

Card Decks of the  
**Sidhe**  
Manual

David Spangler  
art by Jeremy Berg



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# Card Decks <sup>of the</sup> Sidhe Manual

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## Dedications

This card deck and manual are dedicated to the Sidhe and to a partnership with Humanity that can heal the Earth and allow an ancient wholeness to be reborn in new forms. D. Spangler

And

To the reconciliation of the Sidhe and Humanity and to those gentle and intrepid souls who work to make it happen. J. Berg

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to many people for helping to make this book and card deck possible. Foremost, of course, are the Sidhe themselves. Without their contact, none of this would have happened. This is true of my friend and colleague, Jeremy Berg. His own contact with the People of Peace affirmed my own and complemented it. His inspiration made the beauty of the cards possible.

Profound thanks go to Adrienne Dunn. Her own contact with the Sidhe initiated the original idea for this card deck and manual, and her contributions made the whole project possible. Without her as well, this deck would not have come into being.

Contact with the Sidhe is new to me, but over the years I've been inspired by friends and colleagues of mine—John Matthews, R.J. Stewart, William Bloom, and Gareth Knight—for whom such contact has been and continues to be part of their work. Without your example, I would have been less sure of my own experiences. You are all my brothers, and I thank you for all you've contributed and are contributing to the emergence of a new world.

Finally, thank you to my lovely wife, Julie. Not only did her editing skills make this book much better than it would have been otherwise, but she is the “she” with whom I am daily grateful to be spending my life.

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# PART I: THE DECK

## THE STORY OF THE SIDHE DECK

The story of how this card deck came into being is a true fairy story. (Actually, to use the proper spelling for the beings involved, it is a *Faerie story*, but I'll have more to say on that later.) The story begins when my Lorian colleague Jeremy Berg, the owner and publisher of Lorian Press, published *The Sidhe*, a book by the British spiritual teacher and author John Matthews. *Sidhe* (pronounced shee) is, according to John, the “oldest known name for the faerie races of Ireland” and means the “people of peace.”

This book became very popular and eventually led to a demand for more material about the Sidhe. Unfortunately, although he would have liked to do so, John Matthews was too busy to write a sequel. Knowing my love of designing card decks (I had already designed two for him, the *Manifestation Card Deck* and *The Soul's Oracle*), Jeremy asked if I'd like to create a card deck about the Sidhe. I was intrigued, but unlike John or R.J. Stewart or Orion Foxwood, two other friends and authors who have written several books about the Faerie realms, I knew very little about these beings. While I have had extensive contact with the invisible, subtle worlds of spirit and those who dwell upon them, I had had virtually no communication with the Sidhe or indeed with any Faerie being that I knew of. So I told Jeremy that I didn't feel I was capable of such a task.

That is where things were left for several months. But then, in the winter of 2011, something unexpected happened that changed everything. Taking a break from writing, I was sitting on the sofa in my living room and just staring out the window at the trees and bushes beyond when I felt a presence in the room behind me. Turning around, I saw in my mind's eye a swirling, shifting, radiant mist in the air near the fire place. At the same time I felt another mind in touch with my own and heard it say, “I am one of the Sidhe, and I've come to help you with the card deck.” This being no sooner said this than there flashed into my mind a complete picture of what a Sidhe card deck would look like when laid out and the major components of what such a deck should contain. There were few details—they came later—but the basic pattern was very clear.

The card deck that you're holding is the result of the collaboration



that started with that meeting.

The initial contact was very brief, lasting no more than five minutes, but it was long enough and comprehensive enough that I knew beyond any doubt that I could create a card deck of the Sidhe. I knew now what was needed and how to go about it. With this new-found confidence, I phoned up Jeremy, explained what had happened and asked if he was still interested in publishing a Sidhe deck. He certainly was, and so the project began.

In the previous card decks I had done, Jeremy's daughter Deva had been the artist, and she had been truly inspired. But she had become a new mother and was too busy to undertake another project. So Jeremy himself decided to paint all the cards. In the process, a remarkable three-way partnership unfolded between Jeremy and me and the Sidhe.

There were some initial guidelines. For instance, we were asked not to portray the Sidhe themselves in the cards. There are a couple reasons why they made this request. The primary one is in order to prevent imposing a particular form either upon the Sidhe themselves or upon the imagination of a person using the cards. A second reason is that the Sidhe are protean beings, able within some limits to shape shift or configure their appearance to meet the demands of a situation. And a third reason was because they are attempting to help us throw off older images of what they look like. This was confirmed for me later in a conversation with John Matthews when he said he'd had a recent Sidhe contact in which he was told to stop thinking of them in a medieval context as if they were knights and ladies and beings of the past. "We are of the present and the future," he was told, and I have received similar messages as well since working on this deck.

Another request was that there could be no more than thirty-three cards in the deck. I have no idea why that particular number was a limit, but both Jeremy and I received this information independently of each other. Obviously this deck was not to be anything like a traditional Tarot which has seventy-eight cards.

Half of the cards were to be of standing stones arranged in a circle around a central barrow or hill with portals at each of the four directions; these cards represented a fixed element within the deck. The other half were the fluid element forming a ring of moving qualities as if faeries were dancing around the stone circle. The stones were of the earth, the outer ring, called "Dancers," was of the invisible world of the Sidhe.

From the standpoint of the Sidhe who contacted me, the overall purpose of the card deck was to act as a point of potential contact between a user and the energetic realm of the Sidhe. This contact would take place within the imagination and the subtle energy fields of the user and would be unique to each person. This was one reason the Sidhe wished there to be no images of them that might force a user to think of them in ways that someone else did. It was evident that my faerie contact wished each person to come to the deck and to use it with fresh and unconditioned imagination and expectation.

By the same token, I felt that there needed to be an oracular use to the deck, a way to tap not only the imagination but the intuition of the individual and the subtle energy field of possibilities and potentials within a situation. I felt the deck should be useful to the individual beyond being a meditation tool, important as that function might be. I wished it also to be a tool that a person might use to gain deeper insights into life issues that they might be confronting. I hoped the deck would not only facilitate contact and a felt sense of connection with the Sidhe themselves and the state of consciousness they represent; I hoped it would also enable a person to tap into that state of consciousness to find insights and help in engaging creatively and holistically with the world around them.

All these considerations went into creating the pictures that make up this deck. Painting the standing stones was relatively simple. There were eight of them and four portals or gates; Jeremy used pictures of actual standing stones as models for the cards he painted. When I first saw them, I was struck with the power that the images conveyed.

It was with the sixteen “dancers” that the fun really began. I had no idea when we started just what these cards would be, only that in some manner they would represent qualities, states of being, or images useful both in attuning to the Sidhe and in contributing to an oracular function. A tall order! It was in this area that the collaboration most manifested itself.

I began by making lists, jotting down all the card ideas I could think of that might be appropriate. As I did so, specific ideas and images began to come from our Sidhe partner. Certain of my choices were eliminated quickly and others were considered or counter-suggestions were made. As the final list began to take shape, I would pass on my ideas to Jeremy and he would turn them into a painted picture. At the same time, Jeremy began to feel his own contact with the Faerie world and would receive

specific images, sometimes quite different from the ones I had suggested. For a time, both he and I would awaken around 4 am in the morning, he with specific images in his mind and me with ideas and patterns. Then at a more reasonable hour we would compare notes over the phone and discover that we were both thinking of the exact same ideas and images. Obviously, our Sidhe partner was communicating with both us in the dream state and we were both receiving suggestions—often the same suggestion—from this being who was taking a very involved and “hands on” approach to the creation of this card deck.

In this way, the sixteen “Dancer” cards evolved into the forms you have now in this Sidhe card deck. As they did so, I was delighted to discover that far from being random, each card was a part of an unfolding story. It is the story of a journey into the realm of the Sidhe, undergoing a transformative initiation and returning to the outer world. I tell this story in the next chapter.

The end result of this collaboration is what I believe to be a very powerful tool for both attunement to a related species of intelligence that shares this world with us and is concerned about earth’s future and use as an oracular portal into your own intuition. The manner in which it emerged is a testament to what is possible when collaboration and partnership with inner beings is accepted and engaged. Although Jeremy and I certainly added our human perspectives and insights to its creation, I have no doubt that this deck of cards is a gift of love and an invitation from the Sidhe. It is truly a faerie story come to life. I hope you will find it a source of blessing.

# THE JOURNEY

*As the Sidhe deck was being created—and in particular as the Dancer cards were emerging—I realized that they were telling a story. There was a definite sequence to the cards that described a magical journey into the realm of Faerie using a circle of standing stones as a portal. I tell this story below as if you were reading from the pages of a journal. (It is also available from Lorian Press as the booklet, *A Midsummer's Journey*.)*



On a pleasant Midsummer's Day in the month of June, I decided to celebrate the longest day of the year by hiking in the hills near where I live. There I came upon an old and weather-beaten stone that looked as if it had lain there in the ground forever. Feeling tired, I sat upon this stone to rest a moment. As I did so, it was as if a deep peace enfolded me. I felt as if the stone were some ancient ancestor with roots not only deep in the earth but deep in time as well. I felt in touch with beginnings and with the origins of things.

As I sat there, contemplating this strange feeling, I began to feel drowsy. My eyelids grew heavy and I could feel my head nodding. The sense of peacefulness grew even deeper. I knew I was about to slumber on this warm stone, and I felt willing to go with it, to sink into a pleasant and refreshing sleep.

But then it was as if I heard a voice. "Open your eyes and see!" I was startled from my drowsiness. I raised my head, my eyes now wide open. To my astonishment, rising behind me was a hill that I would have sworn had not been there before. How could I have missed it? As I sprang to my feet in wonder, I realized that this was no ordinary hill, but a *howe*, a hollow hill carved out who knew how long ago by some long-forgotten ancient people. Was it an ancient tomb or a temple? I had no idea. But then I saw that there was



an opening into the hill and a path leading to it. And were those stars I saw within? Stars inside the earth?

Being an adventurous sort, I decided to enter the hill and see what wonders it might hold, but before I could set my feet on the path leading into it, I heard the voice again, deep and resonant in my mind. "Look around," it said once more. I whirled about, but I could see no one nearby. It felt as if the voice came from the land itself. "Before you enter, walk the circle," it said.

What circle?



But then as if by magic—and surely I *was* in the presence of a strange and wondrous magic—I saw a standing stone at the beginning of the path, no more than two yards south from the opening into the hollow hill. Where it had come from, I had no idea. The peacefulness I had felt while reclining on the ancestor stone remained with me. Perhaps, I thought, I am really only dreaming, though everything felt very solid and real to me.

I went over to the standing stone, noting that from one angle it resembled an old bearded man dressed in a robe that reached to his feet. It made me think of a wizard, and something in me responded affirmatively, saying, "Yes, this is the Wizard's Stone." As I stood near it, it seemed filled with the power to make things happen.

Sure enough, I saw another stone standing not far away but to the east of the barrow. Remembering the request to "walk the circle," I made my way over to it. It was a tall and mighty stone, and it seemed to me to command the approach from the east. Touching it, I thought I heard the word "Artisan" in my mind, and then, "I am the maker. I forge the boundaries that give shape and form to all things and bring beauty to the world." Indeed, standing next to it, I felt an upwelling of creativity.



I continued my walk around the *howe*, this time going to the north.



Here was a standing stone whose gentle curves gave me a sense of a feminine presence. This was heightened by moss growing down one side of it, like a fall of green hair. I wondered what this stone might be, and the voice in my head, now growing familiar if no less strange, said, "I am the Bard. I know the pathways and the directions, the connections and relationships, the stories and the songs so you can navigate under the stars." And as I stood there, I felt myself in the presence of knowledge and wisdom.

This time I pressed on to the west, traveling counter-clockwise around the barrow. The light from the late afternoon sun caught a fourth standing stone at an angle, making it appear in shadow, a tall presence that was slightly menacing. *What might this one be?* I wondered. Beyond it was a river, which I had not known was present in these hills. Mystery upon mystery! This time the mysterious voice said, "I am the Gatekeeper," and when I heard it, I could not help but shiver. But then the voice went on in a more reassuring tone. "I guard the threshold between endings and new beginnings, what has been and what may be. Fear me not!"



This was all well and good, and I took these reassuring words to heart, but still, I admit I was glad to continue on my way around the hollow hill, now ending up once more at the Wizard stone that stood in the south before the path that led to the *howe's* entrance. "All right," I said out loud to my invisible companion. "I have walked the circle. May I now enter the hill before me?"

"Not yet," came the words, whispering in my mind. "There are others still to know. There is a wider circle which you must walk. Look!"

I looked to the south, and beyond the Wizard stone, three new stones appeared, one atop the other two, all together forming a portal. Where had they come from? This was magical indeed.

I walked up to this portal and placed my hand upon one of the stones.





"And who are you?" I asked. No answer. So I stepped through, and immediately it was as though I felt the land around me as a presence, as if I stepped not upon the rich earth but into it. "I am the Gate of Earth and of the Light within it," came the familiar voice.

I stepped back through the Portal, and felt the presence of the land recede, though it did not disappear. The mysterious words continued. "Through this gate come the forces of the land, the spirit of the Earth, to meet the forces of the Stars and the spirit of the Cosmos." I looked about but saw no stars, only the blue of the sky, fleeced with clouds. I looked north towards the barrow and the path leading into it. It seemed odd to me that this path proceeded from the portal to the south and not from the east which is so traditionally the place of beginnings. But then I remembered the plants who begin their life as seeds deep within the earth, and I thought *life* begins even before the sun rises to see it.

Thinking of the sun, I looked to the east. There I saw a new standing stone, one covered with markings. I walked towards it, and as I did, a falcon flew by overhead, landing on the stone where it spread its wings before me as if in greeting—or in warning. When I came close, I saw carvings on the side of the stone. This time the voice said, "I am the stone of Identity. I am the place where your Spirit lands on earth and from which it flies into the world."



Continuing on, I saw ahead of me further to the east another portal, three more stones with one upon the other two. A seagull flew above it. Coming up to it, I looked through and was astonished to see the rising sun, even though I knew it was late afternoon. What magic was this? The voice of my invisible companion said, "This is the Gate of Dawn. This is the portal of manifestation." I stepped through, and I was in a new day, the sun just rising, and all around me I felt a spirit of potentials taking form. I stepped back, and I was once again where



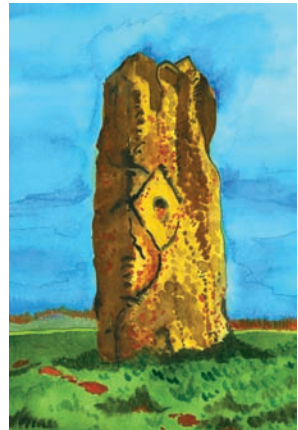
the late afternoon sun was plunging towards the western horizon.

Remembering that I needed to walk the circle, I continued on, this time towards the north, where I saw yet another standing stone and beyond it in the distance another portal.

I walked to the stone. Like the Stone of Identity to the south of me, this one too had a strange carving upon it, a diamond with a circle within it. While pondering its meaning, the voice whispered to me, "This shows the Soul and all that holds it so it may be part of this world. This is the Stone of Boundary, and it brings the gift of uniqueness and individuality to all things."

Knowing I was truly in a magical place, I placed my hand upon the stone hoping for some realizations about my own individuality, but all I felt was the need to continue. So I walked on to the next portal I had seen.

Unlike the first two, this one had three stones on the bottom and a fourth on top. Did this have some special meaning? I didn't know. Perhaps the top stone was simply too heavy for two stones to bear. This time when I stepped through, I expected to be in a new place, but I had not anticipated that it would be in the middle of the



night. Above me, countless stars shown, the heavens a rich panoply of sparkling lights. There was no sign of the day I had just left. I was in the presence of stars. "This," the voice said, "is the Gate of Stars. Here the forces of the cosmos flow into the earth where they meet the powers within the world, giving life for all beings." As it spoke, I remembered that the stars also gave direction, helping people navigate their way.

I felt myself in an awesome place. It was as if each star were a story seeking to be told,



seeking to be known. I was overwhelmed. Although I felt no threat, I felt a little shaken and stepped back through the gate where I found myself to the north of the barrow on a late summer afternoon.



Now I was walking to the west where yet another standing stone awaited me. But before I could reach it, I passed by a mighty stone that lay fallen on the ground, its massive form split into three pieces. Overhead I heard the harsh cry of a crow. The voice said to me, "This is the Fallen Stone. It lost its way and could not stand. It lies as a warning. It could block the path if you are not careful."

I stepped carefully and went around it and on to the standing stone beyond which, frankly, did not appear in much better shape itself from the one on the ground, though it was still upright.

This one was grey and old and looked as if several stones had been fused together at the bottom. As I approached it, a shiver went up my back, for it seemed foreboding to me. The voice said. "Fear not. This is the Stone of Opening. Here you find the power to go beyond yourself, beyond the familiar."

I know this was meant to be reassuring, but I couldn't help but think, *what does it mean to go beyond myself?*



I hurried on to what I now knew was the westernmost portal.



Like the Gate of Stars, this one was also made of four stones, three upright and holding a fourth upon them. Again, I did not know if this had special significance or was merely a necessity because of the weight of the stone the other three carried. At their feet, a row of small standing stones seemed to mark a boundary. Gingerly, but feeling no resistance, I stepped over them and through the portal.

I heard the voice saying, "This is the Gate of Twilight. This marks the threshold where one thing gives way to another and where the potential of the dawn is realized in the fulfillment of the evening."

Looking out to the west, I saw that in this new vista, the sun had already set. A bright star shone on the horizon above a range of mountains. I could see the river I had seen before flowing before me, but it seemed larger, vaster than I remembered. Was it in fact an inlet of the sea and were those lands and mountains I could see the fabled Western Isles of folklore and legend, the realm of the gods, the realm of those who have journeyed beyond the earth? If so, they were not the place for me. I stepped back gladly into the sunlight of the late afternoon.



Now there was only one stone left to see before I could complete the circle and presumably enter the hollow hill. I hurried towards it. Like the other standing stones in this outer circle, it too bore carvings upon its side. A smaller stone stood at its side. As I stood by it, I could see the strange river once again. The voice said, "This is the Stone of Emergence. It is what lies beyond the threshold. It is the result of all you have done, giving way to what you will do."

Feeling I had completed my own cycle of the stones, I hurried now towards the path into the hollow hill, sure that nothing further would bar my way. Curiosity burned within me to know what was in that ancient hill. But I was wrong. As I walked towards the *howe's* entrance, my eye caught movement near my feet. Looking down, I saw a huge snake curling around a stone that seemed to vibrate with power and energy. The serpent was moving towards me. My heart leapt in my chest, and I stopped, standing very still, hardly daring to breath. The snake stopped its movement and lay still as well, seeming to wait for something. Was I in danger?

The faithful voice returned. "There is power in the earth! Can you befriend it? Can you make the world your ally? This is your



chance. This is your choice!”

I wasn't sure what to do. The stone continued to radiate power, which seemed somehow to become part of the serpent that was coiled around it. None of us moved. And then, more out of instinct than anything, I reached forward gingerly but with increasing trust and acceptance and placed my hand upon the snake. I could feel the smooth scales and the powerful muscle beneath my fingers. And I could feel the energy rising from the earth. There was a flash....!



I found myself in a dark place, a strange, unearthly place, surrounded by stone walls that were obviously hewn by hand. I knew intuitively that I was within the howe. In fact, before me was a stone raised up like an altar, and on it a candle burned. But that was all that was normal. In all other ways, it was a strange, unearthly place that seemed to connect with realms both within and beyond the earth. In one direction, I could see stars and the deep blackness of the cosmos, in another direction the sun burned brightly, and in a third the moon shone with a mysterious clear light. Stellar, Solar, Lunar and, with the stones about me, the Earthly: the four creative realms of ancient lore.

Though I seemed to have abandoned the familiar world, the familiar voice had not abandoned me. It now spoke to me, saying, and “Fear not! You have accepted the power in the land. Now you stand at another portal. It is the fifth gate, the one that leads into the realm of the Sidhe, the people of peace and the guardians of the lands of Faerie. Do you wish to enter further? Once you enter, you must press forward.”

I looked around at the stone and the visions of the celestial realms. This was what I had wanted. How could I not go further? “I will go on,” I said aloud.

This time there was no flash of light, no transition. Instead, I found myself no longer in the stone chamber but standing in sunlight by the side of an ocean. Near me was an outcropping of stone and above it trees braved the elements to extend their branches out over the shore. By itself it was not an unusual scene. I had been to such places in my familiar world. But here I felt something different, as if the sky, sea, and land—and the



plants upon the land—all were blended in a perfect harmony, each supporting the other, each part of the other. I felt a oneness that nonetheless honored the uniqueness of each individual form and life that it embraced.

Looking out over the ocean, I could see the far line of the horizon, and it seemed to me that something lay out there just beyond my sight, invisible yet somehow present with possibility. It was exciting. My heart felt at home in this place and yet yearned for what lay beyond.

“This is the vision that will guide you through your journey,” said the ever-present voice. “This is a land of harmony, and beyond is the Far Country, the land of possibility. It is a land you can reach and create if you complete the journey, understand its lessons and accept the gifts it has to give you. Seeing this, feeling this, do you wish to proceed?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Then remember the Vision.”

The scene changed once again. Instead of being on the seashore with life all around me, I now found myself in a barren, rocky land filled with jagged cliffs and ridges. I stood on the edge of such a cliff, looking down at an abyss. The land beyond was hazy, hard to discern, but I thought I could see a river far below me and wondered for a moment if it were the river I had seen by the stones and portal to the west of the barrow. And I could see something else: a cave, and within it, stars. Overhead an eagle flew. Where was I now?

“You are on the Edge,” said the voice. “Before you can enter the new, you must step beyond what is familiar. You must take courage and step into the unknown. Only then can you proceed.”

“You mean, step into the abyss?” I was aghast.

“It’s only an abyss from where you stand. Perhaps it is simply a step into new possibilities. Do you doubt you can do it? Summon your courage! Summon your trust





in yourself!”

It was still a fearful step, but with this encouragement, I did as the voice suggested and summoned my courage. I closed my eyes and stepped off the edge.



I did not fall. In fact, I thought perhaps I had been further from the cliff edge than I'd thought and had merely taken a step towards the edge. I opened my eyes. To my astonishment, I was standing in a green and pleasant land. Before me was another standing stone, but one quite unlike anything I had ever seen before. Two thirds of it was in the rough shape of a bird, its breast and wings faintly discernible. But the head was that of a raptor whose black eyes now gazed fiercely upon me. So fine and delicate was the carving that I could see individual feathers. It seemed as if a giant living falcon were emerging from the stone. I marveled at the craft and skill of the artist who had created it.

Then the creature blinked at me.

Startled, I jumped back, my heart beating in my chest. The stone falcon blinked once more, and then it spoke, the familiar voice that had accompanied me on my journey speaking to me through its curved beak. “Your courage has given you wings,” it said. “You saw the vision and you had faith. You have passed the test of flight. Your emergence is beginning.”

With that, the stone fell away, and the falcon flew off into the sky.

Turning to watch it go, I saw not far behind me a magnificent building rising into the sky, a Sandhill Crane flying nearby. I had never seen such a structure before, though it was vaguely reminiscent of mountain lamaseries I had seen in pictures of Tibet. It was the only building I could see anywhere. Here, I thought, must live the rulers of this land, and I determined to seek them out and meet them.

But I had only gone a few steps when



my familiar companion, the Invisible Voice, made its presence known again. "You may not go there," it said, its tone brooking no argument. I stopped.

"Is it forbidden?" I asked. "Who lives there?"

"I do," the voice answered.

"You?" I exclaimed. "But I would meet you, see you! You have been my guide..."

"And so I shall remain though you see me not, but you have other places to go, other things to see, other tasks to perform."

"But what is this place? It is beautiful!"

"It is the palace of the Sidhe, the People of Peace, the Lords of the lands of Faerie. What you need to know is that they bid you welcome. You are a guest in this land, and the Palace will watch over you. I will watch over you."

I did not know what else to say. My heart longed to see this Palace for myself. I was sure its inhabitants would be as wonderful and beautiful as it looked to be. But as if my unseen guide had read my mind, the voice said, "We are not your destination. You are."

"I...I don't understand."

"We are not here to take you out of your world. We are here to bring you into it new ways. Once this is done, then you will see us. Of that you should have no doubt."

His words made little sense to me. They had brought me here through the barrow only to take me back to where I came from? It made little sense. But I felt I had no choice but to accept.

"Turn, my guest. Turn around and walk. In a short while, you will come to a well of living water, a pond fed by springs deep within the earth. Drink from it and you will find your further path revealed."

"Can you say more?" I asked. But there was only silence. So I reluctantly turned away from the beauty and splendor of the Palace and all the mystery and wonder that it promised, and began to walk into the gently rolling land ahead of me.

As the voice had promised, it was but a little while and a pleasant walk before I came to a spring where water indeed gushed forth from the earth, flowing into a circular pond like a deep well. I walked up to it and realized I was not alone. On the other side, a magnificent stag stood watching me calmly. It seemed perfectly unafraid at my approach. I wondered if in this land of Faerie it had ever seen a human being before.



And then I wondered if indeed it was a stag or if it was itself a Faerie being.

My guide—was he indeed a Faerie Lord, I wondered—had said for me to drink, so I knelt by the well to do so. As I did, the stag came around the pool and lowered his head to the water next to me. I felt graced to be in the presence of such a creature. It seemed a special blessing. Putting my head down, I also drank from the pool. The water was cool and delicious. I felt filled with a vitality such as I had rarely experienced before.

Looking up, I saw the stag was gone. But then I saw it walking toward a distant row of trees. It stopped and looked back at me over its shoulder, and I had the impression that it wanted me to follow. I got to my feet and hastened after it.

When we reached the trees, the stag plunged into them. I had no choice but to follow. Yet it was not arduous going. There was a path, and it was as if the trees themselves bent back to give us room to walk through their midst. I realized this was no mighty forest but only a narrow stand of trees, for soon we came to the end of them. The trees at the edge of the forest were flowering, beautiful white blossoms hanging from their branches. As the stag approached them, it began to disappear. Like a ghost, it grew more and more transparent until finally it vanished altogether.

I hurried forward to the place where it had been, flowers hanging from the branches above me. In front of me at my feet were green stalks of wheat growing at the edge of the trees. And beyond...beyond I saw fields bursting with grain, the fertility and abundance of the land displaying itself before me.

I stood for a moment in the shade of the trees, white blossoms swaying against my forehead in a light breeze, admiring the sight before me. I have always appreciated farmlands, and this was a delight for my eyes.



"You have beautiful lands," I said out loud, confident that my unseen guide would hear me.

"Thank you," came the reply as I was sure it would. "We bless our land, so we are blessed by it in return. But you must be hungry. Look to your right."

I turned and looked. There was a table set in the shade of the flowering trees. And on the table was a feast, the products of the land. There were cheeses and bread, apples and grapes and other fruits.

"Please," said the voice. "Eat and drink. Enjoy yourself with the gifts of the land."

I hesitated. I had heard tales told in the evening around fire-filled hearths of the dangers of accepting food in the Faerie lands. "If you eat Faerie food," one elder had said, nodding his head knowingly, "ye'll never come back. You will be their slave forever." I was sure this would not happen, and yet....



As if reading my mind, which by now I was sure was all too likely and possible for my unseen guide, the voice urged me to partake. "There is no danger here to you," it said, "only nourishment to give you strength. As I said, our desire is not to keep you here out of your world but to return you to it..."

"...changed," I said, interrupting.

The voice was still. Then it said, "yes, but only if you choose. We cannot force this change upon you." This gave me pause, but on the whole, I was reassured. So I fell to the feast with only the slightest trepidation. Soon even that was gone as the flavor and texture of the food drove all thoughts from my mind but the pleasure of the moment. As I ate, I was sure I saw eyes watching me from the shadows under the leaves, and small, greenish faces seemed to stare just at the edge of my vision. But nothing made any move towards me, and I thought, *let them watch, whoever or whatever they are, and see the pleasure their food is giving me.*

In time I became sated. As I finished, the voice returned and said, "I have only one request. That you drink both the wines, the red and the white." And suddenly there were two wine glasses on the table, one filled with a red liquid, one with a white. Perhaps I should have



been concerned. But I had eaten well in the shade of flowering trees in a peaceful and abundant land. I was filled with contentment, and the wine seemed only a further part of that. I reached out and took the red wine glass in my hand and drained its contents. Then I did the same with the white. They were both exquisite, unlike any wines I had ever known before.

"Excellent!" I said. "Either one would have been sufficient. Both were...beyond words..."

"I am glad. The red wine was for you, the white wine was for us. They are the blood of your land and the blood of ours. Drinking them is our covenant with you...."

And with that the voice faded away, and I slept.

In sleeping, I saw a strange thing. Before me rose a mighty tree, one so tall I could not see the top of it. On one side of it, it was night, and I could see moon and stars in the sky. On the other side it was bright day lit by the sun. And I knew somehow without being told that the moonlit side was the realm of Faerie and the sunlit side was the land of humankind. In some magical way, the tree was a portal between the two, a threshold, perhaps even the World Tree of ancient myth and lore.



As I looked down, on the moonlit side I could see a pile of treasure—gold and jewels—piled up against the trunk of the tree. It was more wealth than I had ever seen in my life. My heart skipped and my pulse raced with the wanting of it. I made a step towards it. But then in the middle of the tree, I saw a space that was neither of one land nor the other, and in it there were piles of gold and piles of leaves and twigs. I looked further, and on the sunlit side there were only leaves. I knew then that the gold I coveted was Faerie gold, an illusion that was not what it seemed. Beautiful by night and under the glamour of Faerie, it appeared as fabulous wealth. But in the world of men and women, in the light of day, it would turn into its true nature, nothing but leaves and twigs, worthless.

I started to turn away, sure that this was some kind of test of discernment and that I had passed it by refusing the gold. But something, some instinct, stopped me. Perhaps this was a deeper test than it appeared.

What if the illusion worked the other way as well, that something we humans saw as worthless was actually a treasure in the eyes of the Sidhe? But what was valuable about leaves and twigs? Nothing....

Unless you saw them through nature's eyes; then they were food for the soil. Gold and jewels had no nourishment but leaves and twigs could decay. They provided sustenance for insects and bacteria. Their substance returned to the soil and became food for the trees that had shed them. They were part of the cycle of life, part of what made that cycle unbroken, part of the wholeness of nature.

It was then that the colorful leaves and bent twigs became beautiful and valuable in my sight. No merchant would have accepted them as payment for anything, but they could make compost, gardener's gold, which the soil would accept gladly. And it was the soil, not a merchant, that had produced the bounty on which I had so recently feasted. No amount of gold could have purchased what I ate had the land and nature not give birth to it in the first place. And if that were true in Faerie, it was equally true in the world from which I'd come.

So there was value on both sides of the tree. Each world had treasure for the other. There was no deception here, only a deeper understanding and a reconciliation that united both worlds.

I reached down, and with laughter, I picked up both leaves and gold and put both in my pocket. Would the gold turn to leaves in my world? Would the leaves turn to gold in the Faerie world? I had no idea, but the thought of it filled me with delight. There was no reason I could not honor both.

The tree faded out of sight, and I was standing on the bank of a narrow, shallow river. Across from me on the other bank but partway into the water was a large, brown bear. But I could see that like the raptor, this creature was half stone as well.

The bear turned its shaggy head in my direction. Once more the voice of my invisible host spoke through its lips. "Well done! You have passed the test of discernment. This gives you strength for what is ahead, not just physical strength but moral and spiritual strength as well. You are starting to understand just what our world is



about, for we are the keepers of the world's treasures, treasures we would gladly share if humanity knew how to appreciate and value them."

The bear shook itself, and the stone fell away. It came over to me, and I felt no fear, only love. "Good," it whispered, as it rubbed its head against my head, "Very good." Then it disappeared.

And I did, too.



I found myself no longer on a river bank but standing beside a great standing stone instead. It was night time, and a brilliant full moon shone in the sky above. Had I been magically returned to my world?

At my feet was a path, and I began to follow. I realized immediately I was not back where I had started. There were more great stones standing in the earth, but they were not in a circle. And when I saw where the path led, I knew beyond doubt I was still in the land of the Sidhe.

Ahead of me the path turned into a spiral bordered with flowers. From it a wide wooden staircase wound gracefully up into the sky where it blended with the moonlight, fading into the stars. It was a staircase of great beauty, one that might have come from the Palace I had seen earlier.

This time I felt no trepidation as I walked up to the staircase and prepared to mount it. I knew not where it might lead, but by now I had learned to trust these magical transformations. I knew I had nothing to fear and perhaps much to gain. I placed my foot on the first step and waited, half expecting my host's voice to come again. But there was nothing, so I began to climb the stairs. As they wound to the left, I could see the stars through them, and the banister and railing seemed more fashioned from moonbeams than from wood. Higher I went, placing my eyes on the moon, feeling the steps beneath my feet rather than seeing them, and when at one point I glanced down, I was indeed standing on air and moonlight and nothing else. I took another step...

...and found myself on a grassy plain in the midst of a sunny day. In front of me was a pile of books and scrolls as well as writing implements. One book was open, propped up against the pile. And as I watched, starlight began to pour down in a stream from the sky above. It was a



column of sparkles that resolved itself to my amazement into a red creature that seemed to be a Phoenix or even a small dragon. It looked at me and when it spoke, I heard my invisible host's voice one more.

"Three gifts we give you. The first you have already experienced or you would not be here. This is the ability to walk between the worlds, to mount the stairs of discernment and inner attunement to find new worlds of consciousness and spirit. The second gift is that of wisdom and knowledge that you can gain when you open your heart and mind to the world and its multiple dimensions. This is symbolized by these books and scrolls before you."

"And the third gift?" I asked when the voice paused.

"The third is the gift of Trust and Faerie Luck."

The dragon-phoenix waved its wings, and I suddenly saw a coin flipping in the air. "Call it!" said the voice.

"Heads," I said, without thinking, and the coin landed in the midst of flowers where butterflies were hovering or drinking nectar. I looked at it. On its side was engraved a golden four-leaf clover.

"Heads it is!" said the voice.

I picked up the coin and looked at it. On the other side it was blank.

"Toss it again," my host said. I did, and as if flew through the air, I said, "Heads again!" And once more it landed with the clover showing.

"So," I said, picking up the coin once more, "the third gift is a lucky coin?"

The voice chuckled and I could have sworn the little dragon creature smiled. "Oh, it's much more than that! The one who trusts the world and blends with it in love and respect gains a relationship that can influence the probability of outcomes. Such a person knows the interconnections of all things. That understanding, which is native to my people the Sidhe,



gives an attunement to the world that allows us to affect how things unfold. We know how the smallest influence, like the fluttering of the wings of those butterflies, can create the largest effect. This gives us a way to manifest, to heal and to bless. It is this ability the coin represents, and it is our third gift to you." Having said this, the dragon-phoenix flapped its wings once more and disappeared, along with the books and scrolls.

I felt an urge to walk. The day was pleasant and warm, and the meadow about me was inviting with its flowers and various colored butterflies seeking after nectar. I picked a direction and set off. Surprisingly, my unseen host continued his discourse as if he were still at my side. In a way I suppose he was, though I pictured him, whatever he looked like, sitting comfortably and at ease in a grand room in the Palace while my legs were the ones getting a workout. Still, in such a pretty countryside, I was pleased to be doing so.

"You remember," he said, "the vision you had of the far country, the possible country, at the beginning of your journey? The one that led you to the edge?"

"Yes."

"That is the world we desire to see come about, a world of wholeness and new possibilities. And it can when our race and yours are reconciled and once again united. Once we were one people, both filled with life and energy from the stars, but then we divided. You became part of the earth. And we retreated into a magical realm of our own. Now it is time to come together again for the sake of the future."



We came to a low stone wall. Looking down I saw growing out of the cracks in the rock a red rose and a white rose entwined. Next to them was an ancient stone goblet or chalice.

"We grow from the same soil," my host said. "Your blood is red, mine is white, but we are the same spirit. Red wine and white, white rose and red, we have different gifts and qualities, but now is the time to blend them in a grail of compassion and wholeness for the world. Now is the time for a new being to emerge who carries the spirit of us both."

On impulse, I knelt and picked up the ancient chalice, a grail cup, and



drank from the liquid it held. It was not wine, nor was it water, nor like anything else I had ever tasted, but it filled a place in me I had not known was empty and quenched a thirst I had only dimly realized I had. I could feel something shifting deep within me, a new consciousness stirring and expanding the familiar boundaries that had defined my “normal” life.

I put the stone grail back by the wall and stood. Silence was all about me. I knew somehow my unseen host had left. To my right I could see a small passage leading through the stone wall, and I knew that was where I must go. But when I walked through it and into the other side, the world changed once again. From daylight I now entered into night. Stars twinkled in the sky. A full moon, like the one into whose light the magical stairs had taken me, shone in their midst. In this place, time and space obviously were matters of convenience, not of law.



Another light caught my attention. Off to my left, a small campfire burned. I could see a figure sitting cross-legged in front of it, reminding me of a picture I had once seen of an old shaman. I could hear a curious tapping sound, like metal hitting stone. I went over, and as I got nearer, I could see that it was a man naked from the waist up, and he had a hammer and chisel in his hands with which he was chipping at stone in his lap. But closer still, I saw to my astonishment that he was himself, like the falcon and the bear before him, partly encased in stone. It was this stone that he was chipping, bringing forth his legs.

“Sit down,” he said, not surprisingly in the voice of my host. He kept chipping away as he spoke. I did as he asked. “A new humanity is emerging from the earth,” he said. *Chip, chip, chip* went the chisel against his thigh. “Now you do this by your own efforts. No one but you can decide to free yourself from the encasements you have created.” *Chip, chip, chip, chip.* “But we can help. All the earth can help, if you will see the world and the creatures within it as your allies and your partners.” He paused from his chipping. “When you do, you will not need to chip this stone alone.”

At that moment, the stone around him fell away, and he stood, free and powerful before me. He gestured towards the fire. It flared up,

momentarily blinding me. And as I might have expected, when I could see again, the stone shaman was not there.



Instead, I was in a cavern, one filled with a strange luminescence that seemed to come from all the walls so that I had no trouble seeing. In front of me was a small pool in which I could see fish darting about. Beyond, carved from stone, was a graceful and beautiful throne. A small fire burned before it. By its side lay a wolf whose black eyes stared at me in challenge and expectation, and on its back perched an owl. Next to it rested another grail. Even a spider was present.

Once more a voice spoke, but this time it was a woman's voice, one that thrilled my heart to hear and awoke ancient memories in the very cells of my body. "Welcome," she said, "to the Throne of Gaia. It is the Throne of the Four-Fold Alliance, the partnership of humanity, creatures, Faerie, and Gaia. It is the Throne that restores an ancient oneness in the name of a present that needs healing and a future that needs birthing. Whoever sits here must hold love and the wholeness of all in his or her heart. Not all will choose to sit here, but whoever does will gain the spirit of Gaia within them and be servant, friend, and partner to all. Will you sit?"

"Gladly," I said. And putting action to my intent, I stepped around the pool and the fire and sat upon this ancient throne. A rush of joy filled my heart, and I felt as if all the earth were my Self.

And then, once more, I was elsewhere.

I stood once more in the outer ring of the stone circle where my journey had begun. Next to me was the dark, shadowed form of the Reaper stone, and I knew indeed that a part of me had died and a new me had been born. Across the water, I could see the land that awaited, a new land, a new world. I felt a pang of sadness, for it seemed far from me, and it was where I wanted to be with all my strength and soul.

As I reached towards it in it longing, a robin flew down and landed on my finger, raising its voice in joyous song. I held my breath. Then I knew. *Here* was the new land! *Here* was the Four-Fold Alliance made flesh: bird, standing stone and me, creature, Sidhe, and human, all within the world at large, the body and spirit of Gaia. It was within me if I



opened to it. It was all around me if I would but see it. Gaia was everywhere I was, and I could be a partner wherever I might be. The Throne was not in some deep magical cavern but in the depths of my life, in love shared with others, and in the magic of a shared world awakening.

The little robin sang even more joyously, and in that moment, that distant land did not seem far away at all.



# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CARD DECK

## STONES AND DANCERS

The *Card Deck of the Sidhe* is divided into two types of cards: seventeen Stone Cards and sixteen Dancer cards. Imagine an ancient stone circle surrounding a hollow hill. Around this circle the Faeries dance. Together these represent two basic forces of life: the fixed and the fluid, the stable and the mutable, the stationary and the moving. The power of the cards comes from the dynamic interaction of these two forces.

Stones give shape and form, pattern and organization. They anchor spiritual energies and provide the place around which the dancers can form and move. Dancers represent free and flowing qualities that move through our lives, giving us energy, inspiration, and insight. The stones are those incarnational forces that help us anchor and embody these qualities. They provide the pattern and organization of our lives through which spirit may flow and express.

Nothing in the world is unchanging. Stones represent those elements in our lives that tend to change more slowly or with some resistance while Dancers are those that change quickly and easily.

## THE STONE CIRCLE

The Stone cards represent a stone circle built around a hollow hill or *howe*: a sacred place where heaven and earth, spirit and matter meet, the gateway into the realm of Faerie. The stone circle is made up of standing stones that surround this magical place, both connecting it to the outside world while protecting it as well.

The stone circle represents the physical plane, the incarnate domain with its relatively fixed and solid characteristics. It is a place of contact and connection between different realms, a meeting place, a place of embodiment.

The stone circle is divided into four Quadrants named for the directions they face: South, East, North, and West. Each Quadrant represents a particular set of qualities and meanings; each represents an aspect of our incarnational journey through life.

Although it appears solid and immovable, the Stone Circle is really a process; it is an “engine” of invocation and invitation fashioned from

stone. It represents the dynamic interplay of several elements: the North-South Axis of an energetic and incarnational relationship between stars and earth; the creative power of boundaries and thresholds, as represented by Dawn and Twilight; the movement of the sun around the earth during the day, from its position in the South unseen behind the earth, to its rising in the east, its apex at noon, in which we experience its full power as the star closest to the earth, and its descent back into the unseen at twilight—hence it represents the passage of time.

