a sort of guild or knightly order.

There are hints in some of his writing that there are several of these, some of which he was a member of and I think one he may have been very high ranking as well. Perhaps the name Icarus is a codename within such an Ordo? I imagine from his writing that Ordo sometimes co-operate with each other and sometimes they are bitter enemies. In traditional gaming terms they can also be a sort of adventuring party or loose group like the Fellowship of the Ring or The Justice League. His advice to form such a group sounds like a good piece of advice because really it just involves playing fortunes Wheel with a group of friends with lots of snacks. At least I would hope that is all it would involve. Nobody is really going anywhere 'real' after all; this is just a story game we are playing out in our heads.

When creating characters for the game you can use the following stages based on my reading of his notes, but feel free to skip some if time is short. There are two main approaches here - creating a basic character and a quick and dirty one. There are also two main types of characters - individual and group. Choose whichever suits the sort of story you want to create and the amount of time you have available and don't be afraid to mix them up together. You might choose to use a basic approach to create a few core characters and quick and dirty for everyone else or characters' created on the fly. One approach that could work well would be using quick and dirty for incidental characters and very casual quick games and the basic one for major protagonists and antagonists and a few reoccurring supporting characters. If you were creating characters for a Sherlock Holmes play through, Holmes, Watson, Mycroft, Lestrade and Moriarty might all be created using the basic system and so might a few key characters in an investigation.

All the various coachmen, barrow boys, police and so on would be created with the quick and dirty method and often on the fly as you need them. I should probably add here that sometimes Icarus indicates that all of our fictional worlds have some sort of existence in the Erebus, almost as if our imagination creates them there automatically, so for Icarus there really is a Victorian 'Sherlock Holmes world' somewhere in the Erebus. There would also be a Narnia, a Winnie Pooh world, and even (Lord help us) a Teletubbies world. I will go into the fascinating (and terrifying) implications of all that a bit later.

## Creating a Basic Character

Draw one card for each Element in turn placing in them in that elements position on the wheel. If the card is a Court Card or Major Arcana, draw again until you get a 'pip' (or regular Minor Arcana) card, placing each fresh card on top of the other. Keep the original card drawn and put it to one side because you can use to add to the characters back story.

What if you don't like the result? You could always abandon the character and create another one, but you could adjust the one you have just drawn cards for. This can add to the character's back story and personality and make them more interesting and challenging to use and it is also a lot quicker. The methods suggested here are based on the principle of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. You simply make one thing stronger at the expense of another being weaker.

The first method is to create a character that is gifted but unlucky. This adds a point to the result at the cost of a permanent 10 points from the characters maximum fortune. You can do this for as many elements as you wish so long as it does not take the maximum fortune to zero.



Another is to use the principle of 'strong but clumsy'. You may have noticed that each Element is a 'catch-all' for a particular area. Earth is physical and would take into account a mix of physical abilities such as strength, manual dexterity, speed and agility and so on. Normally the assumption used is that someone with a high Earth score would be good at all those things, but what if the character was strong but clumsy, or had good manual dexterity but was slow? You can use the principle of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' again here. Let's say you drew a 5 for earth but really want your character to be exceptionally strong. You could add points to strength and take them off agility or speed by simply noting the character has, say +4 to strength but -4 to agility or speed. When they try to do anything strength related they use the increased element score not the one you drew, and the same goes for the lower scores when trying to do something using that trait. If you want to get an idea of how you could do this for each Element, take a look at the slow and detailed approach and take your inspiration from the detailed versions of each one.

A third way would be to do what is called a rotation - imagining the Elements on the Wheel, just rotate the scores round to the next element for each. The score for Fire would become the Score for Earth, the one for Earth Water and so on until you have a result you are happy with. This keeps the scores at the same level they were when drawn, and in the same order, but shifts them to another Element. You could do this a maximum of three times before they all come right back to where you started. Rotate cards clockwise or anti-clockwise on the wheel as desired.

Once the cards have been set for each element you should read them to get an idea of the character. If you wish to add greater detail for a character you can use spreads of cards to answer questions about their past, goals, relationships and so on. Use the cards you drew along with any that drawn and set aside to give you a feel for the background of that Element. As an example, Air could give you an idea of the characters educational background, people who played a key part in it and their struggles and successes academically. This way you do not just have numbers, but stories about those numbers. Why is the character so good in this Element? Who has mentored or hindered them along the way? Have they benefited or been held back by being born with a silver spoon in their mouth or starting from the bottom with no advantages of birth?

Decide on an occupation or role for the character (are they are a doctor, a child, a student and so on). This will also suggest some possible areas in which the character has pursued some particular interests and gained some skills or learned to harness some natural talent. With these basic characters, just divide each Elements score between skills appropriate to them (such as knowledge ones ones for Air, physical ones for Earth and so on).

You can assign up to 4 points for each skill, so Air of 9 would allow to have up to 2 skills at 4 with another at 1, or 7 at 1 and 1 at 2 etc. Skills enable you to choose cards to play instead of simply drawing them and can also act as an edge.

You could also just use a one card draw as you need it to construct a 'quick and dirty' character on the go. You have a character and you need their Earth score - just draw a card and note it down as their Earth score. When and if you also need Fire for them, draw another card for it. Elaborate on the character if and when you need to and build on it in stages. This is handy for incidental characters.



You can use the Character Wheel to get an overall feel for how balanced a character is. A simple way to quickly do that would be to take the wheel and add a scale going from each element to the centre from 1 to 10 (with 1 on the outside and 10 in the middle).

You plot where on the scale each element is and then join the points. A perfectly balanced character will have a square shape, while the more out of balance the character is the more distorted the shape will be. Since the scale works from the outside in, the smaller the square is the more focused and powerful the elements are for that character.

This can be a handy way to quickly see a characters elemental biases and strengths.

## Creating a Group

*It is also possible to make guises that are multiple entities, groups or families, armies and swarms. These can be rather disconcerting and difficult to control, especially at first, and they can also be rather noticeable sometimes, so be careful with them. Coordinating a group is really a case of bringing them all together with a common purpose or switching your attention between its parts as needed. You will find that usually you will really want to stick a singular guise because it really is much easier, but secretly directing and controlling an dynasty or an army can also be incredibly useful sometimes and strangely satisfying. It is especially useful if you are planning to play 'the long game' or 'Great Game' in a realm. Watch the passage of time carefully though - in such a game you may need to play around a little with the passage of time and exploit some of the odd time effects of the Erebus to your own advantage. Making a jump in time to see the long game develop can mean you lose sight of some of the smaller details though and you may need to be very careful not to suddenly reintroduce a guise that you last used a few generations ago but instead ensure it is a descendent.*

By the 'Great game' I think *Icarus* may be referring to the political and military cold war between England and Russia for supremacy in central Asia in the nineteenth century. He is clearly talking about some sort of extended set of events over long periods of time that are being compressed so you do not actually have to spend ages waiting in 'real time'. Obviously his intention, which we shall replicate for the sake of the game, is that you are not limited to playing a single person or character - you can also play groups of characters (or switch between multiple single characters). One way of playing a group is to create a family, a dynasty whose fortunes you will follow. You could just create each of the members of the family one by one as single characters, but you can also treat the family group *as if* they were a single character.

You could also create a nation or a business - a giant multinational corporation like the East India Company competing against rival companies and even nations, or the armies they use to conquer and control territory or command essential resources.

In any group you may have factions (like those *Ordos Icarus* mentioned), and also create several tiers in groups or various internal factions competing against each other to direct the larger group.

If you look back over the method for creating a single character really all it consists of is a method for giving a character some core abilities on a scale of one to ten which will be compared against things on the same scale. Its flexibility is that the scale could actually refer to things of any size or strength on the same scale. A person with a fire of 6 is stronger than someone with a fire of 4 - but so is an army or a nation. You only get into trouble if you try and compare characters created using different scales - a single character against an army or an army against a nation. One way to do that would be to break down the larger group into smaller ones on the same scale. There are also some occasions where an



individual might be able to beat a group, such as a quick witted character managing to hide from or evade a group searching for them. This is because sometimes a group can actually drag performance down or get in the way. Use the principles of common sense and/or group discussion to iron out any issues if they occur

## Creating a Non-Human Character

*I should tell you Lavinia that you are by no means limited to making your guise human. In some realms it may even be impossible or very unwise to have a human guise. There is nothing stopping you from making a guise that is an eagle or a fish or some fabulous and exotic creature. One of the great joys of exploring the Erebus is taking a guise that flies or can swim in the oceans. Be warned though, such forms can also have serious limitations. Speech is often a problem, impossible in many guises or if not impossible very imprudent.*

There is nothing to say your character has to be human. Your story could be about house cats manipulating their owners, or a race of even numbers battling odd numbers. Sometimes ideas that sound crazy can be fun to play through and the principle of common sense can be replaced with the principle that the absurd can be great fun. It really all depends on how imaginative or safe you want to be. So long as the characters are of the same rough scale you can also mix and match, playing a group of youthful investigators accompanied by their intelligent pet dog for instance. That way you get both the Famous Five and Scooby Doo (the implications of these fictional worlds having an existence somewhere in the Erebus really are scary sometimes). Non human characters can have detailed backgrounds and skills just like human ones can and playing them can be great fun, often presenting interesting and amusing challenges.

You can use the same method for creating a character to create monsters to fight. Sometime you may also want to create things that are really tiny or work in a swarm, or that are incredibly large, like a dragon. With swarms each point of an Element could represent a part of the swarm, with really big creatures you could give them Elements for separate parts of their body. A dragon might have an Element score for its body, each leg, the tail and the head which can all attack and be attacked separately.

## Control and Identification

*Think of the way you take on a guise as being a bit like possession. I should warn you now that I think of it that possession by another is also a risk you might face sometimes. Be very wary of possession by any of the archetypes of the Major Arcana as they sometimes delight in dominating the weak willed. Your guise cannot resist you as it is your creation, but others might try and take control from you without your permission. Of course if you give permission that is another thing entirely and you pass control of your guises freely to others or even control them together.*

In most RPGs players create a character and play the character they have created, or sometimes a referee will create and assign each player a character. You can do that in Fortunes Wheel, but you can also have a group of players controlling a single character, a single player controlling several, players controlling both protagonists and antagonists or switching between different approaches as appropriate or necessary. Players can also swap characters if they wish because...well why not? If it makes sense at the time, go for it!



You could start off playing the main protagonist, then throw the character open to a group to decide a particular course of action together. Once a course of action has been decided you could then switch to everyone guiding a minor character the protagonist has sent off to investigate something for them.

When the investigation is done you could then switch back. If the protagonist sent a group out to investigate you could each play a member of the group, or guide the group as a whole and then switch to individuals in it if the group splits.

This can also give you the ability to use methods common in books and films such as flashbacks or cutting to another scene. It can even be entertaining to have one person play a character in a scene and the others provide sound effects!

One issue that can come up is that of privileged information. What if a player in the game learns something that the character they have been using would not or could not know? The answer is really very simple - pretend you don't know it when playing that character. Your characters will not know all sorts of things that you have to forget about and set aside when playing them anyway. Sometimes the tension between you knowing something and your characters not knowing it can be what is keeping everything going, building up until they actually discover it. Having a cut scene in which the villain explains to his henchmen that he has an inventive way to trap and kill the protagonist means that even though you may play the character as if they don't know it is coming, you and everyone else playing will be waiting to see what it is and all the while it builds tension because the players know it's coming. Playing a sceptical character investigating a haunting in a house you as the player knows really is haunted gives you all the fun of thinking up clever reasons why there is no ghost and can result in a genuine moment of surprise when one actually turns up. If you have spending a lot of time and energy thinking of reasons why there cannot be a ghost you have not been investing it into treating it as being real and if it is dangerous might even ignore it when it appears as a being fake or act in ways that expose the character to real risk







# Creating Stories



## Storytelling

Icarus does not really have much if anything to say about the actual process of telling stories, despite his assertion that all our stories somehow form worlds somewhere in the Erebus. Fortunes Wheel is a game where telling stories is an integral part of playing though, so it is actually very useful to take a look at it.

We are all used to stories, usually to reading or listening to them or watching them in films and on television. Not as many of us are used to telling them or creating them as collaborative efforts in a group though. It is perfectly possible to play Fortunes Wheel without any specific knowledge of the mechanics of storytelling though partly because there is a sense in which we all know and can see what a story 'is' and partly because nobody is really going to be judging you when you play on your storytelling ability. The only exception being that you can pick up some Fortune Points for 'reintegration' (which we will look at here). There are all sorts of books written about creative writing though, so clearly people do feel a need sometimes (and probably benefit from) some sort of instruction on storytelling as a craft. I will run through a few models that people have used since they may in turn prove to be helpful when you play though if you are really interested in this I would suggest reading some of the many books specifically on the subject. There is also a built in conceptual model of sorts in the game itself, which is what we shall look at first.

It might help to think of Fortunes Wheel as being a sort of 'story machine' with the Wheel of Fortune itself at its heart. The story machine works by the interactions of its imbalances and conflicts. It acts like a great engine wheel where parts of it are heavier than the other or release energy when they are in conflict with another force.

This weight or energy drives it round, powering it through endless cycles of interactions,



each of which is the seed of a story, a point of conflict or a potential resolution. Multiple wheels start to turn each other like cog wheels, and the stories evolve from them. You might need to give it a push from time to time (all machines need some form of energy input) or nudge (calibrate) it to take you down a particular direction to get a really enjoyable story but once you have started to create characters and settings stories will already have begun to form and suggest themselves to you.

Just as part of the story of each creation you introduce into the game is told by its own internal conflicts and stories, each also has the power to dramatically affect everything else.

Your creations can become obstacles to be overcome, tools to overcome them and protagonists and antagonists in your stories. As you play you can choose to try to deliberately influence them, to try and support or attack them. In most games you will choose to follow the story through the eyes of a central character (the protagonist) or through multiple ones. You will be telling their story and trying to find ways for them to triumph over the conflicts, challenges and obstacles they encounter.

Once you have characters and settings you will want to start to use them to make a narrative or to build on those narratives you have already started to create with them.

## Narratives and Narration

*Events have recently overtaken me. One thing has led to another and finally brought me to my current predicament. I find myself thinking back on the sequence of those events and wondering, had I acted differently would any of this have occurred and if I might be sitting safely at home drinking an excellent bottle of port in my study. Would changing the order of things or my reactions to anything have set me on a different course of action and have achieved a different result though, or would Fortuna's influence still have swept me along what could perhaps be my destiny?*

It may seem obvious, but what exactly *is* a narrative?

A narrative is really just a chain of events in a cause and effect relationship occurring over time. The key part of a narrative is that scenes and events are tied together by that relationship. Of course a good or interesting narrative will have a lot more than just a sequence of events and narratives are not always strictly linear. Sometimes they jump back and forth in time using devices like flashbacks or flash forwards, seeming for a while to disrupt the cause and effect relationship or to conceal the relationship, but some sort of relationship between events is still there. Flashbacks can also reveal relationships that may not have been obvious before. Feel free to use things like flashbacks in Fortunes Wheel from time to time if they seem relevant to your story since they can be really great fun to use. They are best used sparingly though.

If you think of events in a narrative we normally have a set idea of what that order will be for it to make sense, but what if we just had a series of separate events and did not have a sense of how they related to each other in a sequence at all? They could be represented as a series of individual 'event cards'. Let us imagine they are a broken vase, a letter, a gun, a man with a key, a park a woman's shoe with a broken heel and a desk.

Would these images make sense by themselves? Might they make more sense in a different order? What might connect them together?



If we saw them in a different order with the connecting events in place rather than being separate images they would become a narrative. The man holding the key opens a locked desk to read a letter his wife was concealing from him - she arrives to catch him reading the letter and they argue over its contents (it is a love letter from another man). He draws a revolver and shoots at her, but misses and hits a nearby vase, she escapes out of the house, but as she runs down the steps outside the heel on her shoe breaks. She discards the shoe and runs into the park, her husband following with the revolver.

What if they were in another order or had different connecting events?

We already have a pack of event cards - the Tarot. The various cards and story seeds you will use while playing Fortunes Wheel are waiting for you, the players of the game, to imagine or work out the connecting events and give them life. You create the action and the dialogue that holds them all together and gives them shape and meaning.

You might start playing with several seeds already in place just like the example above and be finding a way to connect them together in your story, or you might just start with a few cards drawn at random, but however you approach it the key is to be looking for the connections. When you use a spread you are usually creating a narrative and spreads can be great ways of doing just that - you lay out the cards and they give you the events and a possible sequence for them. Reading the cards reveals what they are and suggests how they relate within that sequence.

Most story models assume a basic three part structure which could be loosely described simply as a beginning, middle and end (and which work well with a simple three card spread). A three act structure. In the first part there would normally be some exposition of previous events and details, something that sets the scene.

An event (often a very dramatic one) occurs that starts off the action and the protagonist's efforts to deal with this lead to more dramatic events occurring. This could lead to a turning point that introduces the next act. This could be an even more dramatic event, a 'no turning back' moment called the 'inciting incident', or 'catalyst'. This acts as a sort of call to action, establishing the main goals of the story and raising the key questions the narrative will be seeking to resolve. Will the hero get the girl? Will the killer be uncovered?

In the Middle act you get what is sometimes called the 'rising action' The protagonist attempts to achieve their goal established in the first act and there is usually a reversal of the protagonist's fortunes or setback along the way as a pinnacle of ever worsening situations. The problems the protagonist experiences usually come back to there be something they are missing - perhaps they have a character flaw they need to overcome, or are missing vital information? Perhaps they simply do not yet have the necessary skills? Character development (or a 'character arc') is a key part of this part of a narrative. Character development usually involves the aid of supporting characters in the face of challenges by the antagonist, their henchmen or the situation itself if the antagonist is more like a natural force in a disaster movie.

