

TAROT ARCHETYPES

CHARACTER HANDBOOK



LIGHTSPRESS
THE SIMPLE APPROACH TO ROLEPLAYING

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This book was written by a human.

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Introduction

Tarot Archetypes Character Handbook takes the iconic major and minor arcana and transforms them into powerful archetypes for your fantasy roleplaying characters. This isn't a book on divination, and it's definitely not your typical character handbook. Instead, it's a deep dive into using tarot's classic archetypes as tools for building unique, compelling characters who are more than just stats on a sheet.

This system-agnostic sourcebook works with any fantasy roleplaying system, offering you endless options to flesh out heroes, villains, and everyone in between. Want a wide-eyed Fool whose curiosity changes the party's fate, or a steadfast Knight of Pentacles who doesn't quit, no matter the odds? This book has you covered with detailed personality traits, motivations, strengths, and flaws for every card in the tarot deck. From the driven energy of the Wands to the grounded realism of the Pentacles, each suit brings its own flavor, giving you characters that feel genuinely alive.

Perfect for fans of tarot and fantasy roleplaying, this book is all about collaborative storytelling. It brings imagination, agency, and depth to your sessions, making each decision count and each character arc unforgettable. Whether you're a player looking for inspiration or a gamemaster crafting memorable supporting characters, **Tarot Archetypes Character Handbook** will give you everything you need to build a character-driven experience that's fresh, familiar, and bound to keep everyone at the table invested.

Step beyond the typical character tropes and make each session an adventure in true storytelling. Because when every character has depth, every story is a story worth telling.

Disclaimer

Tarot Archetypes Character Handbook is a guidebook for creating compelling character archetypes for fantasy roleplaying games. It is not a guide to divination, occult practices, or tarot card reading. This book uses tarot archetypes purely as a framework for character development in fictional, imaginative settings and is intended solely as a storytelling tool for players and gamemasters.

A Universal Sourcebook

An earlier edition of this book was originally created as a system-agnostic toolkit, and retains that function in this edition. However, it's now fully compliant with **The Simple Approach** and games using that system and philosophy, including **The Foragers Guild**. You don't need it to play one of our games to use this material, so feel free to throw its elements into any other roleplaying system your choice.

If you're looking to use it with a different roleplaying system, don't worry. For advice on translating material between systems, grab the **Lightspress Handbook**, available wherever you found this book.

Navigating This Book

Here's a breakdown of the tools and resources waiting inside these pages:

A Brief History of Tarot: We start with a short, engaging dive into tarot's origins, from its early days as a card game to its evolution into the symbolic powerhouse we know today. It's the context you need to see how these archetypes have shaped storytelling for centuries, and how they can now reshape your roleplaying sessions.

Tarot-Based Traits: A look at how tarot archetypes can be used to help you to select character abilities within your system of choice, and create original traits when using The Simple Approach. There's advice on how the archetypes can guide the way your character uses their abilities, and tips on roleplaying to align with each unique archetype.

Major Arcana: The 22 cards of the Major Arcana are filled with timeless archetypes that lay the foundation for any epic tale. Each card represents a powerful narrative force, from The Fool's boundless optimism to The Tower's sudden upheaval. This section gives you detailed profiles for each major arcana card, covering everything from personality traits to common motivations, unique strengths, and personal flaws. Use these profiles to create characters who embody a specific card or combine them to layer complex traits and character arcs. Whether you're crafting a protagonist, a mentor, or an unforgettable villain, the Major Arcana has something for every character role.

Suit of Wands: Wands bring fire to your story, representing characters driven by passion, creativity, and bold ambition. The Suit of Wands covers archetypes for the characters who push boundaries, challenge conventions, and live life on their own terms. From the Page's uncontainable enthusiasm to the King's hard-earned wisdom, Wands offer personalities that are all about action, energy, and the unquenchable desire to make their mark. Perfect for leaders, adventurers, and anyone who doesn't mind shaking things up.

Suit of Cups: Cups offer archetypes rooted in feelings, relationships, and intuition. These are the characters driven by love, loyalty, and the depths of the heart. The Suit of Cups guides you through creating characters who value connection over conquest and are motivated by compassion, hope, and empathy. From the hopeless romantic to the wise healer, this section helps you craft characters who bring emotional depth to any campaign. They're the voices of empathy and understanding who remind others what they're fighting for.

Suit of Swords: The Suit of Swords covers characters who live in their minds and wield words or weapons with equal precision. These archetypes are ideal for

strategists, truth-seekers, and those who walk the line between justice and power. Swords brings the energy of intellect, debate, and sometimes ruthless ambition. Whether it's the ethical warrior struggling to uphold their principles or the cunning tactician who thinks ten steps ahead, this section lets you build characters who bring conflict, clarity, and complexity to your story.

Suit of Pentacles: Pentacles characters are grounded in reality, representing the builders, the workers, and those who seek something lasting. This suit is for characters who understand the value of patience, the importance of family, and the satisfaction of hard work. Pentacles are ideal for characters focused on loyalty, survival, and legacy. They bring strength, resilience, and a sense of continuity to the story. From the practical-minded merchant to the determined farmer protecting their land, these characters are in it for the long haul.

Reference: For quick reference, we've included a glossary to clarify tarot terms and a bibliography for readers interested in exploring tarot history and symbolism further. Whether you're new to tarot or just looking to brush up on the basics, this section will give you a strong foundation.

The Simple Approach

To understand this book, you need to know the context in which it was written and the philosophy that runs through it. At its core, The Simple Approach emphasizes the elements that truly matter in roleplaying: narrative depth, character complexity, and player agency. While plenty of systems are still obsessed with combat, loot, and grinding, we know roleplaying can be so much more. This system is all about immersive storytelling, meaningful choices, and characters you actually care about. Whether you're uncovering hidden secrets, solving a gripping mystery, or exploring the complexities of romance, The Simple Approach offers a fresh take on traditional genres like fantasy, science fiction, and horror, along with modern and underserved ones like crime & mystery, cottagecore fantasy, dark academia, magical realism, romance, and espionage.

Narrative-Based Mechanics

At the heart of The Simple Approach are narrative-based mechanics that are easy to learn and designed to grow with you as you play. They let you tweak what's here and add things we haven't thought of yet. The journaling system replaces those one-size-fits-none character sheets, giving gamemasters a flexible tool for organizing worldbuilding, adventure design, and session notes and players ample room to allow their character to grow. Every character, setting, and adventure becomes a unique creation shaped by your choices.

Seamless Integration and Flexibility

Tarot Archetypes isn't a standalone roleplaying experience. You can blend it seamlessly with other Lightspress publications to create one-of-a-kind stories and settings or bring elements from other systems into your Lightspress game. If you

want to use our material with your favorite system or setting, go for it. The conversion notes in the Lightspress Handbook give you the flexibility to play how you want.

Our Philosophy

We believe the true essence of roleplaying happens around the table, where creativity and collaboration come alive. It's not about a book, a brand, or a company. It's about the people playing together, creating something special. Our focus on cooperation, interaction, and investigation ensures that every session is more than just a game; it's a journey filled with compelling adventures and meaningful connections. We stand by our belief that the heart of roleplaying is found in shared experiences and stories crafted by the players. This philosophy drives everything in The Simple Approach and underpins our commitment to delivering content that champions the true spirit of roleplaying, free from superficial constraints.

Commitment to Creative Freedom

This philosophy also guides our belief that creators should own their work and not be beholden to licensing terms that only benefit fickle corporations. We draw inspiration from historical, mythological, and literary sources, tapping into our shared heritage to fuel creative exploration. We maintain full copyright ownership, ensuring that our work stays independent and true to our vision. Using style guides to keep a cohesive voice and narrative structure, we deliver exceptional content free from external influences, preserving the integrity and creative standards of our work.

Accessible & Affordable Roleplaying

We're committed to keeping our games affordable so that more people can enjoy them. Our focus isn't on producing overstuffed, expensive books filled with art to collect dust on a shelf. We're here to create material meant to be played, not displayed. You won't find us chasing awards or turning our games into glorified coffee-table books. Our goal is to facilitate roleplaying, pure and simple, keeping the price points low so you can focus on the game, not your wallet.

Stay Connected and Join Us

If you're tired of the same old grind and ready to try something that actually respects your input, then The Simple Approach is calling your name. We're not just offering a game. We're inviting you to join a movement, a way of playing that values your time, creativity, and agency.

For more on The Simple Approach and our unorthodox take on roleplaying, visit lightspress.com. Subscribe to our newsletter, [The Manifesto](#), for updates on new releases, roleplaying advice, and a healthy dose of our opinions. If you're ready to embrace something different, download the free [Lightspress Handbook](#), your guide to what we're all about.

A Brief History of Tarot

Tarot cards have a tangled history, full of half-truths, wild speculation, and enough drama to fuel centuries' worth of tavern gossip. People assume they know what tarot is all about: fortune-telling, cryptic warnings, maybe a mysterious old woman in a dark room flipping cards to foretell doom. The reality? The history of tarot is much less mystical and far more nuanced. The deck we know today, complete with cards like The Fool, Death, and The Hanged Man, didn't just appear out of thin air or some secret ritual. It started with something shockingly mundane: a card game.

To understand the tarot's evolution, you have to roll the clock back to 15th-century Italy, during the Renaissance. Imagine a world where art flourished, philosophical debates echoed through streets, and religious themes were sewn into the fabric of everyday life. Amid this cultural hotbed, tarot cards first appeared, not as mystical tools, but as pieces in a game called *tarocchi*. This wasn't the domain of cloaked mystics or shady back-alley fortune tellers; it was the leisurely pursuit of the wealthy. The earliest decks were hand-painted, intricate, and luxurious, a pastime for people who wanted to show off both their wealth and taste. The cards were less about revealing hidden truths and more about flexing how much you could spend on fancy illustrations.

The first tarot decks were split into two main sections: trumps (which would eventually evolve into the Major Arcana) and four suits resembling those in modern playing cards (which became the Minor Arcana). These early cards featured figures like The Emperor and The High Priestess, but their job was to help someone win a round of *tarocchi*, not whisper secrets about their future love life. If you pulled The Hanged Man back then, no one thought twice about it, it was just a card, as common as a Jack of Clubs in a modern deck.

The Mystical Makeover

Tarot's leap from innocuous card game to powerful tool of divination wasn't immediate. The transformation needed a few visionaries, or charlatans, depending on your level of cynicism, to start spinning tales about its true origins. Enter the 18th century and Antoine Court de Gébelin, a French writer who claimed that tarot was far more than a Renaissance pastime. He suggested it was actually an ancient Egyptian text, loaded with esoteric wisdom and disguised as a card game to survive religious persecution. It was a story as fanciful as it was baseless, but people ate it up. Who wouldn't want to believe that a simple deck of cards held the key to secret knowledge passed down through millennia?

This belief gave tarot its first mystical makeover, one that would only deepen in the 19th century. Occultists like Eliphas Levi came along and took tarot's newfound reputation to another level. Levi linked tarot to every arcane practice

under the sun, Kabbalah, astrology, alchemy. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an influential secret society, practically enshrined tarot as an essential tool for any self-respecting occultist. Suddenly, tarot wasn't just a deck of cards; it was a compendium of hidden truths, each image filled with layers of symbolism.

And then, the early 20th century sealed tarot's fate as an icon of mysticism with the creation of the Rider-Waite-Smith deck. This deck, crafted by A. E. Waite and brought to life by the talented artist Pamela Colman Smith, set the standard for what tarot would become. The imagery was thick with symbolism that felt almost too obvious, demanding interpretation. Each card, from The Fool to The World, seemed to hold a story waiting to be unlocked. This deck didn't just look nice, it was practically screaming for people to dive into its deeper meanings. And it worked. The Rider-Waite-Smith deck became the blueprint for nearly every tarot deck that followed and cemented tarot's place as a mystical and narrative powerhouse.