The Stone Circle also represents the primal relationship in which a boundary differentiates between one state and another and thus creates a space in which something special can occur. In this sense the Stone Circle is a grail, a cauldron, a container for spiritual, planetary, Faerie, and human energies and their blending. The Gates are the places of respiration, where things can move in and out of the circle, in and out of the energetic field or cauldron created by the stones. In a biological perspective, the Stone Circle can also represent the single cell, the building block of all life on earth, with its internal organelles, its membrane, and its nucleus

So although the Stone Cards are images of solid objects, they really represent dynamic processes within the physical world, even, you might say, the processes that hold the physical world together. Through the stone circle they create, these cards represent the incarnate, physical world.

In a more personal way, they represent your body, with the Heart Stones representing your organs, the Transition Stones representing the connective elements such as the circulatory, endocrine and nervous systems, and the Gates are the senses mediating between the body and the larger environment. The *Howe* is the place where body and soul conjoin, and the *Altar* card is the gate to the vertical worlds of spirit and the subtle realms.

The Stone Circle and the cards that form it represent as well your incarnate life and the various elements that make it up: body, home, work, family, relationships, dreams, goals, and so forth—essentially everything that brings your soul into this world and gives it access to the physical dimension of life.

## THE STONES

The Stone cards are divided into four categories: Gates, Heart Stones, Transition Stones, and Conditional Stones. Each Quadrant has a Gate, a Heart Stone, and a Transition Stone.

GATES: These are the portals into and out from the stone circle. They represent points of connection with the circle itself and the hollow hill within it and specifically with the qualities represented by the particular Quadrant which each Gate represents. These are cards of inflow and outflow, receiving and giving, reflection and expression. If the Stone Circle represents your body, these cards represent your physical and subtle senses.

There are two special Gates, the *Howe* itself and the *Altar* Room within it, which represent the connection with deeper levels and the subtle worlds, as well as with soul, spirit, and our essential sacredness. While the other four Gates are entrances into and exits from the Stone Circle, the *Howe* and the *Altar* Room are entrances and exits into the Realm of the Sidhe and the realms of spirit beyond.

Gate cards always represent connection, access, mediation, and means of expression.

HEART STONES: These stones are the guardians and rulers of each Quadrant. Each represents the heart of the Quadrant to which it belongs and thus expresses the essence of the qualities that belong to that Quadrant. These are the stones closest to the mystery and power of the center of the circle and all that the *Howe* represents. If the Stone Circle represents your body, these cards represent organs.

Heart Stone cards always represent concentration, presence, and power.

TRANSITION STONES: These stones stand at the transition point leading from one Quadrant to another. In this way, they partake of the qualities of both Quadrants to which they are connected. They mark the place and the means by which one set of principles or qualities lead or transform into another, creating continuity. If the Stone Circle represents your body, these cards represent the circulatory functions of the endocrine, blood, and nervous systems.

Transition Stone cards always represent change, transformation, and unfoldment.

CONDITIONAL STONES: These three stones may be found anywhere in the stone circle and belong to no Quadrant. They condition the particular Quadrant in which they appear, deepening, adding to or taking away from the qualities which that Quadrant represents. Condition Stone Cards always represent a modification affecting the whole.

## THE DANCERS

If the Stone Cards represent the dynamic yet comparatively fixed and solid elements of earth and incarnation, the Dancer Cards represent the fluid, moving, dynamic elements of spirit, mind and heart. These are the forces that keep us flexible, changing, and growing. These are the forces of magic and wonder that need the stones to connect to earth, the forces of soul that need embodiment to participate in the world. The Dancers belong to no Quadrant but move around and through all of them, adding their own qualities and powers to what the Stones and Quadrants represent.

While the Stone Cards have a fixed arrangement within the Stone Circle, the Dancers do not. They can be arranged in any sequence or pattern. One possible narrative sequence is the one presented in the Journey earlier in this Manual, but other narratives and sequences are possible.

## THE GATES: AXIS AND THRESHOLDS

The sequence and meaning of the Gates may need further explanation. The sun rising in the East as seen through the *Gate of Dawn* makes sense, as does the *Gate of Twilight* in the West when the sun sets. But why is there a night sky and stars in the North, in the position where one would expect to find the Sun at its height at noontime? And why a sunny day in the South where one would expect the night? In effect, why aren't the *Gate of Earth* and the *Gate of Stars* reversed, with the latter in the South and the former in the North?

This puzzled me, too, when I initially began working with the cards

and receiving information and impressions from my Sidhe colleague. Also, I was accustomed when working with circle patterns to moving clockwise from left to right rather than in the counterclockwise system used in this card deck. At the very least, I would have expected the cycle to begin in the East with the rising sun and ending in the South with the night.

When I asked about this, the first answer was simply an emphatic “The *Gate of Stars* is in the North, in the upper part of the Circle. That is where it must be.” This was followed by a somewhat brusque (though not unkind) statement to the effect that I already understood why, so why was I questioning?

With this implication that I already knew the answer to my questions, I did a little meditation on the relationship of the *Gate of Stars* and the *Gate of Earth*. As a consequence, I became aware of a line of power running from the stars—or more precisely, from what I think of as the “Stellar Realms,” a particular region of subtle energy, presence, and Light in the inner worlds—into the center of the Circle. I could also sense a second stream running from the Stellar Realms directly into the Earth. Likewise, I could sense a similar rising line of power and Light from within the Earth entering the center of the Circle, where it met and blending with the descending star presence, and a line of power of Earth-Light rising directly into the Stellar Realms.

I was indeed already familiar with these lines of power. They figure importantly in some of the work I do in Incarnational Spirituality. Consequently, even though I wasn’t sure how the Sidhe regarded these forces, I felt on familiar ground. Apparently, my recognition encouraged my Sidhe colleague to take pity on me, for he shared the following information.

“The Stone Circle we are presenting to you is not one oriented to the movement of the sun around the planet or to the seasons of the earth, though with some adjustment it can reflect these passages. Instead, the North and South Gates represent a vertical line of power that passes from our world into yours and in the larger scheme of things, from universal sources into your planet. To visualize this, picture yourself standing up with the planet beneath your feet and the stars above you and a line of spiritual power passing through you along your spine connecting heaven and earth. Hence, we have the *Gate of Stars* and the *Gate of Earth*. This line of power unites our worlds as we are both the beneficiaries of its

life-giving force.

“The Gates of Dawn and the Gates of Twilight represent a different line of energy, one of change, for both of these gates represent thresholds between your world and ours. Thresholds and boundaries are important to us, for they are places of power where two worlds come together; they are crossroads in the passage of time. Such crossroads and thresholds have always been meeting places as they represent the borderlands that are not fully Faerie and not fully human, or in a larger sense, not fully spirit and not fully matter.

“So these two Gates represent places of contact and communication where one world intersects another. They represent joining points between the two halves of our world, the physical half and the spirit half.

“Thus the Stone Circle as a whole represents a matrix of connection and contact. That is its purpose, not that of a timepiece. There is the vertical axis of descending and arising powers from the Stars and the Earth which meet to create wholeness; this axis unites and blesses both our people. It reflects our oneness together. Then there is the horizontal line of thresholds which represents meeting places between our different worlds. These are places of change from night to day and day to night, but more deeply, they represent the points of contact between us where we can create collaboration across the boundary of our differences. These thresholds reflect our differences and the power that can arise when we can honor and blend those differences in partnership.”

After this communication, I did some more reflection on the particular construction of the Circle and the relationship of the Gates. This led to an interesting experience in which I saw the sun at noon, high in the sky, acting as a lens to focus stellar energies to the earth. This is not surprising, given that the sun is also a star, the star closest to our world. In effect the sun itself was acting as a *Gate of Stars*.

There is much more that could be discovered and said about the spiritual dynamics and relationships embodied in this Stone Circle. Some further insights are found in the next section on the Quadrants. But as for the rest, I leave that for you to discover through your own explorations and reflections as you engage the cards in this *Card Deck of the Sidhe*.

## THE QUADRANTS

The Stone Circle is divided into four Quadrants, each containing three Stone Cards: a Gate, a Heart Stone and a Transition Stone. These Quadrants represent various foundational aspects of our lives such as our occupation, our family, our goals, and where we live. They also represent body, mind, spirit, and emotion. In the context of Incarnational Spirituality, they represent the four principles of identity, boundary, connection, and emergence. And, as the Sidhe have pointed out, they represent both the axis and the thresholds that connect us with each other, the lines of oneness and of differences.

When using the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* to give an oracular reading, the meaning of a particular card can be modified by the nature of the Quadrant in which it is played. The way in which it is modified will be determined by the specific nature of the cards, the context of the reading and the issues involved, and your own intuition and insights. However, here are suggestions as to the qualities which each Quadrant contributes.

### QUADRANT ONE:

The first Quadrant is at the bottom of the Stone Circle. It is the Foundational Quadrant, the place of conception and initiation, the Quadrant of beginnings.

It is the Quadrant of the Earth from which all living things come. It is the Quadrant of resources and abundance, the Quadrant of Nature.

In our personal lives, this Quadrant represents place and location, such as the land where we live and work.

It can also represent our body itself with its physical resources of vitality and strength.

Its direction is South.

In the passage of time, it represents the beginning of a cycle, whether of an hour, a day, a month, a year, or many years. Note that this may be an inner beginning, not yet visible or manifest in form, such as the conception of a child in the womb of a mother hidden from outer sight.

As previously explained, in the movement of the sun paradoxically it represents Night when the sun is hidden behind the body of the earth.

In this sense, it is the Sun Within the Earth, the Invisible Sun within all things.

In Incarnational Spirituality, this Quadrant represents Identity itself, the source or foundation of who we are.

It is the Planetary Aspect of our life.

This is an Axis Quadrant. It connects to Quadrant Three to form the axis of Earth and Stars, the Planetary and the Cosmic, the Finite and the Infinite along which our souls travel into physical life.

The Stones associated with this Quadrant are the *Gate of Earth*, the *Wizard Stone*, and the *Stone of Identity*.

Its keynote phrase is: *That Which Conceives and Initiates*.

## QUADRANT TWO:

The second Quadrant is on the right side of the Stone Circle. It is the Quadrant of Manifestation, the place of expression and activity, the Quadrant of possibility.

It is the Quadrant of the Sun which gives energy to the earth, making life possible. It is the Quadrant of Energy.

In our personal lives, this Quadrant represents our jobs, the vocations through which we express ourselves, as well as our creativity and activity in general.

It can also represent our mind and will, the capacities for planning, shaping, initiating, and self-expression.

Its direction is East.

In the passage of time, it represents the first quarter of a cycle, whether of an hour, a day, a month, a year, or many years.

In the movement of the sun, it represents Dawn when the rotation of the Earth brings the sun over the horizon, the Invisible Sun made visible in expression and manifestation. This is the outer beginning when the Inner Sun begins to make itself manifest in outer appearance and radiance.

In Incarnational Spirituality, this Quadrant represents Boundary, the creation of a field or container of selfhood that can hold and express the core energy of our life and identity, thus manifesting us upon the earth.

It is the Solar Aspect of our life.

This is a Threshold Quadrant. It is the Threshold between conception and birth, possibility and realization, potential and actualization. Across



this Threshold, energy and life move from the inner to the outer, from spirit and thought to activity and action.

The Stones associated with this Quadrant are the *Gate of Dawn*, the *Artisan Stone*, and the *Stone of Boundary*.

Its keynote phrase is: *That Which Shapes and Expresses*.

### QUADRANT THREE

The third Quadrant is at the top of the Stone Circle. It is the Quadrant of Relationship, the place of connection and engagement, the Quadrant of paths and patterns, direction and guidance.

It is the Quadrant of the Stars which enable us to navigate and explore and find the connections that unite one place with another.

It is the Quadrant of Community, whether it's the community of stars, of humanity, or of life itself: the collective that is formed from all the relationships and patterns we forge in our life.

In our personal lives, this Quadrant represents our relationships: family, friends, co-workers, colleagues, and even casual acquaintances. These relationships form the larger incarnational pattern of our lives.

It also represents intuition and spirit, sources of deep inner guidance from the Soul and the Sacred.

Its direction is North.

In the passage of time, it represents the midpoint of a cycle, whether of an hour, a day, a month, a year, or many years. This may be the moment when everything is at its peak.

In the movement of the sun, though the Gate is that of the Stars paradoxically it represents Noon, when the sun is at its height in the sky. Remember that the sun is also a star, the closest star to Earth. Thus this represents when the star-power of the sun is most evident and powerful

In Incarnational Spirituality, this Quadrant represents Connection, Engagement and Participation.

It is the Stellar or Cosmic Aspect of our life.

This is an Axis Quadrant. It connects to Quadrant One to form the axis of Earth and Stars, the Planetary and the Cosmic, the Finite and the Infinite along which our souls travel into physical life.

The Stones associated with this Quadrant are the *Gate of Stars*, the *Bard Stone*, and the *Stone of Opening*.

Its keynote phrase is: *That Which Connects and Relates.*

#### QUADRANT FOUR

The fourth Quadrant is on the left side of the Stone Circle. It is the Quadrant of Reflection, of discovery and the crossing of thresholds, of unfoldment and fruition, and of consequences.

It is the Quadrant of the Moon which governs the night, a time for contemplation, rest and renewal. It also governs cycles and movement, tides and rhythms, comings and goings, ebb and flow.

It is a Quadrant of new possibilities and potentials, which, if we are to claim them, may require us to change in some manner. It is a Quadrant of release from that which would hold us in worn out or stagnant conditions so that we can move forward.

In our personal lives, this Quadrant represents at one level the tides of our emotions and desires, the inner dynamics of attraction and repulsion that shape our lives. At a deeper level, though, it represents the learning and growth that come when emotions transform into wisdom and compassion, allowing us to see beyond appearances and to gain insights into the life of others, feeling into their joys and sorrows. From this empathy new perspectives and deeper insights emerge.

It can also represent the imagination which takes us into new lands, new worlds, new possibilities beyond the realm of the known and the familiar.

Its direction is West.

In the passage of time, it represents the last quarter and the ending of a cycle, whether of an hour, a day, a month, a year, or many years. It is when outer forms are declining and withdrawing, their essence being distilled and drawn back into an inner realm of wisdom and new potential.

In the movement of the sun, this is twilight when the rotation of the Earth causes the sun to apparently sink below the horizon. The outer sun now becomes once more the Invisible Sun, the hidden Sun Within the Earth that is the spiritual power and presence within all things.

In Incarnational Spirituality, this Quadrant represents Emergence.

It is the Lunar Aspect of our Life.

This is a Threshold Quadrant. It is the Threshold between what is or has been and what can be, the known and the unknown, the seen and

the unseen, the concrete and the imaginal. Across this Threshold, energy and life move from the outer to the inner, from activity and action to assimilation and wisdom.

The Stones associated with this Quadrant are the *Gate of Twilight*, the *Gatekeeper Stone*, and the *Stone of Emergence*.

Its keynote phrase is: *That Which Emerges and Transforms*.

## WORKING WITH A SUN CYCLE

If you are doing a reading that involves the passage of time and you want to work with a normal sun cycle, beginning with Dawn in the East and ending with Night in the South, you can switch the Gates of Earth and Stars with each other. This can also give a seasonal flavor to the circle, with Spring in the East, Summer in the North, Autumn in the West, and Winter in the South.

When doing this, you may not wish to consider the meaning of the Quadrants in such a reading, since making this switch will affect some of the meaning and relationship of Quadrants One and Three. Quadrant One will become the Stellar Quadrant, and Quadrant Three will become the Earth Quadrant. The other two Quadrants and Gates are unaffected. Doing this will alter the fundamental nature of the Stone Circle as a portal of contact and communication using a matrix of threshold and axis, of lines of change and lines of power, of difference and oneness. However, if all you're interested in is tracking a process of development across the chronology of a day or a year then this won't matter.

## STONE CARD DESCRIPTIONS

There are seventeen Stone Cards divided into four categories: 6 Gates, 4 Heart Stones, 4 Transition Stones, and 3 Condition Stones. Twelve of these Stone Cards fall into one of the four Quadrants, while the other five Stone Cards are independent of the Quadrants.

Gate Stones always represent a connection or a means of both accessing and expressing the qualities represented by their particular Quadrants. They represent the power of mediation. Two of the Gates are special: the *Howe* or Hollow Hill at the center of the Stone Circle and an *Altar* room or Gate of Consciousness at the center of the *Howe*.

Heart Stones always embody the essential power and qualities of their Quadrant.

Transition Stones always represent the movement between one state and another, one Quadrant and another. They embody a dynamic activity, unfoldment and flow that carries one condition forward organically into its successor. Thus, they are described as associated with two Quadrants because they represent the transition between one Quadrant and another; however, their “home” Quadrant is the first one listed.

Condition Stones always modify for better or worse the Quadrant in which they appear.

In the following section, each of the Stone Cards is described with the following information: its Name, the Type of card that it is, the Quadrant with which it is associated (if any), Keywords that relate to the card, and Commentary on its meaning and use in an oracular reading. There is also a section called “The Stone’s Voice.” This presents a short epigram or message that Jeremy received as if the stones themselves were speaking to him. Remember, while interpreting any of these cards, the most important questions to ask yourself are “What does this card mean to me at this time? What does this image evoke in me?” The following meanings are simply suggestions to help you in this process.

The Stone Cards are listed and described in the following order:

## **STONE CARDS**

HOWE (HOLLOW HILL)

GATE OF EARTH

GATE OF DAWN

GATE OF STARS

GATE OF TWILIGHT

ALTAR (GATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS)

WIZARD STONE

ARTISAN STONE

BARD STONE

GATEKEEPER STONE

STONE OF IDENTITY

STONE OF BOUNDARY

STONE OF OPENING

STONE OF EMERGENCE

ANCESTOR STONE

FALLEN STONE

STONE OF ALLIANCE



## HOWE (THE HOLLOW HILL)

TYPE: Gate Card (Center)

QUADRANT: All

THE STONE'S VOICE: *Within me is a doorway to the land of the Sidhe. By following the road within I come upon the outer land of folklore and Faerie.*

KEYWORDS: Integration; Wholeness; Connection; Collaboration; Incarnation; Magic.

COMMENTARY: The *Howe* is a hollow hill at the center of the Stone Circle. It is the gate into the realm of Faerie, the land of the Sidhe. As

such it represents a connection with the inner worlds and with the subtle powers and intelligences within the earth. It is a place of power and connection, the place where the stars in the sky meet the stars within the earth. It is the gateway to magic, the magic of incarnation and manifestation. It is also a place where human and faerie may meet and enter into collaboration, thus it represents a state of wholeness.

Metaphorically, you are a *Howe*. You are one of the "hollow hills" where the individual and the universal, the personal and the transpersonal, the magical and the mundane come together and are integrated in a presence of Self-Light and Sacredness. This card represents the entry into your own inner landscape of imagination, intuition, wisdom and creativity. If the Stone Circle as a whole represents your body and the elements of your life, then this card represents your inner self, your open heart and loving mind.





## GATE OF EARTH

TYPE: Gate Card (Axis)

QUADRANT ONE: (South) The Power to Conceive

THE STONE'S VOICE: *Through this gate I enter my body and the primal earth.*

KEYWORDS: Earth; Potential; Nature; Fertility; Resources; Body; Identity; Personal; The Call of the World.

COMMENTARY: The *Gate of Earth* is an Axis Gate aligned with the *Gate of Stars*. Through this Gate the light and power of the land finds access to

the cosmic energies of the stars.

Thus, the *Gate of Earth* is the connection between our soul and the creative, fertile, life-sustaining powers of the earth. It is the connection through which our intent and identity flow out into the world and through which the life and power of the earth flows into us. This card represents the Call of the World, the call that brings us to Earth in the first place. It also represents the nourishing, caring, quality of the world that receives us, just as the earth receives the seed and gives it what it needs to grow.

This Gate gives us access to the powers and qualities of Quadrant One, the South Quadrant of the Stone Circle that is our life and incarnation. It gives us access to the Power to Conceive.

This is also the Gate into the Personal side of our lives, into our specific identity as a particular human being, for on earth, all things are specific and particular. Thus it is a gate into specificity.

This card represents the connection we have—whether that be mental, emotion, physical, spiritual, or some combination of these—to resources that can receive and nourish and bring into being our visions, goals, ideas, and desires. For the soul, these are the powers of the Earth, of the body, and of our personal identity. For our incarnate selves, these are resources found in others, in our work, or in our environment. We have to step through the Gate and make the connections, but the resources are

there in the particularity and specificity of the earth to bring our dreams to fruition.

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## GATE OF DAWN

TYPE: Gate Card (Threshold)

QUADRANT TWO: (East) The Power to Bring Forth

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I wake up to a new day, the first day of creation.*

KEYWORDS: Sun; Birth; Boundary; Generativity; Energy; Self-Expression; Manifestation.

COMMENTARY: The *Gate of Dawn* is a Threshold Gate, representing the transition between night and day, potential and actualization, conception and birth, ideas and actions, rest and activity. Thresholds

are places of power and energy, so this card represents new vitality, energy, and possibilities emerging in your life.

This is a Threshold that moves from the lights of a universe of stars to the light of a single star during the day; thus, symbolically it is the threshold between the universal and the particular.

With the rising of the sun at dawn, solar energy floods the world, energizing the planet and all life upon it. This card represents the manifestation of your soul and identity, your personhood and self, as a generative source of energy for your own life. It is a card of self-expression and outer activity. If the earth is where the seed gestates, the light and energy of the sun is what brings it forth into manifestation and birth.

This Gate gives us access to the powers and qualities of Quadrant Two, the East Quadrant of the Stone Circle that is our life and incarnation. It gives us access to the Power to Bring Forth.

This is a card of vitality, of moving outward, of giving expression to form. Thus in an interesting way, it is also a card of establishing boundaries to hold that vitality and expression. Here is a paradox. The sun shines its light universally upon all, but each specific life receives and

concentrates that energy to give it the power to do what it desires or needs to do. Sunlight shines upon the moon but without any life to hold it, its energy is dissipated in a barren world. It's not enough just to have the energy to manifest; true manifestation also needs boundaries and forms to hold and focus that energy to bring something into being.

Thus the *Gate of Dawn* represents the appearance and expression in our lives of our power to blend boundary and energy, form and Light, to create a body of manifestation.

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## GATE OF STARS

TYPE: Gate Card (Axis)

QUADRANT THREE: (North) The Power to Navigate and Relate

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I step unguarded into the deep vacuum of space and breathe the life-giving breath of stars.*

KEYWORDS: Stars; Cosmos; Connections; Relationships; Participation; Spirit; Inspiration; Transpersonal.

COMMENTARY: The *Gate of Stars* is an Axis Gate aligned with the *Gate of Earth*. Through this Gate the Light and vision, promise and energy of the

Cosmos and the spiritual realms find access to the Earth. Stars represent the vast creative forces of the universe; we are all made of "star-stuff" for they are the wombs from which the atomic building blocks of creation emerge. In esoteric traditions, stars also represent the highest celestial or spiritual realm, the "Stellar Realm" in which our souls dwell.

Though each star is unique, together they form constellations; thus they symbolize connections, relationship and community. We navigate by forming connections and relationships between the stars themselves and between the stars and ourselves on earth. These relationships and patterns chart the course of our direction as we seek our goals.

This Gate gives us access to the qualities of Quadrant Three, the North Quadrant, the Power to Navigate and to Relate. This Gate also brings us

face to face with the immensity of creation. Rather than feeling small and diminished, this can be an experience of wonder and awe. We are part of the Universe, participants in the Cosmos, part of its life.

This is a card of connectedness and relationship. When found in a reading, it suggests that you may find the direction you seek by looking to the relationships and connections in your life. These can be with people or with objects in your life, or with the realms of spirit and the transpersonal side of your life. If the *Gate of Earth* draws you into specificity and particularity, the *Gate of Stars* draws you into universality. Thus this card may indicate the presence of transpersonal forces or allies in your life in the moment or the need to lift your eyes and attention from the earth to the heavens in order to connect with such allies beyond the personal dimension. The *Gate of Earth* offers service to self, but the *Gate of Stars* offers service to community and to the wider web of life of which you are a part. Both of these are necessary to create wholeness, which is why these two Gates form an axis with each other, each complementing the other and providing what the other needs but cannot offer on its own.

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## GATE OF TWILIGHT

TYPE: Gate Card (Threshold)

QUADRANT FOUR: (West) The Power to Learn and Advance

THE STONE'S VOICE: *Between the paths to sun soaked mountains and dark moist forests is another way on which I walk arm and arm with the Sidhe.*

KEYWORDS: Moon; Fruition; Discovery; Emergence; Possibility; Universal.

COMMENTARY: The *Gate of Twilight* is a Threshold Gate, representing the transition between day and night, action and reflection, activity and rest,

outer and inner. Thresholds are places of power and energy, so this card represents the possibilities that contemplation can bring. It represents a time to lift your eyes from the land to the stars and from the familiar to the

unknown lands of imagination and possibility beyond. It is a time to let go so that something new can come to you from those distant horizons.

This is a Threshold that moves from the light of a single star during the day to the light of a universes of stars at night; thus, symbolically it is the threshold between the particular and the universal.

This is a Gate of discovery and emergence, of growth and of harvesting the fruits of growth in preparation to moving on. This Gate is ruled by the moon which governs tides, rhythms and cycles. It is a gate of endings giving way to new beginnings. It suggests now is a time to stop, rest, reflect, look back to see where you've come from, evaluate what you've learned and gained, and see what needs to be released or ended in order to move on.

Twilight is an in-between time. It does not have the bright clarity of the day nor the illumination of stars and moon. It can be an uncertain time, a challenging boundary to cross; where you've come from is now becoming shadowed and where you are going is not yet revealed. And yet, in twilight the first bright star of the night appears to give you guidance and reassurance that there is a new land ahead for you and that the direction and navigation that the stars provide will soon be there to help you find your way. Growth always takes you from the known to the unknown. This Gate offers you the courage through reflection and contemplation, memory and imagination, to take this next step of release and discovery on your journey.





## ALTAR (THE GATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS)

TYPE: Gate Card (Center)

QUADRANT: ALL

THE STONE'S VOICE: *On the altar of my beating heart I fan with love the perpetual flame of sacred fire and open to all the worlds.*

KEYWORDS: Attunement; Alignment; Revelation; Spiritual Awareness; Wholeness; Incarnation; Vertical Connection.

COMMENTARY: This card shows the inner chamber of the Howe.

Around you are the stone walls, while a single candle burns on a stone altar on the floor. However, other realms of awareness are opening up around you and becoming accessible: the Realms of the Sun, Moon and the Stars, each representing a particular manifestation of life, spirit, and consciousness.

This card represents a gate of consciousness, an inner state of attunement and wholeness that leads into the realms of Faerie, the Sidhe, and the vast realms of Spirit beyond.

In a reading, this card suggests the need for attunement and for aligning your human and spiritual sides. It is a card of promise and wonder, indicating that you have within you the means to access what you need in the way of blessing, guidance, and vision. It indicates that higher powers and forces are present and available in your life; you simply need to take some time to access them or pay attention to how they may be manifesting already. Revelation is available if you will be open to it.

This card also suggests that even in the depths of the earth the powers of the cosmos—of sun, moon and stars—are available. The stone walls of the cave do not imprison but instead hold a special state in which the higher realms become accessible. In this sense, this card represents your incarnate state of embodiment, housed within flesh and matter. Yet even here in the midst of materiality, spirit is present. Whatever the circumstances of your life, help, guidance, blessing, and the presence of



the higher worlds are present and available. Light the candle of your own sovereignty and self-light and see the vaster Lights become available.

Whereas the other Gates represent horizontal connections between the Stone Circle, its Quadrants and the world beyond, this Gate represents the vertical connection between the realm of matter and the realms of spirit.

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## WIZARD STONE

TYPE: Heart Stone

QUADRANT ONE: South; Earth; Conception; Gestation—The Power to Be: “I know who I am!”

THE STONE’S VOICE: *In the beginning a song was played that woke the world to dance. I am that song.*

KEYWORDS: Intention; Will, Initiation; Identity; Resources within Self; Womb; Cultivation.

COMMENTARY: This card represents the creative power of identity with its ability to form an intention, to conceive an idea or an activity and set

it into motion. This card (and the Quadrant it stands for) also symbolizes the resources that exist around you and within you to allow an idea to gestate and take form.

The earth provides us what we need in order to incarnate and have an identity in this world, and this card represents the power we bring to gather, organize, and shape those resources to embody who we are.

The Wizard is a symbol of creative imagination and will, the power to be someone with whom the forces of the world can partner and a source of intention that can help shape those forces. This is the magic of identity: being a center of activity and creativity that can bring newness into the world.

In a reading, this card may suggest the need for greater self-knowledge and sovereignty in a given situation or it may indicate that such knowledge and sovereignty is already present and active.



## ARTISAN STONE

TYPE: Heart Stone

QUADRANT TWO: East; Sun;  
Expression; Energy—The Power to  
Act: “I know what I do!”

THE STONE’S VOICE: *I am your  
servant, I am your lover, I am your friend,  
I am your brother.*

KEYWORDS: Self-Expression;  
Individuality; Action; Manifestation;  
Beauty; Creativity.

COMMENTARY: This card represents  
the energy of self-expression and  
manifestation. It represents all the  
ways we make our presence known

in the earth through our work, our hobbies, our activities and behavior. It represents individuality in action and the way in which our actions shape and manifest our individuality.

The sun provides the energy that empowers the biosphere and makes life possible on our planet. It is a generative source. This card represents the “inner sun,” your own generativity and vitality which make it possible for you to shape your life. It can also symbolize a source or presence of energy in your environment which can be of assistance to you.

In a deeper way, this card represents your “life-crafting” skill, encouraging you to be aware and open to opportunities and means to bring beauty and grace into your life and world.



## BARD STONE

TYPE: Heart Stone

QUADRANT THREE: North; Stars; Relationships; Navigation—The Power to Connect: “I know where I’m going and who I’m going with!”

THE STONE’S VOICE:

*Who will dance with me to hills beyond?*

*Who will listen to foundation stones?*

*Who will sing with me of friends so fond?*

*Who will help to build anew with bones?*

KEYWORDS: Vision; Goals;

Connections; Relationships; Engagement; Stories; Memory.

COMMENTARY: This card represents the vision that guides you in your life and your ability to form connections and relationships that will help you accomplish that vision. Your relationships affect the course of your life, and many choices about the relationships you form are made on the basis of what you would like to accomplish and what goals you have in your life. On the other hand, sometimes connections are made and relationships established that bring new vision and goals to you and shape your life in unexpected ways.

In Celtic society, the Bard was the one who knew the history of the clan, who knew the genealogy and all the relationships and connections that made up that history. The bard was the keeper of the collective memory which he or she could share through his or her songs and narratives. The bard was the keeper of vision as well and could provide the clan with the knowledge and insights to help form goals and navigate the way towards them. The bard connected the clan with the world around them, with each other, with their own past and with the vision of their possible future.

This card can stand for the quality and form of relationships in your life with places, people, vocation, and so forth. But it can also mean the stories you tell yourself about your life from which you draw meaning and direction. These are the stories that enable you to relate to yourself

and connect to your own past and goals. These are the stories you use to navigate and make choices. This doesn't mean the stories are correct or helpful, only that you are weaving those stories and they will have an effect on shaping your life. The presence of this card in a reading may suggest a need to look at your stories again and see just what effect they are having. Likewise, this card may suggest that your direction at the moment is being influenced by memory. Whether this is good or bad, useful or not is for you to decide.

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## GATEKEEPER STONE

TYPE: Heart Stone

QUADRANT FOUR: West; Moon; Endings and Beginnings—The Power to Grow: “I am open to discovery, to letting go and accepting the new!”

THE STONE'S VOICE: *The way is blocked, the way is clear, the door is locked but none need fear. The future calls in hidden ways. The past fulfilled in this new phase.*

KEYWORDS: Change; Discovery; Emergence; Transformation; Passages; Closings and Openings; Transitions; Cycles; Rhythms.

COMMENTARY: This card represents the promise and challenge of change and discovery. It indicates the presence of emergence in your life, that as a result of growth, you have come to a turning point, a fork in the road, a gate through which you must pass. Or it may just be a matter of rhythm and the turning of cycles. Whatever the cause, now you are faced with something new and potentially unknown and unfamiliar that calls you forward and with older patterns that now must be released or brought to an end. It is a time of transformation, a time of making a passage from one way of being to another. Such a change may be minor or it could be major.

This card is essentially about growth, but growth is not the same as accumulation; it can mean becoming smaller as well as larger. Growth

implies integration, coherency, and wisdom, and this may mean letting go of what no longer serves you and which by its continued presence can prevent a new integration and coherency from taking form. Furthermore, what may be gained and what may need to be released can be physical or non-physical; they can be objects, places, relationships, vocation, or ideas, attitudes, assumptions, prejudices, emotions, and the like.

The *Gatekeeper* oversees the closings and openings in your life, and its presence in a reading suggests that some such passage is present now. It can mean there is something for you to discover or learn from whatever experiences you have just been through so that you can move on with a new attitude, a new consciousness, perhaps with new skills and wisdom.

This card can seem fearsome, particularly if you are reluctant to change or fear losing what you have or have grown familiar with. But it is really a card of opportunity and growth, a card of beginnings and of life, not just of endings or death. The stone appears dark and foreboding but behind it shines the sun with new light.

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## STONE OF IDENTITY

TYPE: Transition Stone

QUADRANT ONE/TWO:

THE STONE'S VOICE: *When the world was young and standing stones flowed like golden honey, I melted into the earth and in it swim still.*

KEYWORDS: Personality; Personhood; Source of Action and Behavior; Partnership of Soul and Body.

COMMENTARY: This card represents the partnership of soul and body, spirit and form, heaven and earth, that gives birth to the unique hybrid or

amalgam of forces that is your personality. This is your "soul on earth," your "embodied spirit" that can translate the intentions and ideas of your deeper self into action and self-expression in the world. As such this card



represents a fundamental tension between our physical and non-physical selves. Part of us, like the falcon in the card, can soar into the heavens and possesses a wide-ranging, far-seeing vision; the other part of us, like the standing stone, is rooted in the earth and bound by its specific form. Thus this card can represent the tension between freedom and constraint, limitlessness and limits. Resolving this tension is one of the challenges of incarnation, bringing together the “fixed” and the “fluid” to give birth to the “flexible.”

The challenge of this partnership is one of the reasons our personality can be a source of inner conflict, but when we accept and honor both parts of ourselves with love and acceptance for their unique and needed contributions, then this partnership becomes a source of Light and blessing in the world. The personality becomes not an adversary or an obstacle to be overcome but a dynamic wholeness. Then the falcon has a place to roost in this world and the stone gains the vision of the heavens.

In a broader sense, this card represents the union of opposites and the resolution of the tension this may create in order to create wholeness and a new mode of being and expression.



## STONE OF BOUNDARY

TYPE: Transition Stone

QUADRANT TWO/THREE:

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I would speak to you of the paradox of limits in which infinity can unfold. I would speak to you of raging rivers and quiet estuaries. I would speak to you of the mystery of a stewing cauldron and the alchemist's stone.*

KEY WORDS: Boundary; Differentiation; Difference; Focus; Uniqueness; Containment; Holding; Centering.

COMMENTARY: This card represents the creative function of boundaries. Boundaries focus energy and activity, giving them the power of uniqueness and concentration. They create an

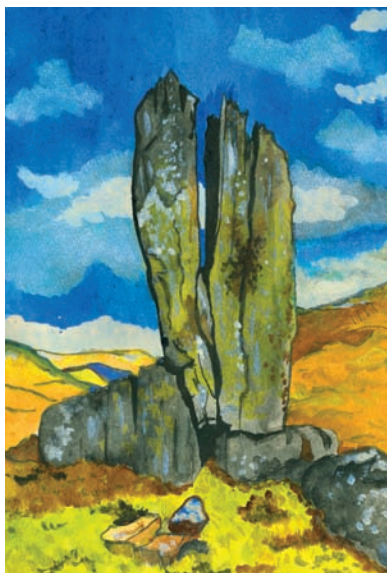


area in which something can be contained and held, preventing its power from dissipating. Boundaries also create differences between people and things; conflicts might arise at such boundaries—and in our human world, often do—but more importantly, creativity can emerge as people with different individual experiences, wisdom, perspectives, and talents connect and blend their efforts, allowing a wholeness to emerge that is greater than its parts. Thus boundaries are where connections can be made and held.

Within the boundaries of your life—the boundaries that make *you* and differentiate you from anyone else—you can find a center. This center allows you to act with power and effectiveness, keeping your intention and energies together and not allowing them to be dispersed. Thus this card represents your ability to stay on track, to be consistent and responsible to the connections you make, the relationships you form, and the directions you choose.

Personality carries your soul into the realm of self-expression. Boundaries carry your self-expression into the realm of connection, relationship, and goal-setting.

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## STONE OF OPENING

TYPE: Transition Stone

QUADRANT THREE/FOUR:

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I offer new life for the meager cost of nothing or everything you own.*

KEYWORDS: Opening; Expansion; Release; New Possibilities and Opportunities.

COMMENTARY: One result of the connections and relationships we form and the goals we set is to expand our capacities. We can often do more with others than we can do by ourselves; we can accomplish

more moving in one direction in our life than by moving in another. As a result of our activities and relationships, an opening takes place and

we experience an expansion of possibilities and awareness. This is a natural part of life. We are not meant to be static or to stay at the same level of experience and consciousness forever. Like a flower opening to the sun, it is inherent in us to open to new possibilities, opportunities and capacities when the timing and conditions are right.

When this card shows up in a reading, such a moment may be at hand in your life. Either an opening is occurring or the opportunity for an opening is present if you wish to take advantage of it. To do so may mean releasing some (or even much) of what has gone before, but the rewards for doing so may result in an expansion of opportunity and fulfillment in some aspect of your life.

Of course, not every opening or expansion may be right for you. Discernment and evaluation may be important. Almost certainly if you accept the opportunity, you will move into the fourth Quadrant which is one of learning and discovery but also of endings, release and giving up what you've outgrown. This can be challenging in itself. Are you ready for this? To open prematurely may be to risk an increased challenge and the possibility of failure, but to delay opening when it is right may be to lose an opportunity.

Sometimes when the forces of expansion and growth are strong in you but you are resisting the change they bring, you may be split open through events outside your control. This is not a warning as much as a recognition of the power of life within you. You are not always expanding; true growth is a matter of integration and consolidation as well, allowing time to mature. But when the time comes that expansion is possible, it is good to be alert to the opportunities for opening that may present themselves.



## STONE OF EMERGENCE

TYPE: Transition Stone

QUADRANT FOUR/ONE:

THE STONE'S VOICE: *Behold, I make all things new, even you.*

KEYWORDS: Consolidation; Integration; New Vision; New Beginning; New Life; New Self.

COMMENTARY: Emergence links the ending of one cycle and the beginning of another. When one pattern ends, another begins and the cycle starts anew. This card links Quadrants Four and One, fruition and discovery leading to a new identity

from which new intentions can arise. What emerges from an old cycle might turn out to be novel and unpredicted. Whatever it is, though, it needs a time of consolidation and integration. There needs to be a pause before launching into a new vision, a new life, a new self.

Yet it is exactly this newness which this card represents. This is the fruit of what has gone before, and it now contains seeds for what will come after. Before taking action, before setting anything into motion, you should take time to honor and appreciate whatever it is that is new and emergent in your life. It needs to integrate with your wholeness so that the movement from one cycle to another is organic and graceful. So in a reading, this card may indicate a need for consolidation, digestion and appreciation of what has gone before or what has led up to this time in your life in order to move forward in a more integrated and organic manner.

This card may also suggest a need to be aware of what is emerging or what is new in your life. It could be something on the physical level, it could be something psychological or spiritual, or it could be a combination of all of these.

It may also mean that a course of action which you are undertaking may result in something new emerging, something that you cannot now predict or define. It may indicate that whatever you are doing will bring you opportunities to experience a new vision or a new way of being in

the world.

Emergence is a transient state. Something is new only for a short while, then it becomes part of the cycle of incarnation, manifestation, expression, connection, and unfoldment, eventually coming to a place where it, too, gives way to something else. But for now, enjoy the moment when your life is touched with newness.

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## ANCESTOR STONE

TYPE: Condition Stone

QUADRANT: ANY

THE STONE'S VOICE: *From the stars I come and from glowing embers I erupted. I was the first land on which you walked and the first bright stone which caught your eye. Honor the ancient ways of peace and see me as a jeweled throne.*

KEYWORDS: Foundation; Source; Primal; Ancestor; Roots; Potential; Beginning; Unshaped; Fresh Start.

COMMENTARY: The *Ancestor Stone* is ordinary in its own way, though very ancient. It represents the power

of the earth with the strength of its minerals, the fertility of its soil, the richness and diversity of its biosphere. It represents unconditioned, unformed potential, even creative power itself. Like a stem cell, it does not have a particular shape or form, but many shapes and forms can be built from it. If there were no stone to begin with, there could be no stone circle. This card represents that which makes other things possible. It is the foundation and substance on which something may be built, from which something may emerge.

When this card appears in a reading it enhances the creative energy and possibilities within the Quadrant in which it is found; it indicates that the qualities found in that Quadrant may be a source of creative power for the individual and worth exploring more deeply to see what may emerge. It also indicates that the forces and powers within this Quadrant may be a source of new vision and fresh starts.

The *Ancestor Stone* also can represent that root consciousness and beingness from which both the Sidhe and Humanity stem, the “common ancestor,” so to speak.

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## FALLEN STONE

TYPE: Condition Stone

QUADRANT: ANY

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I come with grave warning that all may come to naught. And yet I laugh for underneath my weight is the seed of freedom and I will grow whole again.*

KEYWORDS: Warning; Caution; Loss; Obstruction; Challenge; Disconnection; Broken; Failure; Stress.

