

THE SANTA TAROT

About the Deck

The Santa Tarot is an Expansion Suit for the Infinite Tarot, an expandable and customizable Tarot deck. The Santa Tarot consists of the Major Arcana Cards only and does not include the Minor Arcana. The Santa Tarot is inspired by the Midwinter Gift-giver figure most commonly envisioned as “Santa”.

The Midwinter Gift-giving figure is very widespread and has many variations. Its origins are ancient. In this deck we examine many diverse elements that have contributed to the modern Gift-giver Santa and related figures. We hope that you find them as fascinating as we do.

Blessings,
Rev. Don Lewis

The Cards

0 – The Fool / Baby New Year



Legend: We begin our deck with the Baby New Year. The relationship between the Baby New Year and the Midwinter Gift-giver may not be obvious at first, but it is important. The original reason for the Midwinter Holiday season is the Winter Solstice. This is part of the cycle of Nature and has been observed by humans since long before the advent of written history. The Solstice has always been here. From the Summer Solstice to the Winter Solstice days grow shorter and nights grow longer. The Winter Solstice itself marks the Shortest Day and Longest Night of the year. After the Longest Night, days begin to grow longer again, and the Sun is considered to be reborn. For many cultures this has been a very important occasion. For other cultures, even though the original reason has lost its prominence, various customs based on this annual renewal continue to be important, sometimes assigned to newer holidays close to the actual Solstice. The Midwinter Gift-Giver is one of these customs and represents the aged Sun before its Solstice rebirth. In many cultures the calendar is tied to this annual rebirth as well, with New Year's Day being on or near the Winter Solstice. Thus the Baby New Year will be seen to be the reborn year and also the reborn Sun, as well as the reborn Midwinter Giftgiver.

Meaning: In a reading the Fool tells you to trust yourself and have faith in your own judgment. What you have chosen, or what you choose, is the correct choice and will be successful. Believe in yourself, trust in Deity, and go forward. Even if success seems improbable, even if everyone else derides you as a Fool, have faith in your own judgment and follow it. Leave fear and doubt behind and begin your

journey by taking the first step. Trust yourself and move forward with your desire, you will be successful.

I – The Magician / Ded Moroz



Legend: 'Ded Moroz' is the Russian name for 'Grandfather Frost' who is the Slavic spirit of winter. Grandfather Frost is a Pan-Slavic figure whose name has many variations in different Slavic languages. Like other Midwinter Gift-giving figures Ded Moroz is an ancient figure with pre-Christian origins. Ded Moroz originates in Morozko, the Slavic God of winter. Morozko was portrayed as a wizard and a smith, who forged ice which bound the winter like iron. In the Christian era Ded Moroz became identified with the Christmas holiday, and later the New Year holiday, where he visits with gifts for children. Like Santa Claus Ded Moroz is portrayed as an old man with a long white beard. In some stories he lives in a forest of eternal winter. In some stories he lives in the very real town of Veliky Ustyug in northern Russia. Ded Moroz possesses a magic staff of crystal or silver, rides in a horse-drawn sleigh, and in modern times is usually accompanied by Snegurochka the Snow Maiden, his granddaughter and assistant. Ded Moroz and Snegurochka appear throughout the holiday season and deliver presents under the fir tree on January 31, just as the Old Year gives way to the New Year.

Meaning: In a reading the Magician means that the Querent has all of the ability necessary to make their will manifest in the world. Their desire, whatever it is, is within their reach. Whatever they desire to do they can, and unless counter-indicated by other aspects of the reading, should do. Any tools or help needed to achieve their desire are present and available to them. The Magician means that the Querent need only act to be successful –failure coming only through inaction.

