

THE CARTOMANCER



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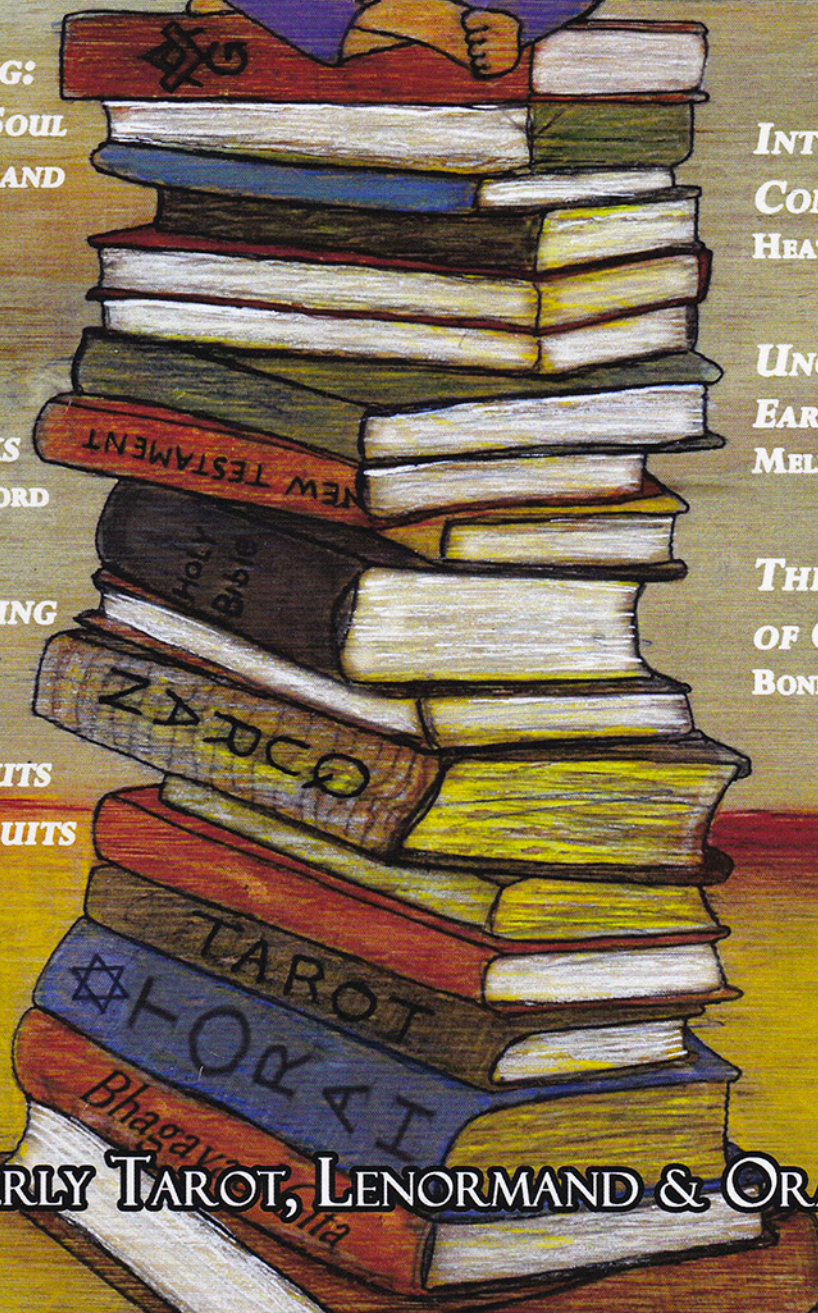
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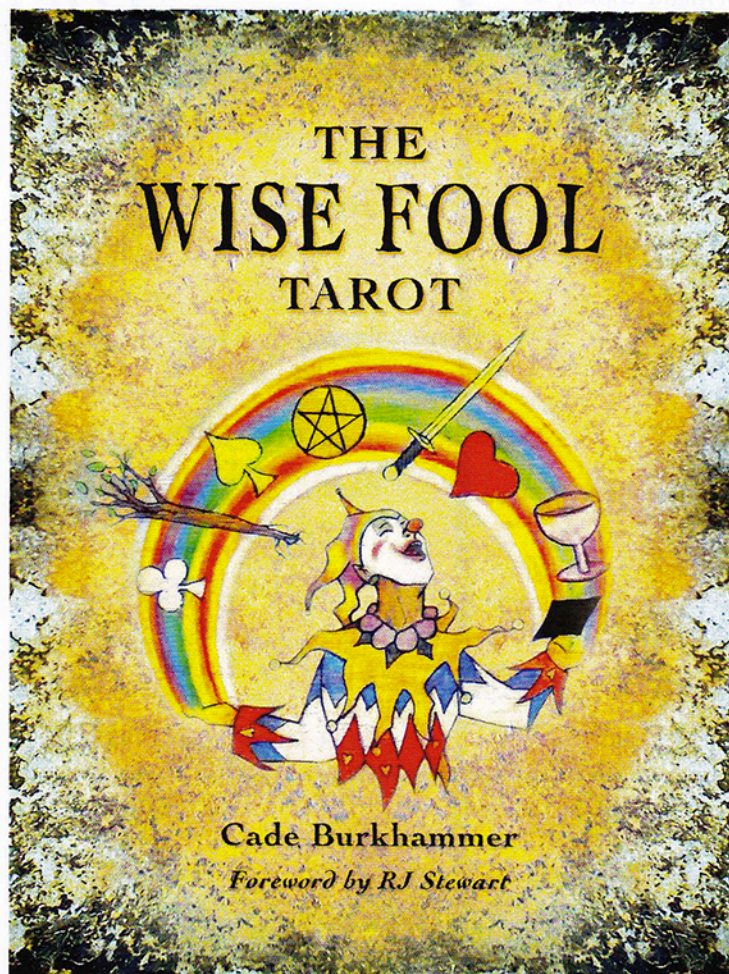
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A QUARTERLY TAROT, LENORMAND & ORACLE JOURNAL