COMMENTARY: This is a stone that was unable to stand. Perhaps from too much stress upon it, perhaps from

imbalance, or perhaps from a shaky, incomplete foundation, it toppled over and broke. In the Stone Circle, it lies upon the ground as a possible obstruction or gap.

This card represents a warning. It can mean that the forward motion of a project or a chosen direction may be blocked or encountering opposition. It can indicate the possibility of failure due to improper preparation or planning or because of the presence of stress. It suggests a need for caution, for extra attention, for reevaluation, perhaps for starting over.

This card diminishes the power or effect of whatever Quadrant it appears in. It may also suggest the presence of a challenge within that Quadrant in a person's life or that the qualities of that Quadrant may be out of balance and thus potentially a source of stress, failure, blockage, or loss.





## STONE OF ALLIANCE

TYPE: Condition Stone

QUADRANT: ANY

THE STONE'S VOICE: *I am the land. I am your mother. I am your home and form the doorway to another.*

KEYWORDS: Alliance; Partnership; Vitality; Energy; Power; Formative Forces; Earth Forces; Love for the Land; Key; Opening.

COMMENTARY: This card represents partnership and alliance formed with the vital presence and energies of the earth itself and the formative, life-giving forces within it. It represents a

love for the land, for nature, and for the creatures, plants and stones that share the earth with us. This love and the alliance it forms are like a key that opens the gates between the human world and the subtler, spiritual worlds, not to mention the realms of Faerie and the Sidhe. When this card appears in a reading, it suggests that the qualities of the Quadrant in which it is found can provide such a key to deeper levels of awareness or to creative, formative forces. In essence, this card suggests that within the power and qualities of this Quadrant are the keys that can open doors, opportunities, and new possibilities for the individual. It is a call to look more deeply into what the Quadrant represents for the individual.

This card is the complement of the Dancer card called *A Bird on the Hand*. Both are cards of alliance and collaboration, of wholeness and integration. The difference is that this card directs our attentions inward to the Light and sacredness within the land, as symbolized by the snake, whereas the Dancer card represents an alliance with the subtle forces of the spiritual realms as symbolized by the bird. But both cards speak to the power of love to create new possibilities and to open new doors.



## DANCER CARD DESCRIPTIONS

There are sixteen Dancer cards. Each represents a particular quality or combination of qualities. However, the images can be interpreted in a number of ways, particularly when used in creating a narrative. While paying attention to the given meanings of the cards, you should also be open to new insights and interpretations that come to you when using the cards in a particular context either for meditation or as an oracle.

In time as you use them the names and descriptions of the cards will become second nature to you. Until then, here are the card titles organized by an alphabetical list of the images on the cards. Note that Dancer cards do not belong to any particular Quadrant but move around and through the Stone Circle as a whole. The meaning of a particular card, though, may be influenced by the Quadrant in which it appears. For each card, keywords are given for the overall meaning of the card and for each of the four Quadrants in which it might appear. If a card appears in the center of a layout, then its overall basic meaning is amplified.

Remember, in interpreting any of these cards, the most important questions to ask yourself are “What does this card mean to me at this time? What does this image evoke in me?” The given meanings in the following descriptions are simply suggestions to help you in this process.

## **DANCERS**

A BIRD ON THE HAND  
BEAR AND STONE  
BLOSSOMS AND WHEAT  
DRAGON AND BOOKS  
EDGE  
FAERIE GOLD  
GAIAN THRONE  
GRAIL AND ROSES  
MOONSTAIRS  
OCEAN AND LAND  
PALACE  
STAG AND POOL  
STONE RAPTOR  
THE FEAST  
THE SHAPING MAN  
THE TOSSING COIN



## A BIRD ON THE HAND

**DESCRIPTION:** A bird sits and sings happily on the fingers of a hand, while the sun shines behind a nearby standing stone. In the background is a river with an image of a new land on the horizon towards which the finger is pointing.

**KEYWORDS:** Partnership; Alliance; Collaboration; Cooperation; Promise  
**QUADRANT ONE:** The personal resources, gifts and potentials you bring to a partnership or alliance; also, alliance with the powers of the earth and nature.

**QUADRANT TWO:** The energy and power released by an alliance, thus the service and gifts it offers to the world.

**QUADRANT THREE:** The participants and relationships that create the alliance; the differences that are navigated to form connections that allow collaboration to manifest.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** That which emerges from the partnership or alliance, particularly in the form of new and unexpected growth, learning, and possibilities.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents partnership and alliance, particularly the collaboration between humanity, the animal kingdom (symbolizing Nature), and the Faerie kingdom or the Sidhe, represented by the standing stone. Thus, it stands for the wholeness and integration suggested by a "Gaian consciousness," a state of mind in harmony with the earth and all its life. But this card can represent any state of alliance and cooperation between different forces or points of view. It also can mean the promise of new possibilities that arise when such an alliance and its resulting collaboration are present. When different participants come together, each with their unique gifts and individuality, something can emerge that is unexpected, novel, and transformative. This card stands for the power and promise that lie in loving, integrated, mutually supportive and beneficial partnerships as well as the joyous self-expression that can arise without hesitation in collaboration.



## BEAR AND STONE

**DESCRIPTION:** A powerful bear, standing in a river, is anchored in stone yet able to take what it needs from the water.

**KEYWORDS:** Grounding; Strength; Stability; Finding Your Anchor; Flexibility.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Attune to the strength and stability in the world around you.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Attune to the strength and stability in yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Attune to the strength and stability you find in

relationships and connections with others.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Attune to the strength and stability in your growth and unfoldment and in letting go of what is no longer necessary or useful in your life.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents finding a strength and stability that grounds you and allows you to act with balance without being overwhelmed. The bear has its own strength but in this card, it is adding to it with the strength and stability of the stone around it. This gives a flexibility that comes from the blending of the fixed (the stone half of the bear) and the fluid (the living, organic half of the bear) allowing it to fish in the river without falling in. This card suggests the need to find in your life that which grounds and anchors you while at the same time allowing you freedom and grace of action. This may mean that without such grounding, the circumstances in your life may be overwhelming to you, or it may mean that with such grounding, you have more power and strength with which to act. Furthermore, the bear itself is a symbol of the land. When united with stone, it can represent the power and blessing in your life arising from deep ancestral knowledge and wisdom held within the land itself.



## BLOSSOMS AND WHEAT

**DESCRIPTION:** In the background, a fertile field; in the foreground, wheat stalks rise from the field while white blossoms burst forth from an overhanging branch of a nearby tree.

**KEYWORDS:** Abundance; Growth; Fertility; Promise.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Seeds of abundance and possibility are present or time to plant such seeds. (Body, Health)

**QUADRANT TWO:** An abundance of energy; time to “plow” and give

attention to possibilities. (Energy, Finances)

**QUADRANT THREE:** Abundance and growth emerging from relationship; pay attention to connections. Also, how might you enable growth and abundance for someone else? (Relationships)

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Time to harvest crop and reap the learning and growth that is available. (Consciousness and Learning)

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the presence of abundance and fertility in your life. It is a card of promise. There is a field to be plowed and seeds to be planted, and the field is rich in the promise of growth. The Stone Circle represents a cycle of development for this card, beginning metaphorically with preparing the soil, planting seeds, nurturing growth through relationships, and the eventual harvest. Thus, depending on what Quadrant this card falls in, it could represent the possibility of future abundance—a possibility that could bear fruit if you pay attention to opportunities and do the work required—or it represents the presence of that abundance in your life already. This is a card of fertility and growth in any area of your life, though the Quadrant may influence the specific area as suggested above. It honors Earth’s gift of space and its blessing in providing you—and humanity itself—a place to grow.



## DRAGON AND BOOKS

**DESCRIPTION:** A red dragon seems to rise amidst a shower of starry sparks from the pages of a book, with other books, scrolls and writing materials laying around it.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge; Learning; Teaching; Magic; Power.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Knowledge of the Earth and Nature; practical knowledge.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Knowledge of Self; creative knowledge from self-expression.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Knowledge of Others and Relationship; collaborative and co-creative knowledge.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Knowledge of Spirit and the Inner Life; philosophical, religious, or esoteric knowledge.

**COMMENTARY:** Knowledge and learning enable you to tap the deep, creative powers within yourself and within the world around you. This card represents such learning and knowledge as well as the power of self-expression. A dragon is being liberated and rising from the pages of the book. This suggests the arising of creative and magical abilities to shape and transform your world through the knowledge you possess, as well as the awakening of life forces in the body through study and the portal of the mind. The ink and quill suggest the promise of creating books and scrolls yourself, thereby adding to the store of knowledge in the world. What you learn and the knowledge you acquire isn't just for yourself alone but can be passed on in various ways, if only through the example of your behavior; thus, this card can represent teaching as well. Where this card falls in the Stone Circle can suggest the kind of knowledge or teaching involved, as indicated by the Quadrant Keywords above.





## EDGE

**DESCRIPTION:** An eagle flies over the edge of a cliff that falls away into a deep canyon. A river flows at the bottom of the canyon, and on the other side, we see a cave that seems to lead into a starry region within the earth.

**KEYWORDS:** Edge; Challenge; Change; Unknown; Daring; Invitation; Courage; Endings; Beginnings.

**QUADRANT ONE:** The edge is in relationship to what supports you, such as your past, the resources you have accumulated, the place you

live.

**QUADRANT TWO:** The edge is in relationship to yourself, your self-expression and creativity, and your work.

**QUADRANT THREE:** The edge is in relationship to others and to the connections you form with the world and the direction you are following.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** The edge is in relationship to the future, to possibilities, and to what can emerge in your life.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the presence of an edge or challenge in your life. This might mean a change is at hand, but it can also mean an invitation to take a new, bold step into something that is unknown and unfamiliar. It is a time when you may feel uncertain and hesitant about your next step. You may fear a possibility of falling and failing. Yet, as the eagle shows, within you is the power of flight if you can move ahead with confidence, courage and vision. There is an edge, yes, but this does not necessarily mean you are blocked or that you will fall. And if you take the next step, you may find yourself in the presence of greater wonder and possibilities than you expected, as suggested by the magical, starry cave that awaits on the other side of the precipice. Further, this card can suggest the need to change the methods you are using for new growth and advancement. The eagle flies over the edge which is no longer the obstacle it can be to someone who is walking. Thus

this card can mean the need to examine not only where one is going but how one is moving forward.

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## FAERIE GOLD

**DESCRIPTION:** A tree separates the two worlds of humanity and Faery. On the human side, the sun is shining while in Faery, the moon and stars light the night. On the Faery side are gold and jewels, but in the light of day and human consciousness, this treasure turns to leaves and twigs.

**KEYWORDS:** Value; Discernment; Transformations; Illusion; Confusion.

**QUADRANT ONE:** This is an indication to value yourself; it also suggests a need to discern between

what is valuable in your life and what is not. It might also indicate you are straddling two worlds.

**QUADRANT TWO:** This is an indication to value what you do, but also to be aware of those actions which do not truly represent you well. Discernment in action is called for.

**QUADRANT THREE:** This is an indication to value your relationships. It can also represent a need to be discerning about your goals and the direction you are taking in life.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** This is an indication to value your growth and your vision for your future; at the same time, it calls for you to discern between visions and achievements that truly nourish your growth and those that only appear to but in the end leave you empty and unfulfilled.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the ability to discern between what is valuable and what is not, what is real and what is not. It also represents the ability to see beneath the surface and discern the deeper value and purpose of a person, an object, or a situation. This card tells you that things are not always what they appear. It also suggests the

power of one thing to transform so that it is valuable in more than one context but in different ways. In traditional folklore, Faery gold and treasure when brought back into the realm of humanity and into the light of day turns into leaves and twigs, apparently useless items. But when put on the earth, leaves and twigs turn into compost that nourishes the soil, and thus are a real treasure to life and to the earth. We think of treasure as something that can be spent, thus it may appear as gold to us; the Sidhe think of treasure as something that nourishes and benefits life, thus it may appear as leaves and twigs to them. This card suggests the paradox of this dual perception and the illusion and confusion that can at times result.

Whatever the Quadrant in which this card appears, it stands for your ability to discern (and the need to discern) the deeper value of that which the Quadrant represents and not be caught in illusion or surface appearances. It also suggests the need to value something for itself in its own domain and to see the expression of spiritual value in the mundane.



## GAIAN THRONE

**DESCRIPTION:** An empty throne sits in an underground cavern. An owl rests on its back while a wolf lies at its side. In a pool in front of it a fish swims, while a spider crawls nearby. There is a fire burning before the throne and a Grail stands next to it. Above we see the outside world with its forest, oceans and mountains, and above that the starry sky.

**KEYWORDS:** Gaian Consciousness; Responsibility; Attunement to Earth; Wholeness; Connection.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Appreciation of the bounty, the goodness, the wholeness of the earth and a call to preserve and extend this bounty and wholeness through our actions.

**QUADRANT TWO:** An appreciation of the power of our unique Selfhood in partnership with the earth and an understanding of the responsibility for the health of all life to which we are called.

**QUADRANT THREE:** An appreciation of the role of connectedness, relationship, and ecological wholeness in charting our course for the future.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** An appreciation of new possibilities that emerge when we surrender old ways of being and acting in the world and learn to sit on the Throne of Gaia, accepting the responsibility of acting for the good of all life.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the throne of Gaia, the Soul of the World. Whoever sits in this throne takes up the responsibility and the challenge to “think like a planet” and bring wholeness to the world. This throne represents attunement to the earth and to all life upon it. The inner place where it exists is where a “Gaian Consciousness” may be found and embodied through your actions. By the throne is the Grail of Healing, for whoever sits in this place takes up the task of bringing healing to the world through acts of love, connectedness, and service. This card illustrates the Path of the Sidhe, a path of commitment and action to the wellbeing of life and the wholeness of the world. It offers both a

challenge and a promise. When it appears in using the cards, it suggests that attunement to the spirit of Gaia is important in the context of the reading. This attunement, this “Gaian Consciousness” is what humanity strives to understand and embody; it is the perspective of a new world, one that can heal the damage to ourselves and to the environment. This card in a reading can indicate a call to serve—to sit on the throne—and to accept responsibility for serving wholeness in the world.

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## GRAIL AND ROSES

**DESCRIPTION:** Two roses, one red, one white, grow together out of the cracks in rocks. A stone grail stands nearby.

**KEYWORDS:** Reconciliation; Healing; Regeneration; Mutual Support; Mutual Service.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Reconciliation, Healing, and Regeneration are needed or may be found in your relationship with the earth, with the land and environment around you, with your job, and with your past.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Reconciliation, Healing, and Regeneration are needed or may be found in your relationship with yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Reconciliation, Healing, and Regeneration are needed or may be found in your relationship with others and with the direction of your life.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Reconciliation, Healing, and Regeneration are needed or may be found in your relationship with spirit, with the future and with the vision that guides you.

**COMMENTARY:** In folklore, the red rose symbolizes humanity and earthly, physical life while the white rose symbolizes the Faerie kingdoms and the Sidhe as well as the life and energy of the stars. Thus this card represents the blending of these two forces in wholeness. To the extent

that humanity and Faerie have been separated, this card stands for the reconciliation of these two kingdoms of life and consciousness and the healing and regeneration that comes about as a consequence. In a broader context, this is the reconciliation between the physical and spiritual parts of a human being. The Grail is always a symbol of healing and service, adding to the regenerative meaning and power of this card. When it appears in a reading, it suggests that reconciliation or healing is either needed in some area of your life or is available and emerging in some area. It suggests that though conditions may appear barren and rocky, life can still emerge. Our ability, symbolized by the Grail, to hold a loving presence in our heart and to honor our ancestral connections to the world opens up cracks in the apparent barrenness through which new life may emerge. Healing is always possible.





## MOONSTAIRS

**DESCRIPTION:** A moon-filled starry sky looks down on a row of standing stones where a line of flowers forms not a Faerie ring but a Faerie spiral. Next to the spiral, an elegant wooden staircase rises incongruously into the sky as if drawn to the moon and made of starlight and moonlight. Or perhaps it is woven from moonlight and reaches down to the earth, where it becomes more and more solid and visible. In either case, part way up, it disappears. It is not necessarily unfinished, but it vanishes beyond

our vision into the Light from which it seems to have come or towards which it was stretching.

**KEYWORDS:** Imagination; Wonderment; Inspiration; Intuition; Possibilities; Connection; Yearning; Trust.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Connecting through Imagination and Wonder to hidden depths of the world.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Connecting through Imagination and Wonder to hidden depths of yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Connecting through Imagination and Wonder to hidden depths within others and within relationships.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Connecting through Imagination and Wonder to hidden depths of spirit and consciousness.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the power of imagination and wonderment in perceiving, creating, and crossing thresholds into new realities. It represents the power of imagination to open new potentials and possibilities. It's the presence of intuition and inspiration in your life. However, it's also about moving into the unknown. Imagination may create the stairway, but where does it lead? Courage is needed to proceed! Here is a stairway that connects earth with the moon and stars and which, in fact, seems partly made of moonlight or turns into moonlight as it rises. This represents the connections and pathways between different realities, such as the realm of the Sidhe and that of humanity, or the world

of spirit and the world of matter, and the ability to cross between one and the other. The stairway partakes of both realities. It suggests that Earth and Heaven form one whole home whose levels are connected by many stairways that are fashioned from the substance of both. It can also be a state of consciousness that is at home on both sides of the stairs, moving freely between them.

The stairway is complete, but because part of it is invisible, it can appear unfinished. Thus, it can be a symbol for yearning, an aspiration not yet satisfied. To satisfy this yearning, one must begin to climb with trust, knowing there are higher connections that will carry one to the goal and which become visible as one proceeds.

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## OCEAN AND LAND

**DESCRIPTION:** A tree on a rocky knoll overlooks an ocean that stretches into the far horizon where there is a faint suggestion of another shore — or is there?

**KEYWORDS:** Inspiration; Discovery; Far Seeing; Horizons; Harmony; Hope.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Inspiration arising from the world, nature and the environment around you; harmony with the environment around you.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Inspiration arising from within yourself; self-

discovery; harmony within yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Inspiration coming from others and from relationships; harmony within relationships.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Inspiration coming from learning, the unexpected, from the inner worlds, from the future; harmony with what is emerging and developing.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents two qualities, inspiration and harmony. On the one hand, the card suggests a quality of far-seeing, of vistas and distant horizons. It is the ability to cast your vision widely and

think into possibilities, to see further than what is immediately before you. It is inspiration arising from such vision. On the other hand, it represents a balance, a harmony, between the sea, the land and the sky: nature in her wholeness. In a way, the image suggests primal new life, the first day of creation and the hope embodied in the freshness of the world. Thus, out of a state of harmony, balance, and attunement, you can find inspiration, hope, renewal, and a far vision to guide you.

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## PALACE

**DESCRIPTION:** High in the mountains, a mighty palace, skillfully and artistically designed and surrounded by the beauty of nature, raises its towers to the sky. A crane flies serenely through the sky while in the sky, there is the hint of distant stars.

**KEYWORDS:** Achievement; Authority; Power; Responsibility; Dedication; Harmony; Help; Ally; Guidance; Wise Ruler; Wise Teacher.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Authority and power that comes from harmony and

attunement to Nature and the world.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Authority and power that comes from harmony and attunement within yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Authority and power that comes from having clear vision of your path and direction while forming mutually beneficial and co-creative relationships with others

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Authority and power that comes from learning, unfoldment, and achievement.

**COMMENTARY:** The *Palace* is the home of a wise ruler, one who can overlight his or her kingdom from the heights within the mountains. It is a place of peace, rooted in beauty and harmony, overlighted by the forces of nature and the spiritual, stellar powers of the cosmos. It is also a place of beauty where the arts are celebrated. It can be the home of a

wise teacher, representing the gift of his or her teaching to the world.

This card represents power and authority that comes from achievement, attunement, beauty, and harmony; it can also represent guidance and help coming from spiritual allies and mentors, both inner and outer, as well as from your own inner wisdom and authority, the presence of your soul or higher self. It suggests that you can access such help through cultivating and celebrating beauty and joy in your life, or at least by seeing your own life as a thing of beauty, created in love by the master architect that is your soul.

The card also signifies responsibility. A ruler or teacher is in a responsible position, one that can affect others in decisive ways. This card can mean a person carries responsibility in his or her life or needs to learn to do so in wise ways. This could mean responsibility for others, for doing a job, for accomplishing a task. Fulfilling such responsibility will have important consequences. With great responsibility comes great power to affect the course of events, so wisdom, awareness and dedication are important.



## STAG AND POOL

**DESCRIPTION:** A powerful stag drinks from a deep and pure pool of water, seeing its reflection.

**KEYWORDS:** Reflection; Depths; Wisdom; Power; Capability; Action Emerging from Attunement; Shared Life and Resources; Ecology.

**QUADRANT ONE:** The power that comes from the wisdom within the world.

**QUADRANT TWO:** The power that comes from the wisdom within your soul.

**QUADRANT THREE:** The power that comes from the wisdom within others and within a spiritual path that can guide you.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** The power that comes from the wisdom found in release and letting go, opening to the new, the unknown, and the possible.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents action guided by attunement and wisdom. The stag, symbol of power, drinks from a pool of water rising from the depths of the earth, symbolizing the deep wisdom that lies within life—both within yourself and within the world around you. This card also represents the refreshment and healing that can come when you take time to reflect and go within, seeking the depths of attunement, as well as the enhancement of your capabilities that can result from such attunement as well. Drinking from the pool is drawing life from the depths enabling you to meet and engage the world with greater vitality, grace, and power. The pool also represents the water that we all drink and that sustains all life. On earth we all share the same ecology. Whatever happens to the least of us, happens to us all.





## STONE RAPTOR

**DESCRIPTION:** A raptor emerges from a body of stone, seeking the freedom of flight and an altitude from which it can see further and more clearly

**KEYWORDS:** A Higher and Wider Vision; Liberation; Freedom; Conflict; Synthesis; Integration; Mastery.

**QUADRANT ONE:** The need for a broader, higher perspective about the world in which you live and work.

**QUADRANT TWO:** The need for a broader, higher perspective about yourself and your activities.

**QUADRANT THREE:** The need for a broader, higher perspective about your relationships and the path you are following.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** The need for a broader, higher perspective on your vision for your future and the goals you are pursuing.

**COMMENTARY:** The raptor is a bird with powerful vision and the capacity to see what it needs from great heights. This card suggests the need to seek a higher, broader perspective, to rise above earthbound knowledge or habits and gain a wider vision. It represents the ability that you possess to liberate yourself from limiting attitudes and the power to fly in spite of any seeming rigidity in your life, thus gaining greater freedom in your life. More deeply, this card represents the unique vision and possibility of spiritual flight and evolution that comes from incarnation into the earth, taking on the limitations of this realm while retaining our connection to the heights. In this sense, it suggests the conflict of two diametrically opposite elements—sky and earth, air and stone, flight and immobility, transpersonal and personal, spirit and matter—and the mastery that can come when we learn to integrate and synthesize them into a wholeness, becoming the Stone That Flies.

This card reminds us that simply to be able to see far and wide, as a raptor does when it circles in the sky, is not always enough. You need to be able to know what you're looking at, to understand what you're seeing. This card suggests that the Raptor who is part of the earth and



understands the fabric and structure of the world—as symbolized by the stone—is better able to truly see, to have vision that is not only broad but deep and understanding as well. He becomes the Stone that can See, again a form of mastery.

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## THE SHAPING MAN

**DESCRIPTION:** Beneath a starry sky, a man uses a hammer and chisel to carve himself out of stone, shaping himself in the light of a fire.

**KEYWORDS:** Creativity; Emergence; Choice; Power within the Self; Shaping; Liberation; Self-Discovery.

**QUADRANT ONE:** The presence of resources in the world that can support you in shaping your life and liberating the potentials within you.

**QUADRANT TWO:** The presence of personal vitality and energy enabling you to shape yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** The presence of vision, guidance and direction for your personal unfoldment as well as relationships and connections that can guide and support your development.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** The presence of potentials and discoveries that await as you free yourself through your own efforts from whatever binds or confines you.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents our inner striving and creative power to make something of ourselves and to shape our own lives. It also represents our ability to free ourselves from limiting conditions. In this picture, the man uses his own tools; he is not being freed by outside forces, though he is being warmed by the fire—inspiring him with its own light and freedom, giving him the vision to guide his crafting. The moon and stars, suggestive of inner forces and cosmic powers, watch on, encouraging, providing their own illumination, but allowing him the freedom to shape himself. This card illustrates our power of choice and our ability to sculpt what we wish to become through our own inner capacities and efforts.



## THE FEAST

**DESCRIPTION:** A table is set with delicious and attractive food for a feast, including two glasses of wine, one red and one white, while unknown beings look on from the surrounding woods.

**KEYWORDS:** Sharing; Nourishment; Plenty; Giving; Celebration; Generosity; Appreciation; Cooperation.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Share the gifts of your abundance with the world around you, appreciating the world that gives you abundance in return.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Share the gifts of your abundance with yourself, appreciating yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Share the gifts of your abundance with others, appreciating the gifts they give you in return.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Share gifts of creativity to build a future of blessing, appreciating the gifts which the powers of spirit offer for your unfoldment

**COMMENTARY:** This is a card of abundance and sharing, of generosity and celebration. It can represent any form of abundance: food, energy, time, finances, anything that you can offer for the nourishment of life around you just as you are nourished. It is an expression of appreciation for the special gifts that come through incarnation and embodiment. You may feel you have only meager gifts to offer, but whatever you place on the feasting table will be appreciated and multiplied manifold. This card also can represent cooperation, particularly between human beings—as symbolized by the red wine—and the creative, formative realms of Faerie and the Sidhe—as symbolized by the white wine (and by the shy, hidden onlookers within the forest). From such cooperation abundance can arise which can then be celebrated and shared with all.



## THE TOSSING COIN

**DESCRIPTION:** A coin has been tossed in the air and is flipping over and over, its final outcome uncertain, while around it butterflies flutter their wings setting unknown potentials into motion.

**KEYWORDS:** The Creative Moment; Influence; Trust; Taking a Chance; Possibilities; Probabilities; Unexpected Outcomes.

**QUADRANT ONE:** Trusting the creative powers in the world.

**QUADRANT TWO:** Trusting the creative powers in yourself.

**QUADRANT THREE:** Trusting the creative power in others and in your connections and relationships.

**QUADRANT FOUR:** Trusting in the future and in what is unfolding.

**COMMENTARY:** This card represents the creative moment when all possibilities are up in the air and anything can happen. At such a time, the smallest thought, feeling, or act, like the fluttering of a butterfly's wings, can influence and shape the outcome. This card reminds us of the power that lies in the smallest moments and elements of life, how a single word or gesture can set vast changes into motion. The card also suggests trust, that once you flip the coin, you can trust in the outcome and have faith in what will unfold, for your fate is held in powerful spiritual forces of creativity, joy and beauty that have only your highest good in mind. This card also represents the willingness to take a chance, to step out in any direction to get energy moving. Sometimes you have to throw caution to the winds and trust your fortunes to the flip of a coin rather than sitting and waiting hesitantly for insight or direction. It's when events are set into motion, when the coin is in the air, that you may see clearly what you want and what you need to do. It's when energy is moving that you can influence the outcome. The motto of this card is: "Seize the moment!" It's about knowing how and when to act to tip probabilities in your favor.

## PART II: USING THE CARDS

### A GENERAL PRINCIPLE IN USING THE CARDS

In all uses of the cards, whether for attunement or for giving readings, here is a simple principle to keep in mind: *Intuition and Inspiration trump what is on the printed page.* I have worked with the Sidhe to establish meanings for each of the cards, but at the same time, a card may trigger in you a particular insight or have a meaning in the moment that is different from what I have written. Pay attention to your own feelings, intuitions, and interpretations. The written meanings are meant as guidelines, not as restrictions.

### USING THE CARDS FOR MEDITATION AND ATTUNEMENT

When the Sidhe made contact with me about creating this deck of cards, the original purpose wasn't to fashion an oracular tool. That purpose developed later as the deck evolved. After all, any set of images can trigger a person's intuition, giving access to subconscious wisdom and perceptions. The initial impression I had of the deck's purpose had to do with facilitating contact with the Sidhe for purposes of inspiration, connection and inner healing.

Stone circles are often places of power where the veil between the worlds is thinned and links can be made with the realms of Faerie. They can function like "interdimensional portals," lifting our consciousnesses through attunement and resonance to a state where contact with the realms of Faerie is possible. By replicating such a Stone Circle in the cards, the hope was that the deck could create in the imagination and spiritual field of the user a kind of "virtual Stonehenge," an inner place that could resonate with the power inherent in such stone circles around the world and thereby also create a link with the subtle realms of Faerie.

Behind this was the desire on the part of the Sidhe to cultivate a renewed sense of their presence and existence as modern, relevant partners in the task of healing the earth and to foster reconciliation and collaboration between human beings and themselves. The card deck was seen as a way of concretizing in an imaginal way within our world a virtual portal to their own realm through which their energy might reach and connect with ours.

How successful Jeremy and I have been in fulfilling this desire and objective is up to you. We have done our best through the images we've co-created in partnership with the Sidhe and through their descriptions and meanings. But the most important ingredient is what you bring to the process. It's your imagination, your attunement, your love, and your willingness to serve the wholeness and healing of our world that will enable the cards to come to life and be a true connecting link between your world and that of the Sidhe. You are the one who must walk the Stone Circle in your imagination, enter the hollow hill, and engage the Faerie Dancers that bring the energy and presence of their realm into our own.

Exactly how you may do this and the results you achieve are up to you. We cannot predict this. But we have some suggestions for how you might begin such an adventure using the cards within this deck. Remember, though, that the realm of Faerie intersects with the world and potentially with your own life in many possible ways far beyond anything a card deck or its images can represent.

### **General Thoughts about Attunement to the Sidhe**

In folklore and esoteric traditions, the Sidhe are considered to live in the Faerie Realms "under the earth." This doesn't mean literally beneath the ground as if they were a species of moles. It means they live in a parallel dimension closely associated with the life and creative powers of the earth as a living being. They live "under" or "behind" the surface appearances of the world in a realm more closely attuned than ours to the wellsprings of spirit from which our planet emerges. Yet, in their way, they are as much a part of this world as we are. Certainly, the health and wholeness of the earth is important to them since our planet's wellbeing is of concern to them, as it should also be to us. This concern is one of the reasons prompting many of the Sidhe to seek renewed contact and reconciliation with humanity in an attempt to help us help the world. This deck is one of the strategies they are employing to inspire this contact.

While the realms of Faerie touch the world in many ways in many places, including within our modern cities, there have always been specific places where the veil between the dimensions is thin and contact is easier. In myth and legend, certain hills and natural features have been thought of as being hollow, filled with the presence of Faerie and providing access

to their realm. Likewise, the stone circles found in many lands are often considered potential portals into Faerie as well. This is the idea on which this card deck has been built. The deck allows you to construct a stone circle out of the images on the cards, at the center of which is the *Howe* or hollow hill that is the portal into the land of the Sidhe.



If you were entering someone's house as a guest and visitor, you would do so with respect and courtesy, honoring their hospitality. Metaphorically, the stone circle is the anteroom to the House of the Sidhe, so you want to approach it in the same way. When you lay out the cards to create the stone circle (and there are different ways you can do this), do so with a sense of appreciation and love for the world around you and with honor for the realms of Faerie that serve this world. Feel respect for the Sidhe. Imagine what it may have been like for those human beings who first designed and erected the stone circles like Stonehenge, perhaps with inspiration and guidance from the Faerie realms. What were they trying to do? What inner contacts might they have been trying to make? What portals might they have been opening through which could have flowed a cooperative spirit between humans and Sidhe?

In other words, you want to create within yourself a felt sense of entering and standing in a stone circle that is a magical portal of contact with the realm of the Sidhe. Exactly how you do this is up to you; the cards are there simply to assist in the process.

Once you have this felt sense, imagine yourself respectfully entering the hollow mound at the center and engaging with the Sidhe, the People of Peace. It's best if you do so without preconceptions or expectations, other than the expectation of finding a partner with whom you can share your love and concern for the earth and your desire to add positively to the world's wellbeing. Motive is important; what is in your heart and mind sets up the resonance that can attune to these subtle beings, like



turning the tuning dial on a radio. You come to them strong and confident in your identity as an incarnate human person, knowing that you have something to offer that is unique and valuable. And you come knowing that the Sidhe have powerful and valuable insights and energies to add as well. But when it comes to healing our world at this present time, neither of you can do it on your own. So you seek each other in a spirit of partnership and shared effort and love.

In seeking this attunement with the Sidhe and with the realms of Faerie, you are seeking to build what I call collaborative presence, a shared field of vitality, energy, and inspiration. This is very different from seeking for a message, for information, or for guidance. You might receive such a message, but it is not the object of the exercise—and if you do receive anything like guidance or information, you are then faced with the need to evaluate it, be discerning, and to find ways to integrate it appropriately in your life.

In the process I'm outlining here, however, the one suggested to me by the Sidhe, the object is to enhance your capacity to connect with the world around you in loving and healing ways. You most likely already know of things you can do to help others, to help the environment, to broadcast healthy and healing thoughts and feelings; you don't need an inner source to tell you the world is in bad shape or to tell you what to do about it. You know. But what the Sidhe can offer is blessing upon your efforts in ways that enhance and enlarge your efforts and the influence of your subtle energies. They can enhance your capability to be, like them, a person of peace.

Further, in this contact with the subtle presence and energy of the Sidhe can come healing and wholeness, peace and attunement to you. As you contemplate the Stones and Dancers, be open to any sensations or qualities of wholeness and peacefulness that may come. If you wish, direct those sensations into whatever areas of your life you feel need healing and wholeness.

The influence and blessing of the Sidhe in your life can take many forms, most of them subtle and not always obvious. They work with gradual, organic processes, not necessarily with grand, dramatic gestures. It is their nature to understand and enhance the natural means by which any organism—plant, animal, or human—unfolds its core nature, its capacities and its potentials in coherent and harmonious ways. Attunement to the Sidhe will most definitely work to your benefit,

but it will do so as dictated by the organic expression of who you are. Over time you will feel a difference, and you will know the partnership is working.

At the same time, you strengthen this attunement by being alert to and seizing whatever opportunities come your way to give specific help to another or to the environment around you, to enhance their unfoldment and to bring harmony into their lives.

As I understand it, the Sidhe are actively seeking connection and collaboration with the human world. This card deck is one way they can use, but without your imaginative and heartfelt participation, it remains just pretty pictures printed on cardboard. The true place of meeting and partnership is in your heart; that is your “hollow hill” where the Sidhe wait to be invited, even as they invite you to share the spaces and pathways of their own hearts.

### **The Sidhe Within**

There is an even deeper possibility inherent in meditating upon and attuning to the subtle energy and presence of the Sidhe or the higher Faerie realm. There has long been an esoteric tradition that the Sidhe and human beings share a common ancestry, that in fact both are part of the same species. This is borne out in many tales from folklore of “faerie marriages” in which a human man or woman marries and has children with a faerie being of the opposite gender. The difference is that one part of the ancestral species incarnated more deeply into physical matter while another part stayed within (or returned to) the etheric and subtle realms. A rough analogy might be made with the dolphins and whales who at one time left the ocean to become land creatures only to return to the sea at some point in their evolution, with their land limbs turning into flippers. We humans have become creatures of matter while the Sidhe have become creatures of spirit, yet we retain deep ancestral links that allows a number of experienced esotericists such as R.J. Stewart to refer to these Faerie beings as our “cousins.”

In my own contact with the Sidhe, I have been offered an additional way to look at this. Sidhe and humanity represent two ways in which Gaia, the World Soul, is externalizing herself, one in attunement to the formative forces and energies of the subtle worlds and one in attunement to the conditions and forces of matter. In modern computer language, the

Sidhe deal with the software of Gaia while incarnate humanity deals with the hardware. Yet, in each exists the wholeness of Gaia, the “application” that results when “software” and “hardware” merge in a harmonious and cooperative operating system. To reach this wholeness, the Sidhe must find their “human within” (which is one reason they seek contact and reconciliation with us) and we must find our complementary inner Sidhe. This process is greatly enhanced and enabled when both sides can engage and collaborate together.

Thus the purpose of the attunement which these cards are intended to facilitate is not only to contact the Sidhe as a race of Faerie beings outside ourselves but to contact the spirit of the Sidhe within us, the spirit of that Gaian oneness and consciousness that both of us carry as seeds within us. This is why when using the cards for meditation and attunement, the emphasis isn’t on messages, guidance or information but on experiencing the life and presence of the Sidhe within our own humanity and the deeper Gaian consciousness to which this leads.

### **Safety with the Sidhe**

I know that for many people, contact with any kind of non-physical being carries a frisson of fear and concern about safety. Hollywood movies, horror novelists and some mainstream religious denominations have filled our imaginations with fear and concern about the subtle world, much of which has little correspondence to reality. On the other hand, traditional folklore provides its own warnings about engaging with the realms of Faerie, so the question of safety in working with the Sidhe is a legitimate one.

Also in folklore, the Sidhe are sometimes portrayed as fierce and warlike who are generally not at all sympathetic to humans. The poet William Butler Yeats, who had experience with the Faerie realms himself, felt they were dangerous to behold. In his poem, *The Hosting of the Sidhe*, he writes:

*‘Our arms are waving, our lips are apart,  
And if any gaze on our rushing band,  
We come between him and the deed of his hand,  
We come between him and the hope of his heart.’*

Remember, the Sidhe are a whole race, much like ourselves, with individuals who have different points of view. I know from experience there are factions amongst the Faerie world who care little for human beings and largely have written us off as destructive pests. But this is not, as I understand it, the majority view. Most subtle beings are only too happy to help and cooperate on behalf of the world. Yet it is also true that many subtle beings, including the Sidhe, who are not hostile in themselves may still carry a surplus of energies that can be difficult for a human being to adjust to and integrate, particularly if that human is unprepared or makes contact in inappropriate ways. If you wish a metaphor, think of a live electrical wire. It has no evil or hostile intent, but it can be dangerous, too, to anyone who is ungrounded.

I am told by my Sidhe contacts that on their side this deck is intended and inspired by those desiring constructive engagement with human beings to be a safe bridge for such connection. In its own way, it is blessed as an expression of their love for the world and their desire to join with human partners in serving the wellbeing of the planet and bringing to birth a Gaian consciousness that allows us to live in the world more ecologically and holistically. If this is your intent in using the cards, you have nothing to fear. You can, before using the cards, make this explicit, for instance by dedicating your session (whether one of meditation and attunement, narrative creation, or divination) to the betterment of the world.

Still, when engaging with the subtle worlds as a whole and the Faerie realms in particular, you are dealing with sources of powerful or at least very different energies and presences, and doing so successfully, integrating the contact, is a form of work. You will do better if you are alert and feeling good energy yourself and aren't overly tired. Further, because the subtle worlds tend to reflect back to you the quality of emotion and thought that you bring to them, you will also do better and run fewer risks if you are peaceful and calm and not angry, distraught, or depressed. Also, there is the fact that even when they are well-intentioned, subtle beings, particularly those of the Faerie realms, don't always understand human ways or human consciousness. Difficulties can arise not through any ill-wishing or malevolence but simply through misunderstanding and a lack of proper courtesy, respect and boundaries. To avoid these, here are some of my own "Rules of the Road."

1. In dealing with any subtle beings, be they Faerie, Sidhe or otherwise, think of how you would deal with a human being from a culture different from your own, one with a different language, history, and ways of being in the world. Acknowledge and be sensitive to these differences, taking extra effort to ensure you are not misunderstanding any communication.
2. Stand in your own sovereignty and power and in pride at being an incarnate human being; you are a sacred person in your own right as blessed by God as any other being.
3. Be aware of your biases and assumptions. Observe and pay attention to any feelings or sensations you have, particularly in your body. Don't make assumptions based on expectations or appearances. Trust yourself. If something feels "off" or uncomfortable, back away and stop the contact. It doesn't necessarily mean that something evil is afoot; it may just be that you and the subtle being are not quite ready for each other yet and don't know how to relate properly.
4. No matter how radiant, powerful, exalted, magical, transcendental, or glamorous a subtle being may appear (and the Sidhe can be very attractive in this regard), you always have the right—indeed, the obligation to your own integrity—to say no to anything you are asked to believe, accept or do if it doesn't feel right to you.
5. Faerie beings in particular can feel glamorous and attractive; it's part of their package, so to speak, for we feel in them a resonance with the magic and connectedness within ourselves that we long to experience. Accept this and don't be swayed by it. They are living beings the same as you, and in some ways, you are glamorous to them, too, for you hold the complement they seek.
6. Always look for partnership, collaboration, appreciation, and mutual respect. You are no being's servant, nor is any subtle being yours. If any being asks for obedience, just say no and ask them to leave. If they ask for cooperation, then you can listen, remembering that this works both ways.
7. Be aware of your own desires, longings, and potential ego weaknesses. If you become vulnerable to a subtle being, it's usually because you wish to be in order to gain something you want. The con man on any level only cons those who want something for nothing or are unrealistic in their expectations.
8. Always make the Sacred your silent partner in all transactions and

partnerships with any other person or being. You do this not simply for protection but in order to bless the partnership and ensure that all involved are benefitted in appropriate ways. If there is a spiritual practice you normally use to help you attune to the sacred, you might do so before working with the deck. If such a practice, whatever its form, enhances your sense of groundedness, safety, and dedication to the highest spirit, then it will benefit any contact you make. Don't hesitate to use it.

9. If at any time, for any reason, you feel uncomfortable or fearful, just stop. You are not asked to go where you don't wish to proceed. But having said that, also work to discover that part of you that can walk without fear but with awareness and wisdom.

If you would like more information about psychic or spiritual protection, I list some excellent references at the end of this book. Basically, just remember this: the cards are designed to work with your imagination. If your imagination is free from fear, free from negative imagery, and free from ego needs of power, glamour, significance, and importance, then you will build a healthy and clear Stone Circle that the shining People of Peace will love to enter to join with you in mutually beneficial collaboration.