II – The High Priestess / Snegurochka



Legend: 'Snegurochka' is an affectionate form of 'Snegorka,' meaning Snow Maiden. Snegurochka is generally conceived as the granddaughter and helper of Ded Moroz who comes with him at New Year's to give gifts to children. Like Ded Moroz himself, Snegurochka is an ancient figure with roots in Slavic Paganism. One version of her story holds that she was the daughter of Ded Moroz and the Goddess of Spring. In 1873, Alexandr Ostrovsky wrote a famous Russian play about Snegurochka based on this legend. The play is called *Spring Fairytale*. In the play Snegurochka lives with her father Ded Moroz in a forest of eternal winter. Being made of snow, Snegurochka has a cold heart, but wishes that she were able to love as mortals do, even if it were to cost her immortality. Her father, being the Winter, does not understand, but her mother Spring sympathizes. Spring gives Snegurochka a magic wreath that enables her to fall in love, and she does so. But Snegurochka is still made of snow, and she and her lover leave the winter forest the rays of the sun fall upon Snegurochka causing her to melt away. Rimsky-Korsakov subsequently wrote the opera *Snegurochka* based on this version of the legend. Another version of Snegurochka's story has a childless couple who make a snow figure one winter, pretending it is actually their child. They pray for a child just like the image they have made, and the snow figure comes to life as Snegurochka. Snegurochka is a wonderful daughter to her parents and a popular girl in their village. One year at Midsummer her friends invite her to join them for the celebration, which includes jumping over the bonfire. Although she has been warned to avoid fire, Snegurochka cannot resist and leaps the bonfire, disappearing with a puff of mist in the fire's heat. By the late Nineteenth Century Snegurochka came to be included in Christmas celebrations and started to be seen as the helper of Ded Moroz, now conceived as her grandfather rather than her father. Later these traditions were transferred to the New Year holiday, where Ded Moroz and Snegurochka symbolize the holiday and come together to give gifts

to children.

Meaning: In a reading the High Priestess card means that the Querent should seek spiritual guidance. The needed answers will come when sought in this manner, but the Querent must look away from the physical situation –preoccupation with which may in fact be obscuring their judgment- to see what is going on underneath. The needed answers or advice can only be found within, so the Querent must look inward, whether through prayer to Deity or to Higher Self, meditation, or psychic messages.

III – The Empress / Mrs. Claus



Legend: Mrs. Claus is the wife of Santa Claus. Mrs. Santa Claus has been an important figure in the Santa mythos since the early Nineteenth Century at least, especially in North America. However, many other Midwinter Gift-giving figures also have wives such as Ded Moroz and his wife the Spring Beauty, Odin and Frigga, Saturn and Ops, et cetera, and Mrs. Claus is a figure of abundance in the same mold as these. Mr. Claus is a motherly figure heavily associated with food, especially baked goods. Mrs. Claus takes care of her husband Santa Claus and his legion of elves. In some versions Mrs. Clause plays a major role in managing the North Pole and Santa's toy production, while in others she is more domestic figure. Like Santa himself, Mrs. Claus is sometimes conceived of always as an elderly woman, in others they grow young again each spring and age through the year. Some versions of her legend identify Mrs. Claus with the Queen of Elphame and it is through his marriage to her that Santa is associated with elves. In some other versions of the legend Mrs. Claus is identified with Mother Nature.

Meaning: When you draw the Empress in a reading, it indicates prosperity, success, and an abundance of comforts, both emotional and material: an enviable position to be in. The Empress indicates success and expansion, but also pleasure and contentment –the Querent will not only be successful in a situation indicated by the Empress, but happy as well. The Empress also indicates a somewhat protected position, not unlike a child in its mother's arms. The Empress can also indicate mental, financial, and if appropriate to the question, physical fertility and definitely indicates the fruition of any situation it refers to.