The third and final act concentrates on moving toward a resolution. The aim is to equip the protagonist for ultimate success completing what they need and building toward a climax. The climax brings it all together at its most dramatic point, resolves and ties things together and concludes the action. You could end a narrative there, or have a section where there is reflection and some sort of reward.

Various plot models go into much more detail than this, but on a basic level the three act structure serves as a good guide. A different model that can work extremely well is that of 'The Hero's Journey' developed by Joseph Campbell and used a lot by some Hollywood scriptwriters.



When you play a game though things may not fall naturally into a simple three act structure. If the story has been plotted out in advance it is more likely to, but players often do surprising things and a game can easily take on new unexpected directions. When you add in randomness with cards you have even more room for the unexpected. Another important factor can be playing time. You will probably have a limit on how long a group intends to play. You could simply split that time into three sections and keep an eye on the clock. For each act you then introduce the key stages and action, perhaps with a card draw or spread at the appropriate point and just force the events to occur. If you know you want a dramatic encounter with the antagonist in the third act and it is getting near to the end of play, you could just decide that time is now and introduce it. You might have to find a creative justification for why it is suddenly occurring, but unexpected events can be wonderfully dramatic! This takes a bit of discipline though and usually people are enjoying themselves, having fun getting sidetracked and are not really all that interested in strictly following a timed three act structure. In practice what usually happens is that you get part way through when it is time to finish and nothing has actually been resolved yet. Games can extend over multiple play sessions and so therefore would that three act structure. What can be fun is to take this into account, but add in a cliff-hanger to end the game session on. A dramatic situation where everyone is dying to find out what will happen next can be a great way to encourage people to get to that next game!

Three act dramas naturally tend to have little echoes of the basic structure within them. You can exploit these and have an encounter with the arch-villain that simply is not yet THE encounter with the arch-villain. It's an encounter, not the final encounter. Protagonists often have tussles with their antagonist or lesser villains along the way. If the encounter was dramatic, just ensure that the final encounter is even more dramatic.

## Narrators

If the game involves playing through a narrative the question naturally arises who is the narrator? The stories that evolve through players interacting with events while playing Fortunes Wheel are formed of spoken narratives. Everyone playing the game has some level of narrative role but usually the task of tying things together and being the overall narrator can be given to a single player who also acts as an arbitrator in the game (the referee or Games Master).

Often this is also the player who seeds the story with some initial resources and ideas from which the story will be built, but whenever a player describes something in the game or declares what actions they are taking they are in effect narrating. The role of narrator does not have to stay with one player - it may be swapped between players over different stories, or even over different scenes of the same story or the whole group can share the role. It should be obvious by now that not only do you have an aid to storytelling in the Tarot, you also have a tool for improvising and creating stories as you play.

While having pre prepared stories and adventures can be helpful, they are not essential. If a pre prepared story is not essential, neither is a Games Master.

## Narrative Statements and Narrative Questions

Authors will do this as an internal process based around asking themselves questions about the story and making decisions that then determine other questions and so on.

In Fortunes Wheel people playing the game speak these internal questions out loud in the group. You do not even have to be imaginative to do this, all you need is the ability to ask a question or make a decision.



The player that seeded the story would normally make narrative statements while the other players ask narrative questions. Players can also make statements that affect the narrative, and if you are improvising an adventure that is exactly what will happen. The difference will be that in a pre prepared adventure the statements depend on the already written plot, characters and maps the Narrator created, while in a freeform one it is normally going to be based on an interpretation of a card or cards. Narrative statements tend to be 'closed' and authoritative (closed because once it has been said you cannot 'unsay it' so it is not open to be changed) while narrative questions are open-ended and expect an answer. For example, the main narrator makes a narrative statement that 'The room is dark'. A player may then ask a narrative question such as 'Could there be a light switch in the room?' and may also make a declaration of an action 'I will look for one', which would be a narrative statement. It is then up to the narrator who made the initial statement to decide if there is indeed a light switch or not. They may have already decided that there is one before the question was asked, or they could use the question as a suggestion there should be one and introduce a light switch even if they had not planned on one being there.

Questions can be answered by drawing a Tarot card and seeing if it suggests there is a light switch. Drawing The Hermit would be a yes for example; as he holds a lantern, suggesting the light would probably not be a fixed one. The Sun card might suggest there is a source of natural light that can be uncovered - a curtain waiting to be pulled back to let sunlight in for example. The main narrator coordinating the story may also sometimes find they need to ask themselves the occasional narrative question as well, especially if they feel 'stuck'. This way it is quite possible to play a game entirely freeform with the story evolving completely from the interaction between the players and any cards randomly drawn. In many role-playing games the opposite tends to happen in that the players are 'railroaded' by a pre-written plot that demands that they first go to point A where they will discover the location of person B and the existence of object C which they must retrieve from person B and then take to person D and so on... any actual choice in the story for the players is just an illusion because they can only follow the linear path already set out for them. If this seems to be happening in a game of Fortunes Wheel it is probably time to break up the railroad tracks by asking some narrative questions to shake things up. Perhaps they will indicate that someone is not at the place you expected them to be when you get there or is really someone else masquerading as them in order to trap everyone and take them to their secret hideout? None of which anyone suspected when they started play, including the player who was railroading everyone. For the sake of group harmony it might be best to establish that everyone, including the railroader, is happy with doing this first.

One important point - never be afraid to just stop the game for a moment and ask everyone what they think is going on/should happen next/motivates a character and so on, or to let a card draw be the seed for a possible answer.

Remember that you can also use the Tarot to answer simple 'yes' and 'no' type questions. If you want the answer to just be a simple yes or no, then take upright (day) cards as yes and inverted (night) cards as no, though you can also get more detail at the same time suggesting why it might be a yes or no from the card meaning.



## Seeds

*I find myself increasingly musing on how my current trials began with something so simple and seemingly innocent as a chance remark at a family gathering and an album of ephemera. The remark led me to look at the contents of the album in an entirely new way and I realised I had missed something that was terribly important. Events I had thought unconnected suddenly seemed to make sense and I realised that there had to be a hidden hand at work in our troubles.*

A seed is something that acts as a catalyst for a story. This can be a pre-existing image, a collaged image or photo montage, sections of text from a book or magazine, physical artefacts and ephemera or even music - anything that can act as inspiration. They can also be specific resources for parts of the story - a map or plan of a building, portraits of people in the story, an old love letter or paper clues, photographs and so on.

It can be great fun to just get people to empty their pockets or bags and use whatever items people have on them as story seeds, or to have players bring an item to the game to act as seeds. The group then improvise the story based around those seeds as they go. A big Fortune reward for the person who works out how to make that old shopping receipt or a potato peeler a crucial part of the story!

You will already have some story seeds once you have created characters in the various cards you drew.

## Phases

*There is nothing as wonderful to me now as a pause in the action, a time to reflect, rest and regroup.*

A game will tend to move between several distinct phases. There are narrative phases, in which events, settings and actions are described, creative phases in which characters or settings might be built, resources and seeds for the game gathered and assembled; discussion or problem solving phases and journaling phases where records of the game are kept. These can happen as a group before, during or after narrative phases, or they can happen completely separately on a different day with players engaging in a creative phase on their own or in smaller groups, discussing the story over a coffee or with a few players getting together to try and solve a puzzle encountered in the game.

Set aside a little time after a game to make a note of the current Elemental energy for each character and any changes to their normal status. This way you can start up where you left off next time you play.

## Reintegration

From a diary entry addressed to Lavinia.

*Do you remember meeting that painter fellow? The pre-Raphaelite, or his shadow. Well a funny thing happened yesterday. I had deemed him utterly insignificant when we first met and aside from having a very pleasant discussion with him about art and Arthurian romances over a delightful afternoon tea on the lawn of Biddy's house thought I was done with him, and he with I. Well he turned up deep in the Erebus near the Castle of Shadows. It was totally unexpected. I had no idea he was a fellow traveller and thought him a mundane ignorant of the Erebus and then suddenly I meet the chap and he is wearing a suit of full plate mail and tells me he is questing for the Holy Grail. He never seemed the questing sort to me (unless it was a quest to bed*



*another fellow's wife) but there he was. He actually proved to be very useful and we fought off some vicious night fey together before we parted. I shall keep a sharp eye out for him in the future (assuming he survives his quest that is).*

Pieces of a story that initially seem to be trivial or even irrelevant can become very important later on - they may even become central to the story. The casual introduction of a character's uncle may be unimportant unless later on that same uncle turns out to be the arch villain of the story, or ends up rescuing everyone from certain death.

The act of bringing back these seemingly unimportant details, characters or events and giving them a new and often surprising significance is called reintegration. It should only be done if the evolving logic of the story means it would make sense to reintegrate something, and when it is done if everyone is agreed it was both appropriate and useful to the story, the player who successfully reintegrates a detail should be rewarded with some Fortune. Really good reintegration can be unexpected and a real delight. As a player the moment it strikes you should be like being suddenly struck by the obvious - if you feel its appropriateness and it is already feeling like a revelation then it will probably feel the same for everyone and would be worth introducing. Often it will happen because you spot a pattern falling into place or someone draws a card that has come up before that logically introduces the same character or event that was previously associated with it back in.

For example, perhaps a card was drawn earlier, the Queen of Swords, and used to introduce a character who was the widow of a murder victim. The players are exploring the attic of the victim's house looking for a murder weapon and have just found a bloodstained knife hidden in a trunk. When they found it a player asked what might happen next and used a spread of three cards that gave the seven of coins (inverted) implying impatience and worry over money, the Tower implying sudden catastrophe and danger and then the Queen of Swords again. They decide that this means his widow killed him for money and that she is right behind them now with a gun...

## Truth in the game

*I should warn you Lavinia that nobody should really be trusted. Even good friends within the Ordo could be traitors. In fact I am convinced of the existence of at least one, though their identity is still unknown to me. Worse, at various times I have been convinced that I have uncovered a traitor only to be mistaken and turned someone who was a friend into an enemy. While they remain faithful to the Ordo they now harbour an animosity to me which has led to all sorts of obstacles springing up that are entirely of my own making.*

*Perhaps this now leaves you with the uncomfortable question - should you trust me? Perhaps you should not! While I would like to reassure you that I am the same person now you have known and that you can trust me, what if I changed or became possessed by some terrible entity of great power? Or someone sent a double of me to you as a trap? I urge you to be on your guard and ready to act as any given situation demand. We must all accept the possible consequences of mistakes but the important thing here is to remain as much in control of things as you can and to survive, otherwise our mission may fail.*

Truth in Fortunes Wheel is a very important concept because how you approach it makes a massive difference to your experience of playing the game and building a cohesive story. There are essentially two ways that you can look at truth while playing - you can either assume that when a character is saying something that they are being truthful and that





information is reliable and well understood, or you can assume that anyone could be lying or relaying false information (even without always knowing it themselves) and that even firm 'facts' could be incorrect or based on mistaken assumptions. Fortunes Wheel works best when everything could be a lie or a mistake or false assumption. This allows you to constantly twist card meanings and events to fit the story. It is both easier and more productive if a player narrates a character as telling you the gold is hidden in the castle but the story natural evolves to have it hidden somewhere completely different to abandon what the character originally said and then ask, why is it not there, than it is to put the gold in the castle anyway. Did the character lie? Was their information incorrect and if so why? Has it been moved and if so who moved it? All of these are openings to make the story deeper, where just sticking with an assumption that the statement had to be true will not.

In our previous example of the revelation of the widow as the killer in a murder investigation it could still be revealed that actually she is not the killer at all. Perhaps she confronted the investigator to conceal the real identity of the killer a long lost son everyone had thought was dead who she is trying to protect?

To some extent Fortunes Wheel involves creating stories that partly work backwards. Instead of following a linear cause and effect, it can be more productive to have an effect and imagine its cause. You do not always have to first create a crazed assassin who you plan to have leap out at a crucial moment to attack along with all his motivations and background, instead you have the crazed assassin attack because this fits with how you are reading a particular card and then you ask yourself, who is this man and why is he attacking us? If your concept of events depends on everything that has already happened as being 'fact' and all correctly understood rather than fallible and open to reassessment, integrating surprising events and contradictory information is considerably harder. Perhaps asking a narrative question about the assassin seems to indicate that a close friend sent him, someone you previously trusted or even a character you have actually played at some point - asking why would they do this works better than simply dismissing either the event or the idea of who could be behind it. Play around with the possibilities and have fun smashing some pieces from a completely different jigsaw puzzle into place to make things fit!

Everyone could be lying in Fortunes Wheel and nothing might be quite as it seems...





## Settings

Fortunes Wheel is intended as a generic system that can be used with a wide range of different sorts of settings. The game uses a central concept to unify any settings, the story of Icarus and the idea of the Erebus. Since any world we might imagine can and will form somewhere in the Erebus any setting you use can be seen as at least notional linked. They are all worlds in the Erebus. You want to play in the Wild West? Your Wild West setting is somewhere in the Erebus. You want to play a detective game based in rural 1930s England? It is in the Erebus. This means that any setting, any location, any genre you want is possible...and yes, in the Erebus. It does have the inevitable consequence that along with exciting and dramatic worlds there are also other worlds you might not find as exciting or even find oddly disturbing (Teletubbyland is still troubling me).

If Icarus is right all these places are there in the Erebus, and potentially characters from then also travel to other worlds. This means that potentially Sherlock Holmes, or a teletubbie, can turn up in the middle of your epic Lord of the Rings fantasy campaign. Since there is a potential for a lot of free improvisation in the game at some point it might actually happen (especially as the idea has now been sown in readers minds).

It is actually very much up to the group how much you want that to happen. If you want to keep a given world locked down and without intrusions from bizarrely mismatched worlds in other genres then lock them down. It just could be a lot more fun open them up occasionally or even bring the borders between them crashing down. Actually there could be serious consequences of that last idea because there might just be a good reason why borders do exist in the Erebus in the first place. This leads us to looking a little bit more closely at the grand 'meta-setting' of Fortunes Wheel.



## The Erebus

*The Erebus is not the dwelling place of a prime mover, the creator. Think of it more like a hole, a space where the creator is not, that contains within it infinite potential for anything that is not God to exist. Perhaps for the more scientifically minded some aspect of quantum mechanics that relates to probability and to potential might spring to mind. If the Erebus is not oneness, it must have the potential for multiplicity, for countless worlds. If it is not infinite, there must be boundaries to it and within it. If it is not perfectly harmonious it must be contain chaos.*

*It could be the land of faerie, or at least a place where they fey folk live. It certainly seems to share with faerie odd space and time distortion effects. It could also be a place of the dead because the dead seem to form there in abundance. The key to it though is that it is the fountain of all creativity, the place where all the creative energy is bundled up, all the potential. Our dreams, hopes, fears, and yes our stories, all find form there. The Erebus itself is dark, cold, nothingness like outer space, but within it you will find gardens of light, whole galaxies, worlds, isolated houses and rooms floating in the darkness. Some of the inhabitants of the Erebus will be aware that their world is sitting there within it, most will not. Only a very small and rare breed will be aware that they are all just shadows of the one real place that ever formed outside of it and which now gives birth to all that is in it. Only a few know that Earth, our Earth, the real one not the shadows of and echoes of it not only exists but that all that is within the Erebus is either born out of Earthlings minds (both conscious and subconscious) or from any other entities that may have preceded us.*

*If you can imagine it, then it can and will be there somewhere in the Erebus, waiting to be found. This makes the Erebus an extraordinary opportunity for those of us who know of it. We can build ourselves refuges there, escape the ravages of time and become as gods. Think of it Lavinia...we can build our own paradises...and our own hells. There alas lies the problem. We are all far from perfect and our subconscious minds, harbouring our deepest hopes but also our deepest fears play just as much a part in forming worlds as our conscious will does. If we create a world it will not only hold what we want, but also what we definitely do not want.*

*World building in the Erebus might at first seduce us but ultimately it can drive us mad. Battle lines can all too easily be drawn between young idealistic hopefuls, older wiser heads and truly ancient ones who have become quite monstrous in their insanity. The oldest powers that I am aware of are those we see depicted in the Tarot (the oldest I know of anyway). Some are more insane and malignant than others, and they can all appear quite charming and rational at times. It is best to be extremely careful around them though. Keep an eye on them and tread carefully.*

*Normally when we invite the Tarots attention by playing around with the cards they are perfectly civil however and there is little risk, perhaps because they know that with time we might very well expose ourselves to any harm they might bring and they just have no interest in hastening the process!*