## **Attunements**

Here are some suggested ways of using the cards for meditation and attunement. In these suggestions, both Stone and Dancer cards are used. The reason is that contact with the Sidhe is in the context of the Stone Circle. In effect, a joint meeting ground is created, partly of earth (the Stones) and partly of the Realm of Faerie (the Dancers); there is an "alliance space" that is neither wholly of the physical realm nor wholly of the subtle world. The *Howe* or Hollow Hill is symbolic of this alliance space.

In seeking attunement, you are not trying to draw the Sidhe fully into your world, nor are you trying to go fully into theirs. You are occupying a shared, middle ground where you co-create a collaborative presence that partakes of elements of both worlds. You are seeking that place where you can find your inner Sidhe and the Sidhe can find their inner humanity, and both can know Gaia in deeper and more holistic ways.



The technique in all these layouts is essentially the same.

1. Begin with an invocation to the Sacredness that enfolds and blesses both humanity and Faerie and which brings the highest good to all life. Do this in whatever way seems appropriate to you. The idea is to surround and fill your meditative endeavors with Light.
2. Lay out the framework of the Stones and then respectfully and lovingly invite the Sidhe (as represented by the Dancer Cards) to enter your world through the medium of the Stones, blessed and held by the Light of the Sacred.
3. Lay out the Dancer Card or Cards which are touch points with the qualities, energies, and presence of the Sidhe.
4. Without trying to interpret or seek the meaning of the cards, just allow their images and relationships to fill your being, evoking a felt sense of connection to who you are in the world, to what the Sidhe represent, and to how the two of you can blend in partnership.
5. When finished, say "Thank you!" to the cards, to the Sidhe, to the realms of Faerie, to your own human self and higher spirit, and to the Sacred. Then gather up the cards, allowing whatever energies have been invoked to flow out in blessing to the world.

### **The Visitor**

This is a primary meditation which my Sidhe contacts suggested. Imagine yourself discovering and walking into a stone circle. At the center is a mound which turns out to be hollow. Entering it, you find a chamber whose walls have ancient carvings upon them. Gazing upon these carvings, you become aware that a friendly, beneficent presence has appeared in the cave with you. You have a visitor from the Sidhe who brings you blessing.

This is actually the scenario of John Matthew's book *The Sidhe* which recounts exactly such a contact and the teachings that followed from it.

Follow the steps outlined above. In this meditation, you are using all the Stone Cards except the three Condition Cards. The layout will look like what is shown on the following page:

Shuffle all the Dancer Cards while reflecting on your desire and intent to enter into a mutually beneficial contact and collaboration, one that will serve all parties involved and bless the earth that both Faerie



and humans share. When you feel ready, place one Dancer Card face up on the *Altar* Card within the *Howe*.

This is your Visitor.

At this point while working on this layout in order to write this section of the manual, I had an interesting experience which I want to

share to clarify what comes next. As I've implied, many of the ideas and suggestions about this card deck and the meaning of individual cards has come through conversation with a particular inner being who is a member of the Sidhe. When writing about this particular practice of attunement, however, I became aware of a group of such beings being present. Male and female Sidhe, they came in a spirit of playfulness and delight, filled with joy and with an interest in what Jeremy, our Sidhe colleague, and I were trying to do with this card deck. Although this isn't necessarily literally true, it often seems to me when Faerie beings make contact that music accompanies them as they carry with them a deep attunement to the joyful rhythms of life within creation.

In this case, they came because each of them wanted to be "the Visitor," each choosing one of the Dancer Cards to accompany. It was as if each Dancer Card carried a signature energy or quality to which a particular Sidhe felt attracted. As I placed each Dancer Card down on the table in turn, one of the Sidhe would step forward and speak a line. There was no sense that what he or she said was the "meaning" of the card or the only thing that might be said. It was made very clear that this was a playful exercise, not a revelation of each card's "true significance."

Thus, when you do this particular attunement, what a particular Dancer Card means to you or what it invokes is for you to determine at that time. The cardinal rule is: *Intuition in the moment always trumps a meaning or suggestion printed on a page.*

What came across in this experience wasn't that I was being told what each card meant; what came across was that within the Sidhe there was support for the overall exercise and attempt at making contact and establishing a consciousness and presence of collaboration. Working with the individual Dancer Cards felt to me as if it were something of a delightful game to my visitors, but the actual practice of making contact with the human world was not. In this, they were very serious and committed.

Here are the cards I drew, one at a time, and what my visitors had to say in response. Their comments are not meant to limit what is possible, only to illustrate what you might feel when a visitor appears.

This exercise is about inviting a single Visitor. Learning to attune to one of the Sidhe is an exercise in itself that requires attention and commitment; this is where you should start. Dealing with a group of them can be a lot to take on until you are familiar with their energies

and qualities and have some experience in discerning their presence and unique nature. What you want is clarity and precision in one contact more than a vague abstractness and possible confusion with a group of contacts. But if you want to (or feel intuitively guided to) invite more than one Visitor, try it out. The cards are yours to experiment with!



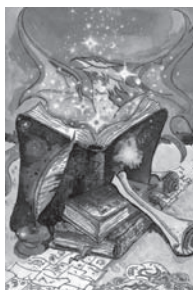
I am a presence of partnership, the power of the once and future brotherhood of all life that can heal and bless the earth.

I am a presence of awakening. The ancient power of the earth stirs and re-enters the world.



I am a presence of beauty, a power that cloaks the land in abundance.

I am a presence of learning. I enable life to know itself so that its power and wisdom may be set free.





I am a presence of freedom, the freedom to explore and to know no matter the obstacles before me.

I am a presence of worth, which lies not in the thing itself but in the relationships it forms with the world in which it finds itself.



I am a presence of vision for those who will find and sit in the Throne of Gaia within themselves.

I am a presence of love that brings strangers together out of barren lands.



I am a presence of wonder and magic that makes the impossible possible.



I am a presence of hope in the promise of far horizons  
and the voyages that take us to them.

I am a presence of refuge and healing when the way  
is hard.



I am a presence of peace and deep refreshment.

I am a presence of patience that can hold a long vision  
and a distant goal.



I am a presence of gratitude at the wonder of earth's  
bounty shared freely with all.





I am a presence of partnership and support for the power in humanity to shape a new self.

I am a presence of whimsy and joy in the possibilities of life.



## Other Attunements

In addition to The Visitor, there are other ways you can use the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* for attunement and communion with the People of Peace and the Lords and Ladies of Faerie. Here are some further suggestions. In each of these, you can draw cards at random or you can deliberately choose the cards with which you feel a resonance in the moment.

Even when using just a few cards, hold in your mind the presence of the whole Stone Circle as if all the Stone Cards had been laid out. Let the spirit of the Stone Circle be a presence in your meditations and attunements even if it is not physically represented by using all the cards.

## Two Card Attunement

The simplest meditation is to divide the deck into Stones and Dancers, shuffling each group to make two piles, and then pick one card from each pile. Use the Stone image and the Dancer image as starting points for your meditation. This allows for a quick “launch pad” for attunement. However, it lacks the Quadrants which can be important in promoting a fuller attunement.

### **Five Card Attunement**

This time you are using four Stone Cards. These cards are arranged as an equilateral cross, one card in each of the four cardinal directions. Then draw a Dancer Card at random and place it in the center of the four. Again, if you wish, you can deliberately draw five cards with which you feel in resonance in this moment. When using this method, attune to each of the Quadrants and its qualities as well as to the Stone Cards within each Quadrant.

### **Nine Card Attunement**

In this layout, you place down four Stone Cards one each in the four cardinal directions, forming a cross. Then draw four Dancer cards, laying one next to each of the Stone Cards. Thus each Quadrant has a Stone and a Dancer card. Finally, lay a fifth Dancer card in the center. Using this method, attune to each of the Quadrants, to the cards within each Quadrant, and to the meaning and quality of the Dancer at the center which synthesizes the whole.

### **Thirteen Card Attunement**

This is identical to the Nine Card attunement but this time draw an additional Dancer card for each Quadrant. In your meditation, in addition to any other contemplations you may make as described in the Nine Card attunement, you would now also reflect on the relationship of the pair of Dancers within each Quadrant and how they interact with and modify each other in the context of the Quadrant where they are found.

### **Full Stone Circle**

First lay down all of the Stone Cards as shown above in The Visitor meditation. Take some time to visualize yourself entering and walking through and around the circle, much as described in *The Journey*. Get a felt sense of being in this Stone Circle and feeling its magic. Then take five Dancer cards and lay one in each Quadrant and one in the center within the Howe. Each Dancer becomes the Lord or Lady of the Quadrant, embodying its qualities, while the Dancer in the center, as in The Visitor, is the one overseeing the whole attunement. (Alternatively, if you wish to include the relationship of Dancers to each other within a Quadrant, you can put two Dancer cards into each Quadrant.)

## The Invisible Circle

The Invisible Circle makes use of the positions of the full Stone Circle without actually laying it out with the Stone Cards. Shuffle all the cards in the Sidhe Deck, then lay out fourteen cards face down on the table following the full Stone Circle pattern as in The Visitor above, with two of the fourteen cards in the center where the *Howe* and *Altar* cards would be. Turn the cards over. Using the Invisible Circle diagram (*Figure 2 on page 135*), identify the positions each of the cards is taking in the Stone Circle. In this instance, “visible” Stone Cards may be paired with “invisible” ones represented by the corresponding position of the Stone on the Invisible Circle diagram. For instance, a *Wizard Stone* might be laid down in the position of the *Gate of Twilight* or the Opening Stone. You are not trying to interpret the meaning of this layout, though. You are only using it as a meditative guide or inspiration, seeing the intermingling of Stones and Dancers in a new and unexpected way.

These are just some of the possible layouts. Feel free to experiment with others as long as you maintain the pairing of at least one Stone Card with one Dancer Card. In each case, the objective is to experience a felt sense of the presence of the Sidhe and just as importantly, the presence of the Sidhe within you, your own inner Gaian attunement and consciousness as well as the spirit of planetary wholeness which both you and the Sidhe can share and manifest in future acts of service.

## USING THE CARDS AS NARRATIVE

One powerful way you can use the cards is to tell stories. *The Journey* presented earlier in this manual is one example of such a narrative.

The Sidhe are an artistic, creative people. One way to come close to them and invite them into a partnership is by expressing your own creativity and artistry. To do this, allow the images on the cards to inspire poetry and narratives. You could do this using just one card as a starting place, letting your imagination carry you onward (imagination is, after all, one of the bridges into the realm of Faerie), or you could use any number of cards. You could place them in an ordered sequence, as I did in *The Journey*, or you could draw them at random, allowing improvisation to weave a tale for you.

Here's an example. I drew the following six cards at random, one at a time:



Here is the story that resulted.

I sat across the table from my host, a person much like myself in appearance but very different in constitution and substance, for he was one of the Sidhe, one of the Shining Ones, whose body was made of much finer matter than my own. We had met in one of the Borderlands that separated his realm from mine, and here he graciously offered me a feast of fruits and cheeses and glasses of wine, red for me as befitted my humanity and white for him as befitted his origin in the stars. Our talk was of pleasantries at first, but then, our hunger satisfied, I posed the question that had brought me to this place and to him.

"How," I asked, "might I bring healing to my world?"

My host thought for a time, then he said, "The world needs what our races can give through our partnership. The red and white roses of humanity and Faerie must once again entwine in collaboration. You should find a way to bring this about. The grail of healing is

found where we work together.”

My heart sank. This seemed like a task too mighty for one person, and I said so. “This seems beyond me. I do not have your sensitivity or attunement, I do not have your magic, I do not have your power. Surely such an assignment cannot rest with me, or with any human. Surely you must act from your high places, from the beauty and healing of your realm, and bring healing to the world.”

He laughed, his voice a rich baritone. “You underestimate yourself—and I feel you overestimate us. We have gifts, ‘tis true, but so do you. And we are more limited than it may appear. Our palaces cannot help you. Our realm is too removed beyond the physical. You are the ones who live in the midst of the problem. You are the sons and daughters of this world. We cannot help you here if you cannot help yourselves. It is not a lack of willingness, but a lack of ability. Without your partnership we cannot adequately access your world. And it is difficult to partner with you if you believe more in us than in yourself.”

I left my host then, thanking him for his counsel and his hospitality but feeling heavy in my heart. What hope was there if the healing of the world rested with humanity? How could we rise to the challenge?

I found myself walking in the fields near where I lived. My footsteps brought me to a grove of fruit trees whose branches were heavy with blossoms. Looking out, I could see the farmer’s wheat field, looking green and fertile with new life. I thought, *This is my earth, too. Whatever powers lie within the soil to bring forth life and abundance, those same powers lie in me. Perhaps I am not as powerless as I thought.*

I stayed there for the rest of the day, pursuing these thoughts, some of which may even have been inspired by my recent host among the Sidhe. When night fell, I looked up and was awed by the wonder of the starry sky, the immensity of the universe displayed before me. What mysteries lay out there among the stars? What other lives might there be on planets circling around distant suns? Thinking these things, I was overcome with a feeling of companionship, as if I were part of a vast community of consciousness and life. Seeing the cosmos arrayed above me didn’t diminish me at all; I felt uplifted, enhanced. Like the Sidhe themselves, I also was a child of star and

planet, heir to the same creative forces that led suns to shine and life to blossom.

That night I built myself a fire and sat under the stars and a full moon, thinking of these things. And as I did, I realized that I had the power to shape myself to be whatever I imagined I could be. I could be a destroyer or I could be a healer. I could abandon all hope, or I could shape myself around a vision. Like the fire that burned before me, I could burn away my doubts.

The next morning, I arose from where I had fallen asleep. I felt renewed. I began walking back to my usual neighborhood, knowing I had it in me to heal that portion of my world that was part of my life. And knowing this, I could feel the forces of Faerie aligned about me, eager to add their contribution to the partnership I now knew I could co-create.

This is a simple example of the kind of narratives you can create. Your stories don't have to deal with the Sidhe or the realms of Faerie, either, but when you weave their magic and presence into your tales, you bring your heart and mind closer to their own consciousnesses—and when you bring love and caring for the world and for all of life into your narratives, you bring yourself closer to their hearts as well.

This technique of randomly drawing cards and improvisationally telling a story can work very well in a group. You could, for instance, gather a group of people and have each of them draw one or two cards and take turns using them to create a collectively inspired and shared narrative. When done with respectful attunement to the Sidhe themselves, this can be a powerful form of cooperation and potential contact.

Of course, you need not be limited to writing stories. The Sidhe respond to all the arts—music, drama, painting, sculpture, poetry, dance—so you should feel free to explore as many creative uses of and responses to the cards as you can imagine.

As a final example, here is a story, *The Spiral Journey*, that my colleague Jeremy Berg, who created the cards that make up this deck, wrote in response to my own. He wove it out of his own attunement to the Sidhe. It stands as both a complement to what I wrote in *The Journey* and, more importantly, as an inspiration to you to use the cards to discover the stories that live in you.



## The Spiral Journey by Jeremy Berg

I looked up from the last entry in my friend's journal and carefully closed the cover. I suppose he had brought this to me because I was one of his "far out" friends and not likely to think him crazy. He was staring at me with a boyish, expectant expression, excited to share his discovery but probably wondering if I thought he had stepped off a cliff somewhere.

"This is quite a story" I said "how much of it is true."

"All of it, as far as I know," he said. "It is my best recollection of the experience but I admit it sounds strange. I never had something like this happen to me before."

"Well, you're not the first to have encountered 'the shining ones' as the Faerie race are sometimes called and probably not the last." I said. "What has been the effect on you? Has it changed anything?"

He sat for awhile with a stony expression, looking up at something I couldn't see. Then a smile broke over his face and the words came splashing out.

"I feel happier with my life", he exclaimed, "more connected to my friends and family ..... I sense the beauty of life and nature, even in my house and built things ..... in my bones. I'm more in love with the world. I ..... feel ..... hopeful!"

We talked for a hour or more longer. I assured him he wasn't off the deep end and that there were many others who had similar experiences and lots of places he could go to learn more of this phenomenon. I dug out my dog-eared copy of a book by John Matthews called *The Secret Life of Elves and Faeries: The Private Journal of Robert Kirk* and gave it to him. Then we went our separate ways. Truth be told I was a little jealous of the remarkable encounter my friend appeared to have had.

Days later, sitting on our porch enjoying the bright morning sun coming over the mountains I found myself reminiscing of my visit a few years ago to West Cornwall, England where a standing stone called the Men An Tol can be found. In Cornish the name means *the hole stone* and it is supposed to have a Faerie guardian who can make miraculous cures—especially when one is passed through the hole. Perhaps, like the Men An Tol there was something magical about the particular stone or place my friend had found. Perhaps the lay of the land was just right in that spot to make an otherworld connection. I began planning a visit to this weather-beaten stone that had triggered my friend's meeting with

the Sidhe. Could he even find it again? Did it even exist in our time and space? Day dreaming about the trip drowsiness took over.

I shook myself and began to get up from my chair when my gaze fell to the bird feeder and stone bench that are below the porch in our front yard. To my amazement, instead of the normal scene there was a large, weather beaten, mossy stone protruding out of the lawn. My first thought was *how in the heck was I going to mow around that!* Then common sense got the better of me, and I wondered aloud how it got there!

"You called and we came." A baritone voice seemed to sing from the nearby laurel bushes. I looked back in the direction of the voice but saw nothing. The play of light and shadows over our flower garden in bloom and the deep green of the bushes was momentarily entrancing. I looked back at the stone but found myself in a different land altogether! It was night and before me stood a stone-framed arched entry filled with stars. At its back was a small hill rising to the blue black night sky shimmering with matching bright stars. I recognized the symbol carved into the lintel. It was the glyph from John Matthew's book *The Sidhe*. I started to walk towards the doorway but was interrupted with a sudden change in scene.

"Before you enter our world you must first tread the path of stones" A growling voice said not unkindly. It sounded like a fatherly bear or some such creature—oddly reassuring.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am a guide to the land you seek to enter. First you must circumambulate the standing stones of our realm. They resonate with standing stones in your world," said the voice which now sounded more struck from a thick wooden xylophone.

"Circumambulate?" I asked, trying to remember exactly what that meant.

A low chuckle gurgled in my head like a small waterfall in a mountain stream. "You know, walk around in a circle," he laughed. "I thought it gave the whole process more gravitas saying it that way."

Something about the humor of my guide helped me relax and it felt safe to begin. I walked south and came to the first stone which seemed to bow slightly as I approached. How this is possible for a standing stone I have no idea but that is what it seemed.

"I am the Wizard stone," it said. "At least that is the closest concept I can find to relate to in your being. I hold the power to manifest new

worlds."

"I am pleased to meet you," I said bowing a little in response. "That is an awesome power."

"Yes, it is a power we share," said the Wizard stone and somehow without moving motioned me to continue to the next station.

To the east stood a stone that radiated a quiet strength, fitting into the stone circle like a finely matched puzzle piece. The sky was ablaze behind it and through it.

"I am the Artisan stone and hold the secrets of creative manifestation, productive activity, self expression, and the shaping of worlds."

"That's a lot of secrets." I blurted out then wondered if it was a good idea to challenge a massive stone—especially one which had three sharp edges at the top.

"The universe dances with who you are and brings you what you need," it answered. "That is the essence of all the secrets."

I thought about this in silence for a moment trying to absorb the wisdom of the stone then felt the urge to move to the north.

"I am known as the Bard," a gentle feminine voice exclaimed. The stone looked almost soft and was surrounded by smaller stones of similar color. They all seemed to be stepping stones to unknown pathways and point in unseen directions. "Although I am known by many other names besides," she continued. "I sing the many songs and recite the ancient poems that hold the routes to navigating the stars."

"I am honored to meet you," I stammered rather aware that I had not travelled much and knew only basic geography.

"You, too, are a bard I see," she said, "I am pleased to share this journey with you."

Not sure what she was seeing and not knowing how to respond I bowed and moved on.

The western stone seemed a good deal more intimidating. As I approached it seemed to be made not so much of stone but of shifting shadow. I remembered a story of *Fin of the Shadows*, a human who had crossed over to the Fairy world and never returned.

"I am not he", said the stone. The voice sounded as a distant bell tolling. "I am the Gatekeeper stone, lord of thresholds. When you step beyond the known into the new I am with you. I bid you peace and entry into the next circle."

*There is another circle?* I thought but before the words crossed my lips

I was standing in front of a gateway composed of two large standing stones shouldering a massive lintel.

Curious, I walked into the space between the stones. As I entered the Gate of Earth chirping of countless crickets grew louder. Following the sound the landscape transformed into a verdant primeval forest. The smell of rich moist earth beckoned me further while the cries and songs and growls and calls of a myriad species created a pleasing cascade of interwoven chorus. Colorful birds flitted through the branches as chipmunks scurried along the path. I felt the breathing presence of many more animals and the diversity of insect and other life so characteristic of our planet.

"Through this gate comes the power of the earth to create new life," said a voice which mingled with all of the other sounds and sights and smells. It seemed to come from everywhere simultaneously. "We welcome you as kin and offer you our blessings."

The sheer beauty and endless fecundity of the forest was awe inspiring. I knelt in reverence of the land. When I opened my eyes I was facing east in front of a new standing stone. This one appeared to have carvings of some sort but I couldn't quite discern their meanings. Suddenly a falcon flew down and alighted on the stone.

"I am the Stone of Identity. I fly and see yet stand and hold the possibility of connection and partnership between our realms, of wholeness emerging among us, of a new heaven and a new earth."

I pondered this statement for a time then thanked the Stone for its inspiration and felt clear to move toward the next gate now ahead to the east.

Time seemed to have little meaning in the land in which I had slipped. The gateway ahead showed a morning sun earlier than when I had begun my journey. A seagull overhead made its characteristic call in greeting as I stepped though the gate. It hung in the air floating on the incoming winds from some nearby seashore and seemed to say. "This the Gate Of Dawn, the portal of perennial dawn from where new days and new possibilities continuously gestate. Through the mystery of boundaries fresh manifestations of the sacred erupt."

Contemplating this statement I stepped back through the gate into the circle.

My experience thereafter continued much like my friend's. I met the Stone of Boundary, stepped into the Gate of Stars, tread carefully around

the Fallen Stone and shuddered until the Stone of Opening reassured me. The Gate of Twilight—the doorway between worlds—came next and my journey of the magic circle ended by the Stone of Emergence.

Like my friend I now walked with anticipation toward the arched doorway filled with stars and was confronted by a huge snake coiled around another standing stone. It radiated an electric power that seemed to flow from the core of the earth itself. Outside this magical land I don't think I would have found the courage to reach out and touch it! But, when I did I knew it to be a Stone of Alliance and found myself just inside a *Howe*—the stone chamber that lead, I knew, into the realm of the Sidhe.

I chose to continue my journey inside the Hollow Hill and was greeted by a vision of Ocean and Land, a world in harmony. I felt an ecstatic sense of oneness and was immersed in ceaselessly emerging wholeness. Land, sea, sky and nature shown in homeostatic balance, the world as it can be and always is.

Then came the cliff's Edge and my own drop-off of courage. Heights have never been my favorite experience and this sheer fall was truly intimidating. I stood frozen several yards from the end of the ledge. I didn't need any voice to tell me that what was required was a step of faith into the abyss! No way!

I'm not sure how long I stood there but after awhile I started to feel the warm air rising from the valley and began to see more clearly to the beautiful landscape below. It almost seemed that I could see fish dancing in the river far below and small animals scurrying among the scree on the opposite mountain side. I noticed in fine detail the entry to a cave with stars twinkling within. I began to feel lighter and softer—like I was made of down feathers. The dancing wind, the sheer delight of the day, the magnificent view all drew me closer to the edge. I leapt forward and became an eagle on the wing, joyfully soaring among the mountain peaks....

...and precipitously found myself standing fully human again in front of another bird, a Falcon I think, carved from living rock. Staring at me.

"Congratulations," it said in a musical voice. "You have stepped off the edge into new possibilities."

"I'm not sure I did anything," I responded, "one moment I was scared to death and the next I was flying!"

"Not all change comes from staring down fear or overcoming obstacles." the Stone Raptor said, sometimes, perhaps most times, change

comes when we rise on the delight of the vision of a more beautiful world."

Then she smiled—yes smiled, and the stone morphed into feathers, she looked up and took to the sky.

I followed her circling path higher and higher. She seemed to gradually change shape again into a crane ..... I became aware of standing outside a beautiful villa or Palace. I knew it was the home, or one of the homes of the Sidhe.

"Greetings honored guest. We, the People of Peace acknowledge you as cousin. Welcome."

"Thank you and greetings to you," I responded. "Where am I and where are you?"

"As you have surmised you are near one of our homes in the hollow hills as you quaintly say. However we would prefer not to show ourselves at this time as seeing us is not the purpose of this journey. It is something better than that." The words seemed to blossom in my mind like red rhododendrons on a spring day.

"What could be better than meeting you?" I asked. "That seems pretty special."

"We appreciate your kindness for saying so but we are here to remind you that it is important for you to be rooted in your own sacred identity. Just as we, you are a stream flowing from the one great fountainhead. Your world too emanates from this source. Once you see it as something as wonderful as you feel ours to be then we can meet as equals—each with something valuable to offer. Then we can be a complete family once again."

After a long pause my greeter bade me walk the path that lead down the mountainside. "You will come to a spring-fed well after a short hike. Drink deep and remember what was said."

This seemed to be the end of our conversation and with one last longing glance back at the wonderful Sidhe Palace I headed down the mountain.

The sun was shining and the trail was full of wildflowers that lent a fragrance to the crisp mountain air. After a while I spied a circular well nestled in a verdant valley. I seemed to have travelled a great distance in so short a span. Except for the stag which greeted me at the pool this could easily have been a scene from any number of places in our world.

"Drink with me," he said "This is the well of remembering and the



source from which all life is nourished.”

With him at my side I knelt, cupped my hands and drank. The water was clear, slightly sweet and scented with herbs and oddly nourishing. I stood up, my thirst fully satiated. I felt my blood coursing through my body in resonance with the upwelling spring and the surrounding land. I found myself in a reverie of sorts. Below the reflections on the water murmurings of unknown depths seemed to beckon.

The stag nudged me and broke the spell. He bounced away, glanced back and flicked his rack to follow.

Reluctantly I did. There was something about the well and the source of the water that I couldn't quite fathom. It seemed to stretch to infinity.

Well, I don't want to bore you with a long tale. Suffice it to say that when I came to the field of Blossoms and Wheat the stag had disappeared just as it had for my friend. I ate the wonderful food and drank delicious red and white wine at the feast - watched by curious eyes in the green shadows.

I momentarily lusted for Faerie Gold then caught myself and noted the priceless value of our own rich, organic land.

I met the Bear who emerged from stone, climbed the Moonstairs, entered the library of the Dragon and Books, and threw the Tossing Coin.

I came to the low stone wall where the red and white roses bloomed through an ancient fissure and held the dream of those with red blood and those with white reconciled.

The Shaman chipping himself from stone reinforced the statement that a new humanity is being born. With his staccato chipping away at the stone in which he was encased he dramatized that we could work to free ourselves from the old constraints and both support and be supported by the other creatures of the earth.

The Gaian Throne held out this promise: A fourfold alliance of Humanity, Nature, Faerie and Gaia working in partnership towards a new Eden. I'm not sure how long I sat on that chair, deep within the earth, appreciating the healing presence of the one who is mother to us all. I decided to do what I could to bring forth this new world.

And, like my friend, my journey ended with a pang of sadness for the realm I had left and the world that was yet to be born. Standing next to the Gatekeeper Stone, reaching out and having a bird sing on my

hand I knew that something of my old life had died and there were new promises to keep.

The world I wished for was gestating deep within me and deep within the Earth.

# USING THE CARDS AS AN ORACLE

## I. CREATING A READING

### **Knowing the Cards**

The power of any oracular system arises in part from the relationship you form with it. So the first step is to become acquainted with the cards. There are not many: only thirty-three, far fewer than the deck of seventy-eight that makes up the classic Tarot. It will not take you long to know them and their possible interactions.

Even more important than simply recognizing the cards and their names is the felt sense within you of what they mean to you. Each of the cards represents a quality that is more than just the name assigned to it. The name is like a portal through which you may step into a much broader landscape of intuition, insight, and imagination in which various interpretations are possible, some of which may not be immediately evident.

What any of the cards actually means in a particular reading will depend on the circumstances of that reading, but in particular it will depend on your intuition and your attunement to the cards themselves and the relationship you have built with them through study and use.

Likewise, in this deck, the Quadrants of the Stone Circle are important and play an integral part in the meaning of the cards. Being familiar with these Quadrants is another vital way of knowing the cards and just what this deck can do for you.

### **Being Playful**

The first few times you use the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* in an oracular way, be playful. Don't use them to answer important life questions. In particular, don't use them to tell you what to do. You are a complex being and your life is woven into the world in complex ways; no divinatory system can hope to capture the wholeness of who you are. All it can do is show you a path of intuition that can, if you follow it, unfold your own inner wisdom appropriate to the situation. You are responsible for the decisions you make in your life; you get the consequences. You should never abdicate that power and accountability to a pack of cards or a book or to the throw of dice or coins or whatever the system may be.

This is particularly true for this deck, for the purpose of the Sidhe

is not to tell you what to do or to become life coaches or inner plane “guides.” Their intent is to respond to the need of the world and to engage you in doing so as well. To do this, they wish to accomplish two things above all else: first, to help you discover your own Faerie heritage, so to speak—the “Sidhe consciousness” within you that feels and knows its connectedness to nature and the world around you. This is the part of you that can recognize and embody a Gaian consciousness. Second, the intent is to connect their energy and presence with your own in a partnership of Faerie and Human that can bless the world and bring healing to the earth.

This does not mean that a Sidhe might not respond to a heartfelt need or question on your part and offer wisdom that can reveal itself through the symbolism of the card deck—or perhaps in other, synchronistic ways in your life. What it means is that when used as an oracular deck, the cards are functioning less as a tool for contact with the Sidhe themselves and more as a tool through their evocative imagery to open you to deep and wise places within yourself where you can find the answers you are seeking. And this inner, wise place may indeed be a “Sidhe consciousness” or a “Gaian consciousness” within you.

For this to happen, though, your intuition and energy need to be flowing and not constrained by fear or anxiety. This flowing state comes best when you are relaxed and playful, attentive and welcoming.

So honor the cards but be playful with them. Give them the freedom to expand and dance in your imagination. You want to treat a reading with the respect and seriousness it demands but at the same time with the sense of creative play that an artist has when trying out new colors or a new brush, or as jazz musicians have in jamming together around a melody. Play jazz with your cards and let them reveal their meanings to you in a melody of inspiration.

## **A Reading**

Using the cards to gain intuitive information about a particular subject is called a “reading.” It is using the cards as an oracle, a way of gaining insight from deeper realms of consciousness. A reading basically consists of laying out a randomly selected number of cards in a particular layout and then interpreting the results. If you use only one card, then the interpretation is based on the relationship between that card and its meaning and the subject of the reading. If you use several cards, then you

add the meanings of the interactions and relationships between them.

### Card Meanings

Every card has several possible meanings in a reading. First, there is the *descriptive meaning* which is the meaning given in the section on card descriptions earlier in this manual, as well as the simple meaning of the image on the card itself. For example, the *Palace* card is simply a picture of a Sidhe palace, while Stone cards are pictures of standing stones.

Second, there is an *emotional* or “*impressional*” meaning. This is simply your emotional reaction to the card, the impression it makes on you due to its image and any past associations, memories, feelings, and so forth that it may evoke in you. Some cards may attract you and please you when you see them and others not based only on their picture. Some pictures you may find exciting, some dull, some inspiring, and so on. Some may just be confusing. These feelings are not irrelevant necessarily, but they can cloud the meaning of a card for you. An emotional reaction is not the same as an intuitive one, so in doing a reading you may find it important and necessary to acknowledge the emotional meaning the card may have for you and then move beyond it.

Third, there is an *intuitive meaning*. This is what the card means to *you* in that moment, based on your own intuition and how you resonate with what the card represents. This could be different from the descriptive meaning and usually is more insightful and accurate with respect to the specific situation represented by the reading. For example, the *Fallen Stone* means an obstruction or a failure descriptively, but in a given reading and its context, you might intuitively feel it means something else, such as a false start leading to a new beginning, or the lessons and wisdom that be resources for us when things don’t work out as expected. It’s important to recognize that intuition itself is a continuum of insight and interpretation; it can range from a simple impression to a complex unfolding of images, feelings, and thoughts. Sometimes staying with an image and not assuming your first “hit” is the meaning allows the intuitive process to deepen and unfold more information.

Fourth, a card has a *relational meaning*. This is the meaning of the card in relationship to other cards in the layout or to the Quadrants. For example, the interaction between *The Shaping Man* card and the *Palace* card together might mean that we develop authority and power when we take responsibility for how we shape our lives.

A *layout* is simply the arrangement of cards, such as in a line or in a geometric pattern like a diamond. The Stone Circle is a layout. A card may have a meaning by virtue of its position in a particular layout. For example, a simple layout would be three cards in a row where the first represents the past, the second the present, and the third the future. In this case, the meaning of the first card would be influenced by its position as representing some past action or condition. This would be its *positional meaning*, which further affects the relationship of a card to the layout as a whole and to the other cards.

Because of the Quadrants in the Stone Circle, positional meanings—i.e. what Quadrant a card falls into—can be important in evaluating and interpreting a given layout. Also the Quadrants themselves and their relationships to each other as Axis and Thresholds carry meaning quite apart from the cards; these relationships and meanings can affect the specific meaning of individual cards.

Which meaning you use in a reading depends on you and on the complexity of the reading and of the layout itself. The simplest approach is just to look up the descriptive meanings of the cards, but often this is incomplete and may not make much sense, particularly if you have several cards relating to each other. What meaning do the *Wizard Stone*, the *Ancestor Stone*, the *Stag and Pool*, the *Bird on a Hand*, and the *Gate of Stars* all have together in a reading if considered only at the level of their descriptive meanings?

Given that the cards are not wise in themselves but are instead tools to tap a deeper source of intuitive wisdom either in yourself or in spirit, the intuitive meaning may well be more appropriate and insightful. This intuitive meaning or “hit” is not necessarily independent of the descriptive meaning, but it usually goes deeper and is more relevant to the specificities of the subject of the reading. And when you have several cards in a complex layout, the relationships and interactions they have with each other based on their positions relative to each other and to the layout itself further deepen your possible intuitive response. One reason there are no names printed on the cards themselves is to minimize the tendency to be influenced by these names and to encourage the use of their intuitive and evocative meanings.

The simple answer to the question of “which meaning do I look for” is “all of them that are possible and relevant.” Let the cards speak to you and inspire you in as many ways as they can, stimulating your imagination



and intuition. Remember the general principle given at the start of this section: intuition and inspiration can trump printed meanings

### **A Narrative Approach**

One approach to a reading is to use narration. Use the cards to tell a story. Look creatively for how the cards lead into and relate to one another. The card images can be very helpful here, as well as their relational and positional meanings in a layout. What narrative do these relationships suggest? Instead of trying to come up with “the truth,” try to come up with a story line. Often such a creative use of the imagination is just what is needed to trigger the intuitive insights you’re looking for.

### **Practice**

Let’s try a little practice. This is just playing with the cards, not doing a reading yet.

Shuffle the deck and deal out one card face down. Now turn it over. Before looking up its descriptive meaning (assuming you don’t recognize it already), just think about what the card seems to be saying. What is the story the card tells just through its image? What does the image evoke in you? What is triggered in your imagination? What is your immediate response? Let the card speak to you.

Now look it up in the appropriate Card Description section in this manual and determine its descriptive meaning. What does that mean to you? Does it correspond in any way to your initial impressions? What new thoughts does it trigger that might not have been there before?

Turn this card face down. Deal out another card face down next to it. Turn the new card over and repeat the playful exercise you just did. Then, after you’ve taken time to consider the impressions and insights the new card offers you, turn over the first card and look at them side by side. Now what impressions do you have? How do they relate? Does there seem to be a story between them? Remember, you’re not trying to do a reading; you’re just playing with the cards and observing their effects. But see what different meanings come up for you.

Repeat this with a third card. Now the complexity of the interactions between the cards goes up. What is this like? What story now emerges?

You can practice like this with all the cards in any way you choose. It’s part of the play of getting acquainted with the deck but also in coming

to know your own intuitive capacities and how you relate to the different possible meanings.

The British occultist and writer, Gareth Knight—an expert on the Tarot—writes in his book *The Magical World of the Tarot* that the secret to successfully working with the Tarot is to treat it with respect and honor as you would a person who is a wise friend. That is certainly true of the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* as well. Take time to get to know it as you would a good and trusted friend and treat the cards accordingly. If you do, you and this deck will form a most rewarding partnership.

## DOING A READING

Doing a reading for yourself or someone else can feel exciting and pleasurable or it can feel daunting and intimidating. It's not unusual to feel some performance anxiety. Questions may arise such as, "Will I do it right? What if I interpret the cards wrongly and give misinformation?"

First, there is no *right* way. There is the way that you and the cards working as partners will unfold together, the way that you discover works best for you, probably through some trial and error.

Second, it is possible to make mistakes and to misinterpret, even when you have lots of experience. No person is infallible as a reader, and certainly no card deck is. Just accept that going in and feel relaxed about it. You will do the best you can, and chances are you will do just fine. The key thing to remember is that as a reader, you're not trying to tell yourself or someone else what to do. The cards give an intuitive snapshot of energies at work, not direction or instruction on how one should lead one's life or what to do in a given situation. You may infer from the cards actions to take, but that insight must come from your wisdom or the wisdom of the person for whom you are doing the reading, not from the cards. The decision to act or not to act—and how to act—is a personal one, not one the cards can or should make. The cards are an adjunct to a person's intent, not a substitute.

If you are doing a reading for someone else, engage him or her in the process. The word "reading" is part of the oracular tradition, but in one way it's misleading, for it's not like reading from a book or a blueprint while the other person just listens passively. You are both partners with the cards which themselves act as a stimulus for your combined intuitions and insights. Think of a reading as a conversation with visual aids! Don't

be afraid to ask questions of the person for whom you are reading or ask them to engage their intuitions as well. Don't try to be the "All-Knowing One," and you will find yourself much more relaxed and as a consequence, probably more accurate intuitively.

And if you look at the cards and haven't got a clue what they mean and draw a blank intuitively, well, that's the way it goes sometimes! Do something else and try again later.

### **The Five Steps**

There are different ways of laying out the cards and doing a reading, but there are five steps all readings have in common.

STEP ONE: Determine the subject of the reading. Who or what is it about? What information are you trying to determine or what insights would you like to gain?

STEP TWO: State the result of Step One in one or two sentences at the most. The simpler the statement is, the better. Be as clear as possible about what you're asking and the result you want.

STEP THREE: Determine the nature of the reading. What kind of layout will you use? The answer to this question depends on the kind of information you want and how you think you might best receive it. Also, the layout may determine just which cards are used and which are set aside. I discuss this in more detail below when I offer some layout examples.

STEP FOUR: If you are doing the reading for yourself, shuffle the cards that you'll be using while attuning to the question you posed in Step Two. If you are doing the reading for someone else, have them shuffle the cards while doing the attunement.

STEP FIVE: Lay out the cards in the desired layout and interpret their meaning.

### **The Oracular Deck**

The Oracular Deck is simply the cards that you shuffle in order to draw random cards for the reading. It is the deck that holds the images that respond to the questions you've asked to start the reading. This might be the entire deck of Sidhe cards, or it might be just the Stone Cards or just the Dancer cards depending on the layout that you're using. You might even have two Oracular Decks, one of Stones and the other of Dancers.

If you are using a layout in which you lay down certain pre-selected cards, usually Stone cards to build a Stone Circle, then those cards are not available to be part of the Oracular Deck.

### **Creating a Layout**

Rather than have strict, structured formulas for the card layouts, I believe they evolve from the nature of the subject and the questions you have. The cards are like building blocks you can assemble and use in various ways. Exploring how to do so can be part of the intuitive process that leads to the insights you wish.

Think of a layout as an algorithm or computer program. It creates specific relationships between the cards in order to generate specific information. If your question involves the timing of something or the interaction between the past, present and future, for example, then right away you know you want some way in the layout to represent these three time periods and that more likely than not you will require at least three cards to do so. The simplest algorithm or layout to display this relationship is to put the three cards next to each other in a line representing the movement from the past through the present into the future.

The very simplest layout is a single card, allowing you to relate its descriptive and intuitive meanings to the question you asked in Step Two.

You can create as complex a layout as you wish using as many cards as you think you need, but remember that more information does not necessarily mean better or more insightful information. The more complex the layout, the more you have to integrate and consider; it can become more of an intellectual exercise than an intuitive one. In my experience, simpler is better.

Be willing to experiment. If you find you've created a layout that is too involved and complicated, simplify it to use fewer cards; if you find you don't have enough information to generate useful relational meaning, then add more cards.

Though this is not sacrosanct, the Sidhe deck generally operates by combining Stone and Dancer cards. The use of a Stone Circle, either in full or abbreviated form, can itself be an important element in the reading, particularly in creating the field in which the wisdom of the Sidhe is invited into your life. This does not mean, though, that you

could not use all Dancer cards or all Stone cards in a particular reading if it seemed right to do so in the context. I discuss this more when I talk about specific layouts.

### **Learning to Read**

Learning to read the cards is an art that you learn with practice. It draws heavily upon intuition and a contextual awareness. A dash of storyteller's imagination and insight is very useful as well! Whether Stone or Dancer, the cards are not rigid. It's entirely possible that in a particular layout and reading, given the context of the question being asked or the situation being posed, that a card may take on a meaning very different from that described in this manual or from its primary meaning. I've tried to suggest some possibilities this way in writing the card descriptions, but of course, it's impossible to cover all the myriad options that might arise for interpreting a card. For instance, the *Moonstairs* card, showing a stairway reaching up towards moon and stars and dissolving into moonlight part way up, normally means a connection between two different worlds (whatever those worlds might be), particularly one forged by imagination and a sense of wonder and possibility. This stairway is finished; it connects both ends, even though one end is not visible until you begin climbing the stairs. But the image of an incomplete stairway apparently leading to nowhere might under particular circumstances be interpreted as longing or yearning

### **If You Have Problems**

A particular reading may draw a blank or leave you feeling clueless and puzzled. That's where a playful element comes in. The cards themselves are not magical; *you* are magical. You, and the spirit beyond you, are the sources of the wisdom and insight you seek. The answers lie in you, but it may be that the cards are unable to draw them out in a particular reading. Just leave them and try again another time. It may be that the effort you made will bear fruit in another way. You may have an important dream or something may happen synchronistically that brings you the insight you were looking for.