IV – The Emperor / Santa Claus



Legend: ‘Santa Claus’ is the most common name in the English-speaking world for the Midwinter Gift-giving figure, however the Midwinter Gift-giver is an ancient figure that far pre-dates the modern name. Most European cultures had a Midwinter Gift-giving figure and these resemble one another closely because the cultures they belong to share a common Indo-European origin. Some of the figures include the Germanic Odin, the Slavic Morozko, and the Roman Saturnus. All of these figures are strongly associated with Midwinter and with Gift-giving, though their Gift-giving was not limited to children and was generally as a reward or punishment for people’s behavior. This role of moral arbiter is reflected in the modern child-centered Santa’s ‘Naughty or Nice list.’ In the Christian Era the Midwinter Gift-giver came to be associated with figures such as St. Nicholas or St. Basil, mainly because of the timing of the feast days of these saints as the character of the saints have little similarity to popular conception of the Midwinter Gift-giver. The modern Santa Claus is usually imagined as a kindly, portly, and jolly figure with an abundant belly and a long white beard, normally but not universally dressed in red. Because of his immense love for children Santa gives gifts to all the children of the world each year at Christmas. Santa has a wife, Mrs. Claus, and lives with her at the North Pole along with a large number of elves. The elves help Santa make the toys that he distributes to children on Christmas Eve. Sometimes Santa himself has been portrayed as being an elf. The famous poem *‘Twas the Night Before Christmas* by Clement Clarke Moore describes Santa as an elf of diminutive stature. More commonly Santa is conceived of as an immortal human who simply works with elves. Santa rides in a magic sleigh pulled by flying reindeer most commonly said to be eight in number. The eight reindeer are often considered a reflex of Odin’s eight-legged horse Sleipnir. Santa is traditionally said to enter through the chimney to deliver his gifts. Before the advent of chimneys, the Midwinter Gift-giver would enter through the hearth, the fire that

was maintained at the center of the home and in ancient times was the focus of domestic worship. In modern times, with chimneys declining in popularity, Santa often simply enters through the front door. Although the 'Naughty and Nice List' is still part of the Santa mythos, Santa's role as moral arbiter has largely disappeared and in most places, Santa is thought of as delivering presents to all children without a moral judgment involved. Many families will leave cookies and milk for Santa as a thank you for his efforts.

Meaning: The Emperor reminds you that whatever situation you are in, it must in its time change. If you are in a bad situation, take heart for things will improve. If you are in a good situation, lay something back for future times. This is a card of looking to the future and preparing for change. The Emperor says to be prudent and plan for the changes which are bound to come, so that you can take best advantage of the natural cycles of things.

∴ – The Hierophant / La Befana



Legend: Often called 'The Christmas Witch,' La Befana is traditionally identified with the related holiday of Epiphany on January 6. Although the origin of the name 'La Befana' is uncertain, it is usually thought to be a corruption of 'Epiphania.' La Befana is an elderly Witch who flies on a broom and delivers presents to children on Epiphany or in modern times Christmas. La Befana enters houses through the chimney and leaves toys and sweets for good children and sticks or coal for bad children. She then sweeps the house before leaving, sweeping away the problems of the old year as she does so. Families generally leave a thank you for La Befana but unlike Santa she prefers a glass of wine and a bit of dinner rather than cookies and milk. Like other Midwinter Gift-givers La Befana is very ancient, having originally been the Roman Goddess Strenia whose festival fell at the New Year and involved sweeping away the problems of the old year and giving New Year's gifts called strennae that were believed to confer good fortune for the new year. Like the figure of Father Winter, the Winter Witch is very widespread with other examples including the Germanic Perchta or Holda or the Celtic Beira.

Meaning: When the Hierophant comes up in a reading it tells you that you have something to learn from the situation being asked about – a "life lesson" if you would. The situation offers you a better understanding of yourself and/or others. But like all life lessons, this one can be either easy or hard depending upon how you handle it. When we resist life's lessons, they can be extremely hard and painful – indeed, however hard is necessary to break through our resistance. Therefore, if you draw the Hierophant, you must make it a point to be open to the lesson Spirit has to teach you through the situation at hand and try not to resist it. Indeed, it is well to pray and ask Spirit to teach the lesson as

gently as possible, while yourself being as receptive to the lesson as you can. In this way the Hierophant will be better able to teach the lesson without trauma, for the lesson itself cannot be avoided.