AN INTERVIEW WITH CADE BURKHAMMER, CREATOR OF THE WISE FOOL TAROT

with Jadzia DeForest



I met Cade in 2014 when he came up for a visit to Portland from the Bay Area. He wanted to show us his tarot project and learn more about assisted publishing through Devera. I was immediately delighted by the image samples that he'd brought. So much texture, beautiful muted colors mixed with bold accents, and the modern imagery is inspiring.

When the idea for The Cartomancer came to be, I contacted Cade about featuring one of his card images for the first

issue's cover art. He was kind enough to agree and even let me choose which card!

Q: How did you get into Tarot?

A: I was handed down a Tarot deck when I was fourteen. I felt a calling to learn the mystical arts of subjective truth, healing, and world folklore. This introduction to the Tarot was in the 1980s, and I was an artist and musician very much absorbed in the punk, goth, and industrial music movements, which all carried occult themes and challenged the systems of society, culture, politics, thought, and life. Reading Tarot came naturally to me as I discovered that the Tarot is a way for the psyche to access ancient information not readily available in our mainstream society. I quickly realized that Tarot can still the body, develop the soul, influence conscious dreaming, and increase self-awareness, and this was absolutely formative for me as a young artist.

Q: What was your inspiration for creating a Tarot deck of your own?

A: I felt inspired to create a deck with the images I wanted to see: images that relate the ancient archetypes of classic Tarot to modern society. I did a painting in 1991 of towers crumbling, an airplane, and a large angel holding energy from above. Ten years later, I saw the event on September



eleventh through the media, and the muses encouraged me to document the Twin Towers' annihilation as the traditional Tower card in the Tarot. In order to make this painting understood, a series of paintings was required to create the entire story. So I began to study the many versions of Tarot and relate them to a contemporary audience.

Q: Tell us more about the *Wise Fool Tarot*, what's the overall concept and theme?

A: The underlying concept of the Fool is the sacred clown that humbles and heals a tormented misguided personality, whether it is personal or collective. Fools are found in all world cultures. In order to keep a tribe or culture sustainable, the Fool (or Native American Heyoka) would satirize society and perform in exaggerated manners to reveal to the people how not to behave, and demonstrate to the viewer a healthier way to live. A person would be prescribed a "strange" act to perform in order to successfully heal their psyche and body,



which would affect their surroundings. The four directions inspired me to list anything in a balance of four, like times of day, ages, seasons, races, sciences, etc. in order to ponder balance, wholeness, and connection. Separation is humans greatest flaw. The goal of this deck is to restore people's

connection to themselves, the planet, and to all its living inhabitants. This deck is post-modern as it relates ancient archetypes to modern society. In essence, the *Wise Fool Tarot* deck is social activism, calling out for its readers to wake up to their hidden potential and to joyously laugh at their follies in the process of their own evolution.

Q: How did you come up with the name: *Wise Fool Tarot*?

A: The original name for the deck was The Three Sided Coin. There are two sides to the coin of reality plus one

I researched Tarot, art, science, psychology, and sociology. I then reinterpreted these concepts to relate to a modern audience.

other that connects them. Eventually, I realized it was too vague. I wished to simply introduce the deep mystical ways that replenish the beings within this planet. The Fool theme came about to integrate the juxtaposition of the concept simple yet deep, hence Wise Fool. The Fool fearlessly desires new knowledge, wisdom, and

experiences. I also felt inspired to combine the widely used Poker card deck with the less widely used Tarot deck. Two Jokers are required for a poker deck. So I added four more Jokers to the WFT deck. I connected the Fools with each suit. The Fool reminds us that the more we know, the more there is to explore and to revel in the wonders of the mystery of life.

Q: Tell us a little about the process from a deck creator's view. How did you decide which art medium you wanted to work in? What do you feel were your greatest obstacles creating this deck? And, which parts were easiest?

A: Since childhood, I was inspired by the surrealist art of Dali and Geiger. When I was 8, I drew a copy of Picasso's *Guernica* painting. When I decided to create this deck it was natural for me to gravitate towards painting. I used acrylic, pencil, and ink on wood. I began the sketches on 88 index cards and then created larger renderings before attempting to paint. Ninety canvases would have been too expensive. Since paper is made of trees, I decided to integrate the direct source using wood. I chose plywood and cut it into similar 12 x 18 inch sizes. The individual wood would show its past life as it wished to, each sheet of plywood had unique patterns from the wood grain.

I chose the wood according to what fit for the landscape and figures represented within the painting's image. I discovered that painting on wood is more like sculpture and also proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. The pigment absorbs into the wood, the pencil scrapes, the paint bleeds uncontrollably.

It became a sacrifice as this process took me much longer



than it would have to create the images on paper. Hopefully viewers will appreciate the unique energy the wood grain adds to each image. The greatest obstacle was creating enough time to work on the paintings and writing.

The 140 page book, with foreword by RJ Stewart, that accompanies the deck was developed to be read from diverse approaches and to be accessible to many different types of Tarot users. Complex ideas were eventually simplified and made interpretable. I had to compose and follow a list of dogmas and rules according to things such as the elemental attributes associated with each suit and the main archetypal associations for each card. I researched Tarot, art, science, psychology, and sociology. I then reinterpreted these concepts to relate to a modern audience. It took a decade to feel confident with the amount of information I collected for the book.

Q: Do you have any advice for those that are thinking of creating their own deck?



A: Envision where the Tarot emerged. Study many decks. Honor them and move on to offer your original compelling vision. Do not copy other decks or make it too personal. Discover what your Muses desire from you to reveal for them. Images are similar to the spoken word; they transgress

and transform beyond time and boundaries. Go on a walk-about and do creative things to heal the self and others. Study themes, focus on them, and integrate them into your deck. The decks that I choose to use for myself, I can tell took a lot of time and passion to create. Take inspiration from an honest, wise voice that is fading and make it loud, original, and legitimate. Be careful to not be redundant. Have a firm and constant understanding of the purpose of the project.

Q: Where can readers find out more about your tarot project?

A: From my website: cadeburkhammer.com, [facebook.com/wisefooltarot](https://www.facebook.com/wisefooltarot) and from the Devera website: www.deverapublishing.com.

DeveraPublishing.com. I will do signings in local Bay Area stores that carry tarot cards and plan to sell at the Bay Area farmers' markets and at Pantheon in San Jose, CA in February of 2016.

Q: Do you have a publication date for your deck? And do you have any special plans, like a launch party, once the deck is in print?

A: It should be available by June 2015. I plan to throw a small party with readings and sales. I'm so excited for this venture to finally become a reality. It's been quite a journey.

Keep in touch about the Wise Fool Tarot:

cadeburkhammer.com

[facebook.com/wisefooltarot](https://www.facebook.com/wisefooltarot)

Card Images from the Wise Fool Tarot © Cade Burkhammer