If a reading is puzzling and defeats all your attempts at reasonable intuitive interpretation, just shuffle all the Stone cards and draw one to see what conditions might be influencing the reading itself.

- If you draw a *Gate* card, you can try the reading again if you wish; it's your choice. The way is open to do so.
- If you draw a *Heart* card, try again but reframe or restate your initial question in a different way. You didn't get to the heart of the matter with your first question.
- If you draw a *Transition* card, conditions are in flux; things are changing. This isn't the best time to do this reading, so stop. Give things a chance to settle down. Try again another day.
- If you draw the *Fallen Stone Condition* card, you're being too serious with the reading, making it heavier than it needs to be. If you wish, try again and approach it with a lighter heart and mind.
- If you draw the *Ancestor Stone Condition* card, you can try again, but you need to attune anew to the subject of the reading; there's something about it you haven't seen. You haven't gone deeply enough into the matter. However, it might be best if you gave it a rest for now.
- If you get the *Stone of Consciousness Altar* card or the *Stone of Alliance Condition* card, you should take time to attune to a spiritual source of wisdom and guidance—God, your soul, your high self, a spiritual ally, or whatever source you find appropriate. Then when you feel more attuned within yourself, try the reading again.
- If you draw the *Howe* card, it means you need to find the answer to your question within yourself, drawing on your own intuition, wisdom, experience, knowledge, and so forth.

If the second reading is as “unreadable” as the first one was, then it's an indication that you should stop altogether.

## II. SAMPLE LAYOUTS

### QUICK AND SIMPLE

If you want to get started quickly and just try the cards out, here are three simple ways to do this: One card, three card, and five card layouts. These methods do not use the full capacity of the Sidhe deck, but they are useful when you only want a quick take on a situation and are not attempting to do an in-depth reading.

**One Card Quick-Click:** Use this method if you want a very quick



snapshot of the subtle energies, qualities or potentials surrounding a situation or immediately available to you in the moment. For example, you might be about to undertake a project, go into a meeting, encounter a new person, or start a new venture. Or you might just want inspiration for the day ahead of you. Shuffle all the cards, then draw one and lay it down face up. See what inspiration or intuition it evokes. (However, this method is not really the best to answer a simple “yes” or “no” question. I tell why further on.)

**Three Card Progression:** Use this method if you would like quick information about a matter or situation that unfolds in a progressive way. Shuffle all the cards while holding the situation in mind, then draw three cards one at a time, laying them down in a row face up. What each of the three means depends on the context or the question you are asking. For instance, they could represent past, present, and future, or, if you’d like a sense of the day ahead of you, morning, afternoon and evening.

**Three Card Tug of War:** Another three card layout may be useful when you have a situation and you want a quick sense of what might be holding it back and what might move it forward. Shuffle all the cards while holding the situation or question in mind, then draw one card. Lay it down face up. This represents the situation and its qualities in the moment. Then lay down one card face up to its left or “behind” it; this represents what may be holding the situation back or working against its fulfillment. Finally, lay a third card down face up to the right or “in front” of the situation card; this represents what can move the situation forward, hopefully resolving any conflicts in the process.

**Five Card Cross:** This is a very basic layout used in a number of readings. It is particularly apt with this deck as even though here it is used for a quick look at a situation, it can still make use of the Quadrants that are part of the Stone Circle, thereby adding an extra dimension to the reading if you wish to use it. Shuffle all the cards while holding the situation or question in mind. Then lay out four cards in a cross, with one card in each of the four cardinal directions, East, North, West, and South. These four represent four elements within the situation and their relationship and interaction. Just what these four are depends on you and the specific context of the reading. Finally, lay out a fifth card in

the center of the other four. This represents a synthesizing or resolving, integrating element.

The four cards can represent as well the four Quadrants of the Stone Circle while the center card is in the place of the *Howe*, the place of integration and connection.

For example, if you want to do a quick layout to explore what qualities or subtle energies might unfold in the day ahead, you could use this layout. The East or Quadrant Two would represent Dawn and Morning, the North or Quadrant Three would represent Noon and Afternoon, the West or Quadrant Four would represent Twilight, and the South or Quadrant One would represent Night. The center card would represent a synthesizing or “summing up,” the overall quality of the day ahead.

This layout can also represent a progression, though in this case Quadrant One to the south (the bottom card of the cross) would be the beginning of the cycle and Quadrant Four, the card to the west or left of the cross, would be the end. Again, the center card is the integrative, synthesizing, or “summing up” element.

Another five-fold layout which expands on the Three Card Tug-of-War layout would have the center card laid down first representing the situation in question. Below it is a card representing the past, the foundation, or the support of that situation. Above it is a card representing the potentials within that situation which could unfold. To the left of it, in the Quadrant Four position, is a card representing what might be obstructing or opposing the situation, while to the right, in the Quadrant Two position, is a card representing what resolves the conflict and moves the situation forward, bringing the potentials into realization.

Note that these simple layouts do not attempt to create a “field” (described below) or make use of the relationship and interaction between Stones and Dancers that helps invoke the Sidhe. They simply engage your intuition with selected images. But if you have been using the deck and have established for yourself a deeper felt sense of your connection with the Sidhe (as inner beings or as qualities within yourself—or both), then even these simple layouts can use that felt sense as a pathway to a communion with the Faerie realm.

## **Timing**

Sometimes you want information about timing. You can structure a

layout to represent the passage of time, such as a row of cards in which the progression from left to right is from past to future. The simplest form of such a layout would be the three cards progression described above.

The Quadrants themselves can represent the passage of time from beginning to ending, early to late, or past to future when you're using a Five Card Cross, also as described above. Thus, a card in Quadrant One would represent an earlier moment in time than a card in Quadrants Two, Three, or Four.

For example, if you wanted to gain some intuitive insight on how a situation might develop over time, you could make Quadrant One mean "now," with subsequent Quadrants representing different periods in the future, such as one week from now for Quadrant Two, two weeks from now for Quadrant Three, and so on. The time intervals that each Quadrant represents would be up to you based on the situation and the kind of information you would like.

### **Focus**

If you want to do a simple reading around a specific topic, such as your health, finances, love-life, or work, then you want a layout with a focus. You can use the *Howe* card as a focus for yourself or pick another card that represents for you the focus you want to attune to. The *Gate of Stars* card might be good for relationships or the *Gate of Earth* for health. Or pick any card that appeals to you in the moment (and as part of the information you're seeking, you might ask yourself why you've chosen that particular card). Just remember that whatever card you pick for the focus is unavailable to be part of the Oracular Deck itself.

If you pick a card at random for your focus, that also may give you information: why did that card come up as the focus for the topic? Exploring this question may prove insightful.

Once you have a focus card, you lay it on the table. The simplest layout is to lay one card on top of it and use that for the reading. But then you lose the relational meanings that can come when you have two or more cards in play from the Oracular Deck. For this reason, I suggest you lay at least two cards down on the focus card. You could turn this into a Three Card Progression or Three Card Tug-of-War layout depending on the context.

Another approach is to lay down the focus card, then, as in the Five Card Cross, lay four cards around it. You can then either assign meanings

to these placements (for example, above means spiritual influence, to the right is the future, below are earthly influences, and to the left is the past) or simply develop the reading from studying the interrelationship between all four of the Oracular cards and feeling into the gestalt or wholeness that they shape together. Of course, you can also bring into this mix the meaning of the four Quadrants of the Stone Circle. If you wish, a fifth card can then be placed on top of the focus card to represent the synthesizing, integrating or resolving element

In the full use of the Sidhe deck, the *Howe* card is usually at the center of the Stone Circle, creating the focal point, and the reading proceeds by placing Stone and Dancer Cards around it.

### **Yes/No**

Frankly, if all you want is a yes or no answer to a question or to know simply whether you should or shouldn't take a particular action, you might as well flip a coin as use an oracular deck of any kind, not just this one. It's like asking someone with three doctorates to work flipping burgers. "Yes" or "No" is an oversimplification of the wealth and depth of information contained in each card and in their relationships with each other—and with you. The purpose of any worthwhile oracular deck is to enliven your intuition and help you engage with depths of knowing within yourself. In effect, they are designed to offer a conversation, a dialogue, with you, not simply tell you what to do. They should enlarge or deepen your awareness of the world and circumstances around you and enhance your capacity to make decisions for yourself, not make those decisions for you.

If you absolutely have to have a "yes" or "no" answer, then it will be up to you to determine whether a particular card or type of cards you draw is saying yes or no, as the cards themselves are not designed to provide that simple or binary an answer (although as I think about it, the *Fallen Stone* card could definitely be interpreted as a "no"). You could, for instance, say that any Stone Card is a no, while any Dancer card is a yes, or vice versa. In other words, you should set the protocol or the meaning ahead of time. (You could also take any card, throw it up into the air, and decide that if it comes down image side up it's a "yes" and if it comes back side up, it's a "no." But as I said, if you're going to do that, a coin would probably be simpler!)

## HALF LAYOUTS

The full potential of the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* manifests through the interaction of Stone Cards and Dancer Cards, the underlying image being that of Faerie beings dancing among and around the standing stones of a stone circle. From such interaction and “dancing,” something emerges: contact, communication, blessing, wonder, grace, synchronicities, and so forth.

However, there may be times when you don’t need to tap into that fuller potential in order to achieve your oracular purposes. At such times it may be perfectly appropriate to use either the Stone Cards or the Dancer Cards exclusively. I call these “half layouts” to distinguish them from full layouts using both Stone and Dancer Cards together, although neither term determines the exact number of cards used. It is possible, as I describe below, for a full layout to use only two cards, one Stone and one Dancer. As long as there is a relationship developed between the physical and subtle worlds, or the human and Faerie realms if you wish, through an interaction between a Stone Card and a Dancer Card, it’s a full layout.

When using a half-layout, you’re not trying to create a field, which I define below, or a Stone Circle (unless you’re playing onto a virtual one, the Invisible Circle, which I will describe further on). Instead, you will use a simpler approach such as one of the three card layouts or the five card cross as I just described.

The challenge with half layouts will come in interpreting the cards. The Sidhe deck is designed around the interaction of fixed and fluid elements or stable and changing elements, the Stones and the Dancers. The meanings of Dancer Cards, for instance, can vary depending on the Quadrant in which they fall or on the Stone Cards with which they are paired. Similarly, the Stone Cards are identified with specific Quadrants, an exception being the Condition Stone Cards which can appear anywhere in the Circle much like a Dancer Card; if the large Stone Circle layout is used, they will also always appear in the same place within a Quadrant (though this can change if the virtual or Invisible Circle is used).

With a half-layout much of this interaction is left out, along with the meanings that go with it. So with a half layout, care must be taken to look for the deeper meanings of the cards. Your intuition is always important in working with oracular decks, but it is even more so in this

case when in half-layouts, Stones may be asked to behave like Dancers, and vice versa.

Still, it's worth experimenting and exploring the possibilities here, particularly if you're short on time and don't wish to do a full layout. You may discover whole new layers of meaning when Stones and Dancers are considered independently of each other rather than in the interaction that comes with the full layouts.

### **Using Just Stone Cards**

The Stone Cards represent the earthly point of contact with the realms of Faerie. As stated earlier in conjunction with the Stone Circle and the Quadrants, they represent the physical side of your life and activities such as your body, your relationships, and your work.

In creating a reading with a half-layout, then, if the questions you have or the answers you seek deal primarily with your physical, outer life such as health, work, relationships, and so forth, then the Stone Cards are most resonant with such topics.

Remember that when you use just the Stone Cards, you're only working with seventeen cards, which raises the probability that a particular card will appear in the reading. For this reason, you want to use fewer cards in your layout. Also, in interpreting the reading, you will want to pay attention to the dynamic aspects of the stones and the qualities they represent, as well as to their more fixed or static meanings.

### **Using Just Dancer Cards**

The Dancer Cards represent dynamic qualities and forces that move through your life, as well as the presence of the Sidhe or other spiritual forces. In effect, they represent your inner life. If the questions you have deal with emotions, ideas, impressions, intuitions, or other aspects of your subjective life, then the Dancer Cards may well be more resonant with what you need.

Again, when using just the Dancer Cards, you're only working with sixteen cards, so you will want to use smaller layouts. And just as when only using Stone Cards you want to pay attention to how they can be dynamic, when using only Dancer Cards, you want to see how they can portray fixed or stable elements in your life as well.

One final consideration: There are no Condition cards amongst the Dancers, so there are no cards that are directly designed to modify

other cards or the reading as a whole. For this reason, when using just the Dancer Cards, you might wish to consider also including the three Condition Stone Cards, which, after all, are moveable stones belonging to no Quadrant and thus are similar to the Dancers. Doing so also gives you nineteen cards for the Oracular Deck, giving you more cards to randomly choose from.

## FULL LAYOUTS

**Two Card Quick Step:** This is a very simple approach, the full layout version of the Quick-Click method I described above. I consider it a full layout because it involves each kind of card, a Stone and a Dancer, even though there's only one of each. There is no field to speak of, such as I describe below, though you are welcome to meditate on the Stone card you play before playing down the Dancer.

The method is very simple. Thinking of the question you have (i.e. the purpose for doing this Quick Step reading), shuffle the Stone Cards (including the Condition Stone Cards) and lay one card chosen at random face up on the table. You might imagine yourself walking in the hills and coming upon a single standing stone or a single Gate with no other stones around it. Or you might come upon a hollow hill (the *Howe*) or a cave (the *Altar*).

Reflect upon this single image and think further on the question or purpose you have for this reading and shuffle all the Dancer Cards. Lay one card down face up on top of the Stone Card. What does this Dancer card tell you? What does the relationship between this Dancer and Stone tell you?

### **The Field**

When the stone circles were erected, they had the effect of creating a field of subtle power that could act both as a portal through which spiritual (and Faerie) energies could be invoked and as a means of holding those energies while they were present so they could be engaged with. In effect, the stone circles created an invisible "cauldron" into which subtle forces could be poured.

This is the underlying dynamic of the *Card Deck of the Sidhe*. The Stone cards are used to create a field of consciousness, energy and presence which can hold the purpose or question behind the reading



and with which the Dancer cards can interact to give you a particular response. The field deepens the question or the purpose of the reading and invokes a response, which comes through the use of the Oracular Deck. This is a system I use in two other card decks I've created, the *Manifestation Card Deck* and *The Soul's Oracle*, and I've found it to be very powerful and successful. However, in this case, because of the symbolism and relationship of stones and dancers, this approach is particularly appropriate and powerful as a way of engaging what the Sidhe represent.

What I mean by a full layout, then, is one in which a field is created prior to asking the question or stating the purpose of the reading, and the cards of the Oracular Deck are shuffled in relationship to this field as well as to the question or purpose. Such a full layout can use any number or combination of cards. A full "Stone Circle Layout," which I describe in more detail further on, is one in which all the Stone Cards except the Condition Cards are used to create the field.

### **Laying Down the Field**

A field is a product of reflection, meditation, and attunement leading to an imaginative felt sense. In esoteric terms, you are shaping the subtle energies around you and the cards to create an energetic container to receive the energies, qualities and presences that will in turn shape the reading. In this process, placing down the Stone Cards one by one to create the layout becomes itself a contemplative act. As you lay a Stone Card down, take a moment to attune to it, to feel into its meaning, into the position it is occupying in the layout, and into its role and participation in the Stone Circle itself. Feel the presence and power of the Stone Circle developing in your imagination as you do. Some layouts will only use part of this Circle, focusing on a particular Quadrant or on the inner ring of Heart Stones, but even in those instances, the full Stone Circle is still present even if unseen.

In an imaginative context, you are entering into a magical place, a Stone Circle dedicated to being a bridge between worlds. It is a portal between the physical and non-physical worlds, between you and the powers and insights within your own soul, and between you and the realms of Faerie, the custodians of the world's wellbeing—and in particular, the world of the Sidhe, the Lords and Ladies of the Faerie realms. Imagine the wonder of being in such a place where great standing

stones rise above and around you and a hollow hill beckons you into mystery and a communion with magic and the Sacred. Imagine this Stone Circle as a protective place, one that accepts and enfolds you, making you safe, embracing you as a fellow child of the earth.

Thus as you place down each Stone Card, feel the Circle rising around you and feel yourself walking in its magical and sacred precincts, awaiting with anticipation and delight, gratitude and love the appearance of a collaborative wisdom arising from the inner worlds to partner you in service to the world—the world of your own individual life and the world we all share, for indeed they are one.

If you also work with the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* as a tool of attunement and for creating narratives as described earlier in this manual, you will find the creation of an invocative, imaginative field of holding and resonance becomes second nature.

### Interpretation

When using the full layout, cards (the Dancer cards in particular) will have at least three different possible meanings and interpretations:

- 1. Positional:** This is the meaning of the position of the card within the Stone Circle, i.e. is it in a Heart position, a Gate position, a Transition position, a central position, and so forth?
- 2. Descriptive:** This is the meaning of the card as given in the Card Descriptions sections of this manual.
- 3. Relational:** This is the meaning of the card in relationship to another, such as when a Dancer is paired with a Stone or two Dancers or Two Stones are together. In such a case, pay attention to the Positional and Descriptive meanings of the two cards and then see how they blend together and interact (or not!). What emerges in the way of intuition, insight, and inspiration from their pairing?
- 4. Holistic:** This is the meaning that may arise when considering this card in relationship to all the other cards in the reading, that is, how does it contribute to or how is it part of or modified by the overall impression you may have received when all the cards in a reading are first laid out and you see them altogether for the first time.

The challenge with full layouts is that between the various types of possible meanings and interpretations as you consider all the relationships

of the Dancers with the Stones, be wary of trying to get too much information. Sometimes the immediate overall impression you have when first seeing the cards laid out is the most useful and significant. Seek as much insight as you wish, but be aware of when you may be overwhelming the reading with too much interpretation. Trust your intuition.

This is where narrative interpretation where you just let the cards tell you a story rather than trying to discern all the meanings in the cards may be useful in being able to see the forest of the reading in spite of the many trees of possible information.

Finally, as with the attunements, when using fewer than all the Stone Cards in a particular layout, keep in mind the presence of the whole Stone Circle. You might not see it or represent it by using all the cards, but its spirit is still there in all the readings.

### **The Four Readings**

Here are four ways of laying down a field and doing a reading using a full layout with both Stone and Dancer cards.

**The Quadrant Reading:** This layout is used when you want a reading on a topic that is governed by one of the four Quadrants of the Stone Circle. For instance, if you wanted a reading about a new project you're beginning, or about your body and its health, you would focus on Quadrant One. If you had a question about your work, you would use Quadrant Two, and so on.

1. Take a moment to attune to the Sacred within you and in your world, to your own soul and inner wisdom—the incarnational intelligence that knows what is best for you—and to the Sidhe whose Stone Circle you are now about to enter, as well as to any other spiritual allies important and relevant to you.
2. Take the three Stone Cards relevant to the Quadrant you have chosen; these are the Heart Card, the Gate Card, and the Transition Card for that Quadrant. Take the *Howe* Card. Then shuffle the remaining Stone Cards and pick one at random. This is the "Circle Card" and represents the forces within the rest of the Stone Circle (i.e. within the other three Quadrants) that are relevant to this reading. Using the Five Card Cross layout, lay down these five cards with the

*Howe* in the center, the Gate Card below it (South), the Heart Card to its left (West), the Transition Card to its right (East) and the randomly drawn Circle Card above it (North).

3. Take time to meditate and feel into the qualities of this Quadrant as laid out before you. Feel into the relationship between this Quadrant and the *Howe*, which is your creative and spiritual center, the place of integration between your transpersonal and personal life. Feel into the relationship between this Quadrant and the Stone Circle as represented by the Circle Card. This relationship is really the connection between the matter or question at hand, as represented by the Quadrant you've chosen, with the rest of your life. Sense into the overall feel or field that these five cards create within and around you.

4. Holding the felt sense of this field, think of the question you wish to ask or the matter which you wish to explore. As you do so, shuffle the Dancer Cards and the Condition Stone Cards together. (If one of the Condition Stone Cards is the Circle Card, then just leave it as such and shuffle in the remaining two Condition Stone Cards.)

5. When you feel ready, deal out five Dancer cards:

- a. The Dancer paired with the Heart Stone Card affects the heart of the matter, the essence or foundation of what you are exploring in the reading.
- b. The Dancer paired with the Gate Stone Card affects how this matter connects with your larger world; it can also mean how you can connect with the issue at hand, i.e. your way in and out of the situation.
- c. The Dancer paired with the Transition Stone Card shows how this situation is developing, changing, moving forward, or resolving itself—or what you can do to enable it to do so.
- d. The Dancer paired with the Circle Stone indicates how this matter involves or affects the rest of your life, or conversely, what resources or qualities you might bring in from some other part of your life to help or clarify the situation. [Note, by the way, that the Circle Card itself may suggest this as well. For instance, if you are dealing with an emotional issue (Quadrant Four) and the Circle Card is a Quadrant Two card (the mind), it could suggest that help lies in thinking through the issue more clearly in your mind.]

- e. The Dancer in the center, paired with the *Howe*, is the Lord or Lady of the Sidhe, the one who rules the reading and indicates how all the elements come together in synthesis. It indicates the qualities coming from the center of your being, your “Sidhe within,” that have a bearing upon the matter at hand and can make valuable contributions.
6. Once all the cards have been laid out, take time to feel into the overall felt sense and narrative of the entire layout. What particular relationships stand out between the cards? What appears to be emphasized? Are any Condition Stone Cards in play that may be modifying the reading?
7. In interpreting a Dancer card, first pay attention to the position it occupies (i.e. is it in the Heart position, or the Circle position, etc., as indicated by the Stone Card with which it is paired); then, if you wish, you can look at how the Dancer and Stone cards actually interact, that is, how the meaning of the one blends with or affects the meaning of the other.
8. When you feel you have distilled all the insights you can in the moment from the cards, gather them up with a feeling of gratefulness for their service and shuffle them back into the whole deck. Give acknowledgement and thanks to your own soul, to the Sacred, to the Sidhe, and to any other spiritual allies you feel may have been of assistance.

**The Inner Circle Reading:** This layout is used when you want to draw on the meaning, presence, and power of all the Quadrants of the Stone Circle but you don’t have the time, or the circumstances are not right, to use that Circle as a whole. In this case, you will use the four Heart Stone Cards and the *Howe* Card as they contain the essence of the Circle and its connection to the realms of spirit and higher wisdom.

1. Take a moment to attune to the Sacred within you and in your world, to your own soul and inner wisdom—the incarnational intelligence that knows what is best for you—and to the Sidhe whose Stone Circle you are now about to enter, as well as to any other spiritual allies important and relevant to you.
2. Using the Five Card Cross layout, place the *Howe* Card on the table as the center and around it place the four Heart Stone cards in their

appropriate Quadrants (*Wizard* to the South, *Artisan* to the East, *Bard* to the North, and *Gatekeeper* to the West).

3. Take time to meditate and reflect upon this layout and what it means to you. Attune to the presence of the Stone Circle at whose heart you are now standing and allow the field to emerge.

4. Holding the felt sense of this field, think of the question you wish to ask or the matter which you wish to explore. As you do so, shuffle the Dancer Cards and the Condition Stone Cards together to create the Oracular Deck.

5. When you feel ready, deal out five cards, one paired with each Heart Stone and one paired with the *Howe* Card at the center.

6. Observe and reflect on the relationship that is formed between each Dancer and the Quadrant in which it is now found. What meanings or insights arise from this pairing? How does it reflect on the subject matter or question behind the reading? How does the specific meaning of each Heart Stone enter into and modify this relationship between Dancer and Quadrant? How does this affect the reading?

7. If a Condition Stone Card appears in place of a Dancer, you can do one of two things.

- a. You can simply accept the Condition Stone Card in place of a Dancer Card; it modifies the effect of the Quadrant in which it is found according to the kind of Condition Stone Card it is.
- b. You can draw another Dancer Card and place it in the Quadrant along with the Condition Stone Card. The meaning of this Dancer Card and its relationship with the Quadrant is modified according to the kind of Condition Stone Card it is.

8. When you feel you have distilled all the insights you can in the moment from the cards, gather them up with a feeling of gratefulness for their service and shuffle them back into the whole deck. Give acknowledgement and thanks to your own soul, to the Sacred, to the Sidhe, and to any other spiritual allies you feel may have been of assistance.

**The Full Stone Circle Reading:** This reading uses all the cards in the Sidhe Card deck. The field is created by laying down all the Stone

Cards other than the Condition Stone Cards. This is the most complex of all the layouts. While it can be very powerful, it offers a lot of information that can seem overwhelming and confusing. You may wish to practice with simpler layouts to get the feel of the deck first before attempting this one. On the other hand, it's worthwhile experimenting with this just to get a sense of the presence of all the cards displayed at once.

1. Take a moment to attune to the Sacred within you and in your world, to your own soul and inner wisdom—the incarnational intelligence that knows what is best for you—and to the Sidhe whose Stone Circle you are now about to enter, as well as to any other spiritual allies important to you.
2. Lay out all the Stone Cards, minus the Condition Stone Cards, as shown in *Figure 1. The Stone Circle*. Note that the *Altar* Card is placed on top of but slightly offset from the *Howe* Card at the center of the Circle.
3. Take time to meditate and reflect upon this layout and what it means to you. Attune to the presence of the Stone Circle in which you are imaginatively now standing and allow the field to emerge.
4. Holding the felt sense of this field, think of the question you wish to ask or the matter which you wish to explore. As you do so, shuffle the Dancer Cards and the Condition Stone Cards together to create the Oracular Deck.
5. Lay out the cards from the Oracular Deck onto the Stone Circle. You can do this in three ways.
  - a. By Quadrant—You will use five Dancer Cards total; place one in the middle of each Quadrant and one at the center of the circle where the *Altar* and *Howe* are.
  - b. By Quadrant Elements—You will use five Dancer Cards total. Place one in the middle of the Stone Circle on the *Howe* and the *Altar*. Then choose which element you wish to address. There are three elements within each Quadrant
    - i. Heart Stones—These deal with the subject's inner life or with the heart of the matter in question.
    - ii. Gates—These deal with the subject's outer life, connections to the larger world and to others, modes of expression and of giving and receiving.
    - iii. Transition Stones—These deal with changes, with



dynamic forces at work in the subject's life or within the matter in question; they are the forces that move things along, the "Stones that Flow" and advance the issue; the forces of change and unfoldment.

Shuffle the Dancer cards and place one card on each of the four elements you choose, one in each Quadrant.

- c. By Stone Selection— You will place Dancer Cards face down on selected Stones within the Circle. The Stones you select will depend on the information you want and the meaning of the individual Stone Cards and the Quadrants. For instance, if you want to know how a situation is changing, you might place a Dancer on a Transition Stone; the Quadrant you would choose for this placement would depend on the question behind the reading and the kind of information you're seeking. Or you could pick the stones at random or by intuition. The number of Dancer Cards you place down can be anywhere from five to ten. One Dancer will always go in the center. When you have placed all the Dancer Cards, turn them face up.
- d. By the Whole Circle— You place a Dancer Card face down on each Stone in the Circle— twelve in number— and one in the center for a total of thirteen cards. When you have placed all the Dancer Cards, turn them face up.

6. Condition Stone Cards may appear in place of Dancers. If so they modify the Quadrant in which they appear, as well as modifying any other Dancer cards that are in that Quadrant with them.

7. Observe and reflect on all the relationships and possible meanings that are created by the interactions of Dancers, Conditions, Stones, and Quadrants. Take your time and allow the significance of various pairings and relationships to arise for you. Let the reading unfold itself as the Stone Circle speaks to you.

8. When you feel you have distilled all the insights you can in the moment from the cards, gather them up with a feeling of gratefulness for their service and shuffle them back into the whole deck. Give acknowledgement and thanks to your own soul, to the Sacred, to the Sidhe, and to any other spiritual allies you feel may have been of assistance.

FIGURE 1: THE STONE CIRCLE

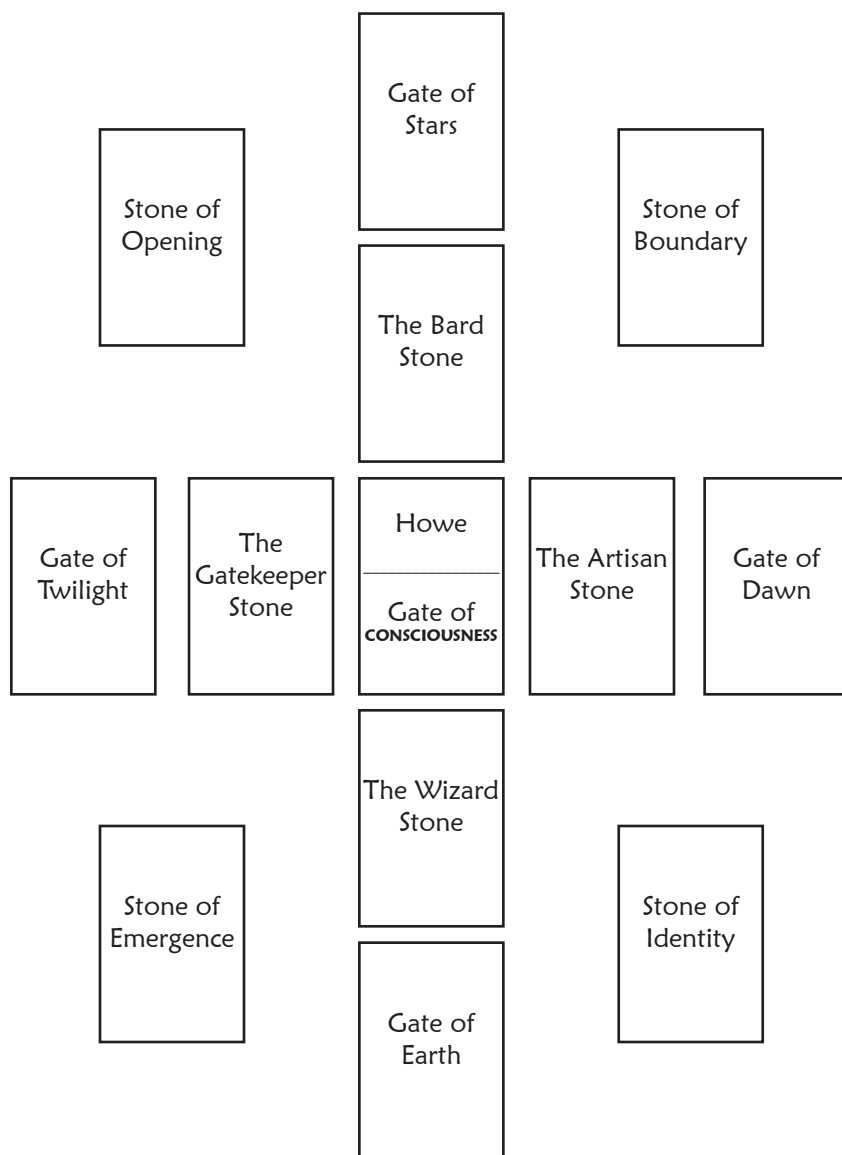


**The Invisible Circle Reading:** In this layout cards are played on an “invisible” Stone Circle whose positions are shown in *Fig. 2: The Invisible Circle*. This layout utilizes all the cards to the maximum, drawing out all

their possible meanings, and making the Stones as dynamic and fluid as the Dancers. It provides the most flexibility to a reading.

1. Take a moment to attune to the Sacred within you and in your world, to your own soul and inner wisdom—the incarnational intelligence that knows what is best for you—and to the Sidhe whose Stone Circle you are now about to enter, as well as to any other spiritual allies important and relevant to you.
2. Attune to the Stone Circle as shown in *Fig 1: The Stone Circle*. Create the field in your imagination without laying down any cards.
3. While attuning to this field, think of the question or matter about which you would like to do a reading. As you do so, shuffle all the Stone and Dancer cards together.
4. One by one, lay thirteen cards out face down, one in each of the positions of the twelve Stones of the Stone Circle and one in the middle where the *Howe* normally is. When you are finished, turn all the cards face up.
5. Using *Fig. 2: The Invisible Circle* as a guide, determine the position and meaning that each card, whether it is a Stone or a Dancer, is occupying. In effect, you now have a Circle made up of Stones and Dancers, though the Stones may not be in their usual places. The meaning of each card will be determined by its native descriptive meaning and the Quadrant it is in, as usual, but also by the position it is occupying. For instance, the card might be the *Gate of Twilight*, but if it is in the position of the Card of Identity Heart Stone Card between the first and second Quadrants, what does it now mean? What is the significance of it occupying this particular place in the Circle?
6. Observe and reflect on all the relationships and possible meanings that are created by the interactions of Dancers, Conditions, Stones, Positions in the Invisible Circle, and Quadrants. Take your time and allow the significance of various pairings and relationships to arise for you. Let the reading unfold itself as the Stone Circle speaks to you.
7. When you feel you have distilled all the insights you can in the moment from the cards, gather them up with a feeling of gratefulness for their service and shuffle them back into the whole deck. Give acknowledgement and thanks to your own soul, to the Sacred, to the Sidhe, and to any other spiritual allies you feel may have been of assistance.

## FIGURE 2: THE INVISIBLE CIRCLE



**The Invisible Circle Plus:** If you want an even more complex yet potentially more informative layout, do the Invisible Circle reading as above, but after laying out the first round of thirteen cards, lay out a second round as if you were doing a full Stone Circle reading. In other

words, the first thirteen cards act as the Stones in a regular Stone Circle layout, and the second thirteen cards act as the Dancers. Now the possible permutations and combinations between Quadrants, Positions, Stones, and Dancers are doubled. Good luck!

### **Variant Layouts**

The preceding layouts are the main ones using the Stones to create the field and the Dancers to interact with it. But there are other possibilities. Here are four of them.

**Dancing Builders:** You can use this variant with any of the layouts above except the Invisible Circle. In this case, imagine that the Sidhe appear first and create the Stone Circle. Instead of creating a field by laying out Stone Cards first, shuffle the Dancer Cards together and lay them out as if they were Stones. Then shuffle all the Stone Cards (including the Condition Stone Cards) and lay them out as if they were Dancers. Unless you are doing one of the Quick and Simple Layouts or a Half Layout, you can use the positions and Quadrants as indicated in Fig. 2: The Invisible Circle to add to the interpretations and meanings of the Dancers and Stones.

**Double Dancing:** In this variant, when you are playing a Dancer card, play two instead, both face down. Turn one up and do the reading as usual; then turn up the second and see what it adds, what difference it might make. What meaning arises from the interaction of the two Dancer cards together? This variant cannot be used if you are using a full Stone Circle layout as there aren't enough Dancer Cards for doubling up in this manner.

**Shape-Shifters:** In this variant of a variant, do as above, but this time when you turn over the second Dancer card, discard the first. In effect, the Dancer has changed its shape into something else, bringing new meaning into the reading. After all, the Sidhe—and Faerie beings generally—are famous for being shape-shifters, looking one way at one time and then a different way at another time. As with Double Dancing, this variant cannot be used with the full Stone Circle due to lack of sufficient Dancer Cards.

**Dancing Dancers:** In this variant, the Dancer cards, once played, move around the Stone Circle from one Quadrant to the next, like Sidhe dancing around and through the Stone Circle. This variant obviously works only where there is more than one Quadrant in the layout. Each Dancer card has a slightly different meaning depending on the Quadrant in which it is found. In this reading, you take these differences into account as the Dancers move around the Circle, and see how they affect or influence the question or the matter at hand.

**The Lord of the Dance:** In this variant on this variant, once all the Dancer cards have been played in the Circle according to which layout you are using, add one more Dancer. Place it in Quadrant One. This is the Lord of the Dance, and it is the only Dancer that moves. It progresses around the Circle from Quadrant One through Two and Three to Quadrant Four. As it passes through each Quadrant, it adds something new, forms new relationships, alters its own meaning somewhat, and generally adds a moving dynamic to the layout.

**Jumping Stones and Rotating Circles:** These are some variations that Jeremy Berg has been playing with. He says, "I have experimented with the Stone Circle so that there are two variants of the whole Stone Circle; one is the normal Stone Circle as shown in Figure 1 and one is with the Heart Stone card and the Gate card interposed in each quadrant, so the Gate is next to the *Howe* and the Heart Stone is in contact with the periphery.

"With this second arrangement one can rotate the outer circle of Heart and Transition Stones one place at a time around the fixed inner 5 cards (the *Howe* and the Gates) to create 8 layouts, each with slightly different nuances since the modifying influences on each of the Gates changes."

"There are a lot of other variations possible, and it can quickly become a bit overwhelming, but I like the idea that the stone circle can rotate and change just like the Sidhe. It indicates that we are not so fixed as we appear. We may not be as fluid as the Sidhe, but we can dance in our own way as humans."

## CREATING LAYOUTS

I've outlined layouts as I've developed them or as my Sidhe contact has suggested them. But they are not carved in stone, not even in a Stone Circle. The *Card Deck of the Sidhe* is a tool box of images and ideas in the form of thirty-three cards. You should feel free to use it to craft your own layouts and readings. Be playful and experimental. After all, the Sidhe are!

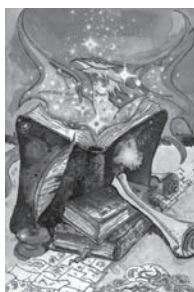
### III. EXAMPLES OF READINGS

The best way to show the Sidhe card deck at work is to illustrate some sample readings. Here are five of them. Note that I present these as readings for other people. Chances are, However, that you will be mostly be doing readings for yourself. The principles are exactly the same.

#### A Two-Card Quick Step Reading

Susan was planning to go for a job interview that morning. She decided as she got ready to leave her apartment that she would use her Sidhe card deck for a quick look at the subtle forces at work around her this morning and how they might affect the interview. She only had time to do a quick reading, so she decided to use only two cards.

Thinking of her interview, she shuffled the Stone Cards. The one she laid down was the *Gatekeeper*. Thinking about this and her interview as well, she now shuffled the Dancer Cards and laid one down at random on the *Gatekeeper*. It was the *Dragon and Books*.



This is an interesting and relevant combination for going on an interview. The *Gatekeeper* is the Heart Card of Quadrant Four, the Quadrant of the future, of new territories, of endings and beginnings.



The Heart Card is the most powerful Stone in the Quadrant, the one that most embodies the essence of what that Quadrant is all about. The *Gatekeeper*, as the name implies, governs openings and closings and the passage from one cycle of life to another. This is a perfect card to represent an interview for a new job, for the interview itself is a form of gateway into the job and the interviewer is a kind of *Gatekeeper*.

The *Dragon and Book* is a card that signifies knowledge, learning and wisdom and the power that comes from them. One way to interpret this is that the *Gatekeeper*—that is, the interviewer—will be positively swayed if Susan can display a good breadth of knowledge and is someone who is adept at mental endeavors. A complementary interpretation is that the more Susan knows about the company and the job, the better she will do in the interview. She has already done some research in this area, so she feels ready in this regard. Also expressing a willingness and ability to study and learn whatever she may need to know to do her new job well would not hurt her chances.

Armed with these insights, Susan heads out to conquer her world.

### **A Quadrant Reading**

Dan wanted to know what was ahead for him in his work. He is a teacher by profession, but he had been feeling a little stale in his work and wondered if he should continue teaching. I offered to do a Quadrant reading for him.

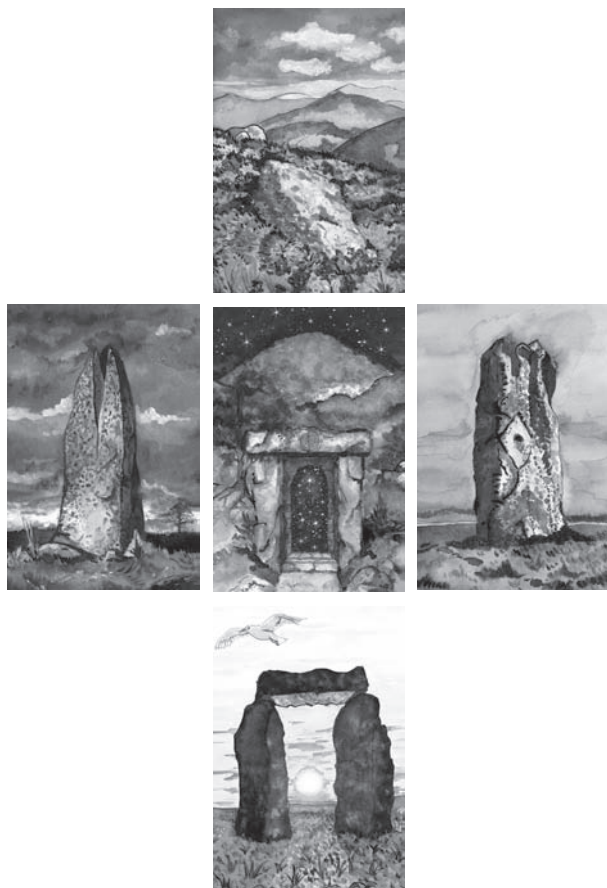
Since the question was specifically about his work, I chose Quadrant Two, the Quadrant of Self Expression.

I began with the four Stone Cards that are part of this Quadrant. One of them is the *Howe* Card which belongs to all the Quadrants equally as it occupies the center of the Stone Circle. The other three are the *Gate of Dawn*, the *Artisan Card* (a Heart card), and the *Stone of Boundaries* (a Transition card). I laid them out in a five card cross, with the *Howe* in the middle, the *Artisan* on the left, the *Gate of Dawn* on the bottom, and the *Stone of Boundaries* on the right.

