

About Witches Through History Oracle Deck

Divination by drawing cards has existed in some form for hundreds of years. Messages can be gleaned from both the metaphorical meanings of a deck and the illustrated symbolism displayed on the cards. With *Witches Through History Oracle Deck*, readers can draw meaning and messages inspired by the magical and mysterious tales from the many witches, familiars, deities, and items in this book. These tie together in five separate suits, which connect to the five magical elements: Earth (grounding, abundance, primal instinct), Water (emotion, the unconscious, mutability), Fire (passion, risk, forcefulness), Air (knowledge, perception, communication), and Spirit (bridge between earthly and divine).

How to Read Oracle Cards

Oracle cards can be read like tarot cards, although they tend to be a bit more open-ended. Begin by holding your deck and focusing on a question or situation that concerns you. Shuffle the deck in any way you see fit, while continuing to think about your query. The simplest way to choose a card is to shuffle until you feel called to stop and then flip one card from the top of the deck. Another option is to spread out all of the cards face down, focus on them, and listen to your intuition for which to choose.

Any number of cards can be pulled from the deck depending on your personal preference. I find a simple three-card spread is useful when you think about it in terms of *Past-Present-Future*, *Mind-Body-Spirit*, *Situation-Action-Outcome*, *Strength-Weakness-Advice*, or any other triple-fold situation. Read on to decipher possible meanings from each card.



EARTH

GROUNDING, ABUNDANCE, PRIMAL INSTINCTS



THE HORNEDED GOD
Nature • Masculine Energy • Abundance

The presence of the Great Horned God in a reading denotes a strong earthly connection. Abundance and fertility are present (or incoming), either materially or spiritually. Take a moment to ground yourself and be thankful for this connection. This card could also indicate a need to step away and reacquire yourself with the natural world and appreciate the beauty around you.



CIRCE
Protection • Sensuality • Excess

When Circe appears in a reading, it is an indication of the more primal aspects of earth energies: the need for protection, physicality, or mental stimulation. What is your inner animal longing for? Take a moment to think about what may be missing and what steps could be taken to satisfy this need. Alternatively, this card warns of the dangers that may come with an excess of material comforts and pleasures. Don't let greed or luxury distract you, and be grateful for the small things.



FAMILIAR: THE SERPENT
Transformation • Rebirth • Hidden Knowledge

The Serpent is a potent symbol for self-transformation and rebirth. This card heralds a time of self-discovery or a new way of thinking. Just as a snake sheds its skin and becomes new, so should we take stock of ourselves and shed anything that no longer suits. Also, in classic mythos, serpents are often coiled among the roots of sacred trees of knowledge. Consider what new things you have learned recently. Nurture and implement these new discoveries in your life.



HERB: MANDRAKE ROOT
Unpredictability • Caution • Vigilance

When the Mandrake Root appears, it is a sign to use caution. Just as one must be careful when dealing with mandrake—whether due to their coma-inducing alkaloids or supposedly fatal screams—we must also exercise care when dealing with certain situations. Be sure to approach things mindfully and with collected thoughts, lest you be caught off guard and hurt.



ITEM: AMULET
Luck • Confidence • Grounding

The Amulet indicates a success of some sort—whether a desired outcome from a project, a blossoming relationship, and so on. Victory and contentment are within reach. Confidence is key here, so make sure to put your best foot forward and believe in your abilities. You are magic.

WATER

EMOTION, THE UNCONSCIOUS, MUTABILITY



AGNES WATERHOUSE

Intense Emotion • Culpability • Morality

The star of the first widely publicized witch execution in England, Agnes Waterhouse represents taking responsibility for one's own actions. Just as Agnes confessed to her witchery in order to spare her own daughter, so must we do what is best, even if it may be uncomfortable. Regardless of the reasoning or causation, we must look past our heightened emotion and take the higher road, for the betterment of everyone involved.