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Tarot-Based Traits

In *The Simple Approach*, traits are more than just personality points; they're powerful, defining statements that capture the core of a character. Think of each trait as a memorable phrase that describes exactly who they are, what drives them, and what holds them back. These traits are drawn from the *Lightspress Handbook* and *Foragers Guild* and given a tarot twist, creating distinct phrases that you can use to quickly bring depth and nuance to your characters. Here's how each of these traits might look in action, with examples that lean into archetypal energy to make characters that practically leap off the page.

Role in the Story

The role in the story is more than just a job title or class; it defines the character's core function in the narrative. Roles give characters a unique place within the story, setting up expectations for how they'll interact with others and affect the plot. Inspired by tarot archetypes, these roles carry an added symbolic weight, giving characters iconic qualities that make them feel instantly familiar yet distinctive. Examples:

Boundlessly Curious Wildcard: The unpredictable force that acts without thinking, diving headfirst into any situation and shaking things up with sheer enthusiasm.

Ever-Adapting Opportunist: Quick to see advantage in any twist of fate, they embrace change and thrive in shifting circumstances.

Fearless Determinator: Driven and unstoppable, they charge forward against any obstacle, motivating others to follow through sheer determination.

Keeper of Mysteries: The quiet guardian of secrets, watching events unfold with knowledge others lack and guiding through subtle nudges.

Master Manipulator of Subtle Forces: A character who skillfully shifts the narrative from the background, influencing others with charm and persuasion.

Nurturer and Heart of the Group: A warm, grounding presence that binds the group together, always putting others' needs before their own.

Self-Sacrificing Visionary: Willing to give up personal gain for a greater cause, they have a perspective that challenges the status quo.

Silent Guide from the Shadows: A withdrawn figure who prefers solitude but offers profound insight when the situation demands it.

The Relentless Lawmaker: A natural leader who values order and control above all, imposing rules and structure for the sake of stability.

Torn Between Heart and Duty: Constantly balancing loyalty and personal desire, they're defined by the conflicts their relationships bring to the table.

Background & History

A character's background and history provide the context for who they are today. This trait serves as a foundation for their beliefs, actions, and worldview. A tarot-inspired background can add a mythic quality to their story, making them feel like part of an ancient tradition or an ongoing legend. Whether it's a tragic event, a hidden past, or a powerful legacy, these backgrounds help ground characters in a layered history. Examples:

A Fate They Resent: Prophecy has laid out their future, but they resist each step, determined to choose their own path even if destiny looms.

A Heart Shaped by Loss: Haunted by a deep personal tragedy, they're driven by a need for justice or vengeance, guiding every step they take.

A Legacy They Can't Escape: Born into an influential or powerful family, they bear the weight of upholding, or redefining, their inherited responsibilities.

Idealist with a Broken Heart: Once hopeful, now wary, they cling to dreams that seem distant but are too precious to abandon completely.

Royal by Blood, Exile by Choice: Nobility runs through their veins, but they've chosen a life of freedom over inherited responsibilities.

Shaped by Battle: Scarred by conflict, they're a veteran with a stoic demeanor, every mark a testament to battles fought and won.

The Eternal Wanderer: With no ties or roots, they drift from place to place, always searching but never settling.

The Hidden Past: Guarding a secret identity or buried history, they carry a weight they can't reveal, at great personal cost.

The Outcast's Perspective: Cast out by society, they view the world from the fringes, with a unique insight that others overlook.

The Scrappy Fighter: Every skill was hard-earned, building a character who trusts in their resilience and ingenuity over privilege.

Personality Traits

Personality traits are the details that make a character come alive. They reflect quirks, preferences, habits, and attitudes that influence how the character responds to the world around them. Tarot-inspired personality traits add an archetypal energy that resonates on a symbolic level, making each character's personality feel more universally relatable. These traits help bring out the complexity and contradiction in every character, showing us who they are behind the scenes. Examples:

A Sarcastic Twist on Everything: Wry and sharp-tongued, they're always ready with a cutting comment, sometimes earning them as many enemies as friends.

Bonds That Cannot Break: Loyalty defines them, creating a sense of unshakeable devotion that can sometimes cloud their judgment.

Eyes on the Stars: Forever dreaming, they live in a world of “what ifs,” lost in visions that few others understand.

Heart Always Open: Compassionate and caring, they instinctively nurture others, creating an atmosphere of warmth and kindness.

Just Follows the Whim: Unpredictable and impulsive, they live moment to moment, following their instincts wherever they lead.

Lost in Their Own World: Pensive and reserved, they spend much of their time in thought, preferring solitude to socializing.

Never Knows When to Quit: Driven to the point of obsession, they can't let go once they're fixated, pushing ahead no matter the cost.

No Patience for Fantasies: Grounded and practical, they disdain idealistic dreams, always focusing on what can be realistically achieved.

Sees Silver Linings Everywhere: An irrepressible optimist, they brighten every room with their relentless positivity, lifting spirits wherever they go.

The Silent Listener: They observe rather than speak, drawing insight from what others say without feeling the need to share their own thoughts.

Physical Traits

Physical traits are the visible markers of a character's identity, hinting at their personality or past experiences. Tarot-inspired physical traits go beyond just looks; they can suggest a character's inner qualities, their struggles, or even their life's purpose. Physical traits can be the first impression that others get, and they add depth by giving characters a “look” that matches their tarot-aligned personality. Examples:

Always Carrying Warmth: Their complexion seems to hold a sunlit glow, embodying a sense of optimism and vitality.

Calloused and Scarred: Their hands tell the story of a hard life, marked by labor and battles, proof of struggles they've survived.

Effortlessly Elegant: Every movement has grace and flow, a natural elegance that captivates and speaks of unspoken sophistication.

Every Line Drawn with Precision: With sharp, commanding features, they seem cut from stone, a face that exudes authority and strength.

Eyes of a Thousand Storms: Their face, weathered by time or sorrow, carries the weight of their experiences, showing a life lived hard.

Impossible to Ignore: Towering and imposing, they're a natural focal point, their presence commanding attention even in a crowd.

Scars as Silent Stories: Visible scars are a part of them, each one a memento of battles fought and survived, worn as silent badges of honor.

Tattoos Tell Their Story: Symbols etched into their skin, each tattoo has meaning, a silent story that they may or may not choose to share.

The Glimmer of Innocence: Their eyes are bright with wonder, as if everything they see is new and full of possibility, inviting curiosity.

Warm and Welcoming Gaze: Their eyes have a gentle softness that makes people feel at ease, radiating acceptance and kindness.

Motivation & Goals

Motivations are the driving force behind a character's actions, the things that push them forward even when times get tough. Rooted in tarot archetypes, these motivations become symbolic and layered, reflecting deeper, universal desires. A character's goals are what keep them moving, sometimes inspiring others or creating conflict with those who get in their way. Examples:

Change the World, One Step at a Time: Unafraid of bold ideas, they're determined to reshape the world according to their vision, willing to tear down structures that stand in the way.

Curiosity Knows No Bounds: They're restless in their pursuit of new experiences and knowledge, always pushing boundaries and rarely thinking twice about the risks.

Escape the Past: Haunted by old mistakes or traumas, they're driven to run from their past, trying to leave it behind by seeking new places, faces, and identities.

Forever in Search of Truth: They're compelled to dig deep, never satisfied with surface answers, even if it means risking everything to uncover hidden knowledge.

Heal What's Broken: Deeply empathetic, they aim to mend, nurture, and restore anything (or anyone) damaged, guided by compassion even in hostile situations.

Justice for All: Fiercely driven by fairness, they'll fight relentlessly to correct wrongs, right injustices, and make sure everyone pays their dues.

Protect at All Costs: Driven by an unshakable sense of responsibility to guard those who can't protect themselves, sacrificing personal needs in the process.

Prove Them All Wrong: Doubt fuels their fire, they're determined to show everyone who underestimated them that they're capable of great things.

To Be the Light in Darkness: They want to inspire others, offering hope even when things look grim, making themselves a beacon of positivity for those around them.

To Command Is Their Right: They believe they're meant to lead and feel an innate drive to control situations, guiding others whether they're willing or not.

Strengths

Strengths are the positive qualities that define what a character excels at, the traits that make them memorable, capable, or inspiring. These aren't just skills, they're the core qualities that come to the forefront in moments of need or crisis. With tarot-inspired strengths, each character's positive side is heightened by

archetypal qualities, creating well-rounded individuals whose strengths are meaningful, not just useful. Examples:

Adaptable as Water: They can shift and change with ease, quickly finding their footing even when circumstances change unexpectedly.

Ancient Wisdom: Their perspective is grounded in deep, time-worn understanding, offering insight that others can rely on when things get tough.

Confidence that Never Wavers: They exude a calm self-assurance, inspiring trust and respect, even in the face of uncertainty.

Creative Problem-Solver: Their creativity goes beyond art; they see things from fresh perspectives and come up with inventive solutions where others see dead ends.

Determined as a Mountain: Once they set their mind to something, they're virtually unstoppable, pushing through any obstacle until they achieve their goal.

Fiercely Loyal: Their loyalty is almost legendary, they'll defend their allies and loved ones against any odds, no matter what.

Heart Full of Compassion: Their empathy is a driving force, always putting others first and making people feel understood and cared for.

Patience Beyond Measure: They're willing to wait, even in the most trying circumstances, understanding that good things come to those who are willing to hold back.

Resourcefulness in Every Situation: They're quick on their feet, able to find unexpected solutions using whatever is at hand, surprising others.

Unshakable Optimism: No matter how dark things get, they always find a way to see the brighter side, lifting the spirits of everyone around them.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses are the flaws, vulnerabilities, and limitations that humanize characters, making them feel real and adding layers of tension to the story. Weaknesses aren't just limitations; they're the things that hold characters back or trip them up. Using tarot archetypes to define these flaws can help create characters with weaknesses that are relatable, adding depth and authenticity to their struggles. Examples:

Blinded by Idealism: Their lofty ideals can lead them to ignore practical realities, setting themselves (and others) up for disappointment.

Constantly Doubting Others: Their trust is hard-won, and they question others' motives, making it difficult to form strong alliances.

Controlling to a Fault: They feel the need to dictate every detail, leaving little room for others to contribute, which can strain relationships.

Fearful of Change: Change makes them deeply uncomfortable, so they tend to resist anything new, clinging to the familiar even when it holds them back.

Gullible and Too Trusting: They're easily swayed by others, tending to see the best in people even when it isn't deserved.

Haunted by Self-Doubt: Though they appear capable, they're plagued by an internal insecurity that causes them to question their own worth.

Impulsively Reckless: They rarely think before they act, constantly leaping before they look, which lands them, and others, in trouble.

Overly Confident: Their belief in their abilities borders on arrogance, leading them to underestimate challenges or overestimate their own skills.

Stubborn Beyond Reason: Once they've made up their mind, it's nearly impossible to change it, even if their decision leads them down a difficult path.

Withdrawn and Secretive: They keep their thoughts and emotions close to the chest, creating barriers that prevent others from truly understanding them.

Quirks and Habits

Quirks and habits are the little details that make characters memorable and relatable, from idiosyncratic behaviors to odd preferences. These minor traits may seem inconsequential, but they add personality and texture, making characters feel like fully realized individuals. Tarot archetypes bring a touch of symbolic resonance to each quirk, connecting them to a deeper archetypal meaning that adds to the character's charm. Examples:

Always Observing People Closely: They have a habit of silently watching others, making people feel like they're being studied.

Always Overprepared: They carry far more supplies than anyone else, from survival gear to obscure items that might never be needed.

Collects Odd Trinkets and Mementos: They have a habit of collecting souvenirs from every adventure, even things others find meaningless.

Compulsively Honest: They refuse to lie or sugarcoat the truth, even when it would be kinder, or smarter, to do so.

Constantly Fiddling with Trinkets: They're always toying with something, a small object or charm that's never far from their hand.