I then shuffled the remaining Stone cards and drew one at random to be the Circle Card, the card that represents the forces coming from the rest of the Stone Circle and acting upon the reading. I drew the *Ancestor Stone* Condition Card. This is interesting. I take this to mean that there are creative, primal energies and support coming from all the other parts of this man's life, flowing into his teaching work. In this context, it's a very

encouraging and supportive card. It suggests Dan has a lot to draw on in the way of inner resources and life wisdom to empower his teaching.

So my initial layout looks like this:



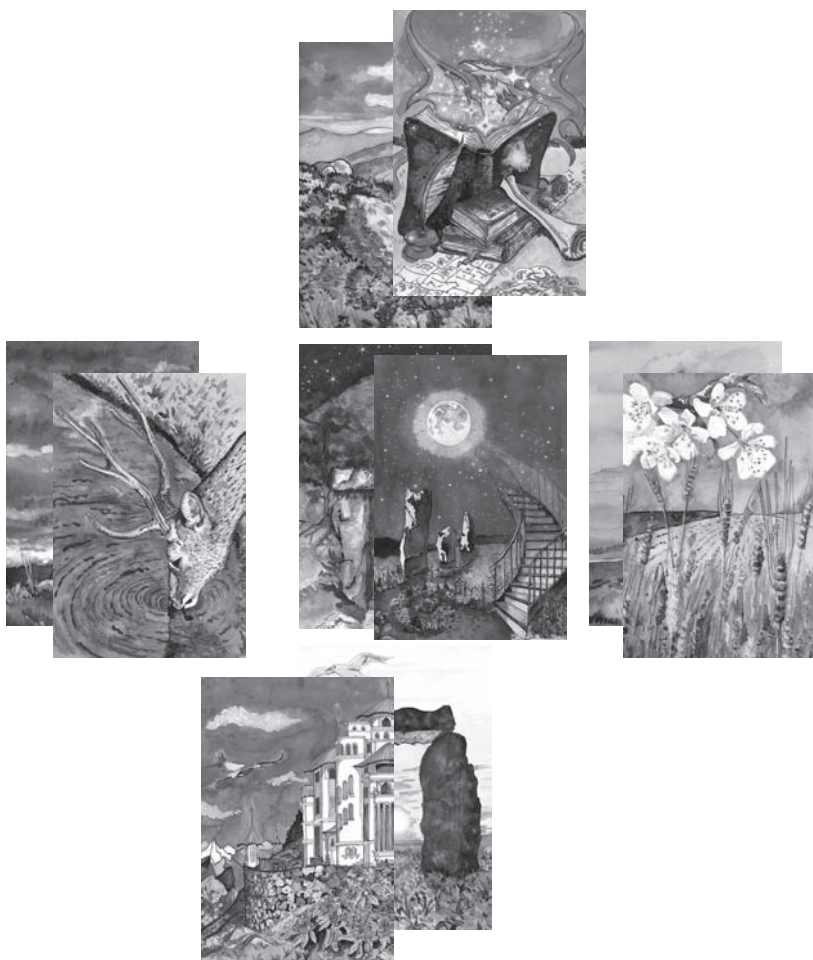
These are the cards to which I attune in order to create my initial field. I ask Dan to attune to these cards, feeling into what they are, what they look like, what they evoke in him, and how they make him feel. I encourage him to see himself standing outside the entrance to the Hollow Hill, the *Gate of Dawn* in front of him with the morning sun rising, filled with promise, while next to him is the Heart Stone of the *Artisan* and off to his left is the *Transition Stone of Boundary*. In other words, I ask him to picture himself standing in this quarter, this quadrant, of a larger stone circle. And lying on the ground is the ancient *Ancestor Stone*. And, I tell him, imagine that you can feel the power building up around you, a sense

of expectation and wonder as he feels the Sidhe approach.

As he creates this imaginative scenario, I hand him the deck of cards. This is the Oracular Deck, and it contains all the Dancer cards plus the remaining two Condition Stone Cards. I want him to shuffle them while feeling into the field we are creating and thinking of his question.

What he wants to know is: should I continue teaching, and if I do, what can I look forward to? Can I make a difference teaching?

When he feels complete with the shuffling, he hands the cards back to me. I take them, and then one by one, I deal out five cards face down, one on each of the Stone cards and one in the middle on the *Howe*. Beginning with the *Artisan Heart Stone*, I turn each of these cards over one at a time. When I am done, the layout looks like this:



In the Heart position is the *Stag and Pool*. This tells Dan that at the heart of his teaching is an ability to draw from deep sources of wisdom and attunement. Further, this wisdom isn't just abstract. Rather it translates into powerful skills and action, as symbolized by the stag. This is an excellent indication for him as a teacher; it shows he is in the right profession.

In the Gate position is the *Palace*. The Gate is the point of expression, the means through which energy flows into a Quadrant and out again. This Gate in particular is that of self-expression, the means by which Dan relates to the world. The *Palace* here is particularly appropriate as one of its meanings is that of a wise teacher, an authority figure who relates to the world from a position of accomplishment but also from beauty and harmony. Being a teacher is definitely a good "gate" for him to encounter and engage the world.

In the Transition position is *Blossom and Wheat*, a card of abundance, fertility, and growth. A Transition card is one that carries things forward into the future; it represents the means by which something moves forward. In this case it's the *Stone of Boundaries*. But this card also means centeredness or knowledge of one's center and one's limits. Boundaries are not necessarily walls, though, but processes of connection and adaptation which preserve one's integrity but also provide a means of contact with the larger environment.

Different interpretations are possible here, but given the overall question of the reading, I believe this Stone and Dancer combination are telling Dan that as long as he stays centered and focused, his teaching will prosper and be fertile. He will be able to plant good seeds in the minds and hearts of his students and they will bear abundant fruit, which is what every teacher wants.

This combination could also mean that Dan is feeling constricted and limited at the moment—he did say he was feeling stale in his work—but if he sticks with it, his efforts will bear good fruit. In short, I see this as a positive indication he should keep on as a teacher and that he has many good days and much accomplishment still ahead of him.

The *Ancestor Stone* and the *Dragon and Books* are also another powerful combination for Dan as a teacher. The *Dragon and Books* is specifically a card of learning and teaching and of the wonder and power—even magic—that can come from such activities. This card is emphasized by being paired with the *Ancestor Stone*. Dan is definitely being told that

what he is looking for in his life will come to him out of his profession as a teacher.

But there is a deeper meaning here. When in the Second Quadrant, which is the Quadrant we're using in this reading, the *Dragon and Books* Dancer card suggests creative knowledge and ability arising from knowledge of one's self or from self-expression. This is also a "Circle Card," standing in proxy for the rest of the Stone Circle, that is to say, for all the other elements in Dan's life. Thus there is a suggestion here that Dan may benefit—and his teaching become more exciting and powerful—if he draws more from his own life experience and injects creativity and more self-expression into it. Perhaps he's been a bit too academic and dry up to now, and he needs a change in how he is teaching, not in the fact of being a teacher. Learning to speak more from his own experiences might be the way to release more energy and magic into his teaching.

Finally, we look at the center of the layout. The *Howe* is where the inner and outer worlds meet, the world of humanity and the world of Faerie, of personality and soul; it's the place of synthesis and integration. And what do we find here? The *Moonstairs*, a magical card if ever there was one!

The *Moonstairs* can suggest a number of things, including contact with the inner worlds or more generically with the magic and wonder within a person's spirit. In the second Quadrant it stands for "connecting through Imagination and Wonder to the hidden depths of yourself." This reiterates what the *Dragon and Books* and *Ancestor Stone* combination is saying.

But *Moonstairs* also implies the crossing of a threshold through gentle, progressive development. In this reading, I take this to mean that there is a threshold that is being crossed (and it may be that Dan's sensing of this is why he feeling uncertain about this future and why he's feeling stale, because part of him knows that change is coming and something new is at hand). It also means that the way forward is one of sequential development, like climbing a stairs one step at a time, rather than a sudden shift. So it counsels patience with the process.

At the same time, the moon stairs disappear into the sky. Dan is taking steps in new directions but he can yet see just what is in store. To some extent, then, he has to move forward in trust and faith.

As far as I'm concerned, this is a wonderful, powerful reading that absolutely emphasizes through its many card combinations that Dan should remain as a teacher, that he is on the verge of something new, and

that abundance lies ahead of him. There is no doubt in my mind that he should remain a teacher.

### **A Stone Circle Reading**

(using Quadrant Elements: Heart, Gate, or Transition)

Adam wished a reading that used the whole Stone Circle but only focused on one particular element. He was feeling some changes taking place in his inner life, but he wasn't sure just what was happening. Since the Heart Stone's element within each Quadrant is closest to the center and thus is the position that most deals with the inner heart of things, including a person's inner life, I decided to do a reading just using the Heart Stone position. (Had Adam wanted to know about communication issues with people, I would have used the Gate element, and if he had wanted to know how events and energies were moving in his life and whether he was in danger of getting "stuck" in some way, I would have used the Transition Stone element.)

I began by laying out the entire Stone Circle, minus the Condition Cards as shown in Figure 1, page 133.

With this Stone Circle laid down, Adam and I meditate and tune into the field that it generates. When Adam feels that he has a strong felt sense of attunement to the Stone Circle, I give him the Oracle Deck, which is made up of Dancer Cards plus the three Conditional Stone cards. While shuffling these cards and holding the felt sense of the Stone Circle's inner field, Adam thinks of the question he wishes to ask: "give me insight into my inner life right now."

When he is done shuffling, he gives me the cards. I lay out the Dancer Cards, one face down on each Heart Stone, beginning with Quadrant One and going around the Circle. The fifth and last Dancer Card goes down in the middle on the *Howe* and *Altar* combination.

When I am finished, the final layout looks like this:



This looks complex, but in fact it's really just a five-card cross layout embedded within the larger Stone Circle. The larger Stone Circle is primarily used to create the field that guides and holds the attunement for the reading. However, had Adam had a different question, we could have used different elements, such as Gates, in which case the final result



would not look like this (the Dancer Cards would be on the four Gate Cards, for instance). Certainly, if we wanted, we could now remove the Stone Cards that are not being used. Keeping them on the table, though, helps preserve the ambiance of the field and the sense of meeting the Sidhe within a larger stone circle. When first learning the cards, it might seem confusing to have these many cards present, but after a time it seems second hand; I find having the other Stone Cards there just helps me get in the mood!

Let's begin by taking an overview of the whole layout. Here are the four Dancer cards: *Ocean and Land*, *Moonstairs*, *A Bird on a Hand*, and *Grail and Roses*. What is immediately evident is that they all present images of dualities, the relationship of two very different things. So we have water and land, sky and earth, bird and human, and two different roses (or roses and stones, if you wish). This could suggest that Adam's inner life at the moment is filled with conflict, but the feel of these cards is more gentle than this. Instead, what I get from them is a sense of a work of balance, harmonizing, attunement, and reconciliation going on within Adam. Let's see if we can break this general impression down into something more specific.



We begin by looking at Quadrant One—the Quadrant of conception, identity, and initiation—and its Heart Stone: the *Wizard*. The Dancer Card here is *Ocean and Land*. This card stands for harmony, vision, and inspiration. Right off the bat, it strikes the theme of balance and harmony. Being in the first Quadrant, I believe it means that Adam has been inspired by a vision of harmony in the world, a vision that is rippling and working its way through his inner life as he explores all the ways in which he can create harmony in his life and in the world around him. Chances are he's been encountering some sources of disharmony in his life, since we all have these, so he may be feeling that this vision is more of an aspiration than a realization.

This is somewhat confirmed by the next Dancer Card in the second Quadrant, the Quadrant of manifestation, self-expression, energy and birth. Here he is discovering that having a vision is one thing but applying it and making it real in the world in



something else. The Dancer Card is the *Moonstairs*, which is a card of the power of imagination to create connections and open new potentials. The stairway connects two different realms, in this case the earth and the invisible realms of the Sidhe or spirit. As it moves from one realm to the other, it seems to disappear. The whole stairway is there, but it doesn't look that way. So from appearances, the stairway can seem unfinished, as if reaching up to the moon and yearning for its goal.

Because it is in the Quadrant of Self-Expression and is associated with the *Artisan Heart Stone*, I think it means that Adam has a vision but doesn't quite know how to manifest it and make it real in the world. This can be troubling his inner life as he seeks for solutions to this question.



The third Quadrant is that of relationship, connection, and finding one's direction. It is the Quadrant of Stars which traditionally helps us navigate through the world. The Heart Stone is that of the *Bard* who represents the guiding vision in one's life and the knowledge of how to create the relationships that can bring that vision to fulfillment. This is what Adam is looking for. Here the Dancer Stone itself offers some clues to an answer. It is *A Bird on a Hand*, and it is itself a card of partnerships and alliances, especially between very different points of view.

In this image we have a repetition of the original vision, the harmony between water and land. The hand on which the bird rests points off to the horizon past a body of water to where a distant, new land can be seen. The bird appears to sing happily while resting on the finger, obviously feeling safe. A standing stone, representing the Sidhe or more generally the subtle worlds of spirit is also there, the sun shining behind it. Here is a promise of discovery, Light, and harmony through cooperation and partnership, particularly between a human being, nature and the worlds of spirit.

This is a fairly clear message about what Adam needs to do to bring his vision of harmony in the world into being. He will do so through the kind and quality of the relationships he creates. This card also says that his immediate task is not to look to others to create the harmony he sees in his inner vision but to do so himself. The bird has to rest on *his* hand, not someone else's! This shouldn't be taken literally that Adam now has to train a bird to sit on his fingers, but it does mean that he should seek

out ways of creating harmony in his interactions with other creatures, with the nature about him, and with the realms of spirit.

This card represents collaboration with things very different from yourself. In the everyday world, this can mean simply people with different views and opinions from those Adam holds. It's easy to create harmony among people whom you like and who think like you. But harmony in the world is going to have to embrace people and factions who do not like each other and most definitely don't think alike. Adam probably knows some people like that who do not share his values or worldview. This card says, if you want your vision to manifest, you need to discover how to be cooperative with them, too.



If he can do this—or even as a result of his working to do this—healing and reconciliation will begin to manifest in both his inner and outer life. This is indicated by the fourth Dancer Card, *Grail and Roses*. It is in the fourth Quadrant, the Quadrant of the future, of unfoldment, emergence and transformation. This is a card of things that have been separated being brought back together in renewed harmony and association.

The grail is always a symbol for healing. Esoterically, the red rose signifies humanity with its red blood and the white rose is the Sidhe with their white blood, but the roses can stand for any persons or situations that have been separated and at odds. Perhaps Adam is involved in strained relationships like this, and this is a promise of healing and reconciliation if he can learn to develop the spirit of partnership and cooperation suggested by *A Bird on the Hand*. It is a wonderful promise to look forward to, one that can inspire him when the challenges of cooperation and collaboration with others, particularly those very different from himself, seem difficult and tiring.

Finally, we look at the center of the Circle. Here the card is the *Palace*. This is a card of the wise ruler, teacher, and ally. It can stand for a higher power working to aid us; it can also mean an inner place of beauty and vision in which one can dwell not in retreat from the world but in order to bring that beauty, vision and harmony out into manifestation. However Adam chooses to see this, this is a powerful card, indicating that he has help in externalizing his vision coming both from within



himself and from spiritual allies who share his desire of peace and harmony on earth and goodwill to all beings.

To sum up, Adam's inner life seems to be charged and vibrant with an inspirational vision of harmony in the world. It is making him reevaluate his life and his way of doing things. He really wants to be a servant of this vision and bring it into manifestation in his life and self-expression, but he has not yet discovered just how to do so. He is experiencing more yearning than fulfillment. But the way is clear as to what he has to do; he has clues on how to proceed, and he is getting help from spiritual allies to succeed. And as he works with this process, he will find healing and reconciliation entering and filling his life—and from him, entering and filling our world.

**An Exercise:** In this reading, I selected the Heart Stone to use, based on Adam's question. But suppose he had asked something different? Suppose he had wanted to know about his relationship with his world (Gates) or about the forces active in his life moving him forward (Transitions)? How might this reading be different if I had drawn the same Dancer cards but placed them on Gates or Transitions instead? I leave it to you to explore this. Imagine the Dancers on a different set of elements and see how their meanings change. For instance, what would *Ocean and Land* have meant as a Gate? What would *A Bird on the Hand* have meant as a Transition?

Alternatively, you could draw a whole new set of five Dancers, put them on the Heart Stones and see how the reading will change.

There are no "right" answers to this exercise, but exploring the possibilities will help you experience the versatility of the cards in this deck and of the Stone Circle itself.

### **A Stone Circle Reading (the Whole Circle)**

Amanda wanted a general "life reading," a snapshot of her life at the moment. This seemed to me to warrant a larger, more thorough layout, and she agreed. So I decided to do a full Stone Circle Reading using the whole Circle. This entailed first laying out the entire Stone Circle minus the Condition Cards, as I did for Adam in the previous reading as shown in Figure 1, page 133.

With this Stone Circle laid down, Amanda and I meditate and tune into the field that it generates. When Amanda feels that she has a strong felt sense of attunement to the Stone Circle, I give her the Oracle Deck, which is made up of Dancer Cards plus the three Conditional Stone cards. While shuffling these cards and holding the felt sense of the Stone Circle's inner field, Amanda thinks of the question she would like to ask: give me insight into my life as a whole.

When she feels done shuffling, she gives the cards back to me, and I lay out the Dancer Cards, one at a time face down, onto the Stone Cards, beginning with the *Wizard* card and moving counter clockwise. When I am done, the final layout looks like what is shown on the following page:

There are twenty-seven cards in this layout, each with its own meaning, and each forming a relationship with at least one other card and with a Quadrant as well. In addition there is the overall feel of the entire Stone Circle with all the Dancers moving in it. Wow! That's a lot of information to process. (And I don't even want to think about what it would be like if I had "Dancing Dancers," with all the Dancing Cards progressively moving around the Circle.) There's a real danger of information overload here, but there's also the opportunity to gain some rich insights. What we need to do is have an organized approach into its mysteries.

So let's break this down. There are five categories we can look at: Quadrants, Hearts, Gates, Transitions, and Center. There are the four Quadrants. There are the four Heart Stones which collectively represent the elements in the reading that are closest to Amanda and her own unique self. There are the four Gates, which collectively represent her connections and engagement with the world, the parts of her or of her activities that are closest to the world. The four Transition stones represent

Dynamic, moving, changing elements within her life, connecting the Quadrants together. And the center which is where she touches the "vertical" domains of spirit, consciousness, and the subtle worlds—and also the source of her power to integrate and achieve coherence in the midst of her life.



## Quadrants

Let's begin with the Quadrants.

Quadrant One is the Quadrant of conception, identity, body, nature, and the world. It is the source of resources that enable us to live. It's the place of initiation and beginning.

Right away, right on the Heart of this Quadrant, paired with the



*Wizard stone*, is the *Edge*. This suggests to me that Amanda struggles with feeling of inadequacy, that's it hard for her to take the initiative, to claim her own sovereignty and power in situations. She holds back, afraid of falling and failing. And yet, if she can claim the power of the Wizard within her, she will find she can fly instead of fall, and that a world of magical potential awaits her beyond the threshold of her fears. In essence, Amada is being asked to claim her own power and creativity in the face of the challenges in her life.



The *Gate of Earth* is where this Quadrant—and the Stone Circle of Amanda's life—opens out to the world, and it is the place through which resources enter her life to support and nourish her. The presence of the *Bear and Stone* is interesting. The bear can stand for emerging strength or the flexibility that comes when one is grounded securely. Thus, this could mean that in order to engage her creativity with the world and receive its support in return, she needs to be grounded in her identity, a similar message to what we've just seen with the *Edge* and the *Wizard*. In this case, it could also mean that she's not as flexible and powerful in the world as she could be (the bear, after all, is half-immobilized) because part of herself—her sense of her identity, power and strength—is bound up and not liberated for her use. Either way, the message is pointing towards a need to be more confident and attuned to who she is and willing to stand up for herself.



This message is complemented by the *Stag and Pool* on her Transition Stone, the *Stone of Identity*. Here the stag, symbol of power released and ready for action, is drinking from a deep pool of wisdom, one connected here to her Identity. This suggests that she has the resources she needs within herself (this is, after all, a Quadrant of resources) to empower her self-expression (the meaning of Quadrant Two, towards which this Transition Stone is moving and with which it is linked).

So the basic message so far seems to be: you have what it takes, Amanda, to do great things and to be effective, creative and powerful in the world if you will accept the challenge of tapping into your own

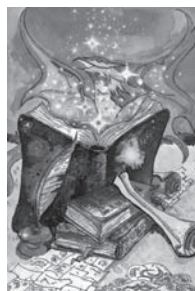


inner resources and wisdom, which begins with realizing that you have them.



We move on to Quadrant Two. This is the Quadrant of birth, self-expression, energy, and mind. The first thing that is evident is the presence of the *Ancestor Stone* on the Heart card of this Quadrant. This modifies not only this particular card, which is the *Artisan*, but the whole Quadrant as well. This gives emphasis and importance to self-expression in Amanda's life, particularly through her intellectual

and creative capacities. This is further emphasized by the *Dragon and Book* card, a card of learning and knowledge, on this Quadrant's Gate, the *Gate of Dawn*. All Gates represent modes of expression, communication, and contact—the ways in and out of the individual's life—and having this particular Dancer Card on it says that the life and power of the mind can be Amanda's particular gate to the world.



What exactly this means depends on Amanda's unique circumstances. It could mean actual teaching, the imparting of knowledge ; it might mean that the mind is important to her in creative self-expression, such as being a writer or poet. It's up to Amanda to determine just what this card combination implies.



We can look for clues in this Quadrant's Transition Stone, the means by which self-expression translates into connection and relationship with others. This is the *Stone of Boundary*, and the Dancer Card on it is *Blossoms and Wheat*, a card signifying abundance and fertility. This is an interesting combination, as on the surface the two cards pull in the opposite direction. In this case, it may suggest that Amanda has a surplus of

good ideas for creativity and self-expression but she needs to focus them. If she loses her center and becomes scattered by trying to do too much or by having so many good ideas she doesn't know just how to choose between them, then it will be harder as she moves out into engagement with the world.

The third Quadrant represents this larger engagement. It is the Quadrant of connections and relationships, but also of charting one's

course. This is why Boundary is the transition between the second and third Quadrants. The movement from Sun to Stars is a movement from the individual into the collective, from the personal to the planetary, from the specific to the universal. If a person doesn't know his or her boundaries and his or her center, then this transition can lead to a scattering and dispersal of one's energies and efforts. Suddenly, there are too many connections, too many choices, too many possibilities. It's easy to lose one's way.

Given the challenges to her sense of identity in the first Quadrant, this could be a problem for Amanda. But before jumping to any conclusions, let's see what the cards in Quadrant Three have to say.

Here is a powerful trio of Dancer Cards: *Palace*, *Faerie Gold*, and *The Tossing Coin*. These three cards are each strong in their own way and having them together suggest that this is the most powerful Quadrant in the Stone Circle of Amanda's life.

The Heart Card in this Quadrant is the *Bard*, and it represents the power of holding a guiding vision and knowing how to connect to others and form relationships that can help you arrive at your goal. This might be seen as manipulative, but it's not about using others. It's about understanding how the patterns and connections we form shape our lives, opening possibilities that might not otherwise open up. It's about responsibility, too, understanding how relationships need to be mutually beneficial.



The presence of the *Palace* Dancer Card on this Heart Stone suggests two things. The first is that Amanda has allies in her life that can help her achieve her goals, and the second is that she brings power and responsibility to her relationships. The *Palace* can also imply that one is in—or would benefit from being in—a position of teaching and being an ally to others. This may have a resonance with the *Dragon and Books* on the *Gate of Dawn* which can indicate one mode of self-expression for her would be through imparting knowledge and wisdom.

*Faerie Gold* is a card that indicates discernment and that the subject understands value and the nature of things. Occupying the *Gate of Stars*, it almost certainly in this context suggests discernment in forming



relationships as Amanda strives to reach her goals. This also resonates to the *Palace* and *Bard* combination. It would appear that Amanda has some clear goals and some allies and good relationships, carefully formed, that can help her achieve them. The Faerie Gold in this position also means that she understands the individual nature of people with whom she relates, appreciating them for who they are. She is not easily taken in by the illusions and masks that people project. Creating good, honest relationships in which everyone is honored is a strong capacity for her as indicated by the combinations of cards in this Quadrant.



When we look at the Transition Stone, the *Stone of Opening*, we find it paired with *The Tossing Coin*. This Dancer Card is about seizing the moment and trusting and moving forward. It can be seen as luck, but it's more than that. It's about understanding how and when to act in order to tip probabilities in one's favor. In this Quadrant and on this Stone, it implies trusting in the creative power of others and in the creative power that arises from your relationships. *The Edge* on the *Wizard* in the first Quadrant suggests that Amanda may not trust herself enough; does *The Tossing Coin* on the *Stone of Opening* mean she also doesn't trust others sufficiently, even though she's good at forming relationships? Possibly; only Amanda would know for sure. But given all we have seen, it's more likely that it means she trusts others more than herself in order to open to new possibilities and to move forward. It could suggest too much dependency.

There is another meaning possible here. Remember the strong cards in Amanda's Quadrant Two, the Quadrant of Mind. The *Blossom and Wheat* card there suggests that she might be thinking too much, that she has too many ideas. *The Tossing Coin* is about moving ahead and not trying to analyze too much. The coin is in the air—the time is past for thinking! Perhaps there is a conflict here? Maybe Amanda is overanalyzing, with too much thought and not enough action? This is a possibility.

Let's move on and see what Quadrant Four may have to say about this.

Quadrant Four is the Quadrant of Emergence, learning, fruition, change, and transformation. It signifies a time of ending and new beginning, of arriving at one's goal and then of moving on to unknown but new destinations.

The Heart Stone is the *Gatekeeper* who opens the way in one direction



but closes it in another; it is the one who governs and oversees passages and transitions. The Dancer Card that has been played on it is *Stone Raptor*, a most interesting card in this position. This is a card that suggest emergence as well—the theme of this Quadrant—but also the resolution and synthesis of opposites in order to gain the freedom that comes from understanding. This is a card of potential mastery, but one that is not without its struggle.

This is an interesting card for another reason. It can be seen as the partner—certainly as a potential consequence—of the Quadrant One Transition Stone, the *Stone of Identity*. This card shows the Raptor landing on the standing stone, the creature of the air entering into partnership with a creature of stone, spirit conjoining with matter to give birth to our incarnate identity.

The *Stone Raptor* suggests the result of this partnership, which on the one hand can seem like a bondage and a loss of flight and freedom—the “fall” of spirit into matter or the soul into the body—but on the other hand suggests a blending of these two elements into something new and emergent: “flying stone” or a soul-infused body. This is the goal of many spiritual traditions, a symbol of mastery.

Having the *Stone Raptor* on her *Gatekeeper Stone* suggests that for Amanda to move forward, she needs to resolve a conflict between two elements in her life, probably two sides of herself. If she does so, she will emerge with new powers, a new mastery, the capacities of being a new self. From earlier cards in this reading, I would venture that the two elements are the strength of her self-expression and her ability to form and work within powerful and creative relationships on the one hand, conflicting with a lack of self-trust and self-confidence, as suggested by the *Edge* on her *Wizard Stone*, on the other.

The importance of resolving this conflict is emphasized by the *Fallen Stone* on her *Gate of Twilight*. Her movement into accomplishment and the achieving of her goals, her growth and emergence, are blocked. The Gate is obstructed. Failure is possible unless there is change. It is interesting that the two boundary Quadrants, East and West, which represent



the thresholds of power in our lives, both have Condition Stones, but they are opposite to each other. The East Quadrant is empowered and emphasized by the *Ancestor Stone*, but the West Quadrant is diminished and weakened by the *Fallen Stone*. This is a clear and powerful message of imbalance. It suggests that the fruits of her self-expression and creativity are currently being blocked; her best efforts are not getting anywhere, or at least not where she wants to go.

Most importantly, this suggests an obstruction to her future; that her plans fall short and are unable to build towards her goals. Amanda's vision is not being realized. Indeed, she may not have a vision for where she is heading. Her lack of trust in herself is creating a lack of trust in—and vision for—her future. She may feel caught in the conditions of her present and unable to see a way forward. This is also suggested by the *Stone Raptor* on her *Gatekeeper Stone*.

What to do about it?



Here we find, as we look at the Fourth Quadrant's Transition Stone, which tells us how to move forward and connect to the forces of our conception and identity, a very clear answer. In fact, in keeping with the rest of the Stone Circle, it could not be clearer and indicates just how powerful and revealing the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* can be. For here we find *The Shaping Man*!

This card is about self-creation. It is about our power of choice to shape our lives through our own efforts. It's about self-discovery. What better card to link the challenges of Quadrants One and Four in Amanda's Stone Circle. It clearly says that to move forward she can't depend on others, no matter how strong and clear her relationships may be, nor can she fully depend on her powers of self-expression, However strong they may be. Instead, she needs to find in herself her confidence to draw on her own authority and selfhood to step out and claim her rightful goals. Her destiny is in her hands. In spite of the challenge of trusting herself and her abilities, she needs to do so if she is to move forward.

Note the powerful flight images in her reading. The *Edge* can be flown over by the Eagle, and the *Fallen Stone* is being flown over and bypassed by the Crow. And there, at the heart of her Quadrant of fulfillment, is the *Stone Raptor*, the card that shows her struggling to find and free her own wings. Yet these wings are in the stone itself, that is, in her embodied

life and personality. She may be “stone,” but as *The Shaping Man* shows, stone is the substance from which she can shape and free herself.



Finally, we look at the center, the place of attunement and synthesis. Note that this is not necessarily indicating the core of Amanda’s life, only the center of this reading, the point that integrates all the information into a wholeness. Here, overlaying the *Howe* and the *Altar*, we find *Moonstairs*.

This is the power of imagination and wonder to open a passage between two worlds or two possibilities. It can also mean the state of consciousness that is at home in two or more realities, able to move freely between them. However, it can also mean a sense of yearning. The goal is seen but the way to reach it is unclear. It seems solid enough at the beginning, but then the way seems to fade out and vanish. The message is that one must trust in the stairs and take the first steps. As one climbs, the seemingly missing pieces will become more visible.

This card suggests that though Amanda is experiencing some blocking elements in her life, her goal is clear and there is a way forward to achieving it. But she needs to take the steps necessary to “climb the stairs,” and the major step as indicated by the other cards is to begin believing more in herself and trusting her own inner capacities and power.

Altogether, this is a very clear and powerful reading, giving a snapshot of Amanda’s life at this moment, showing a challenge, a struggle, and a way forward. It contains strong clues of where her strengths and weaknesses may lie and what to do about them.

The reading could stop here—Amanda already has a lot of good information and insight that can be helpful—but it can go further. There are more ways to analyze the Stone Circle, as I suggested at the beginning. So let’s explore these a bit in the interest of providing a complete example.

### Heart Stones

Heart Stones are those standing stones closest to the *Howe* and thus to the center of the Stone Circle, the place of integration and connection with the inner worlds. There are four of them, and they form the Inner Circle. These, and the Dancers that connect to them, are closest to the heart of reading. That is, they get to the essence or source of the matter



in question.

Amanda's inner circle is made up of the following four cards: *Edge*, *Ancestor Stone*, *Palace*, and *Stone Raptor*. These are all powerful, strong cards. The *Ancestor Stone* in a Heart position further emphasizes the Inner Circle in the reading; it stays that the main challenge Amanda faces—and probably its resolution—lies within her; that is, she is faced with primarily an inner, subjective challenge rather than an outer one coming from circumstances or people in her life.

The *Edge* defines the challenge as one of self-trust and self-acceptance; Amanda has trouble accessing her "inner Wizard," the power of her creative intentions and will. The *Ancestor Stone* emphasizes this. The *Palace* says that she has the power and authority if she will look for it within herself, and also that she has allies who can help her. Finally, the *Stone Raptor* indicates a need to come to terms with two opposing or at least different realities in her life, which can be the powerful need (and ability) for self-expression challenged by a lack of self-confidence.

Note that the appearance of a bird trapped in stone can lead one to suppose this card indicates a condition of being bound by outer circumstances, which could be events or other people, or by inner attitudes and emotions. This might be an appropriate interpretation in some contexts, but it isn't really the sense of this card. The *Raptor* is not trapped as much as it is emerging and transforming from one state to another, learning to blend the powers of one state (flight) with the powers of the other (the stability and strength of stone).

So in Amanda's case, I believe the *Stone Raptor* in the place of the Heart in the Fourth Quadrant suggests her struggle to emerge as a fully independent, self-realized person and the rewards that will come to her when she does.

Overall, reading just the Heart Stones suggests that while Amanda is challenged inwardly, she possesses real inner strengths and powers which will lead her to some level of mastery if she can integrate the different parts of herself in mutually beneficial ways.

### Gate Stones

Gate Stones make up the outermost circle and deal with our relationship to the world. They are the stones furthest from the *Howe*, and they regulate how and where things reach the Inner Circle from the larger world and vice versa. In a reading, they deal with outer elements



of a person's life and with the connections a person forms with his or her world.

Amanda's Gates are paired with the following Dancers: *Bear and Stone*, *Dragon and Book*, *Faerie Gold*, and *Fallen Stone*. This latter says right away that while the problem may lie in Amanda's inner world, the effects manifest and can be seen in her outer life. This is where she "falls down." The first three cards all indicate strengths of flexibility, groundedness, knowledge, and discernment, but when it comes to "closing the deal" and actually fulfilling her actions, she feels blocked. She has good intents, but her efforts don't take her into any place new. There is a sense of being stymied in building a future for herself.

How she relates to herself is affecting how she relates to her own future. In fact, she may not at the moment have a vision for her future.

### **Transition Stones**

Transition Stones indicate how energies are moving in our lives; they are a snapshot of dynamic elements within us and around us. They are "Stones of Flow," suggesting how we can move forward in our lives.

In Amanda's case, the Dancers paired with her Transition Stones are *Stag and Pool*, *Blossom and Wheat*, *The Tossing Coin*, and *The Shaping Man*.

These are all powerful cards. The first suggests the need for action guided by drawing on deep wisdom; the second indicates abundance. Both of these suggest that Amanda really has a lot going for her if she can mobilize her resources. *The Tossing Coin* says that to move forward, though, she needs to trust the moment and learn to act improvisationally without overanalyzing her moves and actions. She needs to recognize the creative moment. On the other hand, in line with the other two cards, it can also mean that she has lots of creative moments, that through her ability to touch deep places in herself, she turns ordinary moments into creative ones. And the last card sums it up by saying that to move forward, she needs to turn these creative moments into acts of self-creation. Only she can liberate herself. Only she has the power and knowledge and resources to shape her own life through her choices and actions.

Overall, these cards say that she has a lot of power going for her to move forward. She has everything she needs. There are no obstructions at this level. If she can get her inner attitudes and self-images in the right place, there won't be anything holding her back.

## **The Center**

Finally, we look at the center of the reading where the *Moonstairs* lies atop the *Altar* and *Howe* cards. In this case, considering this card all by itself, it suggests powers of attunement and connection with spiritual or inner forces. This card in the center says Amanda is an imaginative, attuned woman of vision who is connected with both the world of earth and the world of spirit. This confirms that she has a lot going for her—indeed, everything going for her. The subtle worlds are her allies, and she has access to them, if only subconsciously. She is open and receptive to intuition and inspiration.

Her problem, then, is not at a deep, core level. It is with her self-image. If she takes time to climb these inner stairs and connect with her deeper wisdom, she will find a self-knowledge that gives her the perspective she needs, one that releases her gifts while enabling her to stay balanced and whole.

There are undoubtedly more or other interpretations that are possible for Amanda, but this gives you an example of what a full Stone Circle reading is like. It can seem very complex and involved, but in fact it can be broken down into easily assimilated chunks, and when it is, the whole often reveals itself in ways that are wonderfully self-evident and inspirational.

## **Invisible Circle**

As a final example, I'd like to show you how the Invisible Stone Circle works in a reading. This is an interesting approach because in it, both Stones and Dancer cards are mobile and dynamic; that is, all the cards act as if they are Dancers. It demonstrates the fluidity that is present in both realms, earth and spirit, human and Faerie.

The Invisible Circle uses the chart in Figure 2. You use it—or Figure 1—to imaginatively create the field, rather than laying down Stone Cards. Basically, you can play down any card, Stone or Dancer, in any position. The greatest effect this has is on the Stones, which now have a mobility they otherwise lack in other layouts. This can draw out meanings that might otherwise be lost.

In this reading, a young couple are planning on marriage and have come to talk with me about it. They have asked for a reading. I have decided to use the Invisible Circle because both Stones and Dancers get

to be dynamic just as both individuals will bring their own dynamism to the marriage. (This doesn't mean, for example, that you should always use the Invisible Circle when doing readings for couples; other layouts can work just fine depending on what the questions are or the need may be.)

The Oracular Deck for the Invisible Circle is all the cards. I pass the deck to the young woman, Helen, and ask her to start; after she shuffles for a bit, thinking about their marriage, she passes the deck to Philip, who will shuffle the cards as well and then pass them to me.

I now lay out thirteen cards as if I were laying out Dancers onto a Stone Circle. I start with Quadrant One with its Heart, Gate, Transition, the Quadrant Two, etc. I place the center card last. The layout looks like what is shown on the following page:

This is a very interesting layout, packed with information. I'm going to go over it briefly, but I'll leave it to you to work out the details based on the examples I've already given you.

**1. First Quadrant:** *Ocean and Land* (Heart); *Moonstairs* (Gate); *Faerie Gold* (Transition)—At the heart of this Quadrant is a vision of harmony and of two worlds coming together. The Gate, which opens to the nourishment and resources of the world, is an image also of two worlds connecting through imagination and wonder. Both of these are very appropriate to two people falling in love and seeking to blend their lives together. The energy moves forward through an act of discernment, one that values individual difference yet still blends them together, the way gold and leaves are both held in the roots of the same tree. In short, here are two people with a vision of joining two worlds and possessing the discernment to see that they have what it takes to accomplish this joining.

**2. Second Quadrant:** *Ancestor Stone* (Heart); *Artisan* (Gate); *Wizard* (Transition)—The *Ancestor Stone* emphasizes the heart of this Quadrant, which is birth, energy, and self-expression. It also represents a deep primal power from which other things arise; this could well be a symbol for love in this reading. The *Artisan Stone*, which is actually the Heart Stone of this Quadrant, is at the Gate position, which is very auspicious. Here the Heart reveals itself to the world, bringing creativity into expression and declaring the love



that is at behind this marriage. And the relationship moves forward through the power of the *Wizard*, which is the Heart Stone of the First Quadrant; this is the power of individual will, the willingness of these two people to blend their separate identities into a relationship through love.

**3. Third Quadrant:** *Grail and Roses* (Heart); *Gatekeeper* (Gate); *Edge*

(Transition)—This is the Quadrant of relationship and connection. How wonderful to find in the Heart position two roses entwined, definitely in this context a sign of partnership, love, and marriage; with the roses comes the grail of healing and transformation. This is supported by the Gatekeeper in the Gate position, itself a Heart Stone and one that rules changes, endings and beginnings, and discovery. Certainly this couple is ending one phase of their lives and starting a new one. With their marriage, blending their lives together like the two roses, they will definitely be passing through a gateway. It will have its challenges—all relationships do—as signified by the *Edge* as the Transition Card; but their love will enable them fly over the chasm and find the new land beyond.

**4. Fourth Quadrant:** *Gate of Earth* (Heart); *Bard Stone* (Gate); *The Tossing Coin* (Transition)—Wonderful! Here at the heart of their future together is the card that signifies the resources and bounty of the earth, of nature, of the body, a card of conception and initiation. Obviously their marriage is going to bring new and nurturing elements into their lives. This might well signify children. The *Bard* is the Heart Stone of the Quadrant of Relationship; acting as the Gate here, it means that their future will come to them through the power of their relationship, which will give direction to their lives from here on. And *The Tossing Coin* tells them that to move all this into being and to move forward, they need to seize the moment and get on with it. Enough analysis. Go get married, already!

This is just a quick and dirty analysis of this rich layout. If you wish, you can explore the cards and their meanings more thoroughly. You can, as I did with Amanda's reading, evaluate all the Heart Positions together. Here, that would be *Ocean and Land*, *Ancestor Stone*, *Grail and Roses*, and *Gate of Earth*. What do these four cards suggest to you when taken as a group? You can do the same with the Gate positions, the Transitions, and the Center (which I did not cover above, but as the *Stone Raptor* is very interesting indeed as an integrating card for this reading). Remember, there are no "right" answers to these questions, only intuitive impressions.

#### FOR YOURSELF

As I said at the beginning of this section, the examples I've given are

from readings for other people. Most if not all of the time, though, you will probably be using the deck to do readings for yourself. The *Card Deck of the Sidhe* is, after all, a very personal tool enabling your relationships with the realms of spirit. In the five exercises of this section, the interpretation of the cards due to their placement in the Stone Circle would not vary much if I had written the exercises as personal readings. Would their meanings have changed at all? Why not explore this yourself if you'd like? Go back over the exercises and treat them as if they were for you. How might you have interpreted the cards differently, if at all? Doing this will give you even more of a feel for the cards and how they interact with each other.

Or even better, take out the cards now and give yourself a reading. After all, you now have all the information you need to do this. The question might be, "How might the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* become a part of my life?" Good luck!

#### A FINAL THOUGHT

Remember, in the end, whether you are doing a reading for yourself or for someone else, you are the source of insight, not the cards. You are the reading, not the cards. The cards merely offer help and inspiration for your own intuition. You don't really need cards to sit with someone and intuitively, sensitively, lovingly feel into them and their situation; you don't need cards to access your own wisdom and compassion.

Having said that, though, the cards are a useful and powerful tool, especially when used with honor and respect, and of course with an appreciation of the Sidhe from whom they have come. I have offered a number of sample readings, but in the end, you must find, out of your own unique relationship with this deck, your own ways of using the cards. Then they will become your partners, and you will be theirs, which in turn may lead to a partnership with the Sidhe in some unknown but relevant way. And that is what this deck is truly all about.