VI – The Lovers / Mistletoe



Legend: Mistletoe is a parasitic plant that grows on many trees and bushes but is especially associated with the oak tree in folklore. Mistletoe was sacred to many ancient peoples. Mistletoe was important in Druidic practice, where it was associated with the God Taranis. Among the Germanic peoples Mistletoe was the plant used by Loki to murder the God Balder, being the only plant that he was vulnerable to. Horrified that it had been used this way, legend said that Mistletoe dedicated itself thereafter to being a symbol of love, friendship, and alliance. Mistletoe was also sacred to the Greeks and Romans, who treated it as a protective herb. Mistletoe has long been associated with the Winter Solstice, and hanging Mistletoe was part of the Saturnalia celebrations. Hanging a sprig of Mistletoe in the home was believed to protect the home and its inhabitants. Mistletoe was believed to draw good luck as well. Mistletoe was also a symbol of love, friendship, and alliance. The idea of kissing under the Mistletoe was popularized in the Eighteenth century. The idea is that to kiss under the Mistletoe will bring good fortune to the couple's romance. Originally, a berry had to be picked from the Mistletoe sprig each time a couple exchanged a kiss beneath it in order for the blessing to take effect -when there were no more berries left, the Mistletoe sprig would confer no further blessings.

Meaning: In a reading the Lovers indicate the importance of conscious choice and of being clear in what one wants to happen in the situation being asked about. Often the person may be having difficulty in choosing what they want or may be unclear on how they actually feel about the situation. Self-examination may help them to clarify their feelings and desires, and then make a clear choice. In any event, the Lovers indicate that a choice is necessary, and no progress can come to the situation until a choice has been made.

VII – The Chariot / Santa’s Sleigh



Legend: While Odin rides an eight-legged flying horse and La Befana rides a broom, Santa and Ded Moroz both travel by sleigh. Ded Moroz' sleigh is drawn by horses and is a perfectly ordinary sleigh. Santa's sleigh on the other hand is a magic sleigh drawn by flying reindeer. The sleigh is a very sensible mode of transportation for a figure associated with deep winter and northern climes. The reindeer make their first appearance in early Nineteenth Century United States. Originally just one reindeer, first seen in the 1821 poem *Old Santeclaus with Much Delight*, the number of reindeer expanded to eight with Clement Clarke Moore's 1823 poem *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* and were given as ten reindeer in Frank L. Baum's *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* in 1902. The figure of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was added to the mythos in 1939: but in all these versions and others the reindeer are resolutely magical and definitely fly.

Meaning: The Chariot represents moving forward. When this card comes up in a reading it means that the Querent should definitely take action in the situation and can expect to be met with success. The Querent should take action with confidence, even in the face of opposition or apparent obstacles –as these shall be overcome. This is a card of success and advancement.

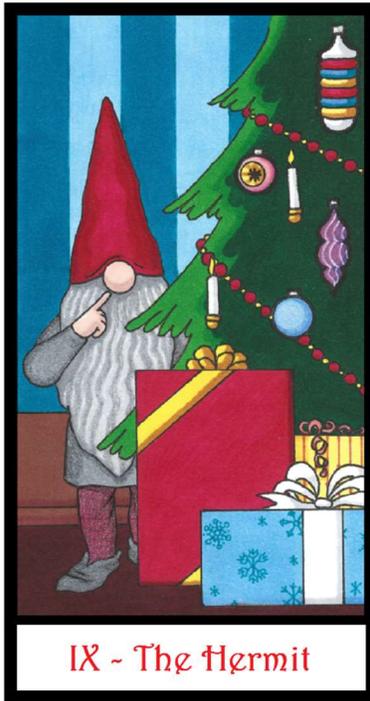
VIII – Strength / Elf



Legend: Elves are associated with the midwinter holiday in Scandinavia and in the English-speaking world. Elves are conceived of as immortal spirits, and in modern times are usually portrayed as being diminutive humans. In Scandinavia, elves called Tomten or Nissen traditionally acted as guardians of the home and became associated with Midwinter Gift Giving when the older image of the Yule Goat became less common. In the English-speaking world elves became associated with Santa as toymakers and helpers during the Nineteenth century. In the early Nineteenth century Santa himself was often portrayed as an elf, so it was a natural conclusion that he worked with other elves to create the toys and gifts that he distributed. In the picture we see one of Santa's elves showing his strength by lifting and carrying many presents in Santa's workshop.

Meaning: Strength, as its name suggests, indicates the ability to withstand any challenge. When the Strength card comes up in a reading, the Querent may face challenges or obstacles, but should rely upon their own strength to withstand these. This is not a card which indicates a good time to move forward with a situation, but rather a time to stay still, rely upon one's strengths, and adopt a defensive mode.

IX – The Hermit / Tomte



Legend: A 'Tomte' is a spirit in Scandinavian folklore that acts as the guardian of the home and family. Sometimes the Tomte is thought of as an ancestor spirit, and other times as a nature spirit. 'Tomte' is the Swedish name for this kind of spirit while 'Nisse' is the Danish term, 'Toftu' the Norwegian, and 'Tonttu' the Finnish forms of the name. The Tomte is usually pictured as a diminutive being with a long white beard and pointed hat. The Tomte looks over the family and the household but does not like to be seen and can be quite irate if they are observed. It was normal to leave a bowl of porridge with butter as a thank you for the Tomte, especially at Christmas Eve. Over time the Tomte took on the role of Midwinter Gift-giver, previously played in Scandinavian countries by the Yule Goat. Today the Tomte brings gifts at Christmas in which role he takes on something of the jolly character of a Christmas Elf.

Meaning: The Hermit advises self-reliance. The Querent has all the knowledge and ability needed to handle the situation at hand, and does not need outside help or advice –indeed, the Querent is better off without outside help or advice since their own understanding of the situation and how to deal with it is superior to any outside view. Others may not know as much, understand as deeply, or may even misunderstand the situation. Consequently, the Querent should rely upon their own unique perspective, and trust it.

X – Fortune / Father Winter



Legend: Father Christmas, admirably expressed as the Ghost of Christmas Present in Charles Dickens' 'Christmas Carol,' is the personification of all the good aspects of the Midwinter season and the Midwinter Holiday especially. Father Christmas is presented as a middle-aged or elderly man richly dressed and abundantly supplied with gifts to give out as well as all manner of festive foods and sweets. As such, Father Christmas is also related to the Roman Saturn, whose Saturnalia festival is one of the main sources of modern Midwinter Holiday customs. Assimilated to the native Dis Pater, the Roman Saturn differs from his Greek counterpart in being looked on as the ruler of a bygone Golden Age and as a Lord of the Dead. The Saturnalia festival commemorated these qualities by temporarily turning the world upside down with parents and children and masters and servants changing roles, a general suspension of ordinary social conventions, and the custom of giving or exchanging gifts. After Saturnalia itself ceased to be celebrated many of its customs transferred to other Midwinter Holidays. A notably example is the Lord of Misrule, a custom in which a child or in some cases simply an unlikely person would be chosen to rule over the Holiday as King, turning normal social convention on its head.

Meaning: In a reading the Fortune card represents a gift of Fate –unexpected good luck, assistance, or advancement. This suggests that the querent will advance in their situation for reasons other than their own effort. The querent can expect good luck and unexpected favorable resolutions to situations in question.

XI – Justice / Rudolph



Legend: ‘Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer’ is a modern Christmas tradition created by author Robert L. May in 1939 and popularized by a Gene Autry song in 1948 (written by Johnny Marks). In the story Rudolph is one of Santa’s reindeer born with a strangely luminous nose. This unique nose causes Rudolph to be rejected by the other reindeer and overlooked by Santa. Only when a particular Christmas Eve is so overcast with fog that Santa’s sleigh cannot fly, is the true worth of Rudolph’s unusual nose recognized, as it can act as a beacon cutting through the fog. With Rudolph leading the way, Santa can make his flight after all. After this, Rudolph is accepted and celebrated, receiving justice for his earlier exclusion.

Meaning: In a reading the Justice card means that you can expect to receive back from a situation as much as you are willing to put into it. Thus, hard work will be rewarded with success in equal measure. Justice represents a situation in which the querent’s efforts are not wasted, though they may take time to reach fruition. But with the Justice card the querent should trust that hard work will eventually pay off. Of course, Justice also says that nothing more will happen in the situation than the querent makes happen.

XII – The Hanged Man / Frosty



Legend: Although the use of evergreen foliage in wreaths and boughs was very common during the Midwinter Holiday in most of Europe, the tradition of the Christmas Tree originates among the German peoples. Tree veneration was common in the ancient world, and well attested in ancient Europe. The idea of decorating trees is also ancient, and widespread. It is often said that the idea of bringing a Christmas Tree into the house and decorating it was started by Martin Luther, however the use of indoor decorated trees can be shown well before Luther's time albeit in public spaces such as Guildhalls. In any event the use of decorated Christmas Trees became very popular in Germanic countries during the Renaissance and spread out from Germany to the rest of Europe over time. The Christmas Tree, being an evergreen, represents immortality. The Christmas Tree can also be taken to represent the World Tree, an important theme in ancient Germanic religion. It was upon the World Tree, called Yggdrasil among other names, that Odin hanged himself for nine nights to gain the magic of the Runes. However, Odin hanging from the World Tree seemed a little heavy for the theme of this deck, even if entirely relevant -therefore we have Frosty hanging from the Christmas Tree instead. The earliest known Christmas Trees were decorated primarily with edible decorations such as dried fruits and pastries, and sometimes with paper ornaments. By 1600 AD small ornaments were being made of glass and tin and sold throughout Germany. Today Christmas ornaments are made in almost any design one could want. Frosty, the subject of this ornament, is a snowman brought to life by magic who later melts in the Sun on a hot day. Although Frosty the Snowman as a character only dates to 1950 AD, it is a variation on a very ancient folktale theme which also gave rise to the figure of Snegurochka mentioned elsewhere in this set.

Meaning: The Hanged Man represents a situation which will require the passage of time before it can move forward or be resolved. This will take time before it occurs, and it cannot be rushed. At the same time the querent will learn much about their own nature from the situation –what truly matters to them, how they truly feel about things. Though they will have to wait before they can progress, this waiting will bring them deeper self-knowledge and insight into themselves.

XIII – Death / The Old Year



Legend: The Year is intimately tied to the cycles of Sun and Moon. The earliest peoples used these natural cycles to measure time, and from them over many centuries developed calendars. Each year, the Sun renews itself at the Winter Solstice. Days grow shorter and nights longer as we approach the Winter Solstice which is the Longest Night of the year. After the Longest Night, days begin to grow longer again and the Sun is thought of as having been reborn. Many calendars have been tied to this cycle historically, with the New Year occurring more or less at the time of the Winter Solstice. In the picture, the Old Year prepares to pass away, even as the Baby New Year peaks out from beneath his robe, about to be reborn.

Meaning: The Death card tells us that current circumstances will change drastically. Whatever the current influences on the situation in question, drawing the Death card indicates that these will be altered and transformed. The querent should be prepared to move with this change and adapt to it, as there is no way to prevent or avoid it.

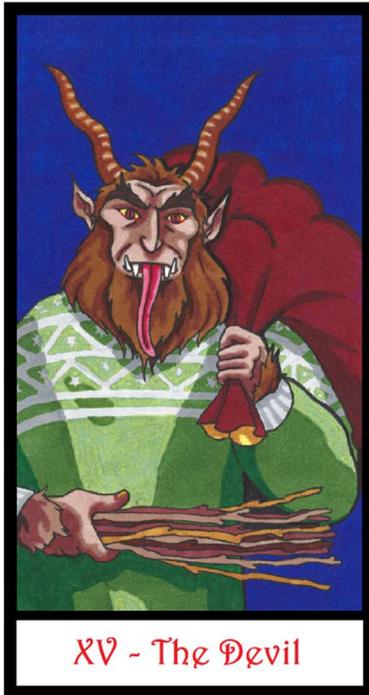
XIV – Temperance / Santa's Daughter



Legend: Just as Ded Moroz has his granddaughter Snegurochka in Slavic countries, so the English-speaking world's Santa is often said to have a daughter, although she does not normally act as one of his helpers. Like Snegurochka, Santa's daughter is commonly associated with snow. However, unlike Snegurochka Santa's daughter is not made of snow -she merely creates and controls it. Santa's daughter has been given many names none of which is universally accepted, including Holly Claus and Ivy Clause. In addition, the character of Suzie Snowflake is sometimes identified as Santa's daughter, though not always. The Temperance card is about transmuting one thing into another, and because of her association with snow Santa's daughter is perfect for this. Santa's daughter transforms water into snow and ice, fundamentally changing its state.