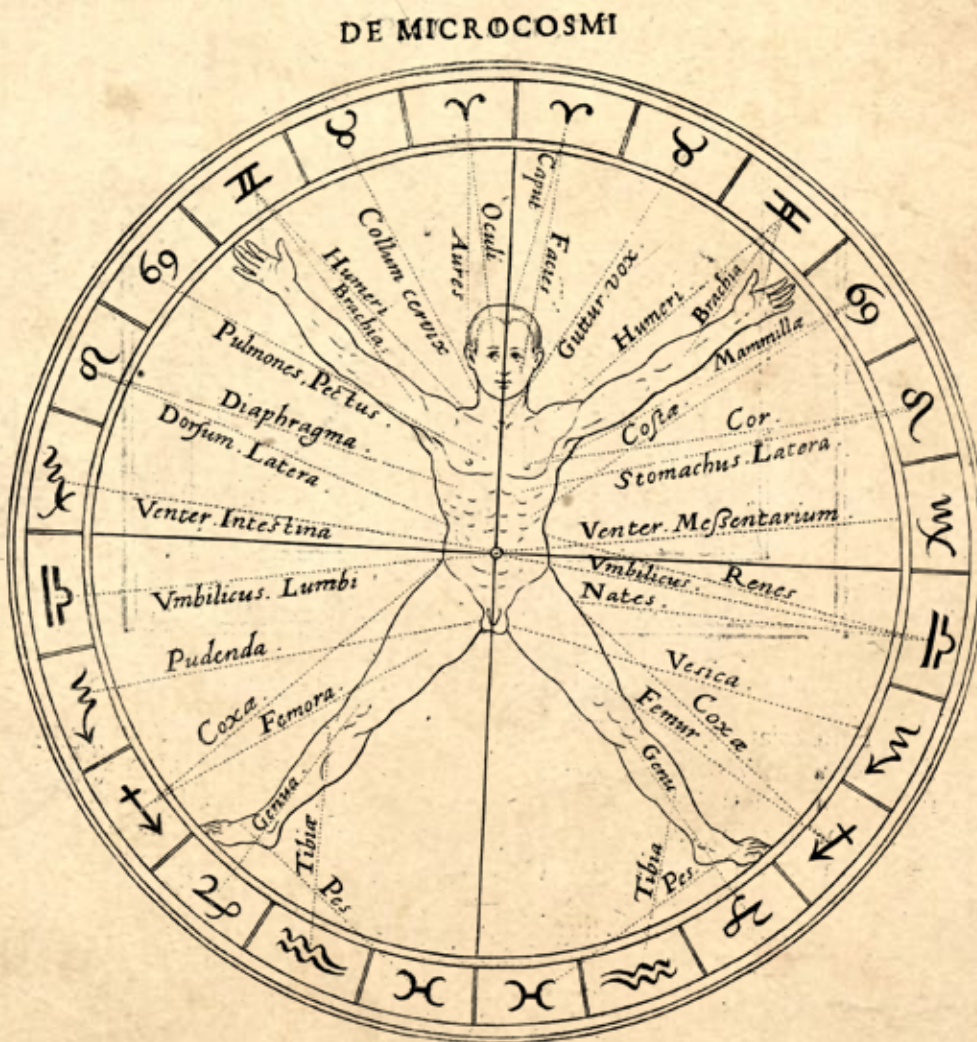
*What we normally have to worry about in the Erebus is each other. World builders can be selfish sometimes and resent intrusion, or they may have created a world as an experiment or testing ground for something they would rather keep hidden from their peers. Not all world builders are aware they ever actually built one though. The various writers and entertainers who gave us works of fiction probably never imagined their world would actually take on form somewhere. That does not however stop someone from claiming it and using it for themselves.*



Icarus wrote about the Erebus a lot in his notebooks. Not surprisingly as part of what he seems to have been doing was exploring it. I shall summarise his observations and theories here for you. Think of the Erebus as being a bit like outer space. You can walk around in it and travel through it without a space suit, since an atmosphere will usually just form around you, but if you panic and let your fears take over having one might help. Your fear of there being no atmosphere may just suck it all away. Everything in the Erebus itself really comes down a personal battle of sorts between your Ego and Id, the conscious and the subconscious and how that takes form. In short it all comes down to Fire and Water. You use your Fire Element to will yourself through it and to address your immediate needs, suppressing the Water Element which constantly threatens to push things out of your conscious control. Air and Earth balance off the theoretical and the actual with Making whatever your Fire or Water (whichever is dominant) 'wants' take form.

You can travel through it from place to place and world to world, often quite rapidly and directly if you know where you want to go, but can also wander for what can seem like an eternity if you do not.

For now the simplest thing though is to forget the Erebus itself and concentrate on those worlds that form within it. The worlds of the Erebus are the settings for the game of Fortunes Wheel. The Erebus and the story of Icarus give you something to hang them all together if you want along with a handy concept of you, the player, as an explorer and in a sense a character in the game in your own right.



## Creating Settings

You can use the cards to create any sort of setting you want, or you can use one that already exists - from a familiar story perhaps. You can also use ones provided specially to work with Fortunes Wheel. At first you will probably just want to play with adventures set inside such a world as if you are a native of it. You might wish to forget about the story of Icarus and just set it aside. Hints and clues about his story may crop up from time to time in official Fortunes Wheel game books, and perhaps you will also start to create your own or ones concerning people like him, fellow explorers of the Erebus. You may also eventually want to start taking characters from one world and putting them in another. Importing or exporting them. Until the location of Witching is uncovered many of these tantalising threads of stories will remain a deep mystery. If you treat a world, a setting, as self contained and walled off for now you can concentrate on playing around with the mechanics of the game and just enjoy a single world.

Keep in mind though each time you create a new character for a different setting, you are already world hopping, moving from one world to another. You the player are the traveller; the character is just the guise you take. This explains why you do not know everything there is to be known about your game world and why you will need to uncover and discover things.

If you do want to create your own settings, you can do so with or without the cards, or use them as a tool to help bring your ideas to life. Creating a setting is exactly like creating a character and in a way it can help to think of the setting as a character. If it has high Earth it will be more ordinary and mundane than if it has high Air, which would be more abstract or conceptual. The Para-Elements can also play a very productive place here - a high Earth Water world could be one of soap opera like intensity full of icy relationships, one with high Air and Fire could be wildly creative worlds of imagination like ever shifting smoke.

You might want to make a world very literal, with a world with a high Water element having only minimal land masses on it. Some of the notes Icarus left imply the various worlds form in 'bubbles' of the dominant elements and para-Elements. He called these 'Dominion' (Fire), 'Galatea' (Stone), 'Bastion' (Earth), 'Winterhold' (Ice), 'Arcana' (Water), 'Palladia' (Steam), 'Typhon' (Air), and 'Imagis' (Smoke).

Just as you would when creating a character, once you have built its Elements from the cards you can interpret them for extra detail and do spreads as well. You can treat Fortunes Wheel as a sort of basic world building engine as well as a character and story building one.

Experiment, and have fun with it. Create worlds by yourself and as a group. Use seeds for your worlds just as you would for a story.

## Creating Scenes

Game play can be thought of as being composed of several scenes. Each scene features its own setting in a point in time. Think of it like a scene in a film or play. Events and actions tend to happen within a single scene and do not always carry on directly into subsequent ones (though their implications and repercussions do). A person in one scene does not also have to be in the next one as well, the setting may change, and it may happen later (or earlier if it is a flashback). You can jump between scenes by simply summarising events between them - time passes, long journeys become compressed into a short description and so on. This is called 'ellipsis' after the three little dots... that indicate something is missing in a sentence. When a new scene starts the first thing to do is to set the scene - describe when and where it is and then describe the scene itself. Often this will be done by the main narrator in the story, but there will be times when any player might set a scene, especially if they have control of the narrative for a while.





You can use seeds that have been created in advance for some of the details of a given scene. Or you could create them using draws from the deck - one for the location, another for people present (if any), and another for a threat or challenge that could be played out in the scene and so on. You can do this exactly the same way you would build a world, because a scene is ultimately just a little world within a world. In some esoteric philosophy there is a concept of what is called the 'macrocosm' and 'microcosm'. It is often illustrated with the classic Da Vinci drawing of man. It actual goes back to the ancient Greek philosophy of Plato and Neo-Platonism. It is essentially a schema, or mental map, of seeing the same patterns reproduced throughout the universe on different scales. Very much like the way fractals work. For the Neo-Platonist, man was 'the measure of all things', the midpoint of the schema where everything might meet. Da Vinci's man is literally acting as a measure. Where this can help with a setting in Fortunes Wheel is by looking at it as a question of scale and form - all sorts of things might be superficially different, larger or smaller than each other, but a scene is just a world in miniature, a world within a world. The basic methods of creating thing used in the game can still be applied because it is just a smaller version or variant of the same basic sort of thing (a setting).

## Time

Time in the game will tend not to flow in a regular fashion because you will be jumping in and out of different time scales as you play. Specific settings can have different timescales as well, for example another planet may have a 26 hour day. You have effectively have a clock in the Wheel already that you could use to keep track of time passing if needed, though you would ideally need it to fit the given timescale of the world as well.

The best way to think of time is using this idea of different scales. On the short end of the scale you have seconds and minutes, then you have hours and days, and finally months and years or longer. Within a scene you will generally be using 'short time', seconds and minutes without any jumps or ellipsis. If a character has to wait an hour for something you do not want to actually have to sit and wait an hour in real time (our time). Juts skip time and move to the new event or scene. Some effects in game such as the duration of a spell or time healing may be in hours or days or more and if so you just keep a note of how much time passes in these ellipsis until it runs out. In practice it means that any actual action is happening in short time and everything else in ellipsis.

Characters involved in action, especially when fighting, will generally take turns to act based on their initiative. In essence a 'turn' becomes a rough unit of time in the game. Some actions such as casting a spell may take a number of turns to complete, during which other characters may also be taking actions. If a character is trying to do something that takes several turns their action can be disrupted by someone taking less turns to act who attacks them.

Some RPGS get very picky over exact time scales, but for Fortunes Wheel rough sketching works far better and keeps you focused on what is happening and the story instead of technicalities to do with the system.







# Playing the Game



## Using the Cards

Having learned a little about the cards and storytelling there are still a few practical questions about how you actually use them in play. You know that you can interpret cards individually or in spreads and that you can make characters and settings that suggest possible conflicts and stories, but actually using these things in play might seem a little daunting still or raise questions about how you might resolve a fight between characters or heal someone who has been wounded. The next few sections deal with the details of actual play.

### Frequency

*A few words of advice on how often you should use the cards is appropriate here Lavinia. Only use them when you need to. There is really no point in resorting to reading or using the cards for every little thing as it will just bog you down and distract you from your mission. How can you be my agent in manipulating or investigating events in someone's world if you are never actually paying attention to what is going on around you naturally that does not need your intervention? Over using the cards can also drain all your own energy and then you might also become more vulnerable and easier to detect. It might even lead to you losing control of your guise and it dropping completely. That would not actually harm you, but it could expose you and tip my hand to forces we really want to remain hidden from.*

I was struck by that line about being an agent in someone else's world. *Icarus* seemed to be implying that he needed Lavinia (and by extension it seems now us, the players of the game) to investigate or mess about with other peoples fictional creations. Now that is really bizarre. He also gave some good advice about the way you use the cards though which is very useful for the game. One important question is how often should you draw a card? They only really need to be drawn if you want to resolve something like a fight or trying to complete a task, but you can also use the cards to address questions in play, create new developments in the story or even construct a location drawing cards to map the place out area by area.

It is not a good idea to use them for absolutely everything though. If you draw cards for absolutely everything you will just slow the game down until it becomes boring and unplayable. You can decide for yourself if you want to open a door for instance, you do not need to draw a card to see if you should or can open every door. If a door is one that would it make sense is locked you could draw a card to resolve getting through the door though. Even in a fully improvised ad hoc game where everything in the story is being created as you go you can draw a card for a location, decide it is a stately home and then simply describe its rooms and furnishings based on that one card. You would not need to draw a card to determine every painting on the walls, if there is a kitchen or not and so on. You might however want to draw a card to determine something like its condition - is it lived in or a ruin, palatial or run down? The mysterious *Icarus* gave me the distinct impression in his writings that while I am thinking of our determining these things with the card draws he is thinking sometimes more of discovering them, but I think that is just a difference with the way we are using words. At least I hope it is.

## Detail and Fidelity

*Icarus* did not really go into this much, but it struck me as being important. How much detail should players go into when using card meanings and how strictly should you apply meanings? The answer is a simple one - as much as you feel is helpful at the time. You can use the most obvious meaning right out of the little booklets that come with the cards taking it exactly as it says, or you can build complicated relationships between the description of a cards meaning and aspects of the cards imagery as you see and relate to it. In one test play we created an entire setting based around a nail pictured in a card looking like a mushroom. It does help to discuss meanings as a group sometimes because other players can come up with all sorts of interesting suggestions and connections and the group will also get a feel for the times when a full blown discussion about a cards meaning is useful and when you just want to take it at face value and move on. Misunderstandings and mistakes can be as interesting and productive as insightful readings of the cards and the closest you will actually get to a 'right way' of using them is whatever works for you at the time.

## Card Spreads

*Lavinia, dear one, do not fail to take the time occasionally to devote yourself to more detailed readings and manipulation with the cards. Take the time to lay them out in some of the special patterns I showed you all those years ago - you remember them surely, the special story patterns that show the past, present and possible future. You know the ones that can reveal hidden goals and establish where our opposition may be waiting for us. If you find yourself in a lull in whatever events have been occurring and you need direction or you want to make some sort of more sustained and durable act it would be wise to remember to employ a spread. Just do not forget to watch your back when you do since focusing on them also distracts you from your surroundings.*

In fortune telling books you will usually see ways of using cards that go beyond simply drawing and reading a single card. When you use several cards at a time to read them as a group of inter connected meanings, this is called a 'spread'. *Icarus* ever the one to provide handy tips also talked about these in his letter to Lavinia.

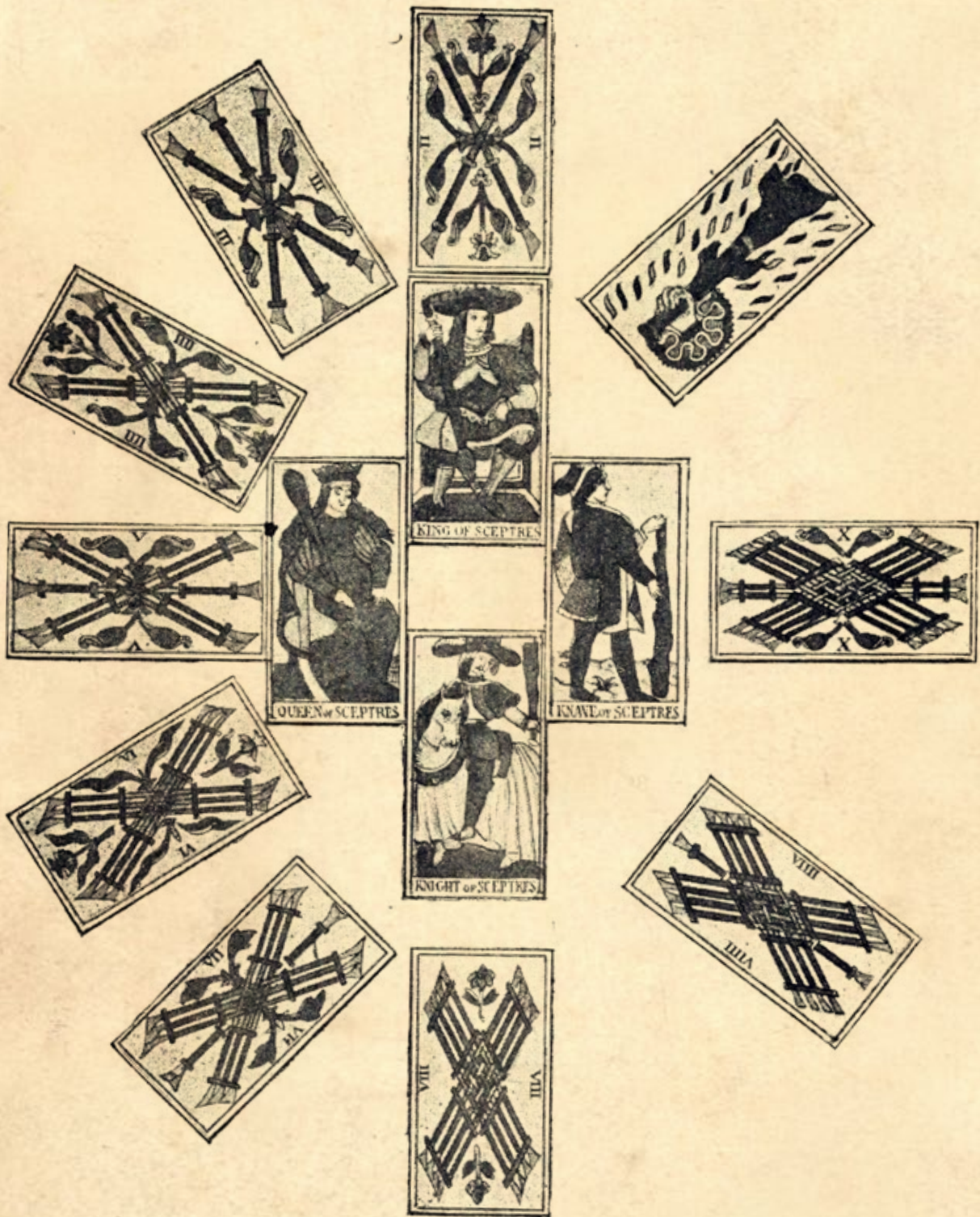


Where a fortune teller would use them to reveal the past and predict the future in Fortunes Wheel the future is a blank canvas - it has not been predetermined and the cards do not dictate to you what will occur, only suggest what might occur. I am sure some fortune tellers would say the same. They suggest possibilities, avenues to explore and nothing more. I suspect than more often than not if something does appear to come to pass the cards seemed to predict that it is because we have made it so ourselves or simply interpreted events flexibly (just like we can interpret the cards) to make events fit.

One of the simplest card spreads is a three card one. The first card represents the past, the second the present and the third the future, though you can also play around with that and make the first card the public, the second the personal, and the third the secret and so on. The basic idea with spreads is that they give you a possible relationship between multiple cards that allows for more complex interpretations of them. *Icarus* seemed to have thought they also help you work complex 'magic' with the cards but then he seems to think all the creative work involved in what we would call 'storytelling' is really magic that brings our creations to life somewhere in the Erebus. I think by now you have probably got the right idea that I do not always see eye to eye with *Icarus*. This is a game and storytelling kit, not a tool to work real magic in some actual fairy land.

There are many popular spreads you can use. You can also always simply make up your own. You actually already have a layout for a spread on the Character Record - the Wheel of Fortune itself. Combined with the various correspondences and relationships shown on the Wheel it is actually a very versatile spread to use that goes far beyond simply placing a card at each compass point. You can also adapt the Wheel spread and combine it with other spreads quite easily.







## Tasks

*It was essential for me to persuade the Guardian that I was on legitimate business otherwise I would probably have been stuck in those God forsaken tunnels for ages. The Guardian was far too strong to fight but I had to meet with Queen Alice and my mission was an urgent one. I decided that to fall back on my natural charm and Charisma would not do, what the Guardian would respond to was authority! Having none at the time in the relevant Ordo I just had to bluff and bluster my way through, so I simply strode up to the fellow as confidently as I could and told him to stand aside on orders from the Queen. Flashing what at a glance might look like official papers but was really just the document I needed to consult her about I looked him right in the eye assertively and waited expectantly for him to step aside and open the door. To my great surprise he did just that. It was only later that I discovered from the Queen that I happen to bear a passing resemblance to her a prominent member of her court and the Guardian probably thought he recognised me in the half light of the tunnel.*

The game will often involve situations where you will need to determine if someone succeeds in completing some sort of task or test of skill. This may involve overcoming an external force or problem or an internal struggle or could be an attempt to assault another with the intention of harming them. This need not be physical in nature - it can be emotional or about winning an argument as well. If you look on the Character Wheel you will see each Element also corresponds to one of Body (Earth), Mind (Air), Spirit (Fire) and Soul (Water). In a physical combat you would be attacking Earth because it corresponds to the physical body. If you want to overcome someone's will power you would attack their Fire Element because it corresponds to the force of their spirit and so on.

When you are seeking to resolve something you are always 'attacking' an 'opponent' but the attack could actually consist of tearing up a precious photograph, laughing at someone or punching them and the opponent could be a person or creature but it could also be an object or even something totally abstract like a theoretical problem. It could even be yourself.

You might also want to use an interpretative approach and apply the cards meaning at the same time. This is generally just going to add a little colour to the result. It could suggest some specific detail relating to the attack itself or it could relate to any injury caused or even any possible longer term lingering effect.

Most of the time whatever you are resolving will be happening in 'short time' (seconds and minutes).

The easiest way to handle short time is to treat it as our real time, so if it takes you a minute in a fight to play an attack and then a couple of minutes to work out any damage and interpretive effects just take it as having happened in game over the same three minutes. The attack may have involved a little circling and trying to work out what your opponent was going to do and combatants back off and get defensive after an attack if they are hurt.

You may however want some sense of 'who goes first', an order of initiative. Just take things in order of the highest appropriate Element to the lowest (In a battle of wits it would be Air, in a physical one Earth etc). If the same actions are simultaneous.

### Using Chance:

Shuffle and place your deck of cards face down with a space for discards next to it. Draw a card randomly from this deck.

Current Elemental Energy + Card + (edges - distractions)

*vs.*

Current Elemental Energy + Card + (edges - distractions)

Highest result wins. Excess points turn into damage to Elemental Energy

Cards drawn are placed on a discard pile. Once the scene ends, shuffle the discard pile back into the deck.

If you do not have a numerical value for an Element already, simply draw a card to represent the Element or assign one. Keep a note of the result so it can become their permanent score for that Element. There is a record sheet at the back of the book that you can use to make notes and record Elements for occasional characters and objects.

### Using Skill:

Draw a hand of four cards from your deck and either lay them out before you or hold them as you would in a game of cards. You can only play cards from your hand if the character has a relevant skill. You can still choose to draw a card instead. Make sure you keep the cards orientation as they were when you drew them from the deck. You can keep them hidden (just like you would in a game of cards), or reveal them and open them up to discussion or suggestion on their use by other players.

Once you have a hand, keep it because you will probably use the hand again later.



Each point of the relevant skill allows you to use a card starting from the left in the hand. So if you only have 1 point of skill you can only use the first card on the left. If you had 2 points you could choose which of the first two cards from the left you want to use and so on. Once used the card is placed on discard pile and is replaced by a draw on the right of the hand, shifting all the cards left. Each point of skill also counts as an edge.

You play the cards exactly same way as you do when you draw them, the only difference is that you are able to select them from your hand instead of relying totally on chance.

Skill effectively enables you to play more strategically as you can see some options before using a card. With higher skills you get some choice of cards, and with both higher and lower ones you can see a possible card you could play later after playing a card as cards you do not have enough skill to use will eventually shift into a position where you can. You will also have some cards that might at face value look awful that you might just want to use to get rid of. Take into account though that even low numerical value cards can be useful because of their meaning.

You can use these two approaches (chance or skill) to resolve anything.

## Damage Something

Anything that has been 'hit' (resolve something) can be damaged. The excess points used to get a 'hit' are converted into damage. If you beat the opponent's card by 3 points, you do 3 points of damage to a relevant Element. Damage is taken from the element's energy attacked on the point track of the Wheel. If the element's energy reaches 0 it is incapacitated and that energy cannot be used until repaired/healed. For items the element itself is damaged, and if it reaches 0 the item's particular elemental property is destroyed. This will usually result in the destruction of the item itself in some way, rendering it useless. For a person or creature you will have either physically wounded it or created a wound to part of their psyche, damaging their confidence or sanity.

You can spend Fortune instantly to remove the effect of damage to an Element at a cost of 2 Fortune Points per point you are removing. This means that as long as you have enough Fortune left you can cancel the effects of wounds and even stop yourself from hitting zero in Elemental energy.

Not all attacks need damage anything in a lasting way. What if you only want to knock someone out or win an argument but you do not actually create some sort of lasting injury? You can also try and overwhelm an Element. If you have indicated before attacking that you do want to really damage your opponent and the numerical value of the hit equals or exceeds the Element's current energy you will automatically get a 'stun' effect. For a physical blow this would cause the opponent to stagger or fall to the ground, dazed and if it exceeded the Element's current energy knock them out. In an argument it would leave them speechless, or cause them to withdraw completely. Nothing is adjusted on their current Elemental energy though - it stays the same as it was before you attacked them. Because you are attacking the current energy of the Element it is obviously easier to achieve stuns and knockouts on opponents or things that have already taken some actual damage to that energy because it will be easier to overwhelm it in a single attack, so to get a stun or knockout you might need to weaken a strong opponent first.







## Internal Conflicts

*I find myself to be my own worst enemy sometimes. I have been over confident and ignored the subtler warnings of my heart toward caution. Sometimes my knowledge and understanding of the threats I must confront makes me want to avoid them entirely or even paralyzes me with fear. It is terribly hard to be strong when strength itself may be a weakness, to be wise when wisdom urges you to abandon the task. Am I fighting some external threat or myself? Or must I learn to defeat myself before I can truly defeat anything else?*



You may have noticed that in many stories the protagonist actually spends quite a bit of time fighting themselves. They often face challenges of their bravery, honesty, love and so on. There is absolutely nothing stopping you using a character's own elements as tests of these. Can their Water element be overcome by their Fire element (their emotions overcome by their force of will)? Will they overcome their tiredness (Fire against Earth) or will their physical distractions stop them thinking clearly about a problem (Earth against Air). You can even use the same element against itself - will a character's intellectual arrogance overcome their ability to see that they have made a mistake?

These internal conflicts can be an important part of a character's development and overcoming ones that tie in closely with the personal challenges that may have been revealed during character creation should help the character to grow.

You can resolve them in the same way you would anything in the game, except the opponent is yourself. Internal conflicts result in an effect and the amount they win or lose by gives the effects duration in whatever timescale seems appropriate to the group.



## Extended Tasks

*I needed to craft myself a device that would enable me to detect the invisible creatures that were hunting me in this real. The old abandoned workshop I had found had all the tools and materials I needed, and I had all the resources to enchant it as well. The task would take me hours to complete, and a failure at any of the stages could make it take even longer. After spending the best part of a day labouring over it and having had several setbacks where I nearly ruined the device I was building I finally had a working detector. I invested a little bit of extra magic into it so I could use it without worrying about it running out of energy.*

You can make things in the game as an extended task. To do this, you build each element in turn. Set the highest strength you want for each element of the finished item. This becomes the difficulty level for the task for building that element. Each element can have a different strength and difficulty level. Add the current strength of that element (so it will get harder as you go) to the difficulty level rather than drawing/playing a card for it. You can continue building the element until you reach the predetermined strength/difficulty level or until you fail in resolving the task. If you succeed you add the amount over to the Element you are building, if you fail you subtract it. If success brings you to the strength you were aiming for or above, that Element is completed. If any failures bring it to zero it is broken and you have to start all over again for the entire object (including any other Elements that were completed). If you need to know how long it takes, each draw takes one of whatever unit of time you have decided the task will take (usually hours).

Use the same method as you would for resolving something, but with the following modification

Element + Draw (or card from hand if using skill) + any edges

*vs*

Element Aimed at + Current Element + any distractions

When an element is built, move on to the next element and repeat the process until the item is finished. At this point you can opt to 'fix' the item by expending fortune equal to the strength of the element to be fixed. This will make the strength of the element fixed permanent. If left unfixed, each use of that element of the object reduces it by one until it is repaired/recharged or fully used. Fixed items are either 'magical', have a significant role or are the product of superior skill or technology.

When you make something like ammunition that has multiple instances of the same thing you can use earth to represent quantity. The actual projectile weapon which uses the ammunition is a separate creation and earth would relate to its durability.

If a player wants a particular character to have an edge of their own creation and design this is a good way to go about creating one as the edge becomes something the player has invested time and fortune in.

## Repairs and Healing

If something has been damaged it can also usually be repaired/healed/fixed. Treat it exactly like creating something as an extended task, which each success repairing a point of damage to the elements energy and any failures damaging it further.

The defender can at any time spend fortune to 'heal' or 'shrug off' the damage. If there is not enough Fortune available to do this, you can also heal with the Permanent 'fixed' Elemental instead of Elemental Energy. If the element falls to zero any subsequent hits cause a single 'wound'. A wound causes the permanent Element to drop a point and will also carry with it a penalty or distraction effect that will plague the wounded person until the Permanent Element is restored by raising it back up again. The cards involved, situation and elements concerned give an indication of appropriate penalties but these could include losing the use of a limb, gaining fears and phobias, memory loss or any other suitable problem.

Once the Permanent Energy of the Element is reduced to zero the character is dead. This means a character will only die if the amount of damage done to them exceeds the permanent value of the Element. A character damaged to a point where the value is zero or below will be unconscious or in a coma. They cannot heal themselves with a physical intervention such as first aid or surgery, but they can expend Fortune or points of the Permanent Element. Rather than weaken their characters Element a player who does not have enough Fortune may opt to remain in that state until they are healed by someone else or recover naturally.

Some things can also repair naturally over time, while others cannot be repaired at all. The story itself should dictate how quickly things heal naturally - sometimes you will find a story works well following months of a character having to deal with a broken leg while you play, at other times you will just want to skip right past it by jumping straight to a scene after the injury has healed. The same broken leg if healed as a task will still be broken until enough time has passed for it to heal naturally, but it will heal naturally faster and the character should be able to continue in the story in less pain and with greater mobility (part of 'fixing' it might include getting or making some crutches for example). It is always best to let common sense and the needs of the story guide you when repairing anything.





## Magic

In Fortunes Wheel, 'magic' is anything that taps into the raw creative potential of the Erebus to work some sort of effect that is out of the ordinary. Magic is difficult to do. It is supposed to be. Not all Worlds in the Erebus will be conducive to magic; though technically magic will work in all of them to one degree or another. Think of some worlds in the Erebus being more open to the continual influence of the creative potential of the Erebus than others, with some severely dampening that potential. The easiest way to represent this effect in game is by assigning a distraction level to magical effects for the setting or drawing a card. A minimal dampening effect would give a distraction of one to any magical workings and a strong dampening effect might give a distraction of 7. Sometimes areas exist that touch the Erebus more directly and these places reduce any dampening effect and can even amplify magic. Draw a card for the specific place and take its numerical value off any dampening effect. If you have any spare points they become an Amplification Effect. Such effects give you an edge. This means that in magic rich settings if you find a place that touches the Erebus it can be a great place to work magic. This is why spell casters tend to use them as bases and guard them. Places where a single Element is very strongly present tend to be best. The most common and easiest to find and use are underground places, caves, deep cellars and tunnels. High towers and mountains, small islands in the middle of large lakes or oceans and volcanoes also work well. This means you will usually find wizards building deep dungeons or high towers, living on isolated islands or establishing a cult around a volcano.

Dampening Effects apply to all uses of spells and to each draw involved creating them. So crafting spells in areas with a high Dampening Effect can be nearly impossible, and even when crafted they will often fail. Occasionally however they will work just fine which is why in even very mundane worlds with high dampening effects you still have the occasional tales of people using magic.

Dampening Effects also apply to any cost to Fortune involved in creation, either added to FP cost if acting as a distraction or subtracted if it is acting as an edge. It does not apply to Fortune used to restore Elemental Energy.

Magical spells can be memorised or 'rote' spells, recorded in grimoires and spell tomes, or cast from scrolls.

Spell crafting is usually an arduous task where you craft a spell over a long period of time and then record it in a book to be memorised later. Create spells as an extended task for each Element or part of the spell. When you use a spell to try and resolve a task, always use the Fire Element as the attacking one. Fixing the spell means you have it recorded properly in a spell book or a scroll. If it is not recorded, once it is replaced by another spell (forgotten) there is no way to memorise it again. Casting a spell does not remove it from memory, but replacing it with another spell will.

When creating a spell there are a few things to consider. What does it do? How powerfully does it do it? How long will the effect last? How far away can it affect something?

Any spell consists of a description of its base effect, its Elemental Drain (Water), its power (Fire), duration (Earth) and range (Air). Choose one Element to be the spells 'Master Element' that sets the overall nature of the spell and another to be the spells target Element. They can be the same if you want but they should logically fit with the Element. When you are thinking of the base effect, spells can have physical, mental, and emotional and will power based effects. A fireball would be targeting Earth and using Fire for example. The Master Element and target Element do not need a value or take one from the spell parts, they relate directly to the caster and the targets own Elements.

Spells draw directly on the casters Elements. The Elemental Drain is a number subtracted from 11 to get the number of points of the Master Element's energy you will spend in casting, so the more you invest into Water the lower the drain. Investing 8 points into Water would give you a cost to cast of 3 points from the spells Master Element. Only investing 1 point in Water would make a spell that would usually knock you out if you cast it. You can spend Fortune to balance off the Elemental Drain at the usual rate of 2FP per Elemental Energy point restored.

You can memorise any spell with a power that is equal to or less than your Earth. You can have a number of spells memorised equal to the spell casters Air Element. A memorised spell can be cast as a single action. Any other spell has to be read from a spell book or scroll and casting will take one action per point of its power. This way reading a spell with Fire 6 would consume 6 actions.

Casting a spell costs the total of all of its Elements in Fortune. Multiple spell casters can combine to split the Fortune cost between them if they all know the same spell and cast it together. It is a good idea to record the basic cost when made.

Spell casters in some worlds steal Fortune from others to help with casting. The easiest way is through a blood sacrifice - each point of damage done to the victims Earth as a physical injury that draws blood gives 1 point of Fortune to help power the spell.

A cast spell uses the spells Fire Element in any attack, so when resolving the spells effect on a target the spells power is used as the attacking Element and the target Element as the defending one.



If what you want is to enchant an item instead of recording a spell to be memorised in a spell book, first you would need the item (which may need to be made as an extended task first) and then you put the spell effect when made into it and fix it with Fortune at a cost of 5FP. Enchanted items can be used by anyone and do not require memorisation or a text to use, just the item that was enchanted. If the enchanted item is not fixed it will deteriorate (use charges) each time you use it. An enchanted item will have a number of uses equal to its Earth. If all the charges are used up it will cease to be an enchanted item and would need to be enchanted again.

Using an enchanted item is not free of cost as they drain the Element of the user that matches the Master Element of the item in exactly the same way that spells do.

It is possible to use magic to enhance an item instead of or in addition to giving it a spell power. You would use an existing item or make one as an extended task as normal and then focus magic into improving the items edge. Items will usually have logical maximum properties, so for instance an iron sword would not have as high Earth as a steel one. The crafter can ignore such limits and push the item beyond any normal logical maximum. Items enchanted this way do not drain Elemental Energy unless they also have an added spell effect. This how you might make items like magic swords. It does cost 5FP per point added to an Element however plus another 5 FP to 'fix' it.