Easily Distracted by Beautiful Things: They're drawn to beauty, pausing to admire anything that catches their eye, from art to nature.

Mind Always Wandering: They're lost in thought, staring into the distance, as if constantly pondering something profound.

Obsessively Clean and Organized: Everything has to be in its place, and they can't stand messes, cleaning or organizing things unconsciously.

Overly Superstitious: They follow a set of strange superstitions, refusing to ignore omens or dismiss even the smallest signs.

Quick to Laugh, Even in Dark Moments: They find humor in nearly everything, their laugh a comforting sound that can cut through tension.

Values & Beliefs

A character's values and beliefs define what they stand for, what they're willing to fight for, and what they'd never compromise on. These are the moral and philosophical codes that shape their decisions and interactions with others. Inspired by tarot archetypes, these values and beliefs carry a symbolic weight, giving characters a sense of purpose and depth that feels timeless and universal. Examples:

Beauty in All Things: They believe that beauty, whether in nature, art, or people, is something to be cherished and preserved at all costs.

Everyone Deserves a Second Chance: Compassionate and forgiving, they believe that redemption is always possible, even for those who've done terrible things.

Justice Above All: They believe deeply in fairness and equality, refusing to tolerate injustice and willing to fight for those who've been wronged.

Knowledge Is the Key to Power: They place an immense value on learning, constantly seeking to expand their understanding of the world.

Life Is a Sacred Journey: They view life as a precious gift, treating each day as an opportunity for growth, learning, and discovery.

Loyalty to the End: Once they've given their loyalty, it's unwavering, and they expect the same from others, considering betrayal the worst of sins.

Strength in Community: They value collective effort and teamwork, believing that people are stronger together than they could ever be alone.

The Future Belongs to the Bold: They value courage and bravery, believing that those who dare to take risks will shape the world.

Tradition Over Change: They're deeply rooted in tradition, feeling that the old ways have wisdom worth preserving and following.

Truth Must Be Known, No Matter the Cost: They hold truth in the highest regard, believing that knowledge should be free and accessible to all.

Conflict Style

Conflict style defines how a character reacts when things go sideways, revealing their strengths and vulnerabilities in high-stakes situations. From verbal arguments to physical confrontations, a character's conflict style can reveal a lot about their personality, values, and priorities. Tarot-inspired conflict styles add an archetypal flavor, creating consistent, recognizable approaches that make characters feel dynamic and relatable. Examples:

Always Looking for Compromise: They believe every conflict has a middle ground, and they're willing to concede if it means keeping the peace.

Blazing Fury: When angered, they're a force to be reckoned with, their temper like a storm that's hard to quell once it's unleashed.

Cold and Calculated: They approach conflict with a clear head, carefully analyzing their opponent's weaknesses and strategizing their every move.

Diplomacy First: They always try to talk things through before resorting to violence, looking for ways to de-escalate even the most heated situations.

Protective Guardian: Their primary goal in any conflict is to shield others, putting themselves at risk to ensure the safety of those they care about.

Quick-Witted and Verbally Sharp: They use words as their primary weapon, outmaneuvering others in arguments or negotiations.

Relentless in Pursuit: They never back down, pushing forward with unyielding determination, no matter the odds or consequences.

Silent and Observant: They wait and watch, letting others reveal their strengths and weaknesses before making a calculated move when the time is right.

Strategic Withdrawer: They pick their battles carefully, knowing when to retreat and choosing to live to fight another day rather than risk it all.

Stubbornly Unyielding: Once they've drawn a line in the sand, they won't budge, refusing to compromise even when it would benefit them.

Tarot & Mechanics

If you're not using *The Simple Approach*, you can still use tarot archetypes to select abilities and portray your character in any system you choose. Each archetype brings a unique flavor to abilities and talents, helping to align the mechanics of your system of choice with the archetype's core traits. Let's look at each trait category and discuss how you might use these archetypes to guide ability selection, character play, and make mechanics and traits work together.

Role in the Story

When choosing abilities to reflect a character's role, focus on what the character naturally contributes to the story. Each archetype's energy should inform what they're best at and how they influence the group dynamic. If your system uses roles, classes, or specializations, pick those that align with the character's symbolic purpose. Examples:

The Fool: Choose abilities that embrace flexibility, discovery, and adaptability. The Fool thrives in unfamiliar territory, so abilities that enhance exploration or reveal hidden details align with their curious nature. They might have skills that let them escape danger, encourage creativity, or improvise solutions on the spot. In play, let the Fool be unpredictable, have them lean into their "beginner's mind" and approach every scenario with fresh eyes.

The Magician: This character excels at subtlety, control, and influence. Select abilities that involve perception, insight, or manipulation, skills that allow the Magician to shape events behind the scenes or bend outcomes in their favor. Look

for abilities that create illusion, persuasion, or even knowledge of lore and secrets. In play, the Magician might steer conversations, reveal hidden motives, or craft illusions, choosing mystery over clarity.

The Empress: Healing, protection, and supportive abilities work perfectly for the nurturing Empress. Choose skills that foster unity, shield allies, or restore health. The Empress brings a steady, comforting presence to the group, so their abilities should help others feel safe and empowered. When playing, the Empress can step up to soothe tensions or mediate disputes, acting as the group's emotional anchor.

The Chariot: Movement, resilience, and sheer willpower define the Chariot. Abilities that enhance speed, endurance, or direct combat serve this character well. Choose powers that push them forward or help them overcome obstacles, symbolizing the Chariot's unstoppable drive. In play, the Chariot will seek to lead the charge, pushing through resistance and inspiring others to take on challenges head-on.

When bringing these roles to life, let the archetype guide their decision-making and leadership style. The Magician might opt for indirect solutions, while the Chariot goes for straightforward action.

Background & History

A character's background and history serve as the foundation for their abilities, revealing what they've endured or achieved to reach this point. Consider choosing abilities that echo a significant part of their past, lending credibility and depth to their expertise and instincts. Examples:

Haunted by Tragedy: This character's past has left scars, pushing them to develop resilience or survival skills. Abilities related to toughness, willpower, or resistance to fear reflect their hard-earned determination. For someone shaped by loss, healing skills might be rooted in a desire to prevent others from experiencing similar pain. In play, this character may exhibit a guarded approach, always cautious and slow to trust.

Inherited Power: For a character bearing the weight of lineage, look for abilities that symbolize legacy, martial training, formal education, or mastery of ancient spells. This character may also have privileges from their upbringing, like diplomatic skills or cultural knowledge. When playing, let them occasionally reference their heritage, viewing situations through the lens of duty or family honor.

The Outcast's Perspective: Life on the fringes has taught this character to survive against the odds. Skills in stealth, street smarts, or tracking align with an outcast's unique view of society. This character may also have learned to adapt quickly, making them resourceful and alert. In play, let the outcast bring fresh insights to traditional situations, challenging norms and keeping a skeptical eye on authority.

Royal by Blood, Exile by Choice: Choose noble abilities like diplomacy, persuasion, or insight into high society. Despite their self-imposed distance, they carry the hallmarks of nobility, from graceful mannerisms to a sense of responsibility. In play, this character may demonstrate a desire to prove themselves outside of their birthright, keeping their royal past under wraps.

When roleplaying, allow these backgrounds to influence their priorities. The Haunted character may hesitate before connecting with others, while the Royal Exile might sometimes struggle to adapt to simpler ways.

Personality Traits

Personality traits capture how a character thinks, reacts, and engages with others. Choose abilities that highlight these qualities, giving the character's personality a strong impact on how they handle challenges and interact with the world. Examples:

Relentlessly Positive: Pick abilities that boost morale, bolster defenses, or inspire hope. A character with boundless optimism might also have a knack for calming tensions or creating camaraderie. They could possess skills that lift spirits and help others persevere. When playing, let this character's positive outlook shine through, using humor or encouragement to keep spirits high, even in grim situations.

Brooding Thinker: For this introspective character, abilities that enhance perception or analysis are ideal. They're the ones to notice small details or read people accurately. Consider picking investigative skills or abilities that require careful planning. In play, the Brooding Thinker may be slow to speak, weighing options before acting, and likely preferring observation over immediate involvement.

Practical Realist: Choose straightforward, no-nonsense abilities that focus on practical solutions. This character should be skilled in survival, problem-solving, or anything that gets results without fuss. In play, the Realist might avoid "fluff" abilities, focusing instead on those that give clear, predictable benefits. They're likely the first to point out impractical ideas and keep the group grounded.

Dreamer with an Eye on the Stars: For this visionary, select abilities that reflect imagination or hope, like divination, illusion, or spells that reveal hidden truths. They might also have skills related to storytelling or art. In play, the Dreamer may sometimes seem disconnected from reality, always seeing potential rather than limitation, encouraging others to look beyond what's immediately obvious.

Let personality traits come through in their responses and interactions. The Relentlessly Positive character might encourage others when morale dips, while the Practical Realist will suggest efficient solutions.

Physical Traits

Physical traits aren't just for looks, they hint at a character's lifestyle, experiences, and attitude. Choose abilities that align with these traits to reinforce the character's physical presence and add dimension to how they handle encounters. Examples:

Eyes Full of Wonder: Perception and investigative abilities are perfect for a character who takes in everything around them with fresh curiosity. They notice details others overlook, making them skilled at exploration. In play, let this character's wide-eyed nature guide their reactions, treating every discovery with excitement.

Commanding Presence: Abilities in intimidation, leadership, or persuasion reflect this character's natural authority. Choose skills that enhance their ability to sway others or take control in tense moments. In play, let them exude confidence, stepping up to lead or address conflicts with an air of authority.

Graceful and Elegant: Stealth, acrobatics, or precision-based combat skills fit a character with natural grace. They should move with purpose, using finesse over brute force. In play, their elegance should come through in every gesture, making them memorable in the way they interact with the world.

Scars as Silent Stories: Choose abilities that signify resilience or toughness, like damage resistance or survival skills. This character has been through battles, so their scars reflect their hardened nature. In play, let them show quiet pride in their scars, seeing each as a reminder of what they've overcome.

Use these physical traits to influence how they approach problems. The Commanding character might naturally step into leadership roles, while the one with Scars may stand firm, unmoved by minor threats.

Motivation & Goals

A character's motivations drive their choices, influencing which abilities they develop to help achieve their goals. Think about what keeps them going and select abilities that allow them to pursue these motivations effectively. Examples:

Protect at All Costs: Defensive or shielding abilities work for a character who is deeply protective. Skills that let them guard others or take hits on behalf of the group reinforce their selfless nature. In play, they should prioritize the safety of others, positioning themselves as a shield or barrier.

Curiosity Knows No Bounds: Choose abilities that aid exploration, discovery, and investigation. This character is driven by the thrill of learning, so anything that reveals secrets or enhances perception suits them. In play, they may go out of their way to uncover mysteries, putting their curiosity above personal safety.

To Inspire Others: Select abilities that improve allies' morale, like rallying abilities or skills that grant temporary boosts to others. This character believes in lifting those around them, and their abilities reflect this. In play, let them provide

support or encouragement, even stepping in to make sacrifices if it means others benefit.

Escape the Past: Skills in stealth, disguise, or agility align with a character looking to leave their history behind. They may have abilities focused on evasion or hiding, enabling them to avoid reminders of their past. When playing, let them instinctively avoid questions about their background or attempt to avoid familiar people and places.

Play these motivations by focusing on what drives their actions. A character Protecting at All Costs will always put themselves between danger and others; one Escaping the Past will constantly look over their shoulder.

Strengths

Strengths are the talents and qualities a character can always rely on. They aren't just useful; they're a reflection of the character's core competencies. Choose abilities that showcase these strengths, making the character effective and capable within their archetypal domain. Examples:

Unshakable Optimism: Supportive abilities that boost morale or heal are a natural fit. This character sees the silver lining in everything, and their abilities should reflect their tendency to bring hope. In play, let them see solutions where others see problems, finding the upside in even bleak situations.