## PART III: THE SIDHE DECK AND INCARNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY

### AN INCARNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

For the past decade I have been developing and teaching a contemporary approach to spirituality which I call Incarnational Spirituality. While its development as a specific system of practice is recent, its roots go back to a collaboration that began in 1965 with a non-physical spiritual being whom I called “John.” Such collaboration was made possible by a native clairvoyance I have had all my life and by years of previous contact with non-physical beings and the subtle worlds which they inhabit. The partnership with John, however, was different in quality, intensity and duration from any contact I had had before, and it lasted for twenty-seven years. I describe it in detail in my book *Apprenticed to Spirit*, published in 2011 by Riverhead Books.

Based on experiences and insights gained from this collaboration, I became what I sometimes describe as a “naturalist” of the subtle realms, investigating them as a form of ecosystem equivalent to, though different in substance from, the physical environment and ecology we normally experience. This was due in part to the fact that I come from a family of engineers and scientists, and when in college, I was pursuing a program in biology. So it seemed natural to me to bring the perspective of a biologist to my perceptions and investigations of the non-physical worlds. Some of the fruits of my research as a “subtle naturalist” are presented in my book, *Subtle Worlds: An Explorer’s Field Notes* from Lorian Press.

Throughout these investigations, one common thread that I encountered repeatedly was a desire on the part of many subtle beings to find ways of creating—or in some cases renewing—a collaborative partnership with human beings that could benefit the world during a time of increasing challenge and environmental crisis.

One challenge to such collaboration, though, was that we did not understand the incarnational processes which enable us to be part of the physical world while retaining connections with the subtle worlds. Not having this understanding also meant that we could not participate in these processes in mindful ways that would enhance both our own individualities and the partnerships we might form. Thus, in 2001, at the urging of a group of non-physical colleagues with whom I was



working then, I began to focus my explorations and research on the processes of incarnation and the specific inner resources to which those processes give birth within us.

Thus for the past ten years I have been researching, developing and teaching with the help of a number of colleagues both in this world and beyond it a unique spiritual practice I call Incarnational Spirituality. Based on what I term a “partnership cosmology,” it offers an understanding of the principles behind the incarnational process and a way of practicing and applying those principles to strengthen our presence here in the world. By enhancing our incarnational presence, we experience more deeply our spiritual and ecological connections to the planet around us and develop capacities to form collaborative partnerships with the subtle realms in service to the wholeness of our world.

This, I have discovered, is in perfect harmony with the interests and objectives of the Sidhe who have been collaborating with Jeremy and myself in creating this deck of cards.

*The Soul's Oracle* is the card deck Jeremy and I designed to present the principles and practices of Incarnational Spirituality. The *Card Deck of the Sidhe* has been created for different purposes; yet, the same goal of partnership and collaboration between human beings, Nature, and the subtle worlds is found in both.

This partnership expresses what in Incarnational Spirituality we call a “Gaian Consciousness.” The motto for such a consciousness is “to think as the planet thinks,” that is, holistically, systemically, in terms of connectedness, ecology, and fostering life and its development. In a human being, this kind of awareness most often manifests as love.

In the *Card Deck of the Sidhe*, there are three cards that particularly relate to this Gaian Consciousness and the partnership it implies. They are the *Stone of Power*, *A Bird on a Hand*, and the *Gaia Throne*.



In the first two we have a stone representing the Sidhe or the powers of Faerie and the inner, spiritual life of the Earth; we have a snake or a bird representing the realm of other living creatures and Nature in general; and we have a hand representing humanity. This is the Three-Fold Alliance of which R. J. Stewart writes and around which much of my own work has revolved.

The *Gaian Throne* is slightly different. This card originated in a vivid dream experience. I found myself, like Dante, wandering through woods. I came into a clearing where a band of wolves seemed to be waiting for me. They turned and headed deeper into the forest, indicating I should follow, so I ran after them. We came into a rocky area where they plunged into a cave. Again, I followed. This cave became a passage that wound deeper and deeper into the earth, coming out into glorious caverns and then plunging further onward. Eventually we came to one particular cavern that seemed to be our objective. It was lit, though I could not tell the source of illumination. There was a shallow stream or pond, and on the other side of it was a throne carved in stone. On it, sat a woman in dark blue and green robes.

I stopped on one side of the stream, but the wolves went on and lay down around the throne. The woman smiled and gestured for me to approach, and I stepped into the stream and crossed over it. A voice, perhaps the woman's, I wasn't sure, said, "This is Gaia," and at that point I woke up, feeling that I had been in a place of power, not literally within the earth but at the core of its spiritual life and vibrancy. I had no doubt that I had touched Gaia, the World Soul, or at least a symbolic representative thereof.

I felt that this dream vision belonged in this card deck, so Jeremy obligingly painted a picture of a *Gaian Throne*, but this one empty, surrounded by expectant animals and creatures, waiting for the person who can sit in it, taking up the responsibility of serving the wholeness of the world. This image had resonances for me with the Siege Perilous, which was a vacant seat at King Arthur's Round Table that could only be sat in by a knight destined to find the Holy Grail; should anyone else sit in it, he or she would die. In this sense, I saw this card as representing both an invitation and a challenge to live one's life in caring for the world.

In a deeper way, however, this card also represents the incarnate individual, you and me, as described in Incarnational Spirituality. Here we have a meeting place where stars and earth come together, the same

essential image as that of the *Howe*, the center between the *Gate of Stars* and the *Gate of Earth*. In Incarnational Spirituality, we each are born bearing this center, this meeting place and throne, within us. We are fashioned from a meeting of spirit and matter, stars and earth, and we come to this world ultimately to add blessing and power to its wellbeing and growth. So in this sense, this card also represents the essence of Incarnational Spirituality. In its image of wholeness and service, it signifies the aspiration of the soul behind every incarnation.

When the vision for this deck first came from the Sidhe who has been our colleague in the process of its creation, I began to work out the details. Incarnational Spirituality as a practice is organized around “fours:” four principles, four blessings, four practices, and so on. Consequently, without really thinking about it, I found myself organizing this deck into the same four-fold categories, tying it into the patterns with which I was familiar from Incarnational Spirituality. At this point, my Sidhe colleague gently but firmly said, “This deck is not meant to be another expression of your Incarnational Spirituality.” So I pulled back and took more care to discern the unique individuality and character of *this* deck and paid attention not to make it a clone of the other decks I’ve created. Yet, the Stone Circle did fall naturally into four quadrants, and as the deck evolved, it was apparent that there were correspondences between these quadrants and the four basic principles of incarnation: identity, boundary, relationship, and emergence. I was careful not to impose this correspondence, but it arose naturally.

After the deck was finished and its function was evident, my Sidhe colleague said, “*Now you can point out the similarities that exist. If our deck can also assist you in your work with the incarnational journey, that could be part of our partnership, yes?*”

The purpose of this card deck is not to promote Incarnational Spirituality *per se*, but its purposes are complementary. After all, for all that they are invisible to our physical senses, the Sidhe are also incarnate beings the same as we. The matter that makes up their bodies is different, and they do not face many of the same struggles we do here in the densest vibrations of matter, but the principles of incarnation work as truly for them as they do for us even if they manifest differently. And at heart the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* is about incarnation: the incarnation of the Earth and the incarnation of a partnership between Faerie and human that can serve the planet at a time of need. This card deck—and the purpose of

the Sidhe themselves as they have described it to me—is to help us be fully who we are as a sacred humanity.

Here are three meditations using the Sidhe cards that reflect practices of Incarnational Spirituality.

### **The Incarnational Cross**

Lay out the following five cards:



The center card—the *Gaian Throne*—represents the elements to which we are attuned naturally as part of the Earth: animals, plants, stars, earth itself, water, fire, the throne as an artifact of culture, and the Grail as a symbol of Spirit. In effect, this card represents the potential within us each to manifest a holistic and Gaian self blessing the world as a whole.

You could say this card represents the deep intent of the soul within each of us.

Around us are four gates through which we engage with the energies of the world. The vertical axis is between our transpersonal and personal selves, the Self of the Stars and the Self of the Earth, so to speak. The horizontal axis can represent two things: activity and contemplation or the powers of nature (*Gate of Dawn*) and the powers of human culture and imagination—that is, what emerges from us as a species—(*Gate of Twilight*).

The purpose of the meditation is to gain a deeper appreciation for who we are as the consciousness that inhabits the center of this incarnational cross, seeks to balance all its elements, bringing them into wholeness and integration, and expressing their potential through our lives.

If you wish, you could shuffle and draw at random four Dancer Cards, placing one on each Gate to represent Allies and helpful powers or qualities that come to you from the four directions which can bring you to realize your incarnational potential.

### **The Shaping Principles**

Next is a second layout you could do to explore the felt sense of your incarnational potential. Layout the cards as shown on the following page:

Here we have the individual shaping himself, carving himself out of the substance of the earth, precisely what we do in our incarnations as we shape ourselves from matter, thought, feeling, memory, dreams, and so forth. In so doing we draw on the four Principles of Incarnation represented by the four Transition Stone Cards:

Identity in the South, Boundary in the East, Opening (to Relationship and Connections) in the North, and Emergence in the West. How do these principles express in your life? How do you use them to manifest and shape yourself?

If you wish, you can shuffle the Dancer Cards and play one Dancer at random on each of the Transition Cards. These can represent potential qualities and allies available to you to assist in the understanding and use of each of these principles.



## Roots

Finally, here is a spread about our roots. According to the Sidhe, they and humanity share a common ancestry and common roots in the spiritual worlds. Further, you, like each of us, is rooted deeply in sacredness: rooted in the uniqueness of your individuality, in the Identity of your soul, and in the Will-To-Be within the Sacred that gives birth to all creation, all manifestation. The act of being ourselves and seeking to express our unique contribution to life as an act of discovery and revelation of who we are and who we can become is what I think of as a “root action.” It is a primal expression of the same impulse of identity and discovery within the Generative Presence that is the Sacred that gave birth to the universe. Both you and the Sidhe grow out from this

root. All things do. Meditating upon it is a meditation upon that which binds us together in wholeness as well as that which gives us the means to express as individuals.



Here the *Ancestor Stone* is at the center, representing our common ancestry with the Sidhe and, on a deeper level, our common ancestry with all beings and all creation in the life and presence of the Sacred. It can also represent your incarnate self's roots and ancestry in your soul.

To the South is the *Wizard Stone*. It says: *"I find my roots and my identity in who I am."*

To the East is the *Artisan Stone*. It says, *"I find my roots and my identity in what I do and in the things and the life I craft and create."*

To the North is the *Bard Stone*. It says, *"I find my roots and my identity in the connections I form, the relationships I create, and the larger whole of*



*which I am a part."*

To the West is the *Gatekeeper Stone*. It says, "*I find my roots and my identity in the visions I hold, the discoveries I make, and in what I can become.*"

Meditate upon each of these Stones and how they express the roots of who you are. If you wish, shuffle the *Dancer Cards* and see what allies and qualities come to assist you with each phase of your identity, helping you turn roots into leaves and blossoms.

### **Gaian Throne**

When doing a Full Circle Spread—or any spread in which you would use the *Altar* card—if you want to give an incarnational flavor, you can use the *Gaian Throne* card instead in the center. In addition to other meanings, this card represents the seat of your soul in attunement to the world and all its creatures and as such represents as well the state you seek to achieve in your life. It is, in a way, the place of your inner altar as well as a symbol of your incarnation as a whole.

There are undoubtedly other ways you can explore the dynamics of your own incarnation and of Incarnational Spirituality using these cards, and there are undoubtedly ways in which the interplay of the Stone Circle and the various cards will reveal elements of Incarnational Spirituality as you use this deck. All of this Jeremy and I now leave to you to explore and discover.

## PART IV: EPILOGUE

This project has been an amazing adventure. Now that my part in it is complete, I turn it over to you, hoping that it will share that adventure with you, too. When I began this project, I had no idea that it would evolve from creating an oracular deck to becoming a manual for working with the Sidhe (*Faerie Contact 101!*) or that, when the Stone Circle is laid out, it would become like a small bit of the Realm of the Sidhe placed into our dimension.

I should have suspected. Although my contact with the Sidhe is very recent, I've been working with non-physical beings and with the subtle worlds now for sixty years. If there's one thing I've experienced, it's that things are never quite what they seem. I think of it as the "iceberg principle:" there's always so much more beneath the surface waiting to emerge.

I had an intimation of this when Jeremy brought over to my house the first paintings he did of the standing stones that make up the Stone Cards. We use the phrase "being blown away" loosely, but this really is what I felt. I was not expecting anything like what he laid out for me that morning. For one thing, Jeremy had never painted before, though as a retired architect he certainly had skills for drawing and illustration. So I was not expecting the level of artistry that the paintings showed. Further, what he had done was to find pictures on the Internet of actual standing stones and painted them, so each stone had an aura of reality and presence about it that might not have been there had he created them entirely from his imagination.

But there was more. The power I felt that day emanating from Jeremy's paintings went far beyond the images themselves. There was a strong sense of a presence, of something being assembled. Looking at the paintings spread out on the floor of my living room, I felt myself actually in the presence of the standing stones and could feel the spirit of a stone circle rising around me. It gave me goosebumps.

I remembered years earlier participating as a speaker in a conference in Austin, Texas. One evening, I was invited to take part in a medicine pipe ritual by one of the Native Americans who was there. I had never been part of such a ceremony, and I was very interested to see what might happen. The hotel where we were staying was right on the edge of open country, so a small group of us walked a couple hundred yards or so into

the country side, eventually laying down blankets to sit on the ground.

The man who was conducting the ceremony brought out two long bundles. He carefully and respectfully unwrapped each of them, singing softly as he did. Within each bundle was one half of a medicine pipe, beautifully carved. So far, so good. But what I wasn't expecting was what happened next when he fitted the two halves of the pipe together. In that moment, I felt a release of power like a light wind pushing against my face and chest. Immediately, I was aware of a spirit being present in our midst. Quite literally, it was the Spirit of the Pipe, and it brought with it as amazing a quality of presence and blessings as I have felt anywhere. This presence overlighted the entire ceremony. When it was done and we had all said our thanks and made our prayers, the man sang again to the pipe and detached the two halves from each other. The moment he did so, the spirit disappeared.

This was something of what I felt that morning with Jeremy with only a few of the paintings that became the Stone Cards lying on my living room floor. It wasn't yet as powerful as the Spirit of the Pipe had been, but the potential of it was there. I could feel the presence of the Stone Circle hovering around waiting to land.

Over the next few months as Jeremy completed the paintings and created sample cards for me to work with, this potential became fully realized. I discovered that every time I laid out the Stone Cards, it was as if a Spirit of the Stone Circle arrived. I could feel myself within the boundaries of the standing stones as powerfully as if they were around me physically. More than once, I just sat on the floor in the place of the *Howe* and arranged the cards around me, feeling the spirit of the stones rise around me. This was always a powerful and uplifting experience. In fact, as long as I used a minimum of four Stone Cards, such as the four Heart Cards or the Four Gates—enough to make a circle, however small—this Spirit of the Stone Circle would appear, though it was always more powerful and present for me if all the Stone Cards were laid out.

I had made two other oracular decks, one teaching and working with the principles of manifestation (*The Manifestation Deck*) and one teaching and working with the principles of Incarnational Spirituality (*The Soul's Oracle*). They are both powerful decks in their own way, containing potentials and mysteries that even after years of working with them, I am still exploring and discovering. But I had never experienced with either of them—or with any other oracular deck or Tarot—what I was

experiencing with the Stone Cards and the Stone Circle they created.

All of this was happening, of course, in collaboration with the Sidhe. How to describe this? Usually, it was just one individual who came and worked with me, and I believe that it was the same individual who worked with Jeremy and often gave him visions for the paintings and guided his work as well. But it was evident that there was a group of Faerie beings involved, for at times more than one would show up—as when I was working out some of the attunements possible using the deck. Writing up the exercise I called The Visitor, I suddenly found myself surrounded by a very eager, very playful group, each of whom wanted to participate and be “The Visitor.” You will have seen the results in the manual.

This sort of thing was not unusual. There was a deep seriousness about this project and yet there was playfulness, fun and delight as well. In all my years of working with the subtle worlds, one of the dominant experiences I’ve had is of the joy that runs through those realms. It is present in our world, too, but so often we obscure it or ignore it. This doesn’t happen in the inner worlds where a quality of joy is as ubiquitous as water or sunlight are in the physical world. This is particularly so, I found, of the Sidhe. And there was another phenomenon I felt with them that I have never felt with other subtle beings: they seemed to me to walk in music. It wasn’t like a movie with a sound track. It wasn’t even music in the normal sense of a melody, but it was as if their very movements had a rhythm and grace that translated into a felt sense of music. I could understand the traditions in folklore where people get caught up in faerie dances and dance the night away. When the Sidhe are around, I feel like dancing, too; indeed, I feel that in some inner way, I *am* dancing. It is a remarkable experience.

So working on this card deck with Sidhe colleagues has been a rich and beautiful experience, one I shall always treasure. But the point I want to make is that as I worked with the cards and practiced laying out the Stone Circle, I found that as the “virtual” or “invisible” Circle rose around me, the Sidhe would be there. Whether I laid Dancer Cards down or not, the Sidhe—or at least the music and magic, grace and joy of their presence, if not specifically their individualities—were there, too. The cards had a power that went beyond being just a set of images on cardboard used to make divinations.

I realized that this project wasn’t about making a deck of oracular cards; it was about creating a magical, imaginal portal—an energy field

and a place of contact—where a bit of the Sidhe’s realm could intermingle with a bit of our own: a borderland with Faerie contained in a deck of cards.

Of course, it’s not really in the cards as such. It’s in you and me and in the Sidhe; it’s in the willingness of both parties to be in touch and to explore reconciliation and friendship, partnership and collaboration. And it’s there on the inner in the presence of all the stone circles and mounds created down the millennia as places of power and contact, bridges between the worlds. When the Stone Cards are laid out and the Stone Circle is revealed, it resonates through the medium of our imaginations and feelings with this ancient tradition and with all the stones that have stood upon plains and hillsides to celebrate the union of heaven and earth, humanity and spirit.

I don’t know just what your experience will be. I hope you experience what I have. Frankly, I enjoy just laying out the Stone Cards and feeling the presence of the Stone Circle rise around me, feeling then the empowerment and attunement that its Spirit brings. I don’t need to do anything else with the deck, though of course when the Dancer Cards are brought into play, something special and wonderful happens then as well.

What I most hope is that this deck of cards will be your portal into contact with the joy and grace, the music and magic of the Sidhe, and that it will do so in a way that lets you discover and unfold your own “inner Sidhe,” the consciousness of joy and magic that lives in you. The Stone Circle does resonate with your incarnation. It is the circle of your life. The intent of the Sidhe is to help you—to help all of us—to be more human, fully developing the sacred potentials of which we are capable.

I’m sure you will find uses for the cards and have experiences with the Stones and Dancers beyond anything that I have. I certainly hope so! If so, then the work involved in co-creating this special, magical deck will be more than worth it on both sides of the Borderlands.

Blessings, and may the Sidhe be with you!

# PART V: The Grail of the Sidhe

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW CARDS

The *Grail of the Sidhe* is a collection of new cards inspired by the Sidhe to add to the existing cards in the *Card Deck of the Sidhe*. There are twenty-two new cards, with twenty of them divided into four suits and two special cards that are “suits” by themselves. These cards were designed for oracular use and can be used by themselves or in conjunction with the Dancer cards of the original deck. They can also simply be added as Dancer cards to the original deck, thereby increasing the possible stories that the deck can tell and the insights it can give.

As Jeremy relates in his story of how this deck came into being, the inspiration for these cards comes from a different group of Sidhe than those responsible for the first deck. That the two groups are working together is evident, but nevertheless, this second group of cards has a distinct flavor related to the image and meaning of the Grail. Unlike the original deck, a hint of the Arthurian mythos is present in these cards.

The process of creating these cards was very similar to that used in crafting the first deck, except this time David and Jeremy were joined in the creative process by Maryn Spangler who brought to the enterprise her experience in working with the Tarot as an oracular tool. But while David and Maryn suggested some possible card images, this time around the primary focal point of inspiration, contact with the Sidhe, and creativity was with Jeremy.

Having labored on these cards for some months now bringing this new deck into being, we are all three convinced of the power and inspiration that these cards bring to the larger enterprise of working with the Sidhe. We hope that they will be as much a blessing and inspiration to you as the original deck has been to so many people.

Summer, 2015,

*Jeremy Berg*

*David Spangler*

*Maryn Spangler*

## THE STORY OF THE NEW CARDS

**Jeremy:**

One morning I was out for a jog. It was a beautiful morning, and here on the Island where we live in the Northwest United States, the views are spectacular. Thinking of nothing in particular but simply enjoying the sun and waters of Puget Sound, I suddenly found myself in communication with one of the Sidhe. He had a particular request to make, and it was made clearly. Would I be willing to create an “extension” deck to the *Card Deck of the Sidhe* already in publication? Interestingly this was not one of our usual Sidhe collaborators but someone who felt related, representing a slightly different group. Neither I nor David Spangler nor anyone else to my knowledge had ever suggested or even thought of extending this deck.

Of course I am usually willing to work with the Sidhe and have a certain commitment to promoting their interests so I paid special attention. It seems my Sidhe contact and his colleagues had given this quite a bit of thought.

The extension deck was to have 22 new cards. There was to be four suits to match the 4 quadrants of the original deck each with 5 cards per suit. In addition there was to be two new “condition” images would link the new images with the existing ones. There was a decided flavor transmitted during this communication of Grail mythology and Arthurian times especially the Isle of Avalon with an ancient Stone Circle standing on its shores. This image was very moving as I stood gazing out over the sound to Whidbey Island which now had come into full view in the course of my run. After a time it became clearer that there was to be one “Grail” image for each quadrant which related to each of the 4 linking stones of the original deck.

What really impressed me though was the next suggestion. Once the 22 cards were in production with an “extension” printing of the original 3.5”X 5”size, another deck could be printed combining the newer cards with the older ones. This would have 55 images since the original deck has 33. Because this is the equivalent of a standard playing-card deck, it could be printed in a smaller, less expensive edition. There are companies who specialize in producing playing card decks for commercial promotions (the *Manifestation* card deck from Lorian Press is printed in this manner).



This would result in a card deck that could be more widely and easily distributed. Obviously my Sidhe friends had done their homework!

**David:**

When Jeremy called me to tell me of his experience while out for a run and that he'd agreed to produce a new set of cards, I was delighted. The *Card Deck of the Sidhe* had proved very helpful to many people, and it had certainly been an adventure and a pleasure to create in collaboration with the Sidhe. The idea of taking this project further and adding to it was exciting.

One of the requests that Jeremy passed on from his Sidhe contact was that the new cards would enhance the ability of the Sidhe deck to be used in oracular ways. Not having a lot of experience with the Tarot or other card-based oracular systems, I wasn't sure what I could add to make this possible. However, help was close at hand as my daughter Maryn did have that experience with both the Tarot and with the original Sidhe card deck. So I asked if she would help with this project, and she readily agreed.

Jeremy had said that the new deck was to be divided into four suits, so we had a structure to work with. What wasn't clear was just what these suits should be, so the three of us toyed around with various ideas, keeping in mind that the new cards would also have to be integrated into the original deck. However, nothing we came up with quite seemed to fit.

It was apparent to me from the start that the Sidhe woman, Mariel, and her group who had given me the design and structure of the first deck were not as involved in this project. Another group of Sidhe was taking responsibility, working closely with Jeremy. But Mariel would come and make helpful comments now and again, and it was she who made the suggestion that helped us finally decide on the nature of the four suits. "Base the suits on what we do," she said, and as she did so, I immediately began to have impressions based on information she had given me over the years, much of which is presented in the book *Conversations with the Sidhe*. This led to identifying the four suits as Shapeshifting, Singing, Priestcraft, and Portals (later changed to Transitions).

Jeremy had already begun painting images as they were suggested to him by his Sidhe contacts. Once we had the four suits in mind, this

process speeded up. Sometimes, Maryn and I would suggest an image to him. The most memorable example of this was Maryn's vision of fish rising in a bubble above a stream, which led to what for me is one of the most beautiful and evocative of the cards that Jeremy painted. She also suggested an image of a misty figure emerging from (or blending into) a tree. As one painting after another came from Jeremy's talented hands, it seemed that in many ways the images in this deck were even more powerful than those of the first deck.

When all twenty-two images were finished, each was assigned to its suit. This was a process that took some discussion and intuition, as some cards could easily fit into two or more of the suits. For example, the powerful image of the robes standing upright but empty while an owl flies overhead could have fit either the Shapeshifting or the Priestcraft suit.

As a final step, Jeremy felt inspired to hold a four-week online seminar introducing the card images to the participants who signed up and inviting them to share their impressions as they worked with the cards. Over forty people took part in what became in effect a "crowd-sourcing" exercise in discerning the meaning and use of the individual cards. A powerful field of shared thought was created, in which the Sidhe fully participated. Many valuable insights emerged which are incorporated into this manual, largely in the form of the keywords that accompany each card. It became apparent, too, just how important the idea of the Grail is to this new deck. Even though the image of the Grail is not present in most of the cards, its spirit certainly is. It's for this reason I felt the new deck should be called *The Grail of the Sidhe*.

When the cards were finished and we were debating just how to sort them into suits, Jeremy was inspired to write a story. Like "The Journey", a story that I wrote for the manual of the original deck to illustrate how the cards connected to each other, Jeremy's narrative shows the relationship of the new cards to each other. Called (with typical Jeremy-humor) "A Knight To Remember", it was the first thing presented to the participants of our seminar. We reproduce it for you here as our introduction to the cards in this manual.

# A Knight to Remember

By Jeremy Berg

When I was younger and returning from war, wounded and dispirited, I spent some time wandering around the British Isles trying to collect the broken parts of myself and find meaning in a brutal world. Perhaps this ancient land so full of myth and legend could weave a tale of regeneration. As an American, the mysteries of the stone circles intrigued me. They seemed alive with hidden portals. And the Cathedrals, especially the crumbling, overgrown, and abandoned ones, the ones open to the starry skies, seemed to carry still some forgotten communion with the land, like the many bodies buried around them in the hallowed ground of their cemeteries. I became a bit of an amateur expert, studying the archeology and history intently.

Driving was a bit of a challenge. Concentrating on staying on the “wrong” side of the road in my little rented Mini Cooper—barely big enough to be called a car—and shifting left handed took all my concentration. One evening, while barreling down a narrow country one lane “hi-way” reading an upside-down, flapping map, it was no wonder I found myself lost. I suppose it didn’t help that I was trying to eat fish and chips too.

I pulled off onto a narrow turn-out to take stock. The sun was getting low, and streaks of pinks and oranges were painting the western sky ahead. A hint of salt scent was in the air, but I would never make the coast tonight. Getting out to stretch I noticed something unexpected; it seemed there was a stone circle on the neighboring hill just across the farmer’s field. Granted I didn’t exactly know where I was, and this could be a new discovery but none of my tourist maps showed anything like this in the vicinity. *What the heck, I thought, I’ve nowhere to be tonight.* Grabbing my hiking backpack, I headed cross-country, careful to respect the farmer’s property fences.

It was odd. Normally a historical artifact of this size and preservation would have signs posted and worn paths to its approach. This circle seemed completely unattended. Yet there it was and one of the best I’d seen yet. Nearly all the lichen-covered stones of the circle were in place, and many of the massive lintels were still spanning and holding open their spaces—thresholds to who knew where. Had I somehow circled around

and come upon Stonehenge again? No, not possible. There were no fences or paths or parking lots or tourist shops. I was completely alone.

I walked for some time among the towering and massive standing stones. I tried to imagine just what inspired such a tremendous undertaking and what forgotten technology allowed this impressive construction. Something just out of reach seemed to tug at my edges, something there in my peripheral vision which disappeared when I turned. After a while, I reclined against the several-ton slab of horizontal stone at the center of the circle. I took this dolmen-like structure for some kind of altar as it was supported by large boulders mostly buried in the earth.

The colors were giving way to grey and the full moon began to rise. The mists of the sea air were beginning to creep in around the base of the hill. Perhaps I should ready myself to spend the night. That is when I first saw movement at the edge of the surrounding deep green woods. Oddly, I had not noticed the forest earlier. Silently someone approached, resolving through the mist like an apparition but striding toward me with purpose. *Probably the farmer, I thought, protecting his land. Or maybe some official in charge of this historic site coming to tell me I was trespassing.*



Wrong on both counts! The figure coming toward me was dressed in a knight's full battle armor and carried a large sword. His breastplate seemed to shimmer. Yet with all the weight and metal, no clanking or any other sound was being made. I should have been totally freaked out! But I had survived worse coming out of the night in the war and something in his demeanor did not seem threatening in spite of the cold tingling up my spine. In any case, I figured I could easily outrun someone weighed down by so much metal garb, even someone who moved with such athletic grace. I relaxed. I wasn't even sure he had seen me yet. This was probably just someone returning from a reenactment of a medieval battle, perhaps come to retrieve something he had lost or forgotten.

He came to the edge of the circle and stopped. Quietly and with obvious care and practice he slid his sword into its scabbard, undid the belt and laid both to the ground, and then he removed his gauntlets and helmet. His hair was surprising long and reddish blond, almost golden

in the penumbral light. He spoke.

"I wish you no harm. I am friends with the guardians of the gateways of peace who helped build this stone temple. May I join you on this lovely evening?" His English had an odd accent almost as if he were tasting and testing new and strange words as they flowed over his tongue. Not sure why I would think that.

"I would be honored", I said not wishing to be rude to one of the locals. After all, I was the foreigner here. Then I added, without minding my manners, "What do you mean you are a friend of the builders of this place? I understand these circles were erected over 5,000 years ago."

"True ..... true", he said smiling, "but time appears differently depending on your age. May I sit with you?"

"Of course, forgive my being boorish", I quickly responded, trying to be friendly.

"Ah, the Boors", he said under his breath like a sigh. "Misunderstood ..... but that is another matter."

Rather ceremoniously, taking time to go around and through one of the "gateways" between two large standing stones supporting a tree-trunk size stone lintel, he entered the circle. Only then did I hear anything like the sounds one would expect from active armor. But instead of clanking it sounded almost like distant ringing bells. The faint glow on his breastplate was more evident as he came nearer. It was as if it was alive with light or flame. Or maybe it was highly polished brass reflecting the moon or stars which had begun to sprinkle the darkening sky. Altogether, it was strange.

I stood and offered my hand to shake. He cocked his head, hesitated, then grasped my forearm. I reciprocated and we stood there a moment in awkward embrace. "So that is how greeting is done these days", he said.

"Close enough", I mumbled. On closer inspection I saw that the inscribed flame on his breastplate was engraved with red brass, silver and gold. "How should I address you?" Taking a stab I wondered out loud. "Sir Knight?"

"I am known as the *Knight of Fiery Hope*", he said. "When all other flames are extinguished, I eternally light the way. However, given the informal circumstances, we can address each other as friend."

"OK, that sounds friendly ", I laughed. "What brings you here?" His answer surprised me.

"You"

"That's impossible", I exclaimed, "I'm lost. I didn't even know I would be here or even how to get here for that matter. It's totally an accident that I am here!"

"Nevertheless, it is true", he stated with finality. Up close his face had the rugged, weathered look of one who had been out-of-doors much of his life. His hands were rough and calloused, yet his bright blue-green gold speckled eyes radiated youth and vitality. I recognized him as a fellow warrior and something more besides than I could not quite grasp. "Indeed you are lost but on a quest, and quests always draw to themselves what is needed."

"A quest?" I asked. Yet even as I spoke, I knew it was true. I was on a quest even if I could not name the prize.

"May I tell you my story", he said. "It may illumine your path in some small way, and I enjoy telling it."

"Please, be my guest", I responded. Despite the unlikely events unfolding, something essential inside me woke to this encounter and his presence.

"And you, mine", he said as he found the edge of a fallen stone on which to sit.

As I again found my seat and shuffled down to get comfortable, he began.

"Once, long ago, I too returned from bitter war. Like you I saw and did things which lead me to question the righteousness of myself and the morality of the society in which I lived. Perhaps that is not how you would express it but it is similar with you, is it not?"

I nodded yes. He continued.

"Please forgive my phrasing. We each come from unique histories, but I am familiar to some degree with your world. Some of what I tell you will sound outlandish but please hear me out. You may question later."

He pronounced *out-land-ish* in three distinct syllables in an unusual way like he was referring to some unseen otherworld.

I gestured acknowledgement without being sure of the agreement we were making. But I was interested, or perhaps enthralled is more accurate.

"I wandered this land much like you in search for something I could not name. I travelled in metal armor much as you have, but also with a trusted steed." An image flashed through my mind of my car. Was this

what he thought of as my 'metal armor'?

"One evening after long travels, I found myself lost and came to set camp outside the deep wood upon higher ground. I arrived at this very place which held this stone circle much as you encountered it tonight. The co-builders of this place befriended me." He paused, perhaps anticipating my question. I suspected he had told this story many times before.

"Co-builders?" I inquired. The time placement of his story was not making any sense.

"Yes, the co-builders. They are referred to in the Gaelic tongue as Sidhe, the People of Peace, the Shining Ones. They built this stone temple, this portal, alongside their human sisters and brothers. It was the place where we humans and our faerie friends could celebrate our kinship and bless the living land with our care and magic. Surely this is known to you."

I just shook my head no. Perhaps it was best not to interrupt with questions. As he said, I could do so later. The phrase we *humans* was a little disconcerting though.

"Hmmm ... much has been lost it seems. In any event you are here and on a quest, and I am here to tell you my story. May I proceed?" he said kindly.

"Please do. My apologies", I said.

"No apologies needed. The ones in my lineage say I embroider a story, so please forgive any lack of speed or clarity." There was a hint of humor in the warmth of his presence.

"One particular Sidhe became a special friend, my muse who helped create pathways for my purpose. We agreed to call him Meriling but his real name is like musical sunlight dancing on sparkling waters. It is unpronounceable in any human tongue. Ah well. In his own way, he was a fellow warrior like you and me and arrived to help guide my quest even as I do yours." All this was related with a nostalgic sigh. In that moment, my bard seemed older than the stones on which we sat.

"So where did your quest begin?" I asked, beginning to engage his narrative.

"Where all quests begin", he grinned, "standing, or in your case sitting, right where you are now."

I looked down at the stone and earth on which my feet rested and when I looked up again he was standing some distance away to the south in front of the portal in which he entered the circle. He was stealthy as



a cat.

"Follow me", he said and I complied.



"This is the gateway of earth. Through it you discover the first pathway of your quest."

Following this enigmatic knight, I stepped through and found myself instantly transported to a primeval forest confronting a huge cave lion guarding the mythical sword in stone. My guide was nowhere to be seen. Somewhere in the back of my adrenaline-infused brain, I registered that this species of lion was extinct. But extinct or not, this beast was very much alive and obviously in charge of this particular section of wood. I froze in place, not wanting to act like prey. However, that was the extent of my planning. No other option seemed.... optimal.



"Can you embrace your sovereignty, your kingship? Can you stand in the sacredness that you are?" The welcome voice of my guide resounded clearly even though its owner remained hidden. "Can you accept your responsibility to the holy land and to all its blessed creatures?" I breathed a sigh of relief. Perhaps I might survive this encounter after all. Then I remembered he had left his sword outside the circle, and he wasn't really here anyway. "Can you honor the lion for what it is; an expression of the life of the Spirit of the World in all its subtle grace and ferocious power. If so, you can wield this sword of true identity for the good of yourself

and of the Earth.”

Summoning the reckless abandon of the battlefield, I moved slowly toward the lion until we stood face to face. His breath mingled with mine and we stared straight into each other’s eyes, locked in an eternal moment. In that space and time, I loved the lion, my earthling brother and the green life in which we both were imbedded. He licked my face as I reached out and stroked his luxuriant mane. Then, being the big cat that he was, he lay down, stretched magnificently and promptly fell asleep, purring loudly.

I stepped onto the stone and without strain pulled the sword free. It seemed to sing just beyond audible range. The forest came alive with vibrant color. I was home.

My unseen friend interrupted my reverie. “Remember, this is just the beginning and not the end of wisdom. You start with your Sovereignty; you do not end here. There is much left to discover on your quest and many paths are still untrodden. The Grail you seek beckons.”

“Grail?”

The resonate voice seemed to reverberate through the entire forest. “Yes, the holy vessel which holds the mystery of a new heaven and a new earth .... and a new you.”

With that statement four visions flashed through my mind. Each was enigmatic but rich in portent and content. Each image was accompanied by a lingering phrase. To this day I am still unpacking the many layers of meaning.

The first was of a wizard’s robe.



“The garments you wear are not entirely who you are but can shape who you wish to be and thereby the world you wish to see.”

The second was a potter's hand in wet clay.



"When the generative hand of humanity and the moist clay of the world meet with the touch of love, the spiral turns and new worlds are given birth."

The third was of a standing stone rooted to the earth but amazingly sprouting new leaves as if it were becoming a tree.

"The beating heart of the stone responds like a lover to your gaze."



The last was a translucent woman emerging from a tree.

"Who comes to greet you on this bright new morn? Who are you who is being born?"

With that I found myself transported and facing the earth gate entry where I had left. Stepping through, I was back inside the stone circle. My companion was on his stone seat. He turned and commented, "I see you've been on a walk?" as if I had taken a short evening stroll. All this was a little much, and I needed time to try to collect myself and my thoughts.

"I met a lion," I stammered, trying to make chronological sense of what I had just experienced.

"Enough!" he said with the stamp of authority. The flame on his breastplate flared with light. "What you saw and heard and lived was for you tonight, not for me. Some day you might share but not now." And then he added wistfully. "We all are overwhelmed at first. Just let it all flow into you like a refreshing drink over a parched tongue."

I found my seat across from him and sat contemplating his words and the events just passed. After a time, he handed me a leather flask filled with liquid and said, "Drink, it will help." And it did. It tasted just like spring water but I guessed was some kind of elixir. *He's full of surprises*, I thought.

"Well, are you ready for another adventure?" Strangely, I was! And just in the moment I glanced away, he had moved to stand before another stone gateway to the east.

He gestured to follow with a forward flow of the wrist and arm. I stood and walked over, slightly more wary this time. No more lions, thank you very much! "This is the Gateway of Dawn. Through it, you discover the second pathway of your quest."



Had so much time elapsed? As I stepped through, dawn seemed to be breaking. Then the scene instantly changed as before. This time though, I found myself in a knight's full armor and felt the weight of the sword, chain mail, metal guards and the war we had left behind. I felt myself to be this and many more ancient warriors.



Then I saw her and heard her song. It was unlike any music I had ever heard. It seemed to weave taste and smell and touch and color. It swooped and mounted the breeze like flocks of song birds exuberant in spring. It breathed life and rebirth. It shaped the world around itself. She was as beautiful as the song. Femininity itself. Divine femininity. Gaia herself, the Spirit of the World and Renewal. I knelt in reverent awe.

"Rise, sir knight, ambassador for your kind. Be at peace." With this, I felt a wave of the strength that I had found with the stone's sword. I remembered my lineage, my divine flame, my kinship with all creatures, even in the presence of this magnificent being.

I stood.

"Very good." she said and with her words a thousand seeds sprouted green around us.

"Will you accept the discipline of your artistry? Will you learn to sing the song of joy, of earth, of hope, just as you have felt the lion's breath of God? Will you see infinity in a flower but pay attention still to the garden's needs? Will you be my companion, my lover, my friend, my partner? Will you help weave a new green grail of spring with me?"

How could I say no? No further words with her were spoken. None were needed. How much time passed, I could not say. Lifetimes perhaps. And once again, four visions flashed before me. As before, each image was accompanied by a commentary.

The first was of an alert deer amid stone ruins.

"Angels with their trumpets wait for those who listen at the gate. A quiet note is wishing to be sung. A silent bell is longing to be rung."







The second was a flute and flowers.

“The score is written in our souls and in the life we lead. The song that spirals back again blends both flute and flow.”

The third was a morning Bugler with a song bird on the wall.

“When the bugler’s blast can summon birds of song, then walls of stone will crumble and temples will rise in their place.”



The fourth was a standing stone, a hummingbird and an ethereal dancer.

“Can you hear the buzz of the hummingbird’s wings shimmering from the stone? Can you dance with she who responds from the heart of the land?”

As these visions faded, I waited to be transported back to the circle. It was some distance off in the morning light but after awhile it became apparent that if I was to return to my host's story, I would have to walk. Fortunately the heavy suit of armor had melted away, and I was dressed once more as before.

It was some time before I made it up the knoll, and I was careful to step back through the gate from which I left. One cannot be too careful when the protocols of sorcery are afoot!

As I stepped through, it was night. Away from the ambient light of the city, the sky was ablaze with countless stars. *Was my guide still here?* I wondered.

"Beautiful aren't they?" My question was put to rest. "The stars I mean. Starlight is like sunlight to our Sidhe cousins. Their silver blood is quickened by their twinkling grace, I'm told."

"I'm glad you're still here", I said, not knowing how to relate to quicksilver hematology.

"Where would I go?" he smiled. "Besides we still have cubits to trod before we sleep."

I thought, *cubits?* but let it go. My friend was not exactly of our time but somehow could paraphrase Robert Frost. *Perhaps he can pick my brain.*

"So what's next?" I asked. My trek back in dawn's light had invigorated me and given time to integrate the energy of the visions. I was ready for more.



He pointed to the north and to another intact open gateway. "The gateway of the stars. The way of priests and priestesses."

Expecting him to sneak over to the gate when I glanced away I kept my eye on him and rose to follow. "Where are you going?" he said.

"To walk through the gate and have our next adventure", I said grinning. This time I was one step ahead of him.

Instead he stayed where he was, looking at me quizzically. "What does it take for a person to be ordained? To be a priest or priestess?" he queried.

I thought for a minute or two and then answered. "Well for starters I



suppose a religious order of some kind to sanction the role. In addition, maybe followers of some ilk to congregate and then a church or temple to practice the craft. Oh, and ritual objects to perform the requisite liturgy. Stuff like that.”

“Actually no, none of that is essential.”



As if his worlds were a magical spell, our circle transformed into a crumbling church—Lindisfarne if memory serves—with a radiant grail open to the sky and stars.

I was, he had said, in search of the Grail, and here it was!

“Churches crumble away and religions fade in time. Worshipers age, disperse and die, and talismans—even the Holy Grail itself—are only as useful as the hands that hold them.” He paused then asked. “What gives the Grail its healing power?”

“The blood of Christ, by all accounts,” I responded.

“And what gives the blood of Christ transformative power?”

“Christ,” I said.

“And what bestows Christ’s power?”

“The presence of Love,” I said with tears welling. The words seemed to speak themselves, flooded with passion.

“Yes, wherever and whenever two or more are gathered in love, connected in honoring the evolving life of the other, there the Grail is present. Whatever you touch become talismans, where you are is your church, and your congregation is whomever you bless. In that moment, you have ordained yourself in the living lineage of love. You are Bard, weaving the story of life. This is why we need not step through a gateway to learn of Priest-craft. Wherever we find ourselves is already our temple.”

With that statement four new visions with commentary presented themselves.



The first was an everyday table of bread and wine with a lit candle.

“Starlight burns in every candle and the body of the world is in any bread. The blood of the universe is in every drop of wine ever bottled. Partake in remembrance of love and weave wholeness into the world.”

Next came an image of a salmon in a bubble floating above a stream flowing out to sea.

“Just as a salmon can swim its way back to its place of origin, so you can find the sacred spark that always is giving you birth. Your journey to the stars starts with being home in your own bubble.”



Then this image. A starlit Pegasus!

“The stars are distant, it is true, but distance has no meaning in the language of love. Call and we will come! Our story is your story.”

And finally a star presence in a stone circle.

"When you take on the mantle of love, of nurturing all the creatures of the world, we step among you and hold the alchemical space open with you .... as we have done for millennium."



"What did you think of the Pegasus?" A voice intruded on my quiet reflections. I was back again with my companion. It was still night. He was warming his hands over a small fire that smelled earthy, musky and sharp like it was fueled by peat. Where did he get that?

"The Pegasus?" I asked, rather dumfounded at the question. I chose to ignore the fire.

"Yes, the Pegasus. They are pretty spectacular, don't you think? Ever ride one?" He was positively gleeful. I couldn't tell if he was joking or acting like an excited teenager.

"Umm ... no I haven't. Have you?"

"Not recently, no. But that story is for another time. Perhaps you would like to sleep now?" he asked with a slight challenge in his voice. "Had enough?" I think he knew me pretty well. I was not one to leave many challenges untested. "How about one more round?" he said, as he stood and shook himself. I was still amazed that he could move in all that armor with such dexterity and so little noise.

"OH .... Kay," I answered stretching out the word, watching him warily. I half expected to be asked to walk off some cliff to demonstrate my faith or kiss a frog. Not my strong suits in either case.

"Perhaps" he said, "*it would* be best for us to nap a bit. We should always honor the body as well as the spirit."

With that, he produced a bedroll from God knows where and before much time had elapsed, snuggled inside next to the retreating fire. It wasn't long before he was asleep. *Well, I guess he is running this show, I thought, so if he says sleep, I'll sleep.* Truth be told, I was tired and I did have my sleeping bag.

No sooner had I closed my eyes than I found myself standing near the edge of the stone circle, wide awake and facing a gateway that itself faced west. Looking back to my companion, he was still curled up, the fire was just embers and it sounded as if he were snoring.

Through the gate, it was twilight. It looked similar to the view standing on the coast and facing west toward the Scottish island of Iona.

I stepped over the threshold through the gate and ..... and nothing happened. I stepped back and tried it again.

Nothing.



I was going to try it a third time when I noticed a weight around my neck. I was wearing a pendant with a glyph I recognized from a book called *The Sidhe* by John Matthews. In it he had said that by concentrating on this "Great Glyph", one could connect with the Sidhe and their world.

"Very good." My somnambulant knight was awake and standing nearby.

"How do you do that" I asked, "You know: read my mind, project your voice without being there, move so quickly and

silently. All that stuff?"

"Something to think about isn't it?" he laughed. "But right now, let's talk about the Pendant. Why do you suppose it has appeared?"

I thought for a while. The obvious answer was to open some kind of portal to the realm of the Sidhe. "True, as far as it goes", he commented on my unspoken thought.

"But not the whole point, is it?" I said. "This is a personal object, not a public portal. It is saying something about who I need to be, what shape I need to hold in order to open this portal. Or any portal for that matter" I added.

That must have had at least some credence because the familiar commentary followed "The one who wears the pendant and seeks the threshold must first open mind and heart and spirit to becoming new. The same person never walks through the same portal twice."

With that a new image appeared complete with commentary. It was a blocked, locked or forgotten door.

“What fragile life will you brush aside to open this door? Where is the key? Perhaps none is needed. Not all gardens should be trammeled and not all thresholds need be crossed. The choice is yours. Choose wisely.”



And then a third image. A bridge.

“Bridges open passageway both ways. To build a bridge, a gift. To be a bridge, a greater gift.”

And fourth, something that stopped me in my tracks: a carbon-black standing stone with the fire of the earth licking at it from below and a firebird descending from above.

“Transformation” was the entire commentary. I felt that to my bones.



And then came another grail quest scene like the ones that earlier had preceded the four visions.

I found myself in a small boat with a living swan as the masthead, apparently navigating itself to the mist-shrouded island ahead. Avalon!



“You have traversed the four gates of the stone circle,” my friend’s voice began, “and learned many things. Through the portal of the West lies completion and fulfillment. But all the gates and all the quadrants contribute to wholeness. In the nurturing relationship of fixed and fluid, of Humanity, Sidhe, Nature and much more is the promise of a new world. Proceed with Hope!”

Indeed I was proceeding. It wasn’t long before we reached shore. I disembarked, not really sure what was being called for. But this seemed to be the night for stone circles, and it felt right to climb the rather steep hillside to the one above me.

When I arrived my quicksilver guide was waiting.

“Avalon is a real place, you know”, he stated with conviction. “It lives in the visions of people just like you and me and in the metabolism of the world soul itself. It will come to be and we will help it flourish!”

“Yes,” I said.

And with that affirmation, one final vision presented itself at the center of this stone circle, emanating from the heart of the island. It was a vision of wholeness, of the grail and of me interchanging identities, becoming one, blessing the world. This, I knew, was a new seed pattern for Gaia, the living Spirit of the World. It was the sustaining life of the utopian quest for Avalon in all its mystery and grace.





“To encounter the mystical Grail of myth is to be healed. To serve the living Grail is to bless. To become the Grail is to give birth to a new heaven and a new earth and a new you.”

This was the final commentary.

Once again I was transported back. This time, I was facing a standing Knight just outside the circle, his helmet and gauntlets donned once more. His belt-buckled scabbard in place, he was holding a drawn sword. He was just as I originally met him. His breastplate glowed.

“Hopefully, this will be a night you remember,” he said pointing to himself. Then he chuckled softly at his obviously well-worn pun as he turned and faded into the morning mists, translucent to the backdrop of the primeval forest.

I awoke with a start to the sound of snorting. Rubbing my eyes, I saw it was dawn and except for several long-horned, wavy-coated bovine beasts, I was alone in my sleeping bag on a rise of grazing land. In the distance through the morning mists my dew-christened Mini-Cooper waited patiently. But there wasn’t a standing stone to be seen, no knight and no primeval forest! *This was no dream, I thought, but a true encounter with the spirits of the standing stones and the land.*

I gathered my things quickly and trudged back to the car. The beasts appeared preoccupied with their cud but plenty capable of defending their territory. It wasn’t long before I was on the road and the next village came into view and with it a hearty breakfast.

It wasn’t until years later that I heard that British archeologists, using new earth-penetrating, radar-imaging techniques, discovered the ruins of an early stone circle hidden for untold centuries under a highland cattle-farmer’s hill on a one lane country road near the western coast of Scotland. A simple, weathered, stone coffin was also discovered nearby imbedded



deep in the earth and long forgotten. It was curiously empty but chiseled into the lid was an emblem of a flame. Beneath, barely decipherable, the Latin inscription read *Spes aeternum oritur*: Hope Springs Eternally.

# THE CARDS

## Organization

The Grail Deck of the Sidhe consists of twenty-two cards arranged in four suits of five cards each with two cards standing alone as a unique “fifth suit” in its own right.

There are five “Grail” cards. One of these, *The Grail Person*, is the central card—the Master Grail—for the entire new deck. It is one of the stand-alone cards. Each of the other Grail cards is the “Ace” or central card for one of the four suits: *Shapeshifting*, *Singing*, *Priestcraft*, and *Transitions*.

### PRIESTCRAFT SUIT



TRANSITIONS SUIT



SINGING SUIT



### SHAPESHIFTING SUIT

This pattern is replicated in each of the four suits, with the Grail card occupying the center and the other four cards of the suit arranged around it.

This arrangement reflects the pattern of the Howe at the center of the Stone Circle of the original Sidhe card deck surrounded by four quadrants represented by the Four Gates and their corresponding Heart Stones:

<i>Shapeshifting</i>	Quadrant 1 – Gate of Earth	Wizard Heart Stone
<i>Singing</i>	Quadrant 2 – Gate of Dawn	Artisan Heart Stone
<i>Priestcraft</i>	Quadrant 3 – Gate of Stars	Bard Heart Stone
<i>Transitions</i>	Quadrant 4 – Gate of Twilight	Gatekeeper Heart Stone

## Descriptions

The following section describes each of the suits and each of the cards individually within a particular suit. For each suit Mariel’s commentary is given along with the suit’s connection to the Stone Cards of the original deck. Each card is described using the following format:

**Name:** In keeping with the Dancer cards in the first deck, each card is named according to the image portrayed. Each of the twenty suit cards, however, will have a second name in parenthesis under the first. This is a name suggested by Mariel. There is nothing binding about this second name. Feel free to use it as a card name or simply to think of it as a descriptive keyword offered by the Sidhe.

**Description:** This is a short description of the image on the card.

**Keywords:** As stated earlier, Jeremy sponsored an online Forum to introduce each of the following cards, inviting the participants to reflect on the meaning of each card. These various insights, interpretations and meanings have been distilled into keywords.

**Mariel’s Commentary:** Mariel, the Sidhe woman responsible for the original deck, was invited to offer her perspective on the four suits and on each of the cards. This section contains her commentary.

**The Relationship to the Stone Circle:** Each of the cards in the new

deck have a specific correspondence to positions within the Stone Circle of the original deck. This section describes this connection.

## Using the Cards

We have not added extra commentary about each card or attempted to provide interpretations of the card's meaning, feeling that Mariel's comments plus the keywords are suggestive enough. The power of these cards lies in their evocation of narrative as you work with them. A particular card may have one meaning for you at one time and then later you may discover yourself interpreting it differently. So much depends on how and where a card appears in a layout, but meaning also depends on the relationship that arises between you and the cards and the particular awareness you bring to them in that moment. In this sense, the cards are context-driven, their meaning deriving from the narrative that emerges from their relationship to you and to all the other cards within the particular "ecology" of the layout you're using for that reading. Like the Sidhe themselves, the cards have a fluidity of meaning and can "shapeshift" from one reading to the next. See them as evocative portals and thresholds of imagination, changing the shape of their meaning and singing their creative songs as you attune to them in an exercise of inner priesthood. In this way, the spirit of the four suits—Shapeshifting, Singing, Priestcraft, and Thresholds—comes to life each time you use the cards.

## THE KNIGHT OF FIERY HOPE

**Description:** A knight in armor stands poised for action, sword at the ready. A brilliant flame burns upon his breastplate.

**Keywords:** Hope, Courage, Perseverance, Possibilities, Openness to the Present and the Future, a Mentor, Guide or Teacher; an Initiator; an Opener of the Way.



**Marriel's Commentary:** For many humans, hope suggests a sense of uncertainty as to how something will unfold. It denotes a preference but not a conviction. Thus there is an aura of powerlessness around the word itself. You hope something will happen but you can't make it so, thus you are unsure it will. For us, however, hope itself is a creative power. It opens channels of possibility that call forth imagination, attunement, attentiveness, and creative effort. Hope keeps these channels open and thus ensures that the way cannot be blocked. It may not be the way you originally intended, but it will be a way forward. Without the fiery hope of a confident heart, little is accomplished. Where it is present, however, miracles can happen. This is the card of miracles waiting and possible to happen. It is the power to initiate new directions and establish new goals.

### **The Story Behind This Card:**

The origin of this card lies in an experience which David Spangler had one evening in his home. Here is the story as he relates it:

"I was sitting on a sofa in my home reading when a non-physical being abruptly appeared in front of me. While this in itself was not

unusual for me, the appearance of this being was. It looked like a knight out of a storybook, clad in shining golden armor, its face hidden within its helmet. On its chest burned a flame as bright and radiant as a piece of sunlight.

It said clearly, "I am the Knight of Fiery Hope! I speak to all humans. You are not entering a darkened age. You are entering a time when the Light of your creative spirit can manifest new vision and new life. Be what I am. Let fiery hope, not despair or fear, shape your world." Then the being disappeared.

The 'fiery hope' is not about outcomes or events but about ourselves. The message of this being is that we are a source of hope because we are—or can be—a source of change and new vision. A particular course of events may be inevitable, but our response to it is not. We can respond in ways we could not have predicted.

In this way, hope can change the future by opening us to new possibilities and choices which can make a difference; but just as importantly, hope can change ourselves. It can change how we meet events that cannot in themselves be changed for one reason or another but which can be altered in their effects by how we respond, especially by how we work together and care for each other.

## THE GRAIL PERSON



**Description:** A Grail filled with a radiant Light is superimposed over the translucent figure of a person who in turn appears to emerge from the trunk of a tree whose branches support the Grail bowl.

**Keywords:** Fulfillment, Wholeness, Realization, Blending, Presence, the Sacred Human

**Mariel's Commentary:** This image can be seen as that of a person changing into a Grail and thus as a metaphor for the capacity of a human being to hold the Sacred within himself or herself. But I see it differently. To me it is an image of the Sacred in its capacity to be all things and to hold all things.

This card to me is a statement of the Identity within all things. The Sacred is the Grail that holds all creation. The Unmanifest holds all that is manifest. So here you see the Grail Identity within planetary life represented by the tree and by the human figure.

It would appear that the Grail is holding a source of Light, but as I see it, the very act of holding is producing the Light. Here is the mystery of boundaries which create the space that brings Light into being. The Grail is not simply a vessel; it is a creative act, the Sacred Act from which all things come.

Whether the grail is an atom, a stone, a tree, a flower, a stag, an owl, a human, or a Sidhe, it is the womb within which Light is born, radiating its qualities out to the world.

Thus this card for me is not a human as a grail but rather the Grail as a human, a human in blended harmony with nature, with Gaia. But then, such a blending is itself a Grail that holds the promise of an expansion



of planetary sacredness. So who is holding whom?

Whatever the answer, this card represents the state of attunement, wholeness, and consciousness to which both Sidhe and Humans are called on behalf of Gaia. We can help each other attain this. It is the fruit of your journey into our realm and also of your journey into yourself. This card speaks to the Goal, the Grail State we all wish to embody and accomplish.

### **THE KNIGHT AND THE GRAIL: The Suit of the Quest**

These two cards are not part of any Suit, but in a way they constitute a Suit of their own, for they are paired in a special way. The inner state—the Grail consciousness and wholeness—represented by the Grail Person is the goal towards which the Knight of Fiery Hope is questing. The Knight embodies the power to achieve the Grail.

In this way, they represent a “Suit of the Quest” itself. They complete each other. The Knight, inspired by the vision of the Grail, burns with a fire of inspiration, confidence and hope, giving him the inner vitality and creative power to go forth to discover and claim the Grail. Likewise, the Grail is not only a state of wholeness that fulfills that inspiration and hope and completes the Quest, but it is that overlighting Sacredness that provides the Light and vision that guides the Knight on his or her Quest.

The Grail cannot be found without the Knight of Fiery Hope, while the Knight is aflame with Hope because of the Vision of the Grail. They are two halves of a Act of wholeness and manifestation.

## THE SUIT OF SHAPESHIFTING

Each of the four suits represents a way in which the Sidhe approach life and thus a way in which we can do the same.

In my experience, the Sidhe can indeed change their physical shape and appearance, but as Mariel describes in her commentary below, shapeshifting has a deeper meaning of coming into attunement with the life around us. So the cards of this suit represent qualities that enhance or express this capacity for attunement and blending which in turn allow for connection, co-creativity and emergence to take place.

**Mariel's Commentary:** Greetings and Blessings! Let me describe what shapeshifting means to us. It can under certain circumstances mean an alteration of our actual form, the change from one shape to another. This is more prevalent among Sidhe who are younger, who are our children, who use this ability for fun and sport or, yes, even for mischief. But as we mature, we discover other, deeper uses for this capacity, uses which should not be so literally translated as an actual changing of physical shape. It becomes instead a resiliency of consciousness, an ability to take on and share the inner shape of something or someone in our environment. In fact, I am using this capacity now to communicate with you.

You might call this ability to shapeshift *attunement*, and it is this, but it is more. In fact, the word “shape” is misleading here, for this ability is not simply one of mimicking a form different from our own. The true shape of anything isn't what it looks like but what it is as an activity of life. You do not have a word for this. It is something's function, yes, but also how life moves and flows within and around it, and the intentionality that powers that movement. You might use a word like “spirit” but it is not truly the spirit of something. Rather it is the moving pattern that the spirit imparts. We call this the *anwa*.

If we see a tree, we are aware of the spirit of the tree and also of its form, its trunk and branches, how its roots go into the earth, the shape of its leaves, and so forth. The *anwa* stands between these two things. It is the shape of the tree's spirit's intent and the activity and functions that flow from that intent. When we shapeshift, we use our *anwa* to enter into and hold within ourselves the *anwa* of the tree. We become this *anwa*. We do not become the spirit or the identity of the tree; it's important to

realize this. Rather, we take on in ourselves, in our own energy field, the movement and flow of the tree's life. We fill ourselves with "the activity of tree".

It might be possible under the right circumstances for us to assume the form of the tree so that if you were looking, it would seem to you that you saw two trees, not one. But this accomplishes nothing. The form of the tree is not its life, not its *anwa*. We are no closer to the tree if we take on its form than if we take on any form, including our own. Do you understand?

For us, shapeshifting is not about form but about connection. It is how we connect. I am taking on something of your *anwa* now in order to communicate with you, and you are taking on something of mine. So we are shapeshifting now, are we not?

We blend with the *anwa* of the things in the world around us in order to better know them and relate to them; you might say we *attune*, but *attunement* for humans often has too mental a connotation. It is that our *anwa*, our activity, comes into harmony and blending with the *anwa* of another, and this is more than a mental act or an imaginative one. It is an act of loving respect and honor. It is an act of shared life. Love stands behind our shapeshifting.

In human terms, this suit in the card deck represents your ability to come into loving and empathetic resonance with the world around you. It is your ability to shift your inner shape, your worldview, your expectations, your *anwa*, to blend with that of another.

**Stone Circle Connections:** The cards in this suit are all connected to the Gate of Earth and to the Wizard Heart Stone in Quadrant 1 of the original Sidhe card deck. This Quadrant represents identity, initiation, conception, and vision.



## THE LION, THE SWORD AND THE STONE (Sovereignty)



**Description:** A lion watchfully guards a golden sword whose blade is embedded partway into a large stone. Sunlight filters through the forest trees behind it.

**Keywords:** Sovereignty, Authority, Leadership, Protection, Presence, Will, Fearlessness, Strength, Foundation

**Mariel's Commentary:** The central card is that of SOVEREIGNTY. All shapeshifting begins with Sovereignty. You must know who you are and the nature of your shape—your *anwa*—before you can begin to take on the shape or *anwa* of another. In this card, the sword represents the will of your Soul that is here plunged into the substance of the world. Your authority and Sovereignty—the Lion within you—comes from this connection and protects it. The Gaian King or Queen does not pull the sword from the stone but plunges it in more deeply. He or she rules through Sword and Stone. This is the symbol of your *anwa*. If need be, however, you may withdraw this sword to show the presence and authority of your Soul.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** This is the Grail card, the center of the circle of the Shapeshifting Suit. In the Stone Circle, it would be equivalent to the Howe, the place of beginning and synthesis.

## THE ROBE AND THE OWL (Wisdom)



**Description:** An empty robe stands erect, seemingly filled with stars, while overhead an owl spreads its wings in flight. A standing stone is nearby, and on the horizon is a rising Light as if something is about to appear.

**Keywords:** Wisdom, Far-Seeing, Clarity, Insight, Accepting a Mantle, Initiation, Guidance

**Marriel's Commentary:** In this card, a wizard's garb stands filled with stars while overhead an owl spreads her wings and Light rises from the horizon. Has the wizard or priest turned into an owl? Is the owl preparing to become the wizard or the priest? Yet both are shapes filled with starlight. We see here the many shapes that we occupy, the outer form that cloaks us, the mind and imagination that spreads its wings to the world, and the Light of our cosmic self, our Soul, which has no earthly form. It is in knowing all three that we understand the power to shapeshift. I would call this card WISDOM.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Earth, the place of Identity, Initiation, and Conception. Here one stands at the boundary between Above and Below, the Stars and the Earth, the Inner and the Outer, able to assume whatever form is needed to move between them. It is the flexibility and fluidity of Identity.

## POTTER'S HAND (Shaping)



**Description:** The weathered hands of a potter work to press a spiral design into a clay wheel.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Creation, Shaping, Molding, Engagement, Partnering, Taking Action

**Mariel's Commentary:** The Potter's Hands are the activity of your Soul, of your Identity, spinning and shaping the movement of your life. Here we see your *anwa* being created. I would call this card SHAPING.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Dawn, the place of Vitality, Activity, and Birth. Here one brings the power of identity into action and expression. It's about the manifestation of new forms through action and creativity.



## THE LIVING STONE (Beginnings)



**Description:** A standing stone is blending with the earth as if it were a tree, putting down roots into the land, while a tiny shoot of new life appears on its top.

**Keywords:** Blending, Adapting, Connecting, Taking Root, Emergence, Giving Birth, Sprouting, Transformation, Surprises, Grounding

**Mariel's Commentary:** In this card, a standing stone is turning into a plant, perhaps a tree—or a tree is becoming a stone. In either case, *anwa* is being shared. Shapes are shifting, connections are being formed, attunement is taking place. And the result is new life emerging. Shapeshifting is not simply about taking another's form. It is about a connection that creates emergence and the sprouting of new insights, new beginnings, new life. I would call this card BEGINNINGS.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Stars, the place of Connection, Relationship, and Pathfinding. In this position, this card suggests the power of identity and Sovereignty to encompass and blend different elements together to create something new. It is the ability to foster emergence.

## THE MISTY FIGURE (Surrender)



**Description:** A misty, ghost-like figure appears to emerge out of (or to blend into) a tree, while behind it shines a golden Light.

**Keywords:** Surrender, Blending, Attunement, Awareness, Emergence, Letting Go, Change, Adaptation.

**Mariel's Commentary:** Here a figure—a woman?—blends into a tree, or is it a tree taking shape as a person? Again, we have the image of *anwa* being shared. It is the letting go of one form in order to understand and blend with another. Something becomes insubstantial that a deeper level of knowing and being may gain substance. After all, to truly shapeshift, you must surrender one shape to know another. I would call this card SURRENDER.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Twilight, the place of Thresholds, Portals, Transitions, Endings and Beginnings. In this position, this card suggests the movement of one form of life into another. It's the power of Identity to transcend a particular form in order to change and adapt.

## THE SUIT OF SINGING

In an earlier message from Mariel which can be found in the book *Conversations with the Sidhe*, she spoke of how creativity among the Sidhe was based on attunement and coming into a vibrational resonance with that which was being created. The metaphor she used for this was music and singing. Creation and building, therefore, were less techniques of manipulation and construction and more methods of “growing” or drawing out what was desired through resonance and harmonization with the world around one. This suit represents this kind of creation through harmony and attunement.

**Mariel’s Commentary:** Greetings and Blessings! You ask me about Singing and the cards that represent this aspect of our lives and work. Before I answer, let me stress that my perception of the cards is simply that of one person. I offer what I see from my life and my world, but you must not take this as the final word or the correct interpretation. Let the cards live for you and whisper their secrets to you in ways meaningful for you. The cards are companions and not simply images bound to a single meaning.

With this in mind, when you, David, named this Suit “Singing,” it was an attempt to represent something I had told you earlier in our relationship, that we create by “singing” things into being and form. The singing here is just a metaphor, though it is true that we do actually chant and sing at times when we are building. The deeper reality lies in the nature of the *anwa*, of which I spoke before. The *anwa* is like music, but a music that is not simply heard but felt throughout one’s body and consciousness. It is life-energy in rhythmic motion and activity. Blending with the *anwa* of another, whether that other is stone or tree, animal, Sidhe, or human, has correspondences to blending harmoniously with another’s voice in a choir. You find an arrangement that suits you both and lets your voices—or your *anwa*—blend in chords of mutual unfoldment and expression. Each thing’s *anwa* is its song of life and being; it contains its form and its dreams, what it has been, what it is, and what it seeks to become.

When we wish to create a building, let us say, we come to agreement on its form and purpose. This has correspondences to creating a composition together: what notes go where, what harmonies should

be produced, what tempo is needed, and so forth. These are not really musical notes as you think of them but energetic identities and resonances being woven together to make the structure we wish. But oh yes, it still sings, and it truly is music we hear not with our ears but with our whole bodies, our whole beings.

What is music but a system of relationships defined by vibration, frequency, rhythm, and time? But this is what all things are made of. The Music of the Spheres is no mere metaphor. So in our composition, we consider all the relationships that will produce the building of my example. These include not only its structure and architecture but the effect it will have upon those who enter it, the vibration of the space it will enclose, and its relationship to the land around it and the *lifescape* in which it is embedded. Anything this building will affect as well as the gifts it will contribute to the world must be considered in the composition of its song, its *anwa*.

When the composition is complete, we then take it into ourselves, into our *anwa*, and we “sing” it. We do what is necessary to set the vibration of the building into motion and expression. This may involve actual singing and chanting; it may involve dance. Or it may simply be standing in outer silence but with inner motion, letting the energy—the songs—of our *anwas* produce the *anwa* of the building, around which substance will grow and precipitate. For in a sense, we grow our structures much as you would grow a plant, even though they may be made of stone and crystal, wood and metal, and they become living companions for us.

All our creation is a form of song as we blend our vibrations with those of our world to bring new *anwas* into being around which new forms may crystallize and condense.

So this Suit represents creative relationship and the bringing forth of new life and form into the world.

About two hours after Mariel’s communication, I was visited by one of the two Sidhe gentlemen who accompany her when she comes close to this level of existence. This is what he had to say:

I apologize for intruding, but know that I bring blessings, too. I take this opportunity to talk with you as I am in training to work more closely with the human kingdom and to communicate with you. So this is my practice. I wanted to add to what my teacher had to say about how we

create.

The *anwa* to us is sacred, and when we create something, we think of it as bringing forth new life, for that is what it is. Whether a building or a table, a road or a seat beside the road, whatever we create, we draw its *anwa*, its spirit, from the universal *anwa* that sustains us all. We are all melodies in the Master Song, the one sung by the Singer of all creation. So when we create, we listen and attune to ensure that the *anwa* of that which we are creating is clear to us and connected to the life, the *anwa*, of the Whole. Do you see? Even from conception, we look for the connections. Nothing is made in isolation from everything else, even though everything that is made carries its own unique melody within the music of the universe.

When we create a building, it is like a child to us. My teacher said that we grow our buildings, but I would say we nurture them as children from their conception in our minds and hearts to their construction in the land chosen to receive them. The metaphor doesn't matter. What matters is that they are alive to us, as alive as any other part of Gaia. And when a building is complete, it becomes not simply a structure in which we may live or work but a companion. Its space is alive to us, a presence with which we may partner, and its *anwa* is there to complement our own and to be complemented in return by what we can bring or add.

This is what I wanted to say, that whether you think of it as singing or as growing, as nurturing or as raising, in our creativity we work with life. We are life shaping life, even as greater lives shape us. This is what I would like you to understand. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to practice my communication with you. The blessings of the Sidhe be with you and all who read these words.

**Stone Circle Connections:** The cards in this suit are all connected to the Gate of Dawn and to the Artisan Heart Stone in Quadrant 2 of the original Sidhe card deck. This Quadrant represents creativity, manifestation, self-expression, birth, and vital energy.





## THE KNEELING KNIGHT (Dedication)



**Description:** A knight kneels in devotion, offering his sword to a figure with long, red hair whose face is obscured in the light of a rising sun.

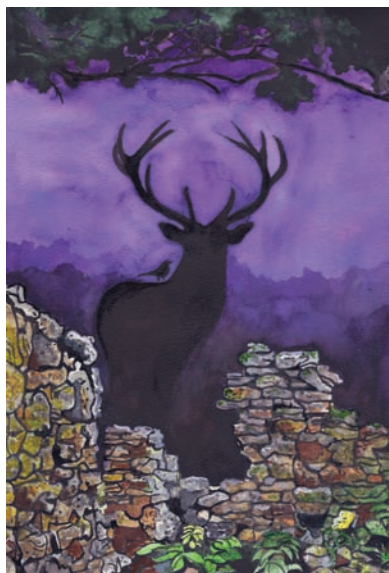
**Keywords:** Service, Dedication, Reverence, Devotion, Respect, Surrender, Acceptance, Champion, Guardian, Vision, Destiny

**Mariel's Commentary:** At the heart of this Suit is the knight kneeling before a Lady representing the powers of the world, the powers of life. The knight is offering his sword and himself. This is what we do before we create. Creation for us is not simply the application of our will. Before we create, we attune. We offer ourselves as instruments of creation in harmony with what is. Before we shape something in the world, we offer ourselves to be shaped as well, for we know that whatever we create—whatever song we sing into being—it must be part of and in harmony with the life of the Whole, with the Song of All That Is. We dedicate ourselves to the well-being and harmony of what already is as well as to that which we wish to create, that which wishes to become. I would thus name this card DEDICATION.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** This is the Grail card, the center of the circle of the Singing Suit. In the Stone Circle, it would be equivalent to the Howe, the place of beginning and synthesis.



## THE SHADOWY STAG AND BIRD (Listening)



**Description:** In the twilight behind a ruined wall, there stands the shadowy figure of a stag with a small bird riding upon its back.

**Keywords:** Listening, Stillness, Mystery, Observation, Waiting, Awareness, Peace

**Mariel's Commentary:** The Stag stands in silence and shadow in the midst of a broken wall. All creation, all singing, begins with listening. We would know what is before we can build what might be. We need to attune to the songs already being sung to know how to sing and blend a new song. This may mean allowing past expectations and habits to crumble and fall away so that we can listen with fresh ears, know with a fresh mind, sing with a fresh voice. I would call this card LISTENING.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Earth, the place of Identity, Initiation, and Conception. Here one stands poised and listening, gathering one's identity and creative power prior to setting something new into motion. It is the identity attuning to the note of that which seeks birth.

## MUSIC, FLUTE AND ROSES (Promise)



**Description:** Upon a sheet of music lie a flute and two roses, one red and one white.

**Keywords:** Intention, Tools, Creativity, Project, Blending, Fulfillment, Promise, Pattern

**Mariel's Commentary:** The flute lies between a red and white rose upon a sheet of musical composition. Here we see assembled both the music to be played and the instrument with which to play it. And we see as well the intent to blend the human and the Sidhe, the red rose and the white, in a song of new harmonies together. This card speaks to the *anwa*, the Song, of a world we would co-create together. I would call this card PROMISE.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Dawn, the place of Vitality, Activity, and Birth. Here that which was heard and conceived through inner listening and attunement is brought forth as composition, pattern and form in order to live in the world. This represents all that is needed to manifest in expression what was first perceived in Silence.

## THE TRUMPETERS (The Choir)



**Description:** High in the battlements of a castle, a herald blows a trumpet while on the wall in front of him, a bird sings in response.

**Keywords:** Announcement, Celebration, Joy, Partnering, Triumph, Shared Endeavor, Blending

**Mariel's Commentary:** The herald blows his trumpet from the ramparts as a bird sings its song. Here we see the act of creating in harmony with the world. Here we have a sturdy, complete wall as contrasted with the ruined one over which the Stag watches. It is new construction, built of vision and hope, and upon it the human plays his music, a clarion call, while Nature sings her music in response. This is the promise being fulfilled. I would call this card THE CHOIR.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Stars, the place of Connection, Relationship, and Pathfinding. In this position, this card suggests the relationships, partnerships, collaborations, and participation that comes forward to support that which was conceived in Silence and brought forth in pattern and form. This card represents the world's response to one's creativity.

## THE GOSSAMER DANCER (The Song)



**Description:** A gossamer female figure, seeming to emerge out of the land and the air, whose hair is like the thin branches of a plant, floats eyes closed, seeming to dance while listening to something only she can hear. Beside her is a standing stone, and above her, a golden bird is dancing with her.

**Keywords:** Attunement, Harmony, Bridging, Emergence, Expression, Manifestation, Revelation

**Mariel's Commentary:** A gossamer lady seems to emerge from earth and stone to greet and dance with a bird. Is the lady a human? Is she a Sidhe? Or is she both, a merging of your *anwa* and ours? She seems to blend stone and plant, air and flight. The bird seems to urge her upward to join it, while she looks back with appreciation upon the stone from which she emerges. This card to me represents the Gaian Human we both seek to bring into being. I would call this card THE SONG.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Twilight, the place of Thresholds, Portals, Transitions, Endings and Beginnings. In this position, this card suggests the giving of one's creativity out to the world where it can live on its own. What began in the depths of your own creativity and Identity now makes the transition to live in new forms on its own in the world as others carry your contributions forward in their own way.

## THE SUIT OF PRIESTCRAFT

**Mariel's Commentary:** Greetings and Blessings! I appreciate this suit you have named Priestcraft for I am, as you know, part of a lineage of priests and priestesses whose function is to mediate the stellar energies into the life of our world.

In our world more than in yours, there is a recognition of how each of us is a conduit through which spiritual forces blend into the life around us, bringing blessing. We know that a form of priestly capacity is there in each of us. Think of it as a continually flowing river of Light passing through us from the Source of All. Any of us can tap into this river and direct its flow where we wish or simply let it overflow from us in the joy and wonder of living.

This river of Light is there in you as well. It flows through all beings from its headwaters in what you term the Generative Mystery.

But a priest is someone who, while allowing the river of Light to flow through him or her, also knows how to hold that flow in a pool of Light that forms a concentrated presence upon which he or she can draw. A priest knows and uses the power of Holding to fashion containers for the Light. A priest is a Grail-Maker because he or she understands how to be a Grail, a container for Light and Life as well as a flow of Light.

To use your words, David, all life is a manifestation of the fixed and the fluid, the structure and the flow, order and chaos. Life is an open system, open to flow and change but possessing structure and resistance as well. The key to life is to Hold and Release, Retain and Let Go, and to know when one must give way to the other. This is the discipline of the priest.

**Stone Circle Connections:** The cards in this suit are all connected to the Gate of Stars and to the Bard Heart Stone in Quadrant 3 of the original Sidhe card deck. This Quadrant represents relationships, connections, engagement, and finding one’s direction and path in the world.





## THE GRAIL, CATHEDRAL AND STARS (Holding)



**Description:** A softly glowing Grail rests on the grassy floor of a ruined cathedral, its walls open to the starry heavens above.

**Keywords:** Sacredness, Holding, Discovery, Love, Renewal, Promise in the Midst of Change

**Mariel's Commentary:** The central card in this suit portrays what I have just described. This is the essence of priestcraft. Here we see three Grails, the Cup, the Cathedral, and the Cosmos. Each holds the other. Each, in your words, is a fractal of the other. The Grail holds the Stars, but the Stars hold the Grail. The open Cathedral with its grassy floor is the blend of Nature and Humanity which also hold each other, as well as holding the Stars and the Individual, symbolized in the Cup. The Cathedral may look ruined, but to me it is simply unfinished, as it will always be. Even the Cosmos is unfinished. All is in process. Each structure that contains also has an openness so that life can transcend it and flow out from it into new forms. Priestcraft facilitates this, providing the structures that hold both form and flow. I would call this card HOLDING, for holding is at the heart of the priestly act.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** This is the Grail card, the center of the circle of the Priestcraft Suit. In the Stone Circle, it would be equivalent to the Howe, the place of beginning and synthesis.



## BREAD AND WINE (Compassion)



**Description:** A cutting board with slices of bread, and a knife rest upon a table that is transparent to stars underneath it. Nearby are a lit candle, a wine bottle, and a glass half-filled with wine.

**Keywords:** Feast, Abundance, Transformation, Compassion, Serving, Service, Communion

**Mariel's Commentary:** Bread and wine lie on a table that is open to the stars. This is deeply symbolic, for all life flows from the stars. The bread and wine that nourish you are made of the life and substance of the stars. But for this to be available, a star must give of itself, either its energy as light or its substance as it dies, flinging its matter to the universe. So behind the nourishment, behind the feast, is an act of love and giving. I would call this card COMPASSION. In priestcraft, the priest nourishes but not always with the elements of outer form; he or she also draws on the deep and hidden sources where Light is held to be released as needed.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Earth, the place of Identity, Initiation, and Conception. In this card, the elements of nourishment are portrayed resting on a field of stars; ideas are being conceived and emerging from the cosmic depths of one's Identity, open to the inspiration of the cosmos. This is the Identity of the Priest; beyond any religious connotations, the priest is the one who mediates between Inner and Outer and draws nourishment out of the deep realms of spirit to feed those in the incarnate realms.

## FISH IN BUBBLES (Journey)



**Description:** In a nighttime land of towering mesas and canyons, salmons float in bubbles above a river, the heavens filled with stars above them.

**Keywords:** Journeying, Protection, Fearlessness, Discovery, Disconnection, New Surroundings, Caution, Observation

**Mariel's Commentary:** Fish journey into strange new star-filled realms, held in a protective bubble of their own environment. There is adventure here, and wonder. There is a willingness to go beyond the familiar and the safe to venture into new domains of life and consciousness. Yet in these adventures, a link to the familiar world is retained so that what is found can be brought back and shared for the blessing of all. This is very much an act of priesthood. I would call this card JOURNEY.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Dawn, the place of Vitality, Activity, and Birth. Here the mediating power of Priestcraft opens to new vistas, visions, and potentials different from what one has known or from what is familiar. It's the power of the inner life to give birth to new possibilities.

## PEGASUS OF STARS (Invocation)



**Description:** A winged horse flies out of a star-filled sky, its body seemingly made of stars itself.

**Keywords:** Invocation, Ally, Vision, Assistance, Challenge, Promise, Possibility, Connection

**Mariel's Commentary:** The winged horse comes out of the stars. This card complements the one before it, as if the former is the call and this is the response. Here the winged power of the Cosmos takes shape and comes to you. The horse is a messenger, perhaps an ally. It is the power of the Stars come to you in a form you can understand and use. I would call this card INVOCATION.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Stars, the place of Connection, Relationship, and Pathfinding. This card suggests the power of priestcraft to summon and partner with inner and outer allies, to create partnership and collaboration and thereby to open up new paths and directions of accomplishment.

## THE STONE CIRCLE AND THE STAR (Blessing)



**Description:** A star of Light blazes in the midst of a circle of standing stones under a nighttime sky filled with stars.

**Keywords:** Blessing, Attunement, Visitation, Vision, Answer, Holding, Invocation

**Mariel's Commentary:** The light of a star shines in the midst of a circle of standing stones. Here is the essence of priesthood. A container has been built to hold a presence from the river of Starlight. The Cosmos is brought to earth and held in a way that allows it to shine its radiance and give its blessing. And this is what I would name this card: BLESSING.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Twilight, the place of Thresholds, Portals, Transitions, Endings and Beginnings. In this position, this card represents the power of collaboration to open a threshold or portal that allows change to take place and something new to emerge. Transformation takes place and all is made new.

## THE SUIT OF TRANSITION

**Mariel's Commentary:** Greetings and Blessings! We come to the final suit, which for me is one of TRANSITIONS, though you may call it Portals if you wish. What is important is that you realize this suit represents a dynamic activity, one that produces change, and not simply a place or an opportunity for change. Change is important to us, not for its own sake—though we may play with changes for entertainment and amusement or for the sheer joy of diversity—but because change is part of life and growth. We are, if you wish, enemies of stagnation. As custodians of life, we recognize that all things change as part of being who they are. The change may be quick or it may be very slow, but it is there, and it is necessary. And among the changes most important to the flow of life are transitions, the moments and the means by which a living system is able to become something more than it was and different from what it was.

You see this in your own life. You don't change simply by becoming larger or older. You also go through thresholds and transitions, as from childhood to adolescence and adolescence to adulthood. A transition, unlike a simple change, may require giving something up, sacrificing something familiar, in order to move forward and gain something new. Transition embraces birth and death, endings and beginnings; it marks significant moments in a being's life after which nothing is ever the same again but new possibilities and wonders become available. Such moments are magical, and they are important to us. We honor stability and continuity, yes, and we honor ordinary change. But we save our greatest reverence for the mystery of transition for it is at such moments that the presence of the Sacred may be revealed and seen.

**Stone Circle Connections:** The cards in this suit are all connected to the Gate of Twilight and to the Gatekeeper Heart Stone in Quadrant 4 of the original Sidhe card deck. This Quadrant represents the future, unfoldment, emergence, and transformation; it is a Quadrant of beginnings and endings.





## THE SWAN BOAT AND THE ISLAND (The Promise)



**Description:** A boat bearing the figurehead of a swan coasts towards a misty island where a magical ring of standing stones can be seen on a hill above the shore.

**Keywords:** Promise, Vision, Fulfillment, Realization, Journey, Transition, