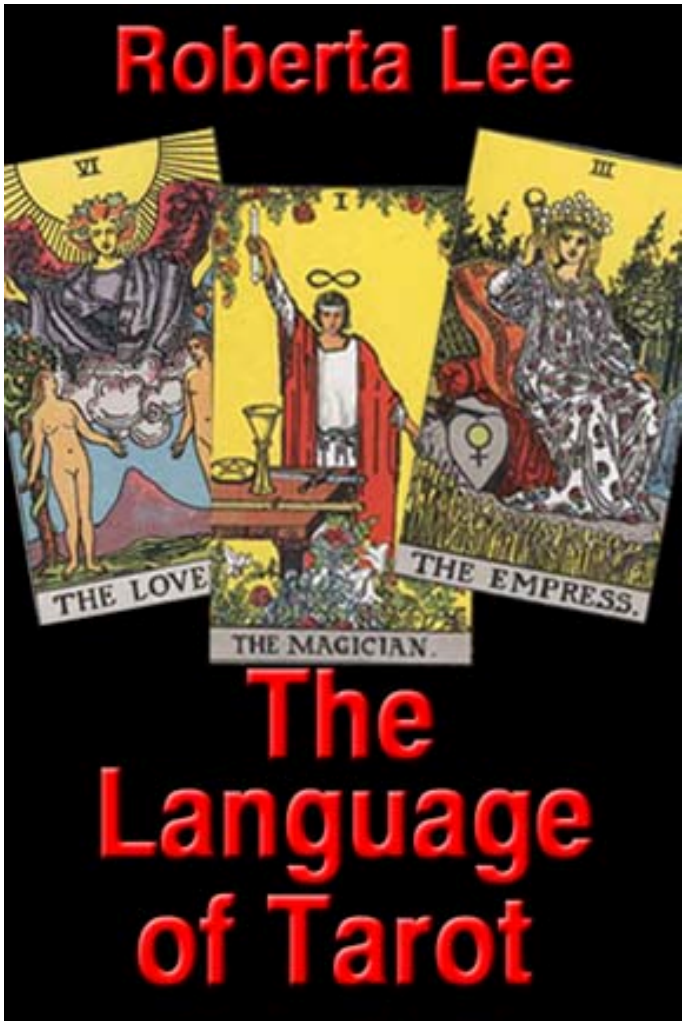

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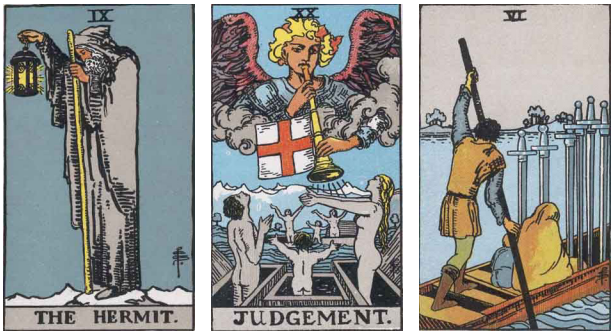
Eight of Cups

Keywords: Leaving, acceptance, abandonment, leave-taking, a sad “goodbye,” divorce, melancholy; abandoned, left, forsaken, dumped

The melancholy Eight of Cups graphically shows someone leaving with a heavy heart. Reluctantly but with determination, someone has made a clear decision to abandon some existing situation and move on, even though it pains them to do so. In a way, this card is the hallmark of true emotional maturity, since recognizing when something is over, accepting that and walking away before that turns into *running* away is so difficult--but often so necessary. This card shows leaving with love: the reluctance, the sadness all speak of the inevitability of this situation, and its basic melancholy. Still, there is no anger here, no recriminations, and no spite.

Whenever this card turns up in a reading, take a deep breath. Don't let your face betray to the Seeker the full implications of this card. For even though it's The Devil, The Hanged Man and Death that make Seekers gasp when they see them, an experienced reader knows that this card, with its aura of inevitability and bittersweet compassion, is one of the most poignant in the deck. Still, I have seen this card to mean release, and I have seen it followed by cards of joy.

Look especially for the Five of Pentacles, reversed, near this card, and read it as, "Your faith in life will be restored after this sad leave-taking."



With The Hermit, Judgement, or the Six of Swords, it becomes, "You need some time alone to decompress and think things through."

Another interpretation is simply that of melancholy. In other words, the leave-taking may be one that is being contemplated rather than one actually, physically implemented, and someone is merely running through a "what if?" scenario that begins with leaving. In this case it's all hypothetical--the leaving, the sorrow, the far-far-better-thing-I-do sighing--and this card is showing us a fantasy about walking (or maybe running) away.

The guidance it gives is unambiguous, if bittersweet: let go and leave it, this matter has run its course.

In business readings, it's quittin' time. This is the card of the disillusioned employee, the person who finally just can't take it any more and decides that sometimes being a quitter makes sense.

In romantic readings . . . well, it's sort of self-evident, no? This is one of those cards that test the honesty--and tact--of a reader. Are you willing to come right out and say, "I see a break-

up, separation or divorce"? Yes, of course, surrounding cards can soften that interpretation. Possibly, you're looking at the fears or fantasies of an over-wrought Seeker. Nevertheless, this card has a very specific meaning in relationship readings, and you, as a reader, need to be honest.

In a reading specifically about sex, this card can indicate disillusionment with relationships in general, and a retreat into either celibacy or a world of fantasy. Since most people--of both sexes--have their most intense orgasms through masturbation, you'd think this path would be more commonly pursued. Yet we are a social species and drawn to each other quite irresistibly--so much so that anyone who consciously chooses to be truly alone is extremely rare. However, perhaps not to be pitied. This is a choice, like any other, and if someone makes it in full awareness, it can--one assumes--have its rewards.

Most commonly, however, this Eight indicates leaving a specific lover.

As an Outcome card, someone will be leaving. Be sympathetic and acknowledge her pain in making this tough decision. Most often, this choice has already cost her dearly. Also, do be aware that point of view in Tarot can shift from one position to another, and cards that show actions, like this can, can be referencing someone other than the Seeker. By the time you get to position ten, though, you should have a good idea of who will be doing the actual leaving, the Seeker or someone else.

Reversed Eight of Cups

Keywords: Return, sensual gratification, refreshed, reunion, celebration; refreshing, renewed, fun

Reversed, the Eight of Cups is one of the few in the deck that literally reverses itself: the person who was leaving now returns. Instead of painful leaving, there is a joyous coming together.

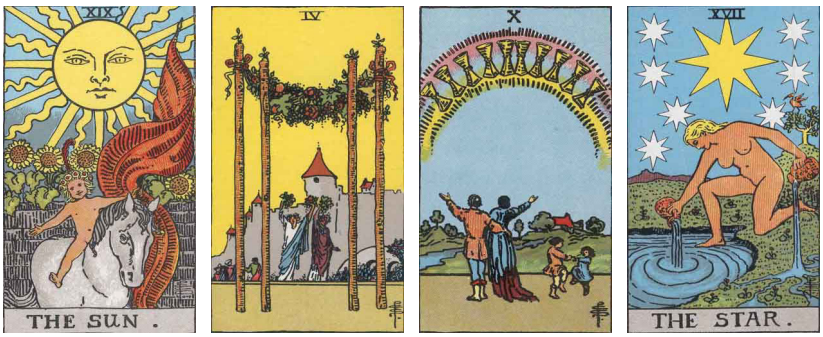
This is the party card: it tends to foretell a very uninhibited expression of sensuality and the sheer pleasure in being alive. Very specifically, it can foretell the end of some difficult phase and the "party hearty" attitude of someone who, for example, escapes a close call and feels life pulsing in their veins as never before.

The guidance this card gives is as simple as it gets. Don't worry, don't be afraid to be happy--enjoy!

In romantic readings when this card is reversed, it's love that returns. This card is not as specific as the Five of Cups, reversed, the "a lover returns" card, in that it can also mean a new person brings a return of emotional passion into someone's life. However, if the Seeker has specifically asked, “Will he return?”, then the answer is an unequivocal “yes.” Whether it foretells a new love or the rebirth of some existing relationship, expect joy, happiness and passion to follow.

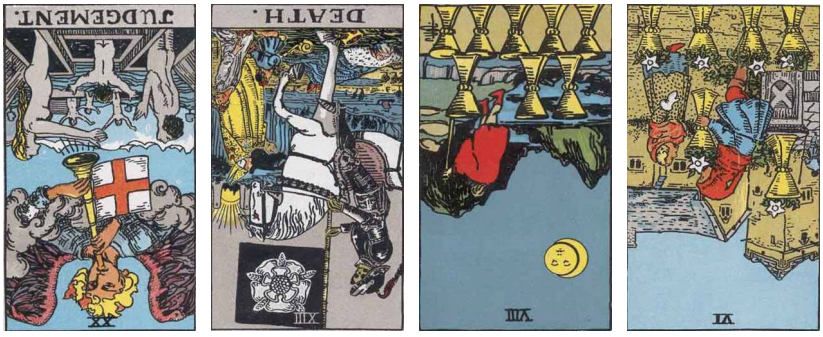
Sexually, reversed, this card is an even more intense version of the above interpretation: passion will not be denied. Men are drawn to women, and women to men (and men to men, and women to women, of course) and it is not within our ability to deny or prevent this. Sexual attraction is one of the strongest forces in the Universe. The Seeker is as happily helpless to resist it as anyone else is.

Reversed, in the Outcome position, this card is a happy ending, but in a different way than some of the other "joy and light" cards like The Sun, Four of Wands, Ten of Cups or The Star.



In the Eight of Cups, reversed, there is the extra component of the bittersweet awareness of life's brevity and unpredictability. Once one has faced loss and tragedy head on, one's feelings about life--and its pleasures--change. Treasuring happy occasions takes on a greater meaning once one

has seen a few sad occasions. The Seeker has seen some bad times. Nevertheless, it has not made her bitter. Instead, she's more able to smile, laugh, and love. The Oracle does this; it has an endearing ability to mirror the ironies of human existence.



(Note the similarities between Judgment, Death, the Eight of Cups and Six of Cups when each is reversed. The Six of Cups reversed shows us someone trapped in the past. The Eight of Cups reversed shows us someone or something returning. Death reversed tells us something that appears to be over really isn't. And Judgement reversed indicates that something *may* be over, but that a decision cannot/should not be made right now. Subtle differences, but large proportion of Tarot readings have to do with the possibility or wisdom of returning to someone or something. The Oracle has therefore provided highly nuanced responses to best address each individual question.)