Resourcefulness in Every Situation: Choose utility-based abilities that adapt to any scenario, from crafting to problem-solving. This character is skilled at making do with limited resources. When playing, let them find unconventional uses for tools and gear, always ready with a quick fix.

Determined as a Mountain: Select abilities that represent perseverance, endurance, resistances, or skills that allow them to endure challenges longer than others. In play, let them never back down, regardless of the odds, always pressing forward.

Creative Problem-Solver: Abilities that allow out-of-the-box solutions, like versatile spells or skills with unique applications, suit this character well. In play, they should regularly seek unexpected methods to solve problems, surprising allies with their inventive approach.

Embrace these strengths to help the character shine. The Optimist keeps everyone going in tough times, while the Resourceful character finds ways to make the impossible happen.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses add depth by revealing a character's vulnerabilities and flaws. These can be quirks, limitations, or blind spots that impact their effectiveness. When selecting weaknesses, think about abilities that may reflect or even exaggerate these flaws, creating opportunities for interesting story moments and conflict. Examples:

Impulsively Reckless: Choose abilities that lean toward immediate action, prioritizing quick resolution over careful planning. This character's impulsiveness might mean they lack defensive skills or resistances that come from preparation. In play, let them leap into action without hesitation, ignoring the potential for disaster and dragging others along in the process.

Constantly Doubting Others: Avoid abilities that rely on teamwork, like support skills or group buffs. This character's trust issues may mean they prefer solitary skills, making it difficult to rely on allies. In play, show their hesitation to follow plans, second-guessing others and focusing more on self-preservation.

Gullible and Too Trusting: Skills that enhance communication or perception could be unreliable for this character, who misjudges intentions. They might excel at sensing what others feel but fail to grasp hidden motives. In play, they might struggle to see through deception, believing even the most dubious promises.

Overly Confident: Select abilities that encourage risk, like powerful but unpredictable spells or high-stakes combat skills. They may lack self-control abilities, reflecting their tendency to dive headfirst into danger without a backup plan. In play, let their confidence guide them into overestimating their odds, rarely considering the consequences of failure.

When roleplaying weaknesses, let them become apparent during conflicts or when others are counting on them. The Reckless character might spoil careful plans, while the Overly Confident character gets the group into tight spots. Examples:

Quirks and Habits

Quirks and habits bring a unique flavor to characters, creating memorable moments in roleplaying. These small, personal details reflect the character's personality and make them relatable. When selecting abilities, look for skills that reflect these quirks or add a touch of eccentricity.

Always Fiddling with Trinkets: Choose abilities that require focus or detail-oriented actions, like crafting or sleight of hand. This character's habit of fiddling might give them an affinity for mechanical skills, making them adept with tools. In play, have them constantly tinker or distract themselves with minor tasks, using trinkets or objects to help them think.

Overly Superstitious: Select abilities tied to luck, fortune, or divination. They might rely on omens, choosing actions based on chance or intuition. In play, have them take omens seriously, interpreting everyday events as signs and sometimes making strange choices based on their readings.

Mind Always Wandering: Abilities that emphasize intuition or perception could align with this character's habit of daydreaming. They're lost in thought, making them insightful yet occasionally oblivious to immediate events. In play, let them get sidetracked by curiosities or lost in unrelated thoughts, occasionally missing details in the present.

Obsessively Clean and Organized: Choose abilities that reflect order, discipline, or planning. They might have skills tied to tactics, careful preparation, or efficiency. In play, let them be meticulous, perhaps obsessively arranging objects or insisting on specific rituals before taking action.

Embrace quirks by making them a regular part of roleplaying, even if they don't directly impact the story. The Superstitious character might check for signs before entering a room, while the Clean and Organized character keeps gear meticulously ordered.

Values & Beliefs

Values and beliefs are the moral and philosophical compass guiding a character's decisions. These aren't just principles, they're powerful motivators that influence how the character interacts with the world and others. Choose abilities that embody their core beliefs, reinforcing their guiding ideals in both subtle and overt ways. Examples:

Justice Above All: Select abilities that enhance awareness, combat, or protection to allow them to act on their sense of justice. They may prefer skills that reveal lies, expose enemies, or defend allies. In play, let them act quickly to right perceived wrongs, even if it leads to confrontation. Their sense of justice may occasionally make them inflexible, as they prioritize fairness over social harmony.

Knowledge Is the Key to Power: Choose abilities that encourage learning, research, or gaining information. They may possess spells or skills that reveal hidden truths or enhance their mental acuity. In play, let their quest for knowledge drive them to explore forbidden areas or experiment with risky techniques, valuing knowledge even above personal safety.

Loyalty to the End: Abilities that support or defend allies reflect their commitment to loyalty. They may excel in protection, healing, or abilities that enhance group success. In play, let them prioritize the needs of friends over their own, staying loyal even in morally gray situations or when their allies make mistakes.

Truth Must Be Known: Select investigative, perceptive, or magical abilities that reveal secrets. This character believes in transparency and seeks to uncover hidden truths. In play, let them be suspicious of deception, challenging others' stories or refusing to accept surface explanations.

These values should influence their behavior in pivotal moments. The Just character will seek fairness even if it makes things harder, while the Loyal character may defend allies against their better judgment.

Conflict Style

Conflict style defines how a character approaches confrontation, be it physical, verbal, or tactical. Their chosen style can make them effective in certain

scenarios while exposing them in others. When selecting abilities, focus on skills that support their preferred methods of handling conflict. Examples:

Diplomacy First: Abilities focused on persuasion, negotiation, or distraction work well for this character, who believes conflict can be avoided. Skills that defuse tension or even charm-based abilities align with a diplomatic approach. In play, let them attempt to talk through confrontations, trying to understand their opponent's motives or deflect aggression before it escalates.

Relentless in Pursuit: Abilities that increase stamina, attack power, or resilience reflect their tenacious style. This character doesn't back down, choosing the most direct path to their goal. In play, they're unyielding, throwing themselves into combat or debate without hesitation, rarely considering alternative approaches.

Strategic Withdrawer: Choose abilities related to evasion, stealth, or agility. This character knows when to pick battles and prefers retreat if the odds aren't in their favor. In play, let them disengage or re-evaluate plans during fights, always looking for tactical advantages or potential exits.

Cold and Calculated: Abilities that enhance precision, observation, or focused attacks align with their methodical approach to conflict. This character views situations from a detached perspective, seeking weaknesses and analyzing opponents. In play, they rarely rush into battle, instead taking time to prepare and finding the most efficient solution.

Conflict styles add dimension by influencing how a character responds to threats and disagreements. The Diplomat might delay actions to avoid aggression, while the Relentless Pursuer keeps pressing forward regardless of risk.

Tarot & Roleplaying

When building tarot-inspired characters, each trait category serves as a wellspring of roleplaying prompts that go beyond any game system's mechanics. These traits, tied to tarot archetypes, help you explore characters' motivations, quirks, and dynamics with a fresh, symbolic perspective. Here's an expanded look at how to use each category purely as roleplaying inspiration, letting the tarot guide you in creating deep, engaging character interactions and memorable scenes.

Role in the Story

The role in the story is more than just a functional position within a group. It's the character's narrative purpose, the "why" behind their actions, shaped by tarot archetypes to bring a layer of mythic significance. Consider how their tarot-inspired role makes them indispensable, or disruptive, within the story. Examples:

The Fool: This character sees life as a journey to be embraced without caution. They're the impulsive heart of the group, inviting everyone to see the world with fresh eyes. Play them as naive but curious, making choices that can lead to chaos

or inspiration. They'll dive into risky situations, prompting others to question their own assumptions and see new possibilities.

The Magician: The Magician is a master of subtle influence, adept at nudging events in the group's favor without others realizing. Roleplay them as someone who reads people well, using their understanding to shift dynamics with a word or gesture. They may offer vague hints rather than concrete advice, leaving others guessing about their motives and true intentions.

The Empress: The Empress is the nurturing, grounding figure who holds the group together. They're supportive, protective, and encouraging, with a natural ability to ease tensions. Play them as a peacemaker, instinctively seeking to mediate disputes and calm fears, embodying a stabilizing energy that helps everyone feel safe and valued.

The Chariot: The Chariot charges forward with unstoppable resolve, bringing momentum and drive to the group. Roleplay them as someone who acts first, setting the pace and motivating others through action. Their intense determination can inspire or intimidate, depending on the situation, as they refuse to let anything stand in their way.

Each role creates unique interactions within the group. The Fool's boundless energy adds a playful, unpredictable element, while The Empress fosters a sense of community. Let these archetypes define how characters engage with one another, subtly guiding the story's flow.

Background & History

A character's background is the foundation of their perspective, shaping how they interpret the present. In the context of tarot, a character's past takes on a mythic quality, with formative events and inherited legacies that linger in their thoughts and actions. Use their backstory as an internal compass, allowing their history to influence their responses and goals. Examples:

Haunted by Tragedy: Their history is steeped in loss or failure, which drives them to prevent others from enduring the same fate. They may hesitate to build close relationships, fearing the pain of loss, or they may become fiercely protective of those they love. Roleplay them as someone who approaches situations with caution, carrying a quiet sadness or intensity that shapes their every decision.

Inherited Power: Born into a family of influence, magic, or wealth, they carry the weight of a legacy that can feel both empowering and confining. They may feel compelled to prove themselves worthy of their lineage or to break free from its constraints. Play them as someone deeply aware of the expectations placed upon them, viewing their actions through the lens of duty, tradition, or family honor.

The Outcast's Perspective: Living on the fringes has taught them survival skills and given them an outsider's perspective on society. They're skeptical of authority and may prefer solitude or small circles of trust. Roleplay them as

someone who notices things others overlook, and who is quick to question norms and challenge assumptions.

Royal by Blood, Exile by Choice: Though they possess the grace and knowledge of royalty, they've distanced themselves from the trappings of power. They may resent or miss their former life, torn between a desire for freedom and the call of responsibility. Roleplay them as someone who navigates new situations with a blend of pride and humility, sometimes revealing a regal bearing in moments of high tension.

A character's background creates a foundation for their behavior and priorities. The Haunted character might shy away from forming close bonds, while the Royal Exile could show traces of regal etiquette even in humble settings. Use these histories to add emotional depth and complexity to your roleplaying.

Personality Traits

Personality traits are the heart of how a character expresses themselves. They bring unique flavor to speech, mannerisms, and decision-making. Tarot archetypes add a layer of mystique and symbolism, allowing you to play these traits with heightened intensity, making your character's personality stand out in every interaction. Examples:

Relentlessly Positive: This character embodies unshakable optimism, seeing the silver lining in every situation. They lift spirits and remind others of the importance of hope, even when things look bleak. Roleplay them as someone who uses humor to defuse tension and finds joy in small things, bringing much-needed relief to others during challenging moments.

Brooding Thinker: Quiet and intense, they're lost in thought, with a tendency to reflect on the weightier elements of life. They might offer profound insights when they do speak, revealing an awareness of hidden truths. Play them as someone who observes more than they speak, occasionally dropping deep or mysterious observations that make others stop and think.

Practical Realist: Grounded and matter-of-fact, they focus on what's immediately relevant and useful. They're skeptical of ideals and dreams, pointing out the flaws in ambitious plans. Roleplay them as someone who keeps the group grounded, providing a realistic perspective that others may find frustrating but valuable.

Dreamer with an Eye on the Stars: This character is imaginative and visionary, constantly drawn to possibilities beyond the present moment. They may come across as whimsical or eccentric, but they inspire others to think beyond limitations. Play them as someone who is always looking toward the horizon, encouraging others to envision a brighter, more exciting future.

Personality traits bring life to everyday interactions. The Optimist might respond to setbacks with a laugh, while the Realist offers blunt, practical

solutions. Let these traits guide your character's responses, making their personality a consistent and compelling part of the story.