MOTHER SHIPTON

Awareness • Gut Instinct • Intuition

Mother Shipton was often hailed as a prophetess, and her appearance in your reading alludes to clear sight and sharp intuition. There's a reason they call it a "gut instinct": you may already know the proper course of action to take. Trust that what you feel is valid and proceed with clear intent to make the best decision for you.



FAMILIAR: THE TOAD

Adaptability • Restlessness • Change

Just as toads move from water to land as the need arises, the appearance of the Toad in a reading symbolizes change and not remaining stagnant. Perhaps you've been feeling restless and out of place, or simply bored with a current situation. The Toad asks you to take a look at your predicament and exercise adaptability. Is there a way for you to adjust and improve your current conditions? If so, begin the steps to do so. If the situation seems dire, then the Toad invites you to move into different waters.



HERB: BELLADONNA

Illusion • Trickery • Delusions

Atropa belladonna is famous for its ability to cause hallucinations in small doses. When this poisonous nightshade turns up in a reading, it's warning us not to get distracted by illusion. Things are not always as they appear. We may have our rose-colored glasses on and may actually be getting ourselves into an unsavory situation. Clear your mind and look rationally at the situation before you, and see it for what it really is.



ITEM: CAULDRON

Reflection • Insight • Inner Wisdom

The Cauldron asks us to take time to balance our emotions and our logical reasoning, just as disparate components are blended within the cauldron itself. Emotion cannot be allowed to outweigh logic, and vice versa. Exercise patience and reflect on what is at odds with your head and heart. This could be a good time to try meditation or reflective journaling.

FIRE

PASSION, RISK,
FORCEFULNESS



THE DEVIL

Temptation • Constraints • Negativity

While the Devil can refer to a variety of figures, the Devil in this deck depicts Satan, the infernal entity most feared by the Puritans. When this card appears in a reading, it denotes the burden of negative emotions, thoughts, or actions. You may feel you have no control over these negative forces and are choosing the quickest way out. By turning to instant gratification and not acknowledging the hold these patterns have on you, you're doing yourself a disservice. Shine a light on what's holding you back and claim your own power over it.



ISOBEL GOWDIE

Pride • Risky Behavior • Slyness

Isobel Gowdie freely and confidently admitted to being in league with the Devil and meeting with all sorts of nefarious spirits. While this pride may seem admirable, we must be wary of letting ego get the better of us. Not every accomplishment is one to be applauded, and often trouble follows where hubris leads. Actions, especially risky ones, have consequences. It's likely the situation at hand could benefit from a dose of humility.



FAMILIAR: THE HOUND

Fidelity • Ferocity • Conviction

Whether a denizen of the underworld or a beloved companion, the Hound represents fierce loyalty and unwavering conviction. When this card appears, it urges you to stand firmly in your beliefs and hold your ground. Do not be swayed by outside forces. Alternatively, the Hound invites you to harness your passion for a cause or project and use it as fuel to see it through. Do what you love, and good things will follow.



HERB: FOXGLOVE

Energy • Ambition • Productivity

This poisonous plant is known for its association with faerie energy and also its ability to stimulate the heart due to the presence of cardiac glycosides (when used in very small amounts by a medical professional). When Foxglove turns up in a reading, it's an indication to push onward and upward. You should be feeling energized and ready to tackle a project or situation with fervor and excitement. Get your blood pumping and form a plan of action to power through.



ITEM: WAND

Inspiration • Opportunity • Potential

The Wand is a magical tool often used to direct and amplify energies. When it appears in a reading, it heralds the start of a new project or idea. Inspiration should move to the fore. Now is a good time to stoke the fire and begin planting the seeds of something you may have previously been putting off.

AIR

KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTION, COMMUNICATION



ALIZON DEVICE

Influence • Rumor • Persuasion

Poor Alizon Device was so convinced of her own dark power that she openly confessed to speaking with devilish hounds and harming the peddler John Law. Alizon and her family lived within the thick mist of superstition and witch fear, which ultimately led her to believe she was wicked and deserving of punishment. When this card appears, it warns against being influenced by outside forces and intrusive thoughts. Rumor, criticism, and self-doubt may be in the air, but you must do your best to keep a level head and think logically for yourself. Try to view things from a different perspective.



GYDE SPANDEMAGER

Withholding • Setbacks • Delays

Gyde Spandemager was one of the first women executed for witchcraft in Denmark, due to her confession of manipulating the weather against the king's navy. When Gyde turns up in a reading, it is a herald of delays or something being withheld. Perhaps news you've been waiting for will take longer than expected or a project has been brought to a halt. Alternatively, perhaps there is something that remains to be said or explained in order to resolve a situation. Patience and clear communication are needed when this card appears.



FAMILIAR: THE RAVEN

Intelligence • Deftness • Inner Depths

The Raven is a bird renowned for its intelligence and ability to learn and communicate. When this card shows up in a reading, it calls you to nurture your mind, look inward, redirect your focus from material things, and explore your intellectual side. Learn a new craft or skill or explore a topic that has interested you. The Raven also tells you to have confidence in your abilities. Use what you know and make the best use of your skills to overcome any obstacles.



HERB: LAVENDER

Rest • Calm • Positivity

When Lavender appears, it denotes a need for calm and rest. Take some time to unwind from the stresses of life and practice self-care, in whatever form that may take. You cannot function at maximum overdrive all the time, and Lavender tells you to clear your mind, take a step back, and breathe. Your work and relationships will be all the better for it afterward.



ITEM: BROOMSTICK

Purification • Cleansing • Clarity

The Broomstick appears when there is a need for clearing away obstructions or negative energies. There may be a tendency to withhold the truth or full story, in order to spare feelings or avoid conflict. Be sure not to get lost in the muck of vagueness and ambiguity. The Broomstick instead calls you to sweep these away and communicate directly and concisely.

SPIRIT

BRIDGE BETWEEN EARTHLY AND DIVINE



HECATE

Liminality • Transition • Crossroads

As the Witch-Goddess of Crossroads and Liminal Spaces, Hecate appears when we are facing a transitional period. Perhaps you're at your own personal crossroads: a big life change, a beginning or ending of a relationship, a new job, or a spiritual undertaking. Whatever it is, this card is an indication that this transition is necessary and is a good opportunity for personal growth and self-realization. Let Hecate lead you down the path to bigger and better things.



WITCH OF ENDOR

Divine Assistance • Cooperation • Guidance

As described in the Old Testament, the Witch of Endor assisted King Saul by summoning the spirit of the prophet Samuel for advice in battle. When she appears in a reading, it is a sign to ask for a helping hand from a trusted mentor, teacher, friend, or spirit guide. There is no shame in asking for help, and oftentimes a better outcome can be reached when more than one hand is at work.



FAMILIAR: THE OWL

Wisdom • Spirituality • Dreams

A night bird of mystery and magic, the Owl represents all facets of spiritual awareness and hidden knowledge. Often seen as a messenger from the underworld or spirit realm, when the Owl appears in a reading it tells us to pay attention to what our subconscious may be telling us. Make note of any significant dreams or signs you may receive during this time; your inner guide(s) may have something important to say.



HERB: DANDELION

Divination • Clairvoyance • Spirit Communication

It may be surprising to learn that this common weed could have such an intense symbolism. But it's true! When Dandelion turns up, it indicates a strong connection to psychic ability or a connection to spirit. You may be feeling that your innate psychic skills are heightened. Now would be a good time to dive into divination and further your skills with things like scrying, pendulum use, or oracle cards.



ITEM: TORCH

Enlightenment • Hope • Manifestation

The torch has long been seen as a symbol of spiritual enlightenment, guidance, and hope. The goddess Hecate carries torches to light the way for her horde of restless spirits. The appearance of the Torch in a reading is a positive message regarding the fulfillment of deep wishes and hopes. Your hard work and perseverance have paid off, and you're reaping the rewards. No matter how dim situations become, the future is sure to be bright.