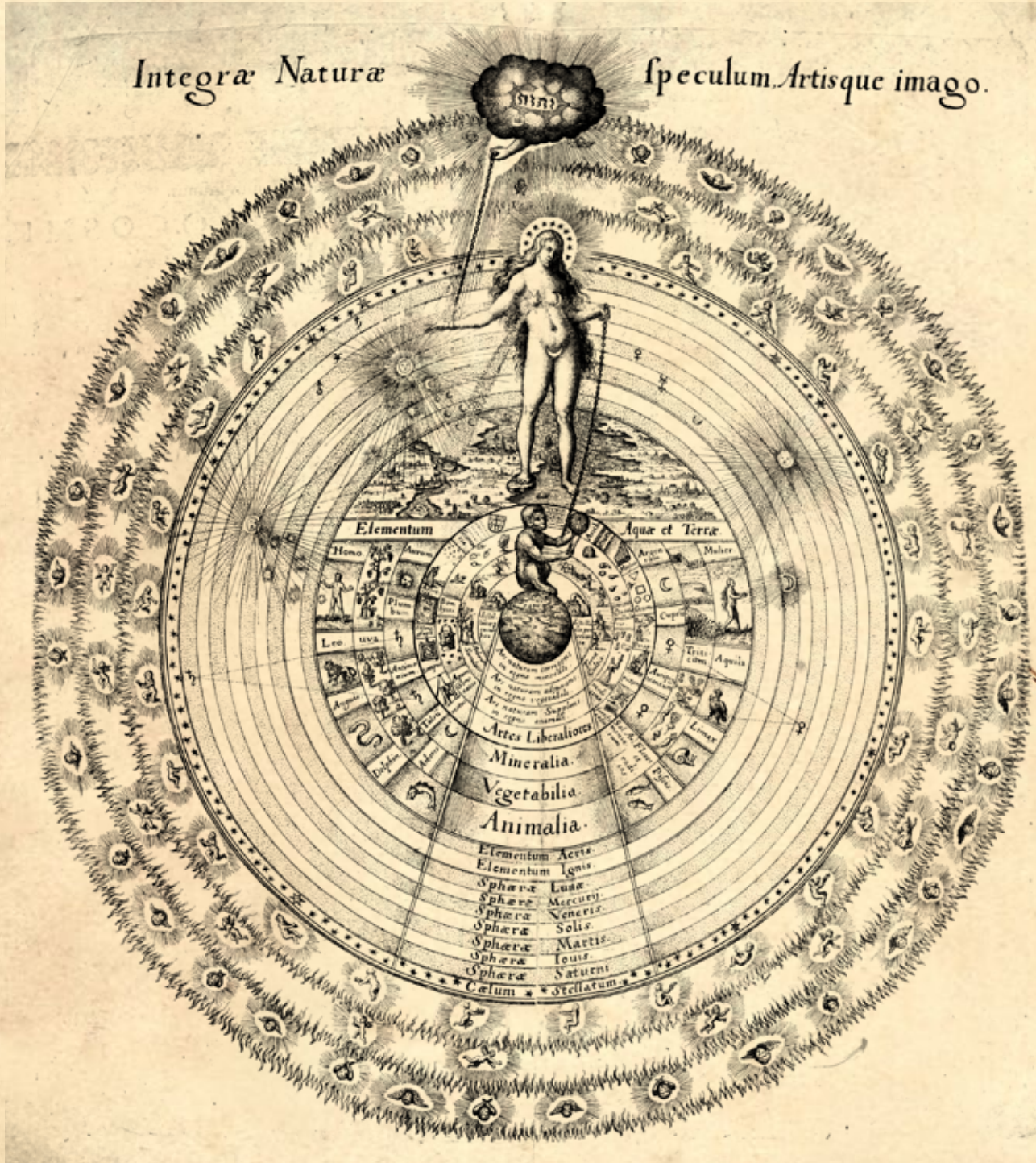
You can also enchant an item to act as a Fortune Pool that you can draw on instead of your own Fortune. Anyone who knows it is a Fortune Store can use it. The only way to get any Fortune into the item in the first place is through blood and it is only placed into the item if the victim's entire current Earth energy is consumed. The number of points taken this way becomes the items Fortune pool, so draining 5 points of Elemental Energy would create a store that can hold 5FP. It will also take the same amount of FP from the victim. If the victim does not have enough FP for this, all the blood is still taken but you only get what FP the victim had at the time. There is no limit to the amount of Fortune you can enchant an item to store other than the availability of victims and your morals. If you spend 5FP to 'fix' it you can recharge it after using the stored FP as many times as you wish. If you do not fix it once the FP are used it is just an ordinary item again. You cannot recharge a store until it is completely empty. If it was fixed you can recharge it with more blood or by stealing peoples Fortune... a fixed Fortune store is naturally vampiric and will actually need to be fed blood or it will automatically start to take FP from anyone who is using it. Every time using it would normally result in FP being gained, the FP goes to the store instead of the person using it until it is full, at which point it can be used again. Be very wary of someone handing you their 'lucky dice' to play with.

Spell casters often create or join magical orders to get access to spell books and items made by members of the order, especially if they are very hard to create. This can result in the rather odd way that spell casters in magic rich worlds are often solitary while ones in worlds where magic is next to impossible form lots of secret orders, societies and clubs.



Integræ Naturæ

Speculum Artisque imago.



## Enchanting the Narrative

Sometimes things just do not seem to be going your way with the cards you are drawing. It is possible to change them by spending Fortune. When you do this it is called 'enchanting the narrative'.

Enchanting the narrative allows you to 'find' things in the game that are useful so long as they are not some sort of major quest goal. If you need a gun and one was not described as being in the room and the room would not logically have to contain a gun, then you can enchant the narrative to put one there.

This costs you 2FP per point of each of its four elements, so a sword that is Water/Speed 1, Fire/Power 4, Earth/durability 6 and Air/range 1 would cost 24 FP and 5 FP to 'fix' it, otherwise you will just drop it and forget it when you are done using it.

You can also spend Fortune in game after a card is drawn to change its numerical power and Element.

It costs the current numerical value of the card in FP to modify a card result plus the amount you want to modify it by (up or down) or 2 x the current numerical value of the card in FP to change a card's Element/suit to the next one on the wheel (adjacent in either direction) or change its orientation.

To change the 6 of cups to the 8 of swords would cost 8 FP to change the number and another 6 FP to change it to either Air or Earth and then another 6 FP to change that to Swords, for a total of 20 FP. If you wanted to flip the orientation as well it would come to a total of 26 FP.

You can also do this with any card drawn in the game but you cannot do it with cards played from a hand or when creating a character.

This means you can use it with cards you draw for as a part of the general storytelling side of the game. And in effect use it to manipulate 'reality' to shift the cards you have drawn to one that fits with what you want better.

This also helps you to bring in something you need in the story. To ensure the key to a locked door is under the doormat you can force the card draw result so it is there.

This counts as 'magic' as well and can be affected any dampening effect of the setting should also give you an additional cost. So if there is a dampening effect of 4 and you want to increase the six of wands by 2 it would cost you 12 FP to do this.

You do not need to create a spell to do this, everyone can as and when they want to so long as they have enough Fortune. There is also no Elemental Drain.

Such effects are usually temporary. Characters wander off, items are lost or moved, and unlocked doors get locked again. Sometimes you might want an effect to endure or become attached to your character. You can elect to 'fix' it. It costs the usual 5 FP to 'fix' a narrative enchantment. Fixed items stay where you put them unless you move them and remain ready for you to use again wherever they are. If you changed something, it stays changed.





## Magic Fortune Costs Summary

### FORTUNE GOES UP:

- 1 FP per point of edge from a Dampening Effect
- 1 FP per point of damage to a blood sacrifices Earth energy

### FORTUNE GOES DOWN:

- 1 FP per point of distraction caused by a Dampening Effect
- 1 FP per point of each Element in spell cast
- 1 FP per point of each Element when you make something
- 2 FP per point to restore an Element that has been drained
- 5 FP to 'Fix' a spell in a book or item
- 5 FP per point added to an Element when enchanting an edge

## Enchanting the Narrative Fortune Costs Summary

- 2 FP per point of each Element to find an edge
- 1 FP per point of final Card value when enchanting the narrative
- 1 FP per dampening effect of setting
- 1 FP per point of card to change a card Element to an adjacent one on the Wheel
- 1 FP per point of card to change a cards orientation
- 5 FP to 'fix' a narrative enchantment or the effects of something you have made





# A Turn of the Wheel



## Improving a Character

Characters can improve over time by investing Fortune into developing them. When you have enough Fortune available you can attempt to advance your characters Elements.

You can use fortune to attempt to advance an element a point in its strength when you reach that elements current strength in Fortune +10 or more. An attempt, even if it fails, reduces fortune by that amount. If you wanted to attempt to increase your fire element from 9 to 10 it would always cost you 19 points of Fortune to attempt it even if the attempt failed.

To advance make a draw. If the result of the draw is equal to or greater than the strength of the element or journey stage it advances.

The new Element score gives you a new card meaning to match. If you advanced the 6 of Coins by one it will become the 7 of Coins and gain that card meaning.

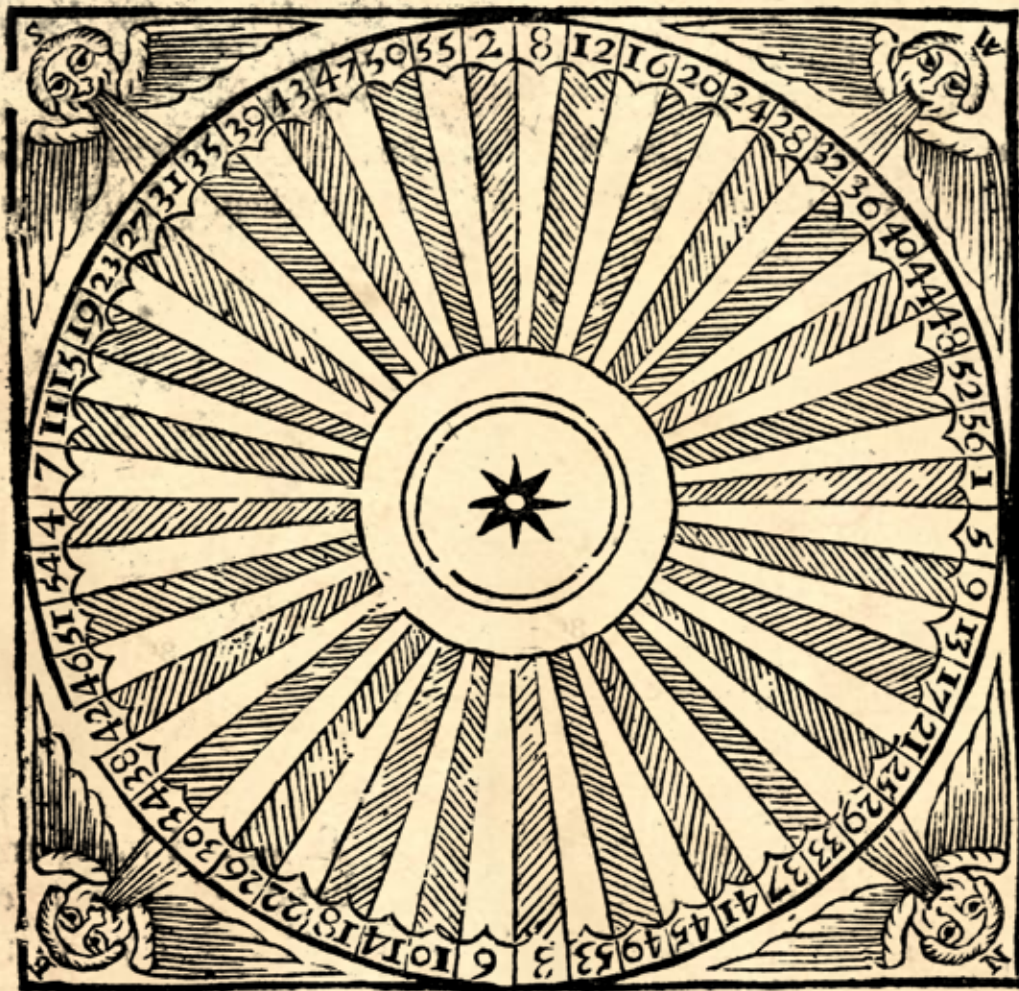
If you want to flip the orientation of the card to change the meaning it costs 5 FP to do so.

If you want to change the suit of the card this is also costs 5 FP.

Something you may have noticed is that players who spend Fortune in game on things like magic and altering card results will have less Fortune to spend on developing their character. Using Fortune to take short cuts is a great way to resolve problems but it also cuts out the sort of learning that happens when you tackle problems as they are instead of how you wish they were.

Note that anything that is determined by your Elements like skills will also change if the Element advances, giving you another point to use. The Wheel turns, you move toward the top and begin a new phase for your guise with a whole new associated meaning...and so the game goes on.

# The Figure or Lottery.



**T**His Game occasions not the frequent crime  
Of swearing, or mispending of our time,  
Nor loss of money, for the Play is short,  
And every Gamester winneth by the sport:  
We therefore Judge, it may as well become,  
The *Hall*, the Parlor, or the *Dining Room*,  
As Chess or Tables; and we think the price  
Will be as low, because it needs no Dice.

F I N I S.



# Appendix

## Tasks Summary

### Using Chance

Shuffle and place your deck of cards face down with a space for discards next to it. Draw a card randomly from this deck.

Current Elemental Energy + Card + (edges - distractions)

*vs.*

Current Elemental Energy + Card + (edges - distractions)

Highest result wins. Excess points turn into damage to Elemental Energy

Cards drawn are placed on a discard pile. Once the scene ends, shuffle the discard pile back into the deck.

If you do not have a numerical value for an Element already, simply draw a card to represent the Element or assign one. Keep a note of the result so it can become their permanent score for that Element. There is a record sheet at the back of the book that you can use to make notes and record Elements for occasional characters and objects.

### Using Skill

Elemental Energy + Card from Hand + (edges - distractions)

*vs.*

Elemental Energy + Card from Hand or Draw + (edges - distractions)

Highest result wins. Excess points turn into damage to Elemental Energy

Draw a hand of four cards from your deck and either lay them out before you or hold them as you would in a game of cards. You can only play cards from your hand if the character has a relevant skill. You can still choose to draw a card instead. Make sure you keep the cards orientation as they were when you drew them from the deck. You can keep them hidden (just like you would in a game of cards), or reveal them and open them up to discussion or suggestion on their use by other players.

Once you have a hand, keep it because you will probably use the hand again later.

Each point of the relevant skill allows you to use a card starting from the left in the hand. So if you only have 1 point of skill you can only use the first card on the left. If you had 2 points you could choose which of the first two cards from the left you want to use and so on. Once used the card is placed on discard pile and is replaced by a draw on the right of the hand, shifting all the cards left. Each point of a skill specialisation counts as an edge so you can also sometimes get a bonus this way as well.

### Extended Tasks

Set the highest strength you want for each element of the finished item. This becomes the difficulty level for the task for building that element. Each element can have a different strength and difficulty level. Add the current strength of that element (so it will get harder as you go) to the difficulty level rather than drawing/playing a card for it.





You can continue building the element until you reach the predetermined strength/difficulty level or until you fail in resolving the task. If you succeed you add the amount over to the Element you are building, if you fail you subtract it. If success brings you to the strength you were aiming for or above, that Element is completed. If any failures bring it to zero it is broken and you have to start all over again for the entire object (including any other Elements that were completed). If you need to know how long it takes, each draw takes one of whatever unit of time you have decided the task will take (usually hours).

Use the same method as you would for resolving something, but with the following modification

Element + Draw (or card from hand if using skill) + any edges

*vs*

Element Aimed at + Current Element + any distractions

When an element is built, move on to the next element and repeat the process until the item is finished. At this point you can opt to 'fix' the item by expending fortune equal to the strength of the element to be fixed. This will make the strength of the element fixed permanent. If left unfixed, each use of that element of the object reduces it by one until it is repaired/recharged or fully used. Fixed items are either 'magical', have a significant role or are the product of superior skill or technology.

## Wounds

Any points over the amount needed to 'win' in an attack are taken from the defenders element attacked (Earth in physical combat but it could be any element).

The defender can at any time spend fortune to 'heal' or 'shrug off' the damage.

If something has been damaged it can also usually be repaired/healed/fixed. Treat it exactly like creating something as an extended task, which each success repairing a point of damage to the elements energy and any failures damaging it further.

The defender can at any time spend fortune to 'heal' or 'shrug off' the damage.

If there is not enough Fortune available to do this, you can also heal with the Permanent 'fixed' Elemental instead of Elemental Energy. If the element falls to zero any subsequent hits cause a single 'wound'. A wound causes the permanent Element to drop a point and will also carry with it a penalty or distraction effect that will plague the wounded person until the Permanent Element is restored by raising it back up again. The cards involved, situation and elements concerned give an indication of appropriate penalties but these could include loosing the use of a limb, gaining fears and phobias, memory loss or any other suitable problem.

## Create Something

Draw one card for each element in turn placing in them in that elements position on the wheel. If the card is a court card or Major Arcana draw again until you get a pip card, placing each fresh card on top of the other. Rotate cards clockwise or anti-clockwise on the wheel as desired or 'Rob Peter to pay Paul'.

You can use this to create characters, monsters, settings, and edges - whatever you need.



# Fortune

## General Fortune

### Fortune goes up:

- 1 FP each time you gain a significant story goal
- 1 FP for taking a real risk or gambling on something
- 1 FP for inventiveness that surprises or impresses the group
- 1 FP each time you reintegrate a story feature
- 2 FP if the reintegration is pivotal to the story
- 3 FP if the reintegration is unexpectedly clever or witty
- 5 FP for completing a story
- 1 FP per point of excess to any number needed to succeed at something

### Fortune goes down:

- 1 FP each time you fail a significant story goal
- 1 FP per point of each Element when you make something
- 1 FP per point you failed something by (Only use this if you want a more challenging game).
- 5 FP to 'fix' a narrative enchantment or the effects of something you have made
- 2 FP per point of Elemental energy restored.
- 1 FP per point of Elements current strength in +10 to advance an Element
- 5 FP to change a card orientation or suit when advancing an Element

## Magic and Fortune

### Fortune goes up:

- 1 FP per point of edge from a Dampening Effect
- 1 FP per point of damage to a blood sacrifices Earth energy

### Fortune goes down:

- 1 FP per point of distraction caused by a Dampening Effect
- 1 FP per point of each Element in spell cast
- 1 FP per point of each Element when you make something
- 2 FP per point to restore an Element that has been drained
- 5 FP to 'Fix' a spell in a book or item
- 5 FP per point added to an Element when enchanting an edge



## Enchanting the Narrative and Fortune

- 2 FP per point of each Element to find an edge
- 1 FP per point of final Card value when enchanting the narrative
- 1 FP per dampening effect of setting
- 1 FP per point of card to change a card Element to an adjacent one on the Wheel
- 1 FP per point of card to change a cards orientation
- 5 FP to 'fix' a narrative enchantment or the effects of something you have made

### APPENDIX 3

## Tarot Card Meanings

MAJOR ARCANA	DAY (UPRIGHT)	NIGHT (INVERTED)
The Fool	Folly, extravagance, intoxication	Negligence, absence, apathy
The Magician	Skill, diplomacy, subtlety, will	Will applied to evil ends, cunning
The High Priestess	Secrets, mystery, wisdom, knowledge	Conceit, superficial knowledge.
The Empress	Action, initiative, the unknown	Inaction, vacillation, truth
The Emperor	Stability, power, protection, maturity	Compassion, obstruction, immaturity
The Hierophant	Alliance, servitude, mercy, goodness	Over-kindness, weakness
The Lovers	Attraction, love, beauty, success.	Foolish plans, failure
The Chariot	Triumph, victory	Riot, dispute, defeat.
Strength	Power, action, courage	Despotism, weakness, discord
The Hermit	Prudence, caution, deliberation.	Hesitation, fear, concealment
The Wheel of Fortune	Destiny, fortune, success	Ill-Fortune, failure
Justice	Equilibrium, balance, justice	Over-severity, inequality, bias.
The Hanged Man	Self-sacrifice, sacrifice, trials, devotion	Selfishness, release
Death	Death, worse change, transformation	Escaping death, better change
Temperance	Moderation, frugality, uniting	Clashing interests, bad combinations
The Devil	Violence, bondage, fate	Weakness, pettiness, blindness,
The Tower	Ruin, disruption, loss	Oppression, imprisonment, tyranny
The Star	Hope, expectation, bright promises	Disappointment, frustration, impotence
The Moon	Danger, deception, darkness	Instability, half truths, trifling mistakes
The Sun	Happiness, contentment, joy	Same but to a lesser degree
Judgement	Renewal, decision, final results	Postponement of result, delay
The World	Completion, good rewards	Stagnation, poor rewards



## Tarot Cards Meanings continued

WANDS	DAY (UPRIGHT)	NIGHT (INVERTED)
Ace	Creation, invention, enterprise	Persecution, cruelty, decadence, ruin
Two	Riches, fortune, opulence, sadness	Surprise, wonder, fear
Three	Commerce, trade, negotiation	Hope, desire, end of troubles
Four	Society, union, harmony	Unexpected prosperity, success
Five	Riches, opulence, the battle of life	Legal proceedings, disputes, trickery
Six	Hope, desire, expectation	Infidelity, treachery, delay
Seven	Success, gain, advantage, valour	Indecision, Hesitation, Embarrassment
Eight	Understanding, observation, haste	Quarrels, discord, jealousy
Nine	Order, discipline, strong defence	Obstacles, delays, adversity
Ten	Confidence, security, honour, oppression	Treachery, subterfuge, duplicity
Page	Strangers, good news, pleasure	Bad news, worry
Knight	Departure, separation, flight	Discord, division, interruption
Queen	Rural woman, friendliness, avarice	Strict, economical, opposition
King	Rural man, knowledge, education	Good but severe, deliberation

92

COINS	DAY (UPRIGHT)	NIGHT (INVERTED)
Ace	Contentment, Prosperity, Triumph.	Profit, riches, greed
Two	Embarrassment, difficulty, recreation	Letters, messages, forced joy
Three	Nobility, power, dignity, skill, renown	Children, mediocrity, pettiness, weakness
Four	Pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction.	Obstacles, hindrances, suspense, delay
Five	Love, sweetness, affection, purity	Disgraceful love, discord, license, ruin
Six	Gifts, gratification	Ambition, passion, jealousy
Seven	Treasure, business, money	Melancholy, worry about money
Eight	Beauty, skill, chastity, innocence	Flattery, usury, hypocrisy, cunning
Nine	Discretion, prudence, discernment	Deceit, artifices, deception
Ten	Home, family, riches, gain	Gambling, robbery, loss
Page	Economy, order, study, management	Profusion, waste, excess
Knight	Trustworthy, wisdom, regulation	Idle, negligent inertia, stagnation
Queen	Liberality, generosity, security	Suspicion, doubt, mistrust
King	Victory, bravery, intelligence	Vice, perversity, corruption, peril

SWORDS	DAY (UPRIGHT)	NIGHT (INVERTED)
Ace	Excessive force, Fertility, Prosperity.	Embarrassment, foolish love
Two	Friendship, courage, tenderness	False Friends, lies, disloyalty
Three	Separation, removal, seclusion, rupture	Error, confusion, disorder, loss
Four	Solitude, retreat, abandonment, exile	Economy, precaution, avarice,
Five	Mourning, sadness, affliction, infamy	Losses, trouble, burial
Six	Envoy, voyage, expedience	Declaration, proposal of love, revelation
Seven	Hope, confidence, desire	Wise advice, prudence
Eight	Sickness, criticism, blame, crisis	Accident, past treachery, fatality
Nine	Death, failure, delay, deception	Imprisonment, suspicion, doubt
Ten	Affliction, grief, sorrow, pain, desolation	Passing success, momentary advantage
Page	Spying, overlooking, authority.	The unforeseen, unprepared
Knight	Bravery, war, Skilfulness	Simplicity, conceit, imprudence
Queen	Loss, absence, separation, sterility	Malice, bigotry, artifice, prudery
King	Power, command, superiority	Worry, grief, fear, disturbance, cruelty.

CUPS	DAY (UPRIGHT)	NIGHT (INVERTED)
Ace	Feasts, celebrations, joy	Change, novelty, inconstancy
Two	Love, affection, friendship	Obstacles, opposition, cross purposes
Three	Success, solace, healing	Quickness, vigilance, excess
Four	Ennui, discontent	New acquaintance, a sign, presentiment
Five	Alliances, inheritances, marriages	False projects, surprise arrivals or news
Six	The past, nostalgia, childhood, memory	The future, expectation
Seven	Reflection, sentiment, imagination	Plans, resolution, decision
Eight	Mildness, timidity, modesty	Joy, happiness
Nine	Contentment, satisfaction, achievement	Mistakes, imperfections, truth, liberty
Ten	Home town, reputation, glory	Combat, strife, opposition, falseness
Page	Confidence, probity, discretion	Flattery, deception, artifice
Knight	Arrivals, advances, invitation	Swindling, duplicity, fraud
Queen	Success, happiness, honesty, advantage	Meddling, troubled success, depravity
King	Goodness, kindness, liberality	Distrust, doubt, suspicion, roguery



## APPENDIX 3

# Tarot Card Correspondences

This is really only a rough guide. Some of these are very traditional interpretations of the cards, but with some aspects (especially places and things) there was little available by way of existing interpretations. Sometimes features are taken from common imagery on the cards. In such cases really the best thing is to just wing it and go with gut instincts based on other aspects of the card or the imagery involved. If cards are night ones (inverted) you can usually just use the opposite sense.

Major Card	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
The Fool	A youth or child, an explorer, dreamer or visionary	Houses and paths or roads, mountain	Pets, luggage and bags, travel goods or items related to exploration	Journeys and departures
The Magician	A creative or highly skilled person, someone who is a smooth talker, storytellers, politicians, inventors, artists and con men	Theatres and magic shops, kitchen, laboratory, shows	Tools, cards, magic paraphernalia, show tickets	Stage shows and street performances
The High Priestess	An independent woman, psychics, counsellors, nuns, fairy godmothers	Mystical places, secret places, libraries and places of silence	books	Meditation, reading, spiritual meetings
The Empress	An older woman, a matriarch	Home, stately homes, boutiques, beauty parlours	home ware, furnishings, cooking equipment food and ingredients	A home cooked meal, family gatherings
The Emperor	A powerful man, a leader	Government buildings, palaces	Office equipment	Discussion and being given orders, business meetings
The Hierophant	A religious person or teacher	Cathedrals and churches, corporate HQ	Religious items	Prayer, worship, sermonising, religious services
The Lovers	Couples and people in relationships, healers and friends, business partners	Romantic meeting places or brothels	Romantic gifts	Meeting, dates, trysts and affairs, marriages
The Chariot	Someone always on the move, members of the military, messengers, professional drivers	Streets and highways	A vehicle, travel tickets	Journeys in a vehicle, travel
Strength	Unofficial leaders, athletes, people who work with animals, healers and arbitrators	Zoos, gyms	Gym equipment, pet supplies, medical supplies	Training, sporting events, a visit to the zoo, a sick animal needing help
The Hermit	Loners, spiritual advisors, mentors, guides, monks, teachers, academics	Monasteries and libraries, caves, retreats	Light source or anything that is bound to be really useful shortly	Meditation, retreat, a getaway somewhere remote



Major Card	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
The Wheel of Fortune	Gamblers, speculators, entrepreneurs	Casinos and gambling dens, Ferris wheels	Gambling equipment	Gambling, taking chances and risks, fairs and lotteries
Justice	Logical people, mediators, lawyers and judges	Courts, police departments	Police or investigation equipment	Debating, analysing, investigations and trials
The Hanged Man	Saints and martyrs, people who make sacrifices, a patient	Places with trees or bridges, shrines	A medal, something commemorative	An ordeal or retreat
Death	Someone who effects change or deals with change or death	Cemeteries, undertakers, butchers, abattoirs, records offices	Weapons, mementos or records of life changes, a photo album, an urn of ashes	Funeral or a birth, festivities marking life changing events
Temperance	Balanced people, spiritual healers, artists, protectors, mediators, managers, alchemists and chefs	Cocktail bars, restaurants, spiritual centres, creative studios	Art equipment, armour, medical supplies, spiritual books	Meditation, yoga, painting, defending someone
The Devil	Materialistic person, cruel and domineering	sinister or seedy places, underworld places	Manacles or rope, bondage equipment, money	Captivity and restraint, someone being cruel
The Tower	Someone who shakes things up, troublemakers, disaster victims, refugees	towers, skyscrapers	Emergency supplies, emergency service clothing and uniforms	An emergency or disaster
The Star	An optimist, guardian angel, stargazers, UFO buffs, healers	Places near water, observatories and planetariums	Curiosities, telescopes, star charts, mystical paraphernalia	Strange and unusual events
The Moon	Illusive and insincere people, mothers, travellers, artists, vets, poets, psychiatrists	Theatres, homes, studios, vets or psychiatrists, bus or train stations	Tickets, misleading or trick items, fakes and forgeries, dubious guidebooks, strait jackets	An illusionists show, journey or helping a troubled animal or disturbed person.
The Sun	Cheerful person, also arrogant at times, children, leaders and innovators, scientists, academics	Hospital delivery room or children's ward. Research labs and universities	Science equipment, books, toys, childrens clothes	Children playing, breakthroughs in research, academic seminars and talks
Judgement	Judges and executioners, historians, investigators	Rehab centre, prisons, churches, therapy group, private investigators office, history society	Evidence, criminal records, historical documents	Trials and executions, therapy sessions, an investigation (legal or historical)
The World	World travellers, successful people, achievers	the great outdoors, airports	Travel or camping supplies, awards	Camping trips and journeys. Award ceremonies



Wands	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Ace	Pioneers, inventors, creatives, entrepreneurs, adventurers	Workshops and factories, dangerous and exciting places	Tools, blueprints, maps	A new opportunity
Two	Business partner, proud enterprising people, negotiators, travellers	Library, balcony, meeting rooms, travel agents	Books, plans and records, brochures, vehicles, suits	A partnership or meeting, speeches, departures
Three	Merchants and traders, manufacturers, authors, co-creators, team workers and enablers	Crossroads or seaside, shops and factories, offices	General goods, office supplies, work clothes	Information to be gained, shopping, team meetings
Four	Home buyers, vacationers, helpers at social events like wedding planners or waiting staff, home makers	Castle, fortress, restaurant, cafe, homes	Vacation items, home decorating supplies, furnishings, party supplies, casual wear	A reunion or family gathering
Five	Sporting competitors, martial artists, lawyers, people with too many irons in the fire	Church or place of religion, sports centre, gym, sports track/stadium	Sports and martial arts equipment, legal documents, sportswear	Delays and difficulties, sporting events, legal meetings
Six	Celebrities, victors, prize and medal winners, anyone up and coming or recently promoted	Meeting place, romantic or business, bazaar, shopping centre, outdoor reception	Memorabilia, treasures and awards, formal wear	Victory or good fortune seem close, prize giving events, celebrity signings
Seven	Professional fighters, lawyers, soldiers, police officers	Parades and circuses, boxing rings, barracks, police stations	Military and police equipment, circus and parade related items, uniforms	A struggle or fight, riots, parades or circus performances





Wands	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Eight	People who are always on the go, changing jobs, taking new opportunities, communicators and travellers, athletes	Resorts, hotels, care homes, sports tracks, job centres, storage facilities	Biographies, tickets, light weight travel supplies, job and wanted ads, practical travel clothing	A rapid journey, job offers, races and travel
Nine	Military personnel, security guard, people who look out for themselves, rights advocates, campaigners	City hall, police station, military bases, armouries, public buildings, campaign offices	Military or police equipment, flyers and campaign posters, armour	Success after a long struggle, demonstrations, military and police parades and displays, patrols
Ten	An ambitious or overworked person, labourer or unionist	Prison, hospital, sweatshop	Work equipment, medical supplies, work wear, prison wear	Hard work, imprisonment or confinement for treatment
Page	A messenger with good or exciting news, an energetic youth. Creative writers, performers, actors, salespersons, teachers, politicians, preachers and public speakers.	Newspaper or magazine office, printers, theatres, salesrooms, schools, public performance spaces	Magazines and newspapers, posters, tickets to shows, books, sales brochures and pamphlets, trendy clothes	Announcements, important news on TV, studying, performances and speeches
Knight	Individualists, travellers, energetic debaters and negotiators. Restless and hasty people. Sportsmen and women.	Bus and train stations, airports, meeting rooms, sporting events	Tickets, energy drinks, sport and travel clothing	Dashing for something, commuting, arguments and discussions
Queen	Country woman, outspoken and witty, devoted, sensible and mature, an entrepreneur or someone involved in multiple projects. Vibrant energetic and fun loving.	Country estates, remote cabins, the great outdoors and gardens	Hunting, shooting and fishing supplies, tinned foods, games, hunting clothes	A hunting party, country retreats and house parties, games
King	Leaders, skilled communicators, secure decisive but impulsive. Adventurers, mediators, evangelists, public speakers, teachers, gamblers and salespeople.	Public halls, casinos and gambling dens, schools	Instruction manuals, Bibles and tracts, cards and dice, orders, suits	An adventure, talks and motivational speeches, gambling, selling



Coins	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Ace	Body builders, labourers, helpers	Currency exchange, dispensary	Money, drugs, work out wear, work wear	A possible financial venture, working out, hard labour
Two	Jack of all trades, jugglers	Clubs, shops, markets, game arcade, carnival	Computer games, carnival and recreation supplies, masks, part supplies, multi-tools, small amounts of cash, casual clothes	Computer gaming, carnivals, shopping, markets
Three	Craftsmen, diligent workers, people with a talent or skill that requires dedication and hard work	Construction site or repair shop (mechanic, cobbler, etc) Fashion show, gallery, boutique	Tools, new clothing	Crafts people working, talent shows
Four	Bankers, business owners and the wealthy.	Transport related, safe or treasure room, banks	Money, treasures, vehicles	Finding money, banking
Five	Homeless and down and out people, the poor and lonely	Disaster locations - burnt out or collapsed buildings, the streets	Emergency supplies, damaged or ruined items and clothing	Disasters and accidents
Six	Mentors, benefactors, philanthropists and investors, charity workers, teachers	Financial/accounting office, pawn shop, charity shop, homeless shelter, museums	Gifts, second hand items and clothing, collections	Good deeds
Seven	Farmers, investors, patient planners	Field, country house, cottage, orchard, farms	Farming equipment, fresh food, overalls and muddy boots	Planting, waiting, harvesting



Coins	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Eight	Apprentices and students, craftsmen, computer whizz, unionists, teachers and tutors	Tattoo shop, banks, business club, workshop	Tools, computers, books, plans, worn or unfashionable clothing	Learning or exploiting a weakness for gain, study
Nine	Self employed people, independently wealthy, environmental campaigner or worker, fashion models, gardeners, property managers, animal lovers	Workplaces and offices, vineyard, gardens, parks	Gardening supplies, designer items and clothes	A vacation or rest, fashion shows, shared meals, talking pets for a walk, environmental protests, gardening
Ten	A wealthy family or dynasty, an aristocrat or heir to a fortune or someone who married into money	Stately home, castle, private estates, exclusive clubs	Expensive status symbols, luxury goods and clothing	Family enterprises and activities, inheritances, society events
Page	A conscientious student or scholar, bookworms, researchers, secretaries, wheeler-dealers, practical diligent and kind	Schools, research centres, science parks, secretarial pools, libraries	Academic books, lab equipment, tools, practical clothing	Study, deals, research
Knight	Accountants, managers, traders, farmers and craftspeople. Engineers and mathematicians. Reliable conscientious, sensible but unimaginative people.	Offices, farms, construction yards, building sites	Tools, accounts ledgers, amazingly boring books, office supplies, dull and boring clothing	Boring routine work and labour
Queen	Business women, good organisers, creative and wealthy people, down to earth and nurturing, benefactors.	Home, nursery, home office or workspace	Crafting supplies, baby supplies and clothes, money, smart casual clothes	Decorating and crafting, taking care of children
King	Financial advisors, financiers, engineers, real estate developers, businessmen, land owners. Bankers, investors, stock brokers. Methodical and good with money. Protectors and patriarchs.	Bank, financial offices, real estate offices	Money, property for sale, stocks and bonds, suits	Banking, trading





Cups	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Ace	Artists, psychics and compassionate types	Lake, pond or place with water feature	Art supplies, divination tools, comfort foods, first aid supplies, small boats, eccentric colourful clothing	Painting, fortune telling, boating, anything relaxing and comforting
Two	Partners and couples, colleagues, people involved with reconciliation and peace	Home, a cafe, internet cafe	Home supplies and furnishings, telephones, letters, matching clothing and clothing sets	Reunions and reconciliations, phone conversations, meet-ups
Three	Entertainers, hobbyists and bartenders. Dilatants and socialites	Beauty salon, strip clubs, party, bar	Alcohol, beauty supplies, party clothes, party food	Parties and events at clubs and bars, social events
Four	Hermits and recluses, dissatisfied people, cloistered academics	Waiting rooms or retreats, monasteries	Old waiting room magazines, comfortable old clothing,	A retreat, seclusion, study and reflection
Five	Burned out resentful and bitter people, ones who have suffered a loss or been mistreated, divorcees	Burnt out buildings, lost luggage and cloakrooms, divorce lawyers, bereavement counsellors	Old photos, lost items, items with bad associations, odd mismatched items of clothing	Losing something or someone, a fire
Six	An old friend, former lovers, people in the nostalgia business or who help with reuniting people, celebrants, executors and private investigators	Farm, place by a river, florists, playground, shops selling nostalgia, private investigators office	Nostalgia ephemera and photos, personal items, wills, treasured clothing (like that wedding dress)	Reunions, nostalgic reflection, investigating the past (especially when it is recent or personal)
Seven	Dreamers and visionaries, artists and creatives	Fishery or fishing spot, garden, jewellery shop, confectioners, studios	Fishing supplies, jewellery, art supplies, confectionary, colourful and creative clothes	Fishing for or seeking something, prophecies and dreams

Cups	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Eight	Someone taking a new opportunity or seeking something, investigators, philosophers, trail blazers	Crowded squares and parks, public meetings and demonstrations, esoteric clubs	Philosophy books, esoterica, maps and diagrams, magical robes	Public meetings and demonstrations, offers and investigations (especially very cerebral ones)
Nine	Indulgent and extravagantly wealthy people, gourmets and sensualists	Forests and lush meadows, gourmet pubs and restaurants	Very expensive clothes, gourmet foods	An extravagant meal or event
Ten	A happy family or group, a skilled relationship counsellor or event organiser	creative studios, parks, halls, homes	Copious food and drink, craftsman's tools, leisure wear	Family gatherings and events bringing people together
Page	Artistic youths, gentle and affectionate, artists, poets, teachers and students	Aquariums, libraries, galleries, cafes, seminar rooms	Books of poetry, love letters, romance novels, paintings	Poetry readings, gallery openings, book clubs, seminars
Knight	Psychologists, psychics, artists, therapists, performers, salespeople. Easily influenced, likeable 'people persons'.	Concert halls, theatres, fortune tellers	Musical instruments, divination tools, theatre props	Concerts and performances, fortune telling, therapy
Queen	Artistic, empathic and caring. Nurses, helpers, social workers and animal lovers. Very easily influenced. Mystics and prophets.	Drop in and day centres, clinics, ashrams	Comfortable clothing and things, 'ethnic' clothes medical supplies, drugs	Retreats, counselling and support, care visits
King	Judges, lawyers, clergymen, businessmen, negotiators, artists and teachers. Educated and cultured, dignified respected and trustworthy.	Courtrooms, legal offices, rich churches, exclusive schools and imposing public buildings	Lavish books, expensive religious items, vestments, robes and academic gowns, fine food and drink	High culture events, opera and theatre, classical music concerts,





Swords	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Ace	Surgeons, medical specialists, legal professions, logical and authoritative people, people fighting for a cause	Editors office	Stationary, surgical tools, blades and weapons, armour, scrubs	A first meeting, finding something, surgery, battles
Two	Indecisive people, people with feuds, unemployed	Anywhere that is closed	Locked containers, keys, wallets and purses	A parting of ways, losing something, something hidden
Three	Irritable forlorn and grief stricken people, people who deal with loss or misfortune	Underground places, cemeteries and funeral parlours	Nothing. Check your pockets as well because you probably lost something important.	Heartbreak, deaths of loved ones, major losses, funerals
Four	People recovering from an illness, hospital and care workers	Hospital, Addiction clinic, pharmacy, drug den	Drugs, cheap alcohol, medical supplies, soiled or rumpled clothing	Reflection, convalescence
Five	Saboteurs, spies, trouble makers, comedians, gossip columnists and tabloid journalists, paparazzi	Magazine offices or printers, newsstands, comedy clubs	Gossip magazines, spy equipment, cameras, embarrassing evidence	Argument, sabotage, spying and gossip
Six	Travellers, cruise ship workers, aid workers, flight cabin crew, tour guides	Elevated places, tall buildings, mountains, river, boats, cruise ship	Boats, planes, travel tickets, travel items and clothing, foreign currency	Leaving a difficult situation, air travel, escapes by water or air
Seven	Thieves, cunning people, itinerants, confidence tricksters, diplomats	Factories, warehouse, isolated place, campsite	Lockpicks, trick items, fakes, clothes with concealed pockets	A deception, robberies, scams and con tricks, diplomatic missions

Swords	Person	Place	Thing	Activity
Eight	Prisoners, people who feel trapped or who are going round in circles, people in dead end jobs	Childs room, nursery, prisons, very boring offices, fast food places	Children's and baby clothes, nursery items, restraints, office supplies, fast food, prison cothes	Entrapment, routine tasks, takeaway meals, dealing with agoraphobics and lock-ins, being grounded
Nine	Insomniacs, worriers, people in pain or distress, the unloved	Psychiatric hospitals, confessionals, washrooms dreary places	Items you can play with nervously like pens or worry beads, worthless hoards and junk	Fear and worry, injury, hoarding
Ten	Someone who is seriously ill or who has hit rock bottom or been betrayed. A bankrupt or person in danger	Obscure museums, landfill, dentists, surgery, deserted and abandoned places	Worn items in poor condition, abandoned things, old toys, rotten and spoiled food	Ultimate betrayal, abandonment, danger, bankruptcy
Page	Precocious youths, spies, mediators, diplomats and negotiators, someone furtive and calculating, scientists, linguists, mathematicians, travellers	Science labs, embassies, conference centres, secret clubs and societies headquarters, security agencies	Spy equipment, diplomatic bags, formulas, patents and secret plans or research or items developed in secret, puzzle books, mystery novels	A message, industrial espionage, research, conferences and diplomatic missions, spying
Knight	Strong assertive leaders and champions. Lawyers, police, engineers, economists, academics, communicators. Dependable but overbearing and aggressive or self absorbed.	Think tanks, headquarters, elite universities, major broadcasting centres, political offices, government buildings	High status journals and publications, uniforms, government documents, briefcases	Important meetings with dignitaries and politicians, important public announcements
Queen	Female academics, advisors and professional advocates of others. Journalists, idealists, humanitarian crusaders. Strong willed and ambitious.	News centres, headquarters for campaigning charities, universities	Communication and media related items, newspapers, pamphlets, smart business clothes	Crusades and campaigns, especially ones led by a woman
King	Commanding and aggressive, politicians, lawyers, doctors, judges, military leaders, officials and authority figures. Independent and analytical.	Political and military offices and headquarters, highways, bunkers	Official documents, smart business clothes, imposing office furnishings, seals and orders	Ordered to do a task, martial law, takeovers, planning



## Using Dice Instead of Cards

If you do not have a pack of Tarot cards you can use dice instead. To just get a numerical value for resolving something a d10 can be used and for anything that would need to generate a meaning that would normally require a pack of Tarot cards you can use 2xd10 and the following tables. You can also get a power for the card from 1-10 if you need one, or just take the cards actual numerical power if you prefer. The split numbers after court cards are for their actual power as a card and the edge value if you would rather use the card as an edge and redraw because you are using a maximum card power of 10. Split numbers for the Major Arcana are for the result if using maximum powers of 10 and the result for the actual card power.

The first result is tens, the second is units, so a roll of a 3 and a 4 would be 34 and two zeros 100. Roll a d10 again (or any other dice if you have one) with an odd number meaning it is inverted as a 'Night' card. This does not give an exact equivalent of the sort of element of chance involved as it is not a straight 50/50 chance of getting an inverted card and of course when using a deck of cards and a discard pile you cannot draw the same card twice without shuffling so the actual chances of getting specific cards will change as cards are drawn until they all shuffled together again, but it is playable. To get everything to fit in with using 2xd10 the major Arcana either needs to be repeated or you can use a stage in Hajo Banzhaf's version of the heroic journey in the book 'Tarot and the Journey of the Hero' instead. Increasing the chance of getting a Major Arcana card is great if you want a more powerful epic game, or you keep it within the usual power limit and add a layer of plot development

A critical failure, should you want to use one instead of a power of zero, is the automatic failure of the task being performed (and if it is an extended task the loss of any already accrued benefits, you go right back to stage one). A critical success is the automatic success of the task and its completion if it is an extended one.

WANDS	COINS	CUPS	SWARDS
01 - Ace	15 - Ace	29 - Ace	43 - Ace
02 - 2	16 - 2	30 - 2	44 - 2
03 - 3	17 - 3	31 - 3	45 - 3
04 - 4	18 - 4	32 - 4	46 - 4
05 - 5	19 - 5	33 - 5	47 - 5
06 - 6	20 - 6	34 - 6	48 - 6
07 - 7	21 - 7	35 - 7	49 - 7
08 - 8	22 - 8	36 - 8	50 - 8
09 - 9	23 - 9	37 - 9	51 - 9
10 - 10	24 - 10	38 - 10	52 - 10
11 - Page - 11/1	25 - Page - 11/1	39 - Page - 11/1	53 - Page - 11/1
12 - Knight - 12/2	26 - Knight - 12/2	40 - Knight - 12/2	54 - Knight - 12/2
13 - Queen - 13/3	27 - Queen - 13/3	41 - Queen - 13/3	55 - Queen - 13/3
14 - King - 14/4	28 - King - 14/4	42 - King - 14/4	56 - King - 14/4





MAJOR ARCANA	HEROS JOURNEY (or use Major Arcana, left)
57 - The Fool - (critical fail)/0	79 - The hero
58 - The Magician - 1/1	80 - The spiritual father
59 - The High Priestess - 2/2	81 - The spiritual mother
60 - The Empress - 3/3	82 - The earthly mother
61 - The Emperor - 4/4	83 - The earthly father
62 - The Hierophant - 5/5	84 - Education
63 - The Lovers - 6/6	85 - Decision
64 - The Chariot - 7/7	86 - Departure
65 - Strength - 8/8	87 - Maturation
66 - The Hermit - 9/9	88 - The true name
67 - The Wheel of Fortune - 10/10	89 - The calling
68 - Justice - 1/11	90 - The helpful animal
69 - The Hanged Man - 2/12	91 - The great crisis
70 - Death - 3/13	92 - The descent to the underworld
71 - Temperance - 4/14	93 - The guide of souls
72 - The Devil - 5/15	94 - The realm of the shadow
73 - The Tower - 6/16	95 - Dramatic liberation
74 - The Star - 7/17	96 - The fountain of youth
75 - The Sun - 8/18	97 - The dangerous return
76 - The Moon - 9/19	98 - The reconciliation
77 - Judgement - 10/20	99 - The healing
78 - The World - (critical success)/21	00 - Paradise regained



It is actually also possible to use regular six sided dice (d6), but you would need to have a symbol for each tarot card on the face of several d6 for that.

A pair of d6 gives you 21 combinations, corresponding to the 21 numbered cards in the Major Arcana. 3xd6 gives you 56 combinations corresponding to the 56 cards of the Minor Arcana, and 13 dice gives can give you all 78 cards. It is possible to packs of blank d6 though which you can either mark or put stickers on. The easiest way would be to get all 13 dice, number the faces from 1 to 78, and then shake them all in a cup only letting the number of dice equal to the number of cards you want out of the cup. Alternatively you could mark the die faces P and a number for pentacles, W for wands, S for swords and C for cups with numbers 1 through 10 and P for page, Kn for knight, Q for queen and Ki for king. So CKn would be the knight of cups, PP the page of pentacles, S4 the four of swords and so on. The Major Arcana can then just be numbered 0 through 21.

# Fortunes Wheel Npc Character Sheet

NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

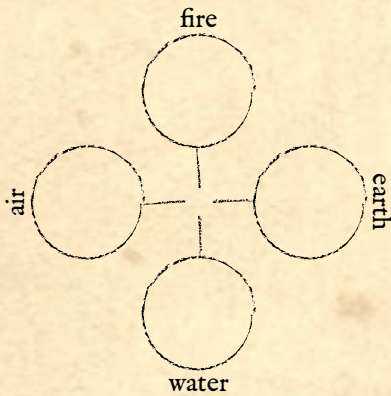
AGE:

\_\_\_\_\_

GENDER:

\_\_\_\_\_

ELEMENTS



ALLIES

NOTES:

ENEMIES

NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

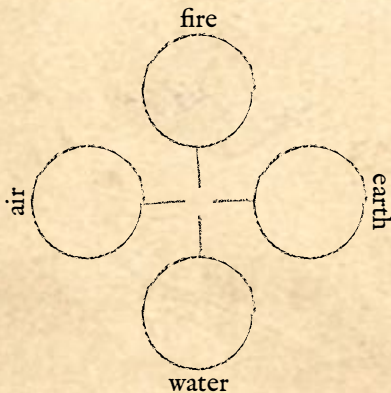
AGE:

\_\_\_\_\_

GENDER:

\_\_\_\_\_

ELEMENTS



ALLIES

NOTES:

ENEMIES

# Fortunes Wheel Character Sheet

CREATOR:

NAME:

AGE:

GENDER:

HEIGHT:

WEIGHT:

## CURRENT ELEMENTAL ENERGY

Fire

Earth

Water

Air

EDGES

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

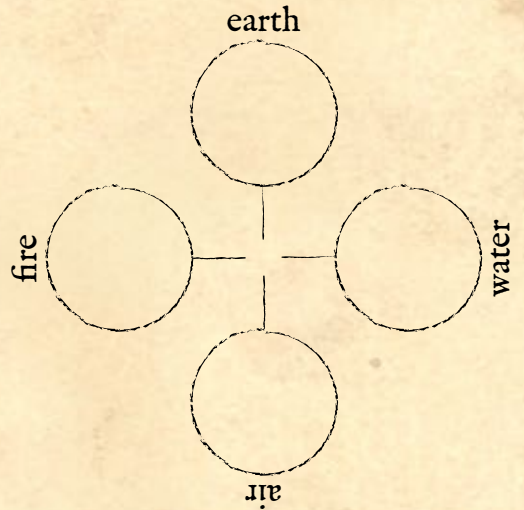
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHARACTER NOTES

## FIXED ELEMENTS



## WOUNDS

Fire

Earth

Water

Air

# Quickstart Q & A – General Questions About Fortunes Wheel

## What is Fortunes Wheel?

Fortunes Wheel is a tabletop role-playing game or ‘RPG’ that uses tarot cards instead of dice.

## How many people can play?

Any number can play. It is best suited to a small group of around 4 or 5 people though. With only 1 player you will miss out on some of the dynamic of group play, with more than 5 you may need to share characters which can make the game less immersive.

## Do you need a referee of ‘GM’ to play?

No. You can have one if you wish but the game can be played with GM tasks shared amongst players. Letting players collaborate with reading the cards during the game can also help create a better play experience. You can have a GM take on all the tasks of drawing and reading cards, preparing and running the adventure and setting challenges for the players to resolve and play all the bit characters and adversaries found in the adventure just like you would in a normal RPG, or you can share those tasks around the group. You could play with particular players taking on particular bit parts, providing sound effects, describing and mapping locations and so on or just collaborate on it as a group.

## How would I actually play solo if I want to?

The same way you would play in a group, except instead of working with other people to create the evolving story you are doing it by yourself - you are both the GM and players. You will probably find you end up drawing cards more frequently than in group play and be improvising a lot more. You can use the cards for creating the skeleton of an adventure that you add detail to as you play, characters, adversaries and events as they seem needed or implied by reading a card or cards and even use the cards to create a physical map with the numerical value giving a sort of challenge rating for each location and its meaning suggesting what that challenge may be. You can also use the cards for creating a sense of dialogue - yes/no questions are easily handled but which each you also have an interpretive meaning that can be used to suggest a subject in conversation, or the speakers mood and motivations.

## I see this game uses Tarot cards - I don't like card based games - can't I use dice instead?

You can use dice if you want to as we have tables that convert the game from cards to dice, but cards do work better for some of the key aspects of the game and we would recommend using them over dice.

## Isn't the Tarot occult? I'm not happy with that.

Historically the Tarot started out as a card game with a fifth suit added for playing card games a bit like bridge. Its use by people for divination happened later and people have also used other ways



of getting random results like dice for divination, natural phenomena like clouds and even the Bible. The Fortunes Wheel game does reference some ideas found in occultism and borrows some ideas from divination but the game itself can be played either as someone who believes in that or as someone wanting to critique it and show that the Tarot does not use occult forces. The system is neutral.

### What if I don't have any Tarot cards? Can I still play?

Yes. There are plenty of free or cheap decks online and also apps for mobile devices that will act just like having a deck of cards. The best ones to use for Fortunes Wheel allow you to create your own tarot spreads.

### How many Tarot decks are used in the game?

You can just use one, but ideally we would recommend one per player.

### Does what deck I use make a difference?

Different decks can be used to tie into the themes you are using in the game if you wish - for instance if you want to play a zombie game there is a Zombie Tarot, and there are decks themed for historical periods, fantasy themes and so on. You can however use any deck you want so long as it is a 78 card Tarot deck (a few Tarot decks have more cards). Ones that have pictures for the regular number cards instead of patterns of the suit symbols are best because you will be 'reading' these pictures to create an extra layer of meaning and story in the game.

### Is there a setting for Fortunes Wheel?

Yes, the game has a setting based around the idea of another dimension called "The Erebus". This is a sort of creative soup of energy formed in chaos and darkness that taps into a combination of elements to separate them and form things from them - it is the 'fifth element' that produces the other four. In effect anything and everything that is forms in it and from it. It does need the presence of something to act on it to make that happen - originally perhaps a 'prime mover' but in game terms it also responds to the activity, both conscious and subconscious of thinking living beings, like humans. Everything we ever create has some form of presence somewhere in the Erebus, so all of the worlds and settings you could ever want to play the game in are there if you want to explore them. The game actually gives you tools to create them for yourself, or you can use existing game settings, settings from novels or films or ones we will create especially for the game.

We are creating one called 'Witching Tales' that is also part of the Kickstarter. 'Witching Tales' actually ties in closely to the concept of the game and the game system itself and it is all about this process of creation and myths and legends that one can creatively and imaginatively link to the Tarot and the four elements.

### Why are you not using an apostrophe in the word Fortune's?

It's ugly and Fortunes Wheel is a graphical entity as well as a grammatical one. We want it to look more elegant as a title and the apostrophe just makes it look clumsy. The use of apostrophes is itself somewhat controversial - George Bernard Shaw called them "uncouth bacilli" and some linguists have pointed out that they are not necessary and may even disappear completely, especially as most people do not know how to use them. Others have declared them as purely decorative as the context clearly shows their use rendering them unnecessary. They were originally used in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and its use was not standardised until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are often omitted for common names even today.



# Q & A – The Game System For Fortunes Wheel

In a nutshell, what is the game system?

Players create characters, settings, creatures and items using tarot cards drawn from a deck. The cards are used to give both a numerical value and an interpretive one for four attributes that correspond to the four elements of Fire (for will power/ego and creativity), Earth (for the physical body and material world), Water (for emotions and the subconscious/id) and Air (for the mind and thought).

These have a numerical value from 1-10. This gives a score for elemental energy. The higher its value the more powerful it is and the more it represents an idealised form of the element.

To resolve actions in the game such as combat or completing a task you test a combination of one of these four elements along with a card drawn from the deck against an opponent's element and a drawn card - the higher result beats the lower one and any excess becomes damage against elemental energy. Once an elements energy has been depleted it no longer functions.

The cards can also be used to create an extra layer of meaning in the game. Each card has a traditional meaning and you can also build your own interpretations of them based on the images on the cards and any associations players make with them. You can also apply this meaning to any results in the game, enabling a really powerful and effective story aspect you just do not get with most games.

Players also have a pool of Fortune Points that they can use to manipulate results and events in the game.

## How do I create a Character?

You draw a card for each element, placing it using the Wheel spread - one card placed at each of the four cardinal points of the compass. Starting with placing a card to the North for Fire, if the card is regular pip card from 1-10 (minor arcana) you keep that card and move on to the next element on the Wheel (Earth to the East, Water to the South and Fire to the West). Some people may be used to a different compass point for each element; ours is based on the traditional ancient Greek placing for them.

If you draw a court card or one from the fifth suit, the major arcana, you keep the card in place on the wheel and draw again until you get a pip card. This means that some elements will have a single pip card on them while others might have several court or major arcana cards and a pip card.

This gives you the numerical strength of each element from the pip card which determines how much the character exemplifies the perfect expression of that element. You record the result, each card drawn and if it is upside down (inverted or 'night') or right side up (or 'day') for each element on a character sheet.

You then 'read' the cards, a bit like telling a fortune both for an individual element and in relation to the others and their position on the wheel. Over time you will find that you discover all sorts of clever ways of reading them that add an incredible level of richness both to character creation and the game, but you can start very simply as well with a basic reading.

Reading the cards will give you an idea not only of how powerful the element is, but if there are any internal conflicts involved for the character - for example a card from the suit of cups also corresponds to Water and having one in the position for Fire on the Wheel suggests a conflict as Fire and Water are opposites on the Wheel. It would imply some sort of conflict of will or creativity even if the cards numerical strength is high. Perhaps they can achieve wonderful things creatively, but it can be a struggle to do so? They can also suggest events in the characters life and people or places that have been or are or might be significant to them. Court cards normally represent people, perhaps a parent or sibling or a mentor and cards from the Major Arcana suggest important events or forces working in the characters life.



This will very quickly start to give you both a sense of the characters personality, their abilities and the challenges they might face in life, but also the beginnings of a back story for them and often suggestions of aspects of game events that will be important for them - where their story might need to go.

### How do I 'read' the cards?

Tarot cards usually come with a little booklet of traditional card meanings. There are also many books on the subject and online decks and apps usually show you the card meanings when they are drawn. We also have some tables in the back of the game book showing both traditional meanings and some variations applying to places and items that act a bit like a random generation table.

You can read these meanings very literally, but you may notice that they are actually often rather vague or even appear conflicting. This is deliberate because it encourages you to make choices and interpret the cards. Fortunes Wheel works best if you actually interpret meanings very freely and just let yourself make associations between the card meaning, an element, what you see and respond to in the cards image and the situation it is being used in. This is something you can take gradually - you don't have to jump right in and can just use the numerical values to begin with if you want. Over time though as you play around with reading the cards you will find it gets easier to do and you start to find more and more exciting and productive meanings for your game play.

You can read cards singly or in a combination of several and also in relation to elements of characters and things involved at the time. You can also draw cards to form a 'spread' or pattern that can be read that shows relationships between them. One of these patterns is actually found in the 'Wheel' that you use to create characters and is represented on the character sheet.

### How does a cards orientation affect its meaning?

Inverted cards generally have an opposite, but not always a negative, meaning to one that is 'right way up'. We call these 'night' cards in Fortunes Wheel and ones the 'right way up' we call 'day' cards. This is to get away from thinking of them as negative/positive. Night cards generally indicate things that are hidden or subconscious while day ones indicate things that are conscious and seen.

Because it can be important which way up a card is, when you shuffle the deck it is a good idea to rotate some of the cards and split the deck during shuffling. How you draw a card from the deck will also affect its orientation.

### Is there a discard pile and how often do you shuffle a deck?

Cards are discarded to a pile and then shuffled back into the deck periodically or when the deck is exhausted. This does mean there can be a 'card counting' aspect to the game, this is all part of playing it because players get a sense of impending fate - they can sense the probability of both good and bad things happening. Because the deck does also get shuffled periodically, at the end of a series of events, when you move to a new location in the game or a longer period of time passes you cannot totally rely on it to predict what cards you will get though.

### When and how often should I use the cards?

As often as you feel you need. We do not recommend using them for every decision - you will make most of your own decisions without them. Often a single card can give you enough to make up all sorts of extra details yourself without drawing anymore. When you use them to create a setting and you read the result as a home you do not have to draw cards to see if it has a living room or how many bedrooms it has, you can make that up based on common sense, but you might want to draw a card to suggest its current condition and if it is a very ordinary hoe or a mansion that can help inform



those decisions. You can also use them for quick 'yes/no' questions - if a card is inverted/night it means no, otherwise it's a yes. You can also read the cards meaning to add extra detail to the result. As an example, let's say you are searching for something in a room - you could draw a card and ask if it is a particular place or not. Note that a 'no' is also a night card relating to hidden things and also the past on the Wheel - so it may be that it is not obviously there, but hidden or was there once but has moved.

If you have a GM who has made or is using a premade adventure many of the things you might draw a card for have already been done so they may be no need to draw one in relation to a premade room with a floor plan and description, or one you have an image of. You can use the cards to actually create the adventure though - a GM could do that in advance or the players could do that as they play, improvising the adventure as they go. When improvising you will probably need to draw cards more often, but you still do not need to do it for absolutely everything - use common sense and your imagination to fill in details.

## How do the four elements work in the game?

Everything in the game has these, even inanimate objects - while for a person Air would indicate their intellectual abilities for an object it would represent its complexity and precision, Fire would represent the level of creativity involved in its making or its uniqueness and Water the objects power to evoke an emotional response.

This means you can treat everything in the game as a 'character' - either purely for creating its attributes or even to use it in play as if it were animate and like a person. You can play a walking talking table if you want to, or a cat, or a magic talking sword all using the same system you use to play a human being. It also gives you a system for attacking or destroying objects - breaking them up and destroying them or vandalising them to make something beautiful look ugly.

They are used to show how close to an ideal form or expression of them something is - for instance Sherlock Holmes would have Air (mind) of 10, a great work of art Fire or Water (or both) at 10 and so on.

## Do the elements or elemental energy fluctuate naturally?

No. Not normally. When you create an elements numerical power it is a fixed value that will stay the same for much of the game (though these fixed scores can sometimes change). They can be affected by circumstances though such as being tired acting in difficult circumstances or having another elements energy severely depleted. These are called 'distractions' and give a negative number to card draws when attempting to resolve an action. They can also be boosted by circumstances or objects that help you focus and apply an element. These are called 'edges' and these give you a positive number added to card draws when attempting to resolve an action. A weapon would count as an edge in physical combat and a photo of a loved one might give you an edge in an emotional conflict.

Elemental energy will go up and down in response to events in the game, but they do not go up and down by themselves - something has to act on them either damaging or 'healing' them. Healing elemental energy can come through intervention with a skill such as first aid or therapy. It can also come from using magic or drawing on a characters fortune.

## Do the attributes act as 'catch alls' or break down further, for things like strength or agility?

In basic play they act as catch alls, but in the full game you can also break each element down into four attributes that combined give the master value you use for elemental energy.





## Do I always have to draw four cards for something when playing?

No. If you need to know a single element quickly you can simply draw a card just for that one element. If you then need another element for something you simply draw another card as required. Sometimes you really do not need to know what an objects Water is if all you want to do is smash it up - its Earth will do. Knowing you are smashing up something that is a work of skill and beauty might make you think twice about smashing it up though and if you do so without drawing a card for it you might regret it later...

## Do characters have skills in Fortunes Wheel?

Yes. These do not work like skills in many other games though. Your elements give you points you can assign to appropriate skills (for instance Fire for creative and will based skills, Earth for physical skills, Water for ones relating to emotions and secrecy and Air for mental ones). Each skill has a maximum of four points. Each player has a hand of four cards and you can use a card from the left for every point of skill you have. If you do not have any skill you cannot use a card from your hand and have to draw blind from the deck.

Someone with a skill of one can use the first card in their hand from the left and can see what that card is, someone with a skill of two has a choice of two cards, a skill of three gives a choice of three cards and one of four allows you to use any of them. When a card is used it is discarded and replaced to the right in the hand, moving all the cards left one place.

## Can you have conflicts and tasks that are not just physical ones such as social or moral ones?

Yes. In most role playing games conflicts are purely physical, but in Fortunes Wheel you can have also have conflicts around any of the elements, both with an external opposing force or creature pitting its elements against your own or an internal conflict pitting one element against another or against itself. These work in the same way as a physical conflict or combat, it is just the elements being used and damaged that change. You can also use one element against a different one, for instance using your Fire as creativity against a block of stone's Earth to sculpt it into a work of art. This would normally be thought of as a task, but it is actually resolved very much like a conflict and is effectively the same.

## Are there ways of doing an extended action or task over a longer period of time?

Yes. Many actions will take more than one card draw or play from your hand to complete, so actually most tasks and actions occur over a period of time as multiple repeated actions. All that is really changing is the time period involved. Some might take a few minutes while others might take days, weeks, months or even years in game time to complete. You set a goal - an amount of elemental power to be 'beaten' with the cards to complete the task. Sometimes this can involve more than one element, moving from one to another until all of them have been beaten.

## Is there a magic system in Fortunes Wheel?

Yes. There are actually two. One is for the conventional idea of creating and using magic spells if you are playing in a game setting that would use them, the other is called 'enchanted the narrative' and is used to manipulate the results of card draws.

Spells are crafted as a task and either cast from spell books and scrolls or from memory. They can also be placed into items and cast from those. Spells have four elements just like everything else, but they are applied slightly differently. Each spell has an Elemental Drain (Water), power of



effect (Fire), duration (Earth) and range (Air). The Elemental Drain is how much of your Elemental energy it uses to cast the spell so casting spells depletes your energy and can even incapacitate your character or kill them. Circumstances can also make it easier or harder to cast spells. Every spell will also have one element as its 'master element' that describes the type of effect it has and what element is being used when attacking something. This can mean using the same element to do different things with different (separate) spells. Fire could be used for a literal flame spell to attack Earth, or it could be used to apply will power to cloud someone's thinking (Air) or make them angry (Water). The spells master element and effects are fixed when created so any individual spell always does the same thing.

### How does enchanting the narrative work?

You can spend Fortune Points to change the numerical value, suit or orientation of a card, thus changing its ability to affect something and its meaning. The only times you cannot do this are when creating a character to play with and if you have run out of Fortune or do not have enough to cover the cost for how you wish to use it. When you enchant the narrative you are literally changing the outcome of cards being used as they are revealed. You have to do it immediately though, once you have moved on to other actions and activities it is too late.

### What are Fortune Points and how are they used?

Fortune Points are used to help you shrug off damage to your elements, manipulate the results of draws and plays from your hand and to improve a characters elements. Each character has a maximum of 100 Fortune points which will go up and down during play according to your successes and failures and how you play and use them. There are two tables that show how Fortune is gained or spent/lost, one for ordinary situations in a game and the other for the use of magic and manipulating the game by enchanting the narrative.

### What is the Wheel and how do I use it?

The Wheel of Fortune plays a pivotal role in the game - it does not just represent the role of chance, it is also embodied in play as a tool to help you explore and use the meanings of the cards in relation to the elements and all sorts of other things. In essence it is the conceptual 'hook' that everything is hung on. Your elements all occupy a place on the wheel at one of the four cardinal compass points but it is also a conceptual map based around them. In Tarot divination 'spreads' or patterns of cards are often used to place cards in relation to each other and amplify and direct how you read their meaning. The Wheel is Fortunes Wheel's main card spread. It represents many things all at once.

It can be used to suggest compass directions (it is a compass), times of day (it is a clock), times of the year (it is a calendar showing the progression of the seasons and also the past present and future both as known and hidden), stages in a narrative or plot (it is a representation of the mythic 'heroes journey' used by many writers to structure a story), a map of a person's personality (it ties in to Myers-Briggs personality types and also shows the relationship of the conscious to the subconscious and how they relate to the mind and body) and more. As you play Fortunes Wheel you will find a wide range of uses of the wheel that help you to read the cards because it shows you ways of relating them to the elements, the elements to each other and both cards and the elements to anything you find the wheel suggests to you.

### Can my characters die?

Yes but you will usually be able to prevent this from happening unless you have used up all of your Fortune Points and nobody else can intervene to help. Normally what will happen is that your character might have an element incapacitated by having its energy reduced to zero, either



over a series of attacks against it or in a single one. You can also have an element 'bleed out' from damage that continues to deplete its energy after an attack unless stopped. When an element is incapacitated it cannot be used - the character is unconscious, paralysed, frozen with fear or doubt as best fits the element concerned. Further damage to it will result in the destruction of the element, and for a living thing this is effectively death. A character or item can continue to have some sort of existence (even when you are dead your body is still there) but is unplayable or cannot be used.

### Can I get around a characters flaws and weaknesses or improve them?

Yes, you can. During play the easiest way to get around a flaw or weak element is to use another one instead that is stronger. Sometimes it is possible to be creative about which element you are using to do what - to open a locked door you could just try and use your strength (Earth) to bash it down, but you could also use your intelligence and mental perceptiveness (Air) to find another way such as locating a key or knowing a good tool to use that will help. A door could be broken down, unlocked taken it off its hinges or the lock could be picked or you could find another way, say through a window or chimney. Creativity with how you use your elements and which ones you use to do what can get round many problems.

You can also use your Fortune Points to attempt to improve or change an element for a character - this is not always going to work and gets harder as your element gets stronger and you may find you need the Fortunes Points for something else instead and miss a chance to improve though.

One of the goals for many players and characters is to eventually overcome obstacles in their live that the cards drawn when they were created have caused. Developing a character is all part of playing the game and can be as important a focus as completing an adventure. In stories you often find that the story is actually acting as a vehicle to help the character to change and improve.

### Does a game of Fortunes Wheel have an end? Is there a winner?

An adventure or individual story may have some sort of end point when a goal has been achieved, but you can play across several of these, like a story arc in fiction. Completing a goal is in a sense 'winning' but often everyone playing wins because they all collaborated to achieve the goal. Really it is entirely up to you if you want to finish with a setting and characters and move on to another one or keep on with what you have already been using.

An individual session of game play will have a definite end though - when people have to sp playing for now and go home or do something else. At this point you would make a record of everyone's current elemental energy and perhaps end the game on a suitable cliff-hanger. When you play again you shuffle the deck first and draw new hands and then carry on from where you left off.