Physical Traits

Physical traits add a layer of immediacy to roleplaying, influencing how characters are perceived by others and how they interact with their surroundings. With tarot inspiration, these traits become symbolic markers of a character's inner life, offering cues for how they move, react, and express themselves. Examples:

Eyes Full of Wonder: They see the world with boundless curiosity, their gaze bright and open, taking in details others might overlook. Roleplay them as someone who's frequently awestruck, expressing excitement over things others find ordinary, drawing attention to hidden beauty in the world.

Commanding Presence: They naturally draw attention and respect, exuding an aura that makes others feel compelled to follow or defer to them. Play them as someone who can hold a room with silence alone, effortlessly guiding the group with a mere glance or gesture.

Graceful and Elegant: They move with precision and poise, as if each gesture is deliberate. They avoid roughness, preferring actions that showcase their control and calm. Roleplay them as someone who is careful in their movements, treating even the simplest actions with care and finesse.

Scars as Silent Stories: Their body bears the marks of battles, each scar a visible testament to survival. They might reveal or reference these scars when speaking about their past, reminding others of the hardships they've endured. Play them as someone who wears these scars with quiet pride, turning them into symbols of resilience.

Physical traits become cues for expression, shaping the character's interactions with the world. The Commanding character will naturally take the lead, while the Graceful character treats each movement with intention, adding layers of visual storytelling to their presence.

Motivation & Goals

Motivations and goals reveal the character's driving force, the purpose that guides their actions. Tarot archetypes lend symbolic weight to these motivations, making them feel more compelling and larger-than-life. Use these as prompts to shape how the character responds to challenges and navigates relationships. Examples:

Protect at All Costs: This character's core purpose is to ensure the safety of others, even at their own risk. They'll instinctively place themselves in harm's way, going out of their way to prevent conflict and protect the vulnerable. Roleplay them as someone who remains vigilant, putting others' needs before their own and stepping in to defuse volatile situations.

Curiosity Knows No Bounds: Driven by a thirst for knowledge, they're always seeking to learn and explore, sometimes at the expense of safety. They're drawn to mysteries and the unknown, taking risks to satisfy their curiosity. Play them as someone who pushes boundaries, asking questions others won't, and leading the group into uncharted territory.

To Inspire Others: This character views themselves as a beacon of hope and strength, lifting others and setting an example of courage and perseverance. They encourage bravery and foster unity, willing to make sacrifices if it inspires others to stand strong. Roleplay them as someone who speaks with conviction, going out of their way to rally allies or lift spirits.

Escape the Past: Haunted by previous experiences, they're constantly running from something in their history. They avoid certain places, people, or situations that remind them of what they left behind. Roleplay them as someone who may react strongly to reminders of their past, sometimes refusing opportunities that could reveal their history.

These motivations guide choices and influence relationships. The Protector might act defensively, while the Escape-driven character remains elusive. Let their goals shape their priorities, creating internal and external conflicts.

Strengths

Strengths are what the character is naturally good at, talents that make them unique and impactful. Tarot archetypes bring symbolic importance to these strengths, making them central to the character's identity. Use strengths to inspire confident roleplaying moments and create a distinctive approach to problem-solving. Examples:

Unshakable Optimism: They're able to find positivity even in the darkest situations, providing morale boosts that keep everyone going. Their belief in a brighter future encourages resilience and camaraderie. Roleplay them as someone who faces challenges with a smile, lifting spirits and providing comfort to others when they need it most.

Resourcefulness in Every Situation: Quick thinking and adaptability define them, always able to improvise with what's available. They're the first to find creative solutions in difficult situations. Play them as someone who thinks on their feet, surprising others with their inventive problem-solving and resourcefulness.

Determined as a Mountain: They're resolute, unwilling to give up no matter the difficulty. This steadfastness provides a solid foundation for the group, as they can always be counted on to see things through. Roleplay them as someone who faces setbacks head-on, inspiring others with their resilience and commitment.

Creative Problem-Solver: They approach challenges from unexpected angles, finding unique solutions where others see dead ends. This character's imagination allows them to see possibilities that others overlook. Play them as someone who

thinks outside the box, encouraging the group to try unconventional strategies. Examples:

Strengths shape how they handle challenges. The Optimist finds hope in adversity, while the Resourceful character finds value in unexpected places. Let strengths add consistency and reliability to their responses, giving the group confidence in their skills.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses add dimension, making characters feel real and relatable. Tarot archetypes amplify these flaws, providing opportunities for conflict, introspection, and growth. Use weaknesses as roleplaying cues, allowing them to reveal the character's vulnerabilities in moments of pressure. Examples:

Impulsively Reckless: They jump into situations without thinking, trusting their instincts but ignoring the potential risks. Their impulsiveness can lead to unintended consequences, sometimes creating tension within the group. Roleplay them as someone who acts on a whim, creating scenarios where others need to rein them in.

Constantly Doubting Others: They struggle to trust, preferring to rely on themselves. This skepticism can make collaboration difficult, as they question others' motives and resist teamwork. Play them as someone who's always analyzing others, sometimes withholding cooperation due to a lack of trust.

Gullible and Too Trusting: They give others the benefit of the doubt, to their own detriment. Their trusting nature makes them vulnerable to manipulation. Roleplay them as someone who sees the best in people, even when it's not deserved, sometimes causing complications.

Overly Confident: Believing in their own invincibility, they take on more than they can handle. This arrogance can lead to overreach, putting themselves and others at risk. Play them as someone who tends to dismiss caution, creating friction when others try to slow them down.

Let weaknesses guide roleplaying choices, especially in high-stakes moments. The Doubter may question others' plans, while the Overly Confident character takes on impossible tasks, showcasing their limitations.

Quirks and Habits

Quirks and habits make characters feel unique, adding small but memorable details to their interactions. Tarot archetypes help turn these quirks into roleplaying cues, adding charm, mystery, or humor to the character's behavior. Examples:

Always Fiddling with Trinkets: They can't keep their hands still, constantly toying with small objects or devices. This habit may be a sign of restlessness or a means of focus. Play them as someone who's always reaching for an object, using it to distract themselves or to process their thoughts.

Overly Superstitious: They believe in signs, omens, and rituals, interpreting everyday events as significant. This habit can lead to humorous or dramatic moments as they follow their superstitions. Roleplay them as someone who insists on performing small rituals before key actions, sharing unusual beliefs.

Mind Always Wandering: They're frequently lost in thought, drifting off mid-conversation or becoming absorbed in small details. This can be endearing or frustrating to others. Play them as someone who occasionally misses what's happening around them, requiring reminders to stay present.

Obsessively Clean and Organized: They need order in their surroundings, rearranging items or cleaning. Their meticulousness may reveal a need for control or calm. Roleplay them as someone who can't resist tidying up, finding peace in keeping things organized.

Quirks add subtle personality to interactions. The Superstitious character may avoid certain paths, while the Clean and Organized character insists on order. Let these quirks surface naturally in roleplaying, making them part of the character's charm.

Values & Beliefs

Values and beliefs are the character's moral compass, guiding their decisions and interactions. Tarot archetypes turn these beliefs into powerful motivators, adding depth and significance to their worldview. Use values as roleplaying prompts that influence how they respond to challenges and view others. Examples:

Justice Above All: They believe in fairness and will take a stand against any perceived injustice, acting as the group's conscience. Roleplay them as someone who defends the weak, holds others accountable, and refuses to turn a blind eye to wrongdoing.

Knowledge Is the Key to Power: They value learning and prioritize discovery, sometimes over personal relationships. They're willing to take risks to uncover secrets, driven by a need to understand the world. Roleplay them as someone who constantly seeks knowledge, treating information as the highest pursuit.

Loyalty to the End: They place enormous value on loyalty, forming deep bonds and standing by those they care about, even in difficult situations. Roleplay them as someone who is unwavering in their support, sometimes creating complications when loyalty conflicts with personal interest.

Truth Must Be Known: They value honesty and seek transparency, pursuing truth at any cost. This may make them suspicious of deception, quick to challenge lies or inconsistencies. Roleplay them as someone who prizes honesty, viewing trust as sacred and distrusting secrecy.

Let values shape decision-making and create internal conflicts. The Justice-driven character may challenge authority, while the Knowledge-seeker prioritizes

discovery over safety. These values add depth to their motivations and relationships.

Conflict Style

A character's conflict style is how they navigate confrontation and danger, be it through diplomacy, aggression, or strategy. Tarot archetypes turn these styles into roleplaying tools, allowing you to explore the character's instincts and approach to adversity. Examples:

Diplomacy First: They aim to talk through conflicts, seeking common ground before resorting to violence. They may treat every encounter as an opportunity to build connections. Roleplay them as someone who values peace, suggesting nonviolent solutions and encouraging understanding.

Relentless in Pursuit: They're unyielding, pressing forward with single-minded focus. This character sees obstacles as challenges to overcome, refusing to give up. Roleplay them as someone who takes on tasks directly, occasionally ignoring advice to slow down or reconsider.

Strategic Withdrawer: They're cautious, preferring retreat or regrouping when odds aren't in their favor. This character sees value in patience and planning. Roleplay them as someone who avoids unnecessary risks, always assessing situations carefully.

Cold and Calculated: They approach conflict with precision, analyzing their options and acting methodically. They see combat as a strategy rather than a passion. Roleplay them as someone who plans before acting, choosing the most efficient course and remaining composed under pressure.

These conflict styles create distinctive responses in tense moments. The Diplomat seeks peace, while the Relentless character charges forward. Let conflict styles influence their choices, creating memorable group dynamics.

Why Tarot Resonates

In fantasy roleplaying, tarot cards do more than provide archetypal inspiration. They add an air of destiny, a sense that every choice matters and every character is part of a larger cosmic plan. Using tarot as a framework makes characters feel timeless and stories resonate on a deeper level. They're not just characters acting out a plot; they're part of an intricate dance of fate, consequence, and transformation.

Tarot isn't just a deck of cards; it's a storytelling toolkit brimming with archetypes, motifs, and lessons that can be adapted, subverted, and explored. Whether you're building a wise old mentor from The Hierophant, crafting a tragic anti-hero from The Hanged Man, or writing an entire narrative arc inspired by The Fool's journey, tarot provides a deep well of inspiration that has stood the test of time. And that's what makes it indispensable in the world of fantasy roleplaying.

The Major Arcana

The major arcana isn't just a bunch of flashy cards that look good spread out on a table; it's a collection of archetypes so potent they've been shaping stories for centuries. This lineup of 22 cards isn't some decorative feature in the tarot deck; it's the backbone of it. When you're dealing with roleplaying characters, these cards are pure gold, each one a blueprint for personalities, motivations, and transformations that can make a campaign worth talking about for years.

The story of the major arcana begins with The Fool and ends with The World, mapping out a journey that can feel familiar to anyone who's ever read an epic tale or watched a hero's rise and fall. This progression from innocence to completion captures life's grand cycle, stuffed with lessons, triumphs, and moments that leave you questioning everything. It's no wonder that writers and roleplaying enthusiasts look at these cards and see more than pretty pictures, they see ready-made characters waiting to be developed.

The major arcana is perfect for fantasy roleplaying because these cards are already bursting with archetypal meaning. Take The Fool, for instance. He's the dreamer, the wanderer who steps into the unknown without a clue what's coming, armed only with blind optimism. Every party needs that wide-eyed character, the one who's all heart and zero foresight, pushing the group into trouble and adventure. Then there's The Magician, the clever, confident master of skills who always has a trick up his sleeve. He's the wizard who twists fate, the strategist who outsmarts enemies, or the rogue who manipulates the odds. He's not just powerful; he's dynamic, driven by will and mastery.

The major arcana doesn't stop at heroes. The deck's archetypes carve out space for mentors, rivals, and even antagonists with depth. The High Priestess represents the mystic who knows more than she lets on, keeping secrets close and wisdom closer. The Emperor? He's not your typical villain; he's the commander who believes order is worth any cost. It's these nuances that make the major arcana a gift to anyone designing characters who don't just move the story forward but bring the drama, tension, and growth that make it worth telling.