Meaning: The Temperance card suggests that the querent or the situation in question involves bringing together a variety of components in order to forge a new creation. This might be a new situation, a new group or alliance, a new project or company, or any number of things – but it will be more and different than any one of its component parts. This is not merely a growth, but a change: a new beginning for the situation.

XV – The Devil / Krampus



Legend: In Germanic countries the Midwinter Gift-giver was Christianized as Saint Nicholas, a Fourth Century AD Christian Saint originally unrelated to the Midwinter Gift-giver tradition. In central Europe, St Nicholas is usually accompanied by one or more companions. The most famous of such companions is Krampus. Krampus is an animal-like figure covered in fur and having prominent horns. Almost always Krampus has his tongue extended, an ancient apotropaic feature. Krampus is thought to be a very ancient figure related to similar figures in European tradition such as the Sylvester Clausen. All of these figures represent the idea of chaos, also associated with night and winter and thus prominent in the Midwinter season. The modern legend of Krampus states that he is demon who accompanies St Nicholas on his yearly visit. St Nicholas rewards good children with gifts such as toys or fruit, while Krampus gives coal or physical beatings to bad children. Some versions of legends relate that Krampus will carry off the bad children to an unpleasant end unless the promise to do better.

Meaning: The Devil card means that you are not seeing clearly –accurate understanding of the situation in question is obscured. With the Devil card an effort is required to see the situation as it really is, rather than as you would have it be, or as you fear it might be. Part of the problem is having an accurate view of yourself. The Devil card suggests that you may be harboring illusions about yourself and your role in or feelings about the situation. Examine your feelings and try to get some emotional distance from the situation or look at it from fresh angles. You may find that things you thought you knew about the situation are very different when viewed from a distance.

XVI – The Struck Tower / The Ruined Chimney



Legend: In most cultures from prehistoric times the hearth was the figurative and usually literal center of the home. For most of history the hearth was an open fire at the center of the home. The hearth was the center of family life being the place where food was cooked and eaten. The hearth was also the place where the family offered prayers to the ancestors and household gods who acted as guardians of the family. As the focus of household worship, the hearth formed a bridge between the family and the spirit world, with the ancestors and household gods manifesting through it. This is why Midwinter Gift-givers like Santa and La Befana enter the home through the hearth rather than simply through the door. Beginning in the Twelfth century the hearth began to be moved to the side of the room and equipped with a chimney to more effectively channel the smoke out of the house. As chimneys became common, figures like Santa began to be thought of as coming down the chimney onto the hearth and thence into the home. Now that chimneys are no longer common the Midwinter Gift-givers often do simply enter through the door, but some families will set up artificial fireplaces made of cardboard to magically facilitate the Gift-givers entry.

Meaning: The Tower card tells us that change is immanent and that conditions in the situation at question will shortly be very different than they have been. This change should be expected quickly and is often a near total change in the situation. These changes are needed because the querent has outgrown the old conditions -though the querent may not be consciously aware of this. It is important

not to resist the changes which come, but to embrace them and adapt to them, because resisting the change will make it a harder experience.

XVIII – The Star



Legend: Placing the Star or other Tree-Topper is the high point of decorating the Holiday Tree. The main origin of the Star in this role is the Star of Bethlehem, which in Christianity is believed to have led the Three Magi to the time and place of Jesus' birth. Magi is the plural of Magus, which was the Latin term of Priests of the Zoroastrian religion. The term Magus was also used generally for anyone who practiced magic or astrology. The Three Magi were adopted wholesale from the Zoroastrian story of the birth of Mithras, where their presence as Zoroastrian Priests makes a bit more sense. In any case the Star carries the symbolism of following the trail to something wonderful whether the birth of a God or merely the joys of the holiday season.

Meaning: The Star is a card of Spiritual guidance. The querent is advised to meditate upon the situation in question. Inner guidance is needed and is the only real answer. Seeking external answers will not help. The querent must come to terms with what they really feel and think about the situation. If the person is spiritually active, then they should seek guidance from their Spirit Guides.

XIX – The Moon



Legend: People often talk about the ‘true meaning’ of the Winter Holiday Season. The original point of the season, of course, was the occurrence of the Winter Solstice. Solstice is the reason for the season. The Winter Solstice marks the Shortest Day of the year and consequently the Longest Night. From Summer Solstice to Winter Solstice the days grow progressively shorter, and then after the Winter Solstice days begin to grow longer again. For this reason, many cultures think of the Sun as being reborn after the Longest Night. This was very important to ancient people who relied on the Sun much more than we do today. For many cultures the Longest Night marked a time of uncertainty -would the Sun really be reborn this night? Would the days really grow longer again? Some cultures would extinguish all household fires on this night, only to light them from scratch from a sacred fire the next day, thus marking the Sun’s rebirth. Although the appearance of the Midwinter Gift-giver has been assigned to various nights through the centuries, the night of the Solstice -the Longest Night of the year- is the origin of the legend, the night when the Old Year gives its final gifts before being reborn.

Meaning: When the Moon comes up in a reading it suggests that the querent should seek out an answer to their situation by spiritual means. Depending upon the person this could be through prayer, through meditation, or through magic. The situation must be approached on a spiritual as opposed to a physical level, and spiritual intervention is required on the part of the querent. Whereas The Stars indicate a need for spiritual guidance, The Moon indicates a need for spiritual action.

IXX – The Sun / Solstice



Legend: At the Solstice the Sun is reborn. After the Longest Night, the days will begin to grow longer again. When the Sun sets to usher in the Longest Night the Old Sun, the Midwinter Gift-giver, is at the height of His power. When the Sun rises the next morning, the cycle begins again. The Midwinter Gift-giver, Santa, Ded Moroz, Odin, La Befana, or whatever name of form the Gift-giver is conceived in, represents the Old Sun about to be renewed. Having reached the wisdom and wealth of old age, the Sun will begin again renewed and refreshed after the Longest Night.

Meaning: When the Sun appears in a reading it indicates that the querent will be successful either in terms of their general situation or in terms of achieving a specific goal. The Sun indicates success, prosperity, acclaim. With this card the querent can be assured of positive influences and beneficial situations.

XX – Judgment / Naughty or Nice List



Legend: Santa Claus famously has a 'Naughty or Nice List' to help him keep track of what to give to which children, good children receiving presents like toys or sweets and naughty children receiving things like coal or rocks. The more ancient Midwinter gift-givers like Saturn or Odin do not seem to have made such distinctions -their gifts were for all and symbolized the bounty of the season, not a judgment on the receiver. But of course, in practice, everyone seems to end up on the 'Nice' list, so it's all good.

Meaning: The Judgment card indicates that the querent will achieve what they have wanted or worked for. A long-term goal is accomplished successfully. The effort that was formerly put toward achieving this goal will no longer be necessary. This may necessitate the querent's re-examining their life in the wake of their success, in order to move on. Otherwise, success may lead to stagnation. The situation which has long taken their attention will be successfully completed –new goals and new directions will be needed to take its place.

XXI – The World



Legend: In the end, the Midwinter Gift-giving figure revolves around the actual giving of the gifts. Whether in a sleigh, like Ded Moroz, a flying sleigh like Santa, or a Witches' broom like La Befana, the Midwinter Gift-giver accomplishes this in a single night giving gifts all over the world. Today organizations like NORAD track Santa's progress in his flight around the world, while the Russian GLONASS similarly tracks Ded Moroz' travels, adding a new tradition to an ancient holiday.

Meaning: The Universe card indicates that the querent can expect very positive conditions in whatever part of the reading the card appears in. The Universe indicates happiness, success, good fortune: Whatever can be desired from the situation is likely to be there for the having. The Universe is among the best possible cards in any position and indicates a near ideal situation.