Now, while The Empress embodies nurturing and growth, The Devil shows up with temptation and the darker sides of ambition. These cards don't just create characters who exist in black and white; they breathe life into shades of gray. The Hierophant brings order and the weight of tradition, great for creating characters who can be either the wise leader or the strict enforcer of archaic rules. The Star embodies hope, perfect for characters who guide others through the fallout of chaos. The major arcana has all the elements needed to make your setting more than just a place on a map; it turns it into a stage for stories with emotional stakes.

The arcana's archetypes work wonders for character development and plot twists. Take The Tower, for example. It's not just a symbol of chaos; it's that moment when everything a character believes comes crashing down. Maybe it's a betrayal, maybe it's an unexpected catastrophe, but either way, it's a pivot point that takes your story from predictable to compelling. The Hanged Man? That's the archetype for characters who are stuck, forced to make sacrifices and look at the world from a new perspective. It's not just drama for the sake of drama; it's the foundation for growth and change.

These archetypes make their way into roles you see in campaigns all the time. You've got The Hermit, perfect for that lone wanderer who reluctantly joins the party, bringing knowledge they picked up in their isolation. The Lovers aren't just about romance; they're the element of choice, the moral crossroads that can push characters in unexpected directions. Strength isn't just muscle; it's resilience and the courage to do what's hard, making for characters who are more than just sword-swinging stereotypes.

The beauty of the major arcana is how adaptable it is. You can take a card like Justice and mold it into the paladin who believes in fair play or twist it into the vengeful knight who doles out their own version of balance. The archetypes are flexible enough to serve as templates, backbones, or just hints of inspiration. The Sun, for instance, could inspire a charismatic bard who brightens every dark day, while Judgment could give birth to a warrior facing their past sins.

The cards map out a journey that mirrors character arcs you'd see in epic roleplaying campaigns, from the naive beginnings of The Fool to the triumphant, world-spanning conclusions of The World. These archetypes make characters relatable, flawed, and interesting right from the start. The major arcana isn't just a tool for divination; it's a cheat sheet for building characters with stories worth telling.

Whether you're looking for a hero with a destiny, a mentor with secrets, or an antagonist who's more complex than just being "the bad guy," the major arcana delivers. Each card can be a guide for a character's personality, motivations, or the journey they're destined to take. It's the kind of inspiration that makes fantasy roleplaying more than just numbers and combat, it makes it storytelling at its best.

The Fool (0)

The Fool is card zero. The blank slate. The one that doesn't know where it's going, only that it's going somewhere, and it'll probably be wild. This is the character that sets out with little more than a sense of adventure and a barely thought-out plan. In tarot, The Fool represents new beginnings, potential, and that breathless leap of faith. They're not jaded by life's trials yet, which makes them optimistic to a fault, maybe even reckless. In a fantasy roleplaying setting, The

Fool isn't just your average rookie adventurer; they're the heartbeat of any story that needs a spark to get going.

Role in the Story

The Fool's role in a story is to kickstart the action, drag everyone else out of their comfort zones, and remind the veterans why they started adventuring in the first place. They're the character who asks the questions no one else dares to, stumbles into secret passageways by accident, and somehow persuades the grizzled warrior to go on *just one more quest*. This archetype brings a chaotic kind of charm to the table. They're not the strategist or the moral compass; they're the wildcard that keeps things interesting.

This character pushes the plot forward because they're always moving, always trying something. They don't sit around waiting for fate to knock. Instead, they run headfirst into the unknown, sometimes dragging everyone with them. If your story needs someone to set off an ancient trap that wakes up a slumbering god or pick up a cursed sword because it looked *cool*, The Fool is your hero.

Background & History

A character grounded in The Fool archetype doesn't come from a grand background full of heroics and power. They're more likely to be from an average village or a city street where they grew up watching travelers pass by with wide eyes. Their story starts with the simple idea that "there must be more out there." Maybe they were the daydreaming blacksmith's apprentice or the farmer's child who listened to too many bard's tales and decided they wanted a life that didn't involve shoveling muck.

This character probably left home with little more than the clothes on their back, maybe a satchel full of essentials, and a head full of stories that are about 10% accurate. They don't have prestigious training or royal blood; they've got nerve and enough curiosity to get into trouble. The background is humble, relatable, and filled with the kind of wanderlust that makes their journey as much about discovery as it is about saving the day.

Personality Traits

The Fool is all heart. They're optimistic, curious, and usually a little naive. They're the character who'll believe a sob story without checking for tears and will rush headlong into a fight if they think someone's in trouble. They're impulsive, which can be endearing or infuriating depending on the situation. Think wide-eyed wonder, boundless enthusiasm, and the kind of courage that doesn't know enough to be afraid.

These characters are also adaptable. They don't hold grudges (mostly because they don't remember who wronged them five minutes later) and can befriend just about anyone. They're the ones who'll chat up the grumpy barkeep until he smiles

or try to high-five a goblin mid-battle. The Fool lives for the moment, enjoying life's chaos without overthinking every step.

Physical Traits

A character embodying The Fool might not look imposing. They're not the tallest or the strongest, and they don't wear gleaming armor or fancy robes. They're more likely to be dressed in simple, practical clothes, maybe a bit ragged, with patches sewn from their last scrape. Their eyes, though, say it all. They have that sparkle of mischief, a gaze that shifts from one thing to the next as if the world is too full of wonder to focus on just one thing.

They might carry trinkets or odd items they picked up because they looked interesting, a shiny rock, an old key with no door, or a feather from who knows what kind of bird. They're covered in a layer of dust, mud, or something questionable, but they're too busy chasing the next adventure to notice.

Motivation & Goals

The Fool isn't driven by glory, power, or vengeance. They're motivated by sheer curiosity and the hope of discovering what's out there. Their goals can be as whimsical as finding a lost treasure just because they heard a story about it or as heartfelt as helping a friend in need without a second thought. They're the kind of character who sets off on a quest because it sounds fun, not because it promises fame.

Long-term goals aren't their forte. The Fool thinks about now, maybe tomorrow if they're really pushing it. They don't plan ten steps ahead; they don't even plan two steps ahead. They live for the experience, the story, and the friends they make along the way.

Strengths

The greatest strength of The Fool is their boundless enthusiasm. They bring hope where it's needed and remind everyone that life is worth living, not just surviving. They're brave without being reckless on purpose; they just don't understand why they *should* be afraid. This makes them unpredictable, which is sometimes exactly what a party needs. When everyone else is paralyzed by indecision, The Fool will say, "Let's just do it!" and kick things into motion.

They're also surprisingly resilient. Life might knock them down, but they get back up with a laugh, ready to try again. They're the kind of character who can find the silver lining in even the darkest dungeon, keeping the party's morale up when things look bleak.

Weaknesses

Where The Fool shines with optimism, they struggle with awareness. They don't notice the obvious warning signs, whether that's a trapdoor under their feet or the sly smile of a double-crossing bard. They're naive, which makes them easy

to deceive and too quick to trust. Their lack of foresight means they can get themselves, and everyone else, into trouble faster than you can say, “bad idea.”

Impulsivity is another big drawback. The Fool isn't one to listen to a strategy session. If someone says, “We should wait,” The Fool's already halfway through the locked door, muttering, “How bad could it be?” under their breath. This can lead to moments of “act first, apologize later,” and sometimes the apology has to come from the rest of the party picking up the pieces.

Quirks & Habits

The Fool is full of quirks that make them stand out. Maybe they hum an off-key tune while picking locks or juggle random objects when they're nervous. They're known for doing unexpected things just to see what happens, like challenging the local knight to a foot race or buying an old map off a street vendor without a second thought. They might have a habit of collecting random keepsakes, the sort of things that seem pointless until they suddenly aren't.

They're also quick to give everyone nicknames and might be the one in the group who insists on calling the brooding warlock “Sunny” just to see him scowl. The Fool doesn't mean to be annoying; they just don't have an off switch when it comes to interacting with the world.

Values & Beliefs

The Fool's beliefs are simple: the world is meant to be explored, and everyone deserves a chance to prove themselves. They don't judge based on background or appearance, making friends as easily with a street urchin as with a queen. They believe in fairness and will stand up for the underdog, even if that means they're now face-to-face with the town guard explaining why they stole bread to help a beggar.

They value friendship, fun, and freedom. They'd rather share their last piece of bread than hoard wealth, and they believe that life's experiences are worth more than any amount of gold.

Conflict Style

The Fool doesn't approach conflict like everyone else. They don't go in with strategy or intimidation. They charge in, usually with a grin and a quick, “Let's do this!” Whether it's a battle or a heated argument, they're not trying to outthink or outmaneuver anyone; they're just there to throw themselves in and see where they land. If they have to fight, they rely on their speed and the element of surprise, dodging and weaving rather than taking blows head-on.

When faced with verbal conflict, The Fool doesn't get defensive. They're more likely to crack a joke, change the subject, or say something that leaves everyone confused just long enough for tensions to cool. They're not confrontational by nature, but when backed into a corner, they'll fight with everything they've got, not because they want to win but because they believe there's always a way out.

The Magician (I)

The Magician is card number one in the major arcana, and it doesn't hold back. This archetype represents skill, mastery, and the power to bring ideas into reality. A Magician is all about taking action and manifesting things, someone who knows exactly what they're doing and has the tools to make it happen. In tarot, this card symbolizes someone who's tapped into both their own potential and the world around them, using whatever's at hand to create change. For a fantasy roleplaying character, the Magician archetype means wielding knowledge, power, and a bit of cleverness to get things done.

This isn't a character who's all talk. The Magician walks the walk, knows the ropes, and isn't afraid to show off a little. They're confident, skilled, and maybe just a bit manipulative. But hey, it's hard to be humble when you're the one everyone turns to when things get dicey.

Role in the Story

In a fantasy roleplaying story, the Magician's role is clear: they're the enabler, the plot-driver, and sometimes the secret-keeper. This is the character who knows how to open doors, literal or metaphorical. Need someone to decipher ancient runes? Call the Magician. Need a strategy for dealing with that dragon? The Magician's got you covered. They can be the mentor figure who nudges the hero in the right direction, the clever strategist behind the scenes, or even the antagonist whose knowledge makes them one step ahead of everyone else.

The Magician archetype is perfect for characters who make things happen, whether through magic, knowledge, or sheer force of will. They're not just bystanders; they're the ones who shape events, bringing the party closer to the story's heart. A Magician-type character can help solve puzzles, make plans, or pull the party out of a sticky situation with a well-timed spell or a quick solution. They're the "brains of the operation," offering a counterbalance to brawn and brute force.

Background & History

A character embodying the Magician archetype likely has a background that involves training, study, or apprenticeship. They didn't just stumble into their abilities; they worked for them, learned from a mentor, or even studied ancient texts in secret. Maybe they come from a family of scholars or spellcasters, or perhaps they're self-taught, driven by an insatiable curiosity to understand the mysteries of the universe. A Magician isn't someone who's content with surface knowledge. They dig deep, collecting knowledge and honing skills that most people wouldn't dare touch.

Their history might involve a key moment where they discovered their talents. Perhaps they were a student who outshone their teacher, or maybe they discovered a magical artifact that set them on a path of self-study. This character

could have spent years honing their craft, mastering techniques that put them a cut above the rest. They have a past filled with both learning and, possibly, a few dangerous experiments gone wrong. After all, no true Magician learns without making a few mistakes along the way.

Personality Traits

A Magician character is confident, maybe even a little cocky. They know what they're capable of, and they're not afraid to use it to their advantage. They're focused and intense, with a sharp mind that's constantly analyzing, planning, and adjusting. They're not always warm or approachable; instead, they're pragmatic, direct, and sometimes blunt. Patience may not be their strong suit, especially when dealing with people who don't "get it" as quickly as they do.

This character can be charming when they want to be, but it's usually a calculated charm. They're the type to use their charisma strategically, when they need something. Beneath that confidence, there's an intensity, a sense that they're always looking for the next challenge, the next mystery to solve, the next big opportunity. They're ambitious and driven, sometimes to a fault.

Physical Traits

The Magician isn't defined by any particular physical type, but they have an air of intelligence and focus. They might carry tools of their trade, like a staff, a bag of potions, or even a spellbook filled with obscure notes. Their clothes could be functional yet stylish, tailored to fit their needs. Maybe they wear rings or amulets that hint at their power, or they're marked with a few scars from experiments or battles where they've tested their limits.

This character doesn't need a flashy appearance to make an impression. They carry themselves with a kind of self-assuredness that's hard to ignore. Whether they're tall or short, muscular or lean, they exude a quiet authority that makes people pay attention.

Motivation & Goals

The Magician is motivated by a drive to know, to master, and to shape the world around them. They're not just in it for the adventure or the treasure; they're driven by an insatiable curiosity and a need to test their limits. Their goals might involve uncovering secrets, mastering powerful spells, or even creating something that no one else has ever seen before. They're driven by personal ambition as much as by any allegiance to a cause or a party.

At their core, they want to leave a mark. Whether they're inventing new spells or decoding ancient languages, they're all about pushing the boundaries of what's possible. They may also crave recognition, wanting their peers to respect their talents. Whatever their endgame, they're not satisfied with mediocrity. For a Magician, life is a quest for knowledge, power, and mastery.

Strengths

A Magician character's main strengths are their intelligence, adaptability, and resourcefulness. They're quick thinkers who know how to make use of every tool in their arsenal. They can solve problems on the fly, drawing on a wealth of knowledge and experience. They're skilled communicators, able to rally others to their cause or negotiate with those who could be allies or enemies.

Their power isn't just in their knowledge; it's in their application of it. They're versatile, able to step into almost any situation and bring something to the table. Whether it's unlocking a magical barrier, concocting a healing potion, or charming an enemy, they always find a way to make themselves indispensable.

Weaknesses

The Magician's biggest weakness? Overconfidence. They can be so sure of their abilities that they miss the potential risks, charging ahead without considering the consequences. They might also struggle with control issues, preferring to take matters into their own hands rather than trust others. Their intelligence can make them impatient, especially when dealing with people they perceive as slow or unworthy.

Their curiosity can lead them into trouble, too. A Magician isn't likely to ignore an ancient text or mysterious artifact, even if there's a good reason to leave it alone. This tendency can lead them into traps, cursed objects, or alliances they'll regret. They can also come across as cold or aloof, especially if they're more focused on knowledge than relationships.

Quirks and Habits

A Magician character will likely have a few eccentricities that hint at their depth. Maybe they mutter to themselves while working on a problem or obsessively organize their books and supplies. They might have a habit of "testing" things without warning anyone, like tossing a vial of mysterious liquid into a campfire just to see what happens.

They're also likely to take notes constantly, scribbling thoughts and ideas even in the heat of battle. They might even collect strange objects or ingredients, filling their bags with trinkets and tools that other party members find baffling. It's all part of the Magician's charm, or so they claim.

Values & Beliefs

The Magician values knowledge above all else. They believe that with enough information, any problem can be solved. They're driven by a desire to understand the world and push its boundaries, and they see themselves as the one capable of unlocking mysteries no one else can touch. They're pragmatic and believe in using whatever means necessary to get the job done.

They may have a strong sense of destiny, believing they're meant for something greater. They're unlikely to follow traditions blindly; they respect knowledge, not authority. If a rule gets in the way of progress, the Magician will find a way around it.

Conflict Style

In conflict, the Magician is tactical and unafraid to get creative. They don't fight head-on; they outthink their opponent. They're more likely to throw off an enemy's footing with misdirection or trickery than go toe-to-toe. If they're backed into a corner, they'll use their intellect to find an escape rather than fight to the death.

In verbal disputes, they're just as sharp. They'll argue circles around someone rather than raise their voice, keeping a calm demeanor that's maddening for opponents. The Magician fights with intellect, strategy, and a few tricks up their sleeve, always looking for the quickest, smartest route to victory.

The High Priestess (II)

The High Priestess is the guardian of mysteries, the keeper of secrets, and the embodiment of intuition. In tarot, she's card number two, representing wisdom that goes beyond mere facts and logic. She's the card of inner knowledge, intuition, and the unknown realms of the mind and spirit. For a fantasy roleplaying character, embodying the High Priestess archetype means tapping into a character who operates from a place of quiet power. She knows things others don't, senses what others miss, and acts as a guide through the unseen.

The High Priestess isn't about loud proclamations or bold action; she's all about subtlety, insight, and patience. She's perfect for a character who holds knowledge close, not because she wants power but because she understands its weight. For a roleplaying adventure, this archetype brings an element of mystery and depth, grounding the story in secrets, intuition, and the layers beneath the obvious.

Role in the Story

In a fantasy roleplaying story, the High Priestess serves as the spiritual guide, the wise advisor, or the keeper of ancient knowledge. She's the character who understands the bigger picture, even when everyone else is fixated on the immediate crisis. This archetype is there to reveal hidden truths, offer subtle warnings, and remind others that not everything can be solved with a sword or a spell. The High Priestess doesn't jump into every conflict; she chooses her moments and, more than not, lets others come to her for guidance.

In terms of story impact, she's the one who knows things that others need but might not want to hear. She might be the one to reveal a prophecy or interpret dreams, giving the party insight that steers them toward (or away from) disaster.

As a mentor or guide, she doesn't coddle or sugarcoat. Instead, she offers clarity and insight to those willing to listen. Her role is less about action and more about perception, helping other characters understand themselves and the challenges they face.

Background & History

A High Priestess archetype character likely has a background steeped in learning, ritual, and maybe even seclusion. She didn't grow up chasing treasure or seeking fame; instead, she was drawn to books, ancient scrolls, or the quiet wisdom of nature. Her early life might have been spent in a temple, a secluded forest grove, or apprenticed to a mystic who taught her the ways of meditation, divination, and the power of silence. She's no stranger to solitude; in fact, she thrives on it.

Her past might involve a formative experience that awakened her connection to the unseen. Maybe she had a vision or heard a voice that set her on a path of self-discovery. She's the type of character who's had to confront the unknown and learn to trust her intuition, even when it's led her down difficult paths. Her history isn't about battle scars; it's about quiet revelations and learning from the shadows.

Personality Traits

The High Priestess is calm, enigmatic, and profoundly patient. She doesn't rush into anything, preferring to observe and understand before she acts. She's the one who waits, watching how others handle themselves, and steps in only when she has something valuable to add. She's wise but unassuming, with a quiet confidence that others respect, even if they don't understand it.

She has a subtle sense of humor that comes out in knowing glances and cryptic comments. She's not aloof, but she values her privacy and isn't the type to share her thoughts freely. People might find her mysterious or difficult to approach, which suits her just fine. The High Priestess isn't out to win friends; she's out to see and understand, and that sometimes means staying apart.

Physical Traits

A High Priestess character might have an appearance that reflects her connection to the mystical and unseen. She could have eyes that seem to look straight through people, or a voice that's quiet but carries an odd weight. Her clothing is likely understated but purposeful, robes, cloaks, or attire suited to someone who's more at home in shadowed libraries or moonlit rituals than on a battlefield.

Her movements are slow and deliberate, each gesture purposeful, as if she's constantly measuring and considering the world around her. She's not one for flashy accessories, though she might wear a simple amulet or a ring inscribed with symbols. Her appearance suggests someone who doesn't need to show off to be powerful; her presence alone speaks volumes.

Motivation & Goals

The High Priestess isn't driven by wealth, power, or fame. Her motivations are deeper, focused on understanding, wisdom, and balance. She's drawn to mysteries, wanting to uncover truths that others overlook. Her goal might be to protect sacred knowledge, guide those who are lost, or preserve the balance between the seen and unseen. She's not interested in meddling for its own sake; she steps in only when it matters.

In a broader sense, she may feel a calling to connect with something beyond herself, whether that's the divine, the natural world, or a hidden realm of spirits and energy. She's motivated by a desire to see the bigger picture, to find meaning in life's patterns, and to help others understand the paths they're on. For her, the journey is about wisdom, not conquest.

Strengths

The High Priestess's greatest strength is her intuition. She senses things others miss, picking up on hidden motives, secrets, and the undercurrents of any situation. She's highly perceptive, able to read people and situations with uncanny accuracy. Her wisdom isn't limited to facts and knowledge; she understands emotions, intentions, and the web of connections that bind people together.

She's also calm under pressure, rarely flustered even in the face of chaos. Where others panic, she maintains her composure and brings a sense of order and clarity. Her insight allows her to make wise decisions without needing immediate evidence or explanations, giving her an edge when quick judgment could mean disaster.

Weaknesses

The High Priestess's introspective nature can make her distant or hard to connect with. She's not one to share her thoughts openly, and her habit of keeping secrets can create distrust, even among allies. She may come across as detached or cold, especially if she sees things others can't, making her seem out of touch with the "real" world.

Her reliance on intuition, while powerful, can also make her susceptible to misinterpretation. She's so used to trusting her instincts that if they lead her wrong, it can be hard for her to admit. Her quiet nature might also make it difficult for her to rally others, especially in situations where bold leadership is required. She's not a cheerleader; she's a watcher, and that can be isolating.

Quirks and Habits

A High Priestess character is likely to have habits that reflect her connection to the unseen. She might meditate daily or spend hours in solitude, tuning into her surroundings or consulting her inner voice. She could carry small talismans, herbs, or crystals, things that help her maintain a sense of balance. People might

notice her pausing to listen to the wind, studying the stars, or observing subtle signs that others brush off.

She might have a habit of speaking in riddles or giving cryptic answers instead of straightforward advice. It's not that she's trying to confuse anyone; she just believes in guiding people to find their own truths rather than handing them easy answers. If she's in a group, she might sit back, observing the interactions and only stepping in when she feels her input is needed.

Values & Beliefs

The High Priestess values knowledge, intuition, and the unseen connections that bind everything together. She believes in balance and respects the power of silence and stillness. To her, wisdom is something sacred, and she doesn't share it lightly. She respects both the natural world and the spiritual, seeing them as intertwined, and she values patience, knowing that everything reveals itself in time.

She's deeply guided by a sense of destiny, though not in a self-aggrandizing way. She believes that certain things are meant to happen, and that her role is to understand those events, not control them. She trusts that everything has its purpose, even if it's not immediately clear, and values integrity and self-understanding above all else.

Conflict Style

In conflict, the High Priestess isn't the one charging into battle or shouting commands. She's more likely to stand back, watching for the right moment to act, or finding ways to turn the situation to her advantage through subtlety. She relies on diplomacy, intuition, and calm observation, disarming opponents with her insight rather than brute strength.

When forced into direct confrontation, she uses precision and restraint, not wild attacks or flashy displays of power. She might weave subtle magic or speak words that plant doubt in her opponent's mind. She's not about dominance; she's about balance and control, preferring to end a conflict with minimal force and maximum understanding.

The Empress (III)

The Empress is card number three in the major arcana, representing abundance, nurturing, and creation. She's the archetype of growth, not through conquest or intellect, but through compassion, care, and an almost magical ability to foster life and beauty around her. She embodies the energy of fertility, not just in a literal sense but in a creative, expansive way. For a fantasy roleplaying character, grounding them in The Empress archetype means they're the heart and soul of any group, the steady presence that provides support, inspiration, and a safe place to regroup.

This isn't the character who charges into battle or dominates with authority. Instead, The Empress is all about cultivating, nurturing, and finding ways to bring people together. She's the character who leads with empathy, who builds rather than destroys, and who creates an environment where people can thrive. In a fantasy roleplaying setting, this archetype is perfect for players who want to embody strength through compassion, resilience through community, and power through patience.

Role in the Story

The Empress plays a vital role in a story by being the grounding presence in an adventure full of chaos and conflict. She's not there to solve every problem with a sword or spell; instead, she offers wisdom, care, and encouragement. This is the character who ensures that the party has what they need, whether it's a pep talk, a place to rest, or just a little perspective when things go south. She brings everyone back to their core, reminding them of what's worth fighting for.

In a larger sense, The Empress archetype can serve as a stabilizing influence within the story's world. Maybe she's a healer whose very presence boosts morale, or perhaps she's a ruler who maintains peace in a kingdom through fair and kind governance. As an advisor or supporting character, she can steer the party in the right direction, encourage cooperation, and remind everyone that not every problem needs to be solved through brute force.

Background & History

The Empress character likely has a background rooted in nature, community, or family. She might have grown up in a close-knit village, where everyone looked after each other, or in a family of caregivers or healers who passed down traditions of nurturing and protection. She might have been taught early on that strength isn't just physical but comes from being able to support others and help them grow.

Her history might include time spent learning how to heal, grow crops, or even raise children. She could have apprenticed with an herbalist or spent years learning how to care for her land. The Empress character isn't someone who's hardened by tragedy but someone who has learned to face it with grace and resilience. She's seen struggle but believes in growth and renewal.

Personality Traits

The Empress is warm, compassionate, and deeply intuitive. She's not one to rush to judgment or act impulsively. Instead, she takes the time to understand people and situations, always thinking about how her actions will affect others. This character is patient to a fault, acting as a mediator or a calming influence during disputes. She's generous, always willing to share what she has, whether that's knowledge, resources, or a shoulder to lean on.

She has a natural optimism, seeing potential where others see failure. This can make her seem a bit naive at times, but her faith in people isn't blind, it's just unshakeable. The Empress character believes in second chances, in the power of growth, and that with the right support, anyone can flourish. This unwavering belief in the goodness of others is both her greatest strength and, sometimes, her greatest weakness.

Physical Traits

A character embodying The Empress archetype has a comforting, grounded presence. She might have a gentle expression, a soothing voice, or a physicality that exudes calm and strength. Her attire could reflect her role as a nurturer and healer, with practical yet elegant clothing, perhaps adorned with floral or natural motifs. She's not flashy, but there's a certain grace in how she moves and carries herself.

She might carry small items that symbolize her connection to nature or her role as a caretaker, a pouch of herbs, a woven bracelet, or a simple pendant. Her appearance suggests warmth and comfort, a person people instinctively feel safe around. She's the type who always has a welcoming smile or a reassuring hand, making her a beacon of calm in the chaos of any adventure.

Motivation & Goals

The Empress is motivated by a desire to create and sustain harmony. She isn't interested in personal glory or riches; her goals are about building something lasting, be it a community, a family, or a legacy of kindness. She wants to protect what she loves and see it thrive, whether that's her companions, her homeland, or even an idea. Her endgame isn't about power, it's about nurturing growth and ensuring that others have the chance to succeed and be happy.

Her goals might involve creating a safe haven, bringing peace to a divided land, or helping those around her realize their potential. For her, success isn't about conquest; it's about making sure others can live and grow without fear. She's motivated by love, loyalty, and a deep-seated belief that everyone deserves a chance to flourish.

Strengths

The Empress character's primary strengths are her compassion, resilience, and patience. She's the one who can weather any storm without losing her sense of purpose or kindness. Her ability to listen and understand others gives her a unique advantage in negotiations or when morale is low. She's the glue that holds a group together, fostering unity and cooperation when things get tough.

She's also an exceptional problem-solver, not through clever tricks or brute force, but through empathy and wisdom. She can see solutions that others miss because she understands what people need, not just what they say they want. Her

strength comes from her ability to support and uplift, making her indispensable in any party or community.

Weaknesses

The Empress's compassion can also be her downfall. She's prone to putting others' needs before her own, sometimes to the point of self-sacrifice. This makes her vulnerable to manipulation by those who might take advantage of her kindness. She can be too trusting, assuming the best in people even when they've given her reasons to doubt.

Her reluctance to engage in direct conflict can also be a disadvantage. While she prefers to negotiate and seek peaceful resolutions, some situations require a firmer hand, which can make her hesitant when decisiveness is needed. Her focus on harmony can sometimes blind her to the darker realities, making her vulnerable when faced with those who don't share her values.

Quirks and Habits

The Empress might have habits that reflect her nurturing nature. She could be the one always carrying a little extra food or medicine, just in case someone needs it. She might have a habit of picking flowers or collecting small natural treasures, things that remind her of the beauty in the world. When she's anxious or deep in thought, she might twirl a leaf or petal between her fingers, grounding herself with a simple, tactile reminder of life's resilience.

She may also have a habit of giving advice or words of encouragement, sometimes unsolicited. Her "motherly" presence can make others feel a bit smothered, but her intentions are always kind. She's also likely to remember details about people, names, birthdays, favorite foods, which makes her feel genuinely invested in those around her.

Values & Beliefs

The Empress values kindness, generosity, and the power of unity. She believes in the strength of community and is fiercely protective of those she cares about. She sees life as sacred, whether it's a field of wildflowers or the people in her charge. Her values center on growth, compassion, and the idea that everything has a purpose. She believes in giving people the tools to succeed rather than doing things for them, teaching through guidance rather than commands.

She has a deep respect for nature and the cycle of life, understanding that growth and decay are both necessary. Her beliefs are rooted in love, balance, and the hope that even in a world filled with darkness, there is room for beauty and kindness to flourish.

Conflict Style

In conflict, the Empress avoids direct confrontation whenever possible. She prefers to resolve disputes through diplomacy, kindness, and understanding. She's

the character who will try to calm tempers, negotiate terms, and find solutions that benefit everyone. She's not one to leap into battle unless she has no other choice, and even then, her actions are likely to be defensive rather than aggressive.

If forced into direct conflict, she'll focus on protecting others and minimizing harm. She might use healing abilities to support her allies or position herself to deflect harm away from others. Her conflict style is all about creating safety, whether through negotiation or direct action, and she'll look for every possible way to resolve things peacefully before drawing a weapon.

The Emperor (IV)

The Emperor is card number four in the major arcana, symbolizing authority, structure, and a powerful sense of responsibility. He's the embodiment of controlled strength and leadership, representing the ability to set boundaries, create order, and impose discipline in a world that might otherwise be swayed by chaos and whimsy. The Emperor doesn't lead with charm or flourish; he leads with purpose and clarity, taking on the burdens that others may shy away from and making hard choices without flinching. For a fantasy roleplaying character, grounding them in The Emperor archetype means they're the backbone of any group, the one others look to when they need steady guidance, firm decision-making, and unyielding resolve.

Grounding a character in The Emperor archetype goes beyond just making them a leader; it makes them a figure of unshakable conviction, someone who embodies resilience and authority in ways that feel solid and dependable. The Emperor archetype in a fantasy setting is perfect for players who want to embrace the strength that comes with responsibility, the power that comes with discipline, and the purpose that comes with having a clear mission. He's not here for personal gain or fame; his motivation runs deeper, a drive to create a structured and secure environment where others can thrive.

Role in the Story

The Emperor's role in a story is essential, as he serves as the grounding force that provides stability, direction, and order when chaos threatens to take over. He's the one who keeps the group focused, who steps in to make the difficult decisions that others might avoid, and who holds everyone accountable when things start to fall apart. His role is not just about directing others but about instilling a sense of purpose and clarity. While his leadership may seem rigid or unyielding, it's precisely this strength that makes him reliable, and his presence reassures others in times of uncertainty.

The Emperor doesn't just keep the party moving forward; he brings structure and focus to a group that might otherwise drift or splinter. His values and sense of duty create a framework within which others can operate, helping them to feel a part of something larger than themselves. He serves as the character who unites

the party under a common goal, setting clear expectations and establishing a moral and tactical code that others can follow. When the group faces external threats or internal discord, The Emperor's role is to maintain cohesion, fostering a sense of unity even if it means making unpopular decisions.

Background & History

The Emperor archetype is rooted in a background of structured responsibility, one where order, duty, and the importance of leadership are emphasized from an early age. Unlike those who come from chaotic or whimsical upbringings, The Emperor's path was likely shaped by environments that value discipline, stability, and clear roles. His background is one of mentorship, where he was taught the gravity of leadership and the impact that one person's actions can have on a larger community. He may have grown up in a setting where authority was respected, where rules were followed, and where expectations were set high.

He likely learned early on that strength comes not just from brute force, but from consistency and reliability. His history reflects an understanding that leadership is about more than power, it's about responsibility and accountability. Whether he came from a noble family that prepared him for rulership, a military background that taught him the value of structure and camaraderie, or a humble community where he earned his respect through dedication, The Emperor's story is marked by lessons in authority and self-discipline. He's seen firsthand what happens when chaos reigns and knows the cost of failing to establish control.

Personality Traits

The Emperor's personality is built on a foundation of authority, discipline, and a deep-seated sense of purpose. He isn't someone to back down or compromise easily, and his values are set in stone, making him both an inspiring and occasionally challenging character. His personality is not about being approachable or open to whims; it's about projecting strength and providing stability for those around him. The Emperor's confidence is natural and unshakable, and his traits reflect a level of maturity and restraint that younger or less experienced characters might lack. He knows his own mind and expects others to respect his leadership, but he also understands that true authority comes from action, not just words.

He's the kind of person who doesn't suffer fools gladly, yet his approach is rarely cruel or harsh. He's pragmatic, focusing on the bigger picture and pushing others to live up to their potential, even if that requires tough love. The Emperor's values are deeply embedded in his actions; he doesn't ask anything of others that he isn't willing to do himself. He's reliable, steadfast, and resilient, serving as a pillar for others to lean on. His strength lies in his conviction, and while he may not be the warmest character, his loyalty and dedication make him someone others can depend on.

Physical Traits

A character embodying The Emperor archetype has a physical presence that reflects his authority, experience, and strength. He's not necessarily flashy or showy, but his appearance is solid, stable, and unmistakably authoritative. He carries himself with a posture that suggests he's used to being in control, and there's a certain weight to his gaze that conveys wisdom and experience. His attire is purposeful, reflecting his values; he doesn't dress to impress but rather to be functional and convey his role as a protector and leader.

The Emperor's physical traits hint at the life he's led, a life of discipline, training, and facing challenges head-on. He might carry the scars of past battles or the signs of age that come from years of hard work. His movements are deliberate and measured, reflecting the discipline that permeates every part of his life. His attire includes functional clothing, armor, or other items that convey his readiness to face whatever challenges may come his way. He's the kind of character who doesn't need to raise his voice to command attention; his presence alone is enough.

Motivation & Goals

The Emperor is motivated by a deep-seated sense of duty, a drive to create stability, and a desire to leave behind a legacy that will stand the test of time. His goals are not driven by personal gain or short-term glory; he's motivated by the impact he can have on the world around him and the protection he can offer to those he's responsible for. His sense of duty is unwavering, and he's committed to creating an environment where people can thrive under the security of structure and order. For The Emperor, there's a profound satisfaction in building something meaningful, something that will endure long after he's gone.

The Emperor's goals are grounded in ideals that transcend individual desires. He's focused on the collective, on the systems and structures that make life better for everyone involved. He's the kind of character who sees the bigger picture and is willing to make personal sacrifices to achieve his vision. Whether it's establishing a kingdom, creating a lasting alliance, or simply maintaining peace within his community, his ambitions reflect a deep understanding of the value of stability. He isn't swayed by temporary setbacks or obstacles; his motivation is to see his work endure, to create something that others will respect and uphold.

Strengths

The Emperor's strengths lie in his leadership abilities, his resilience in the face of adversity, and his unwavering commitment to his values. He's not someone who wavers or doubts his purpose, and this confidence makes him a reassuring presence in any group. His strength is both physical and mental; he's the kind of character who can weather storms and stand firm when others start to falter. His strengths are rooted in his discipline and his ability to remain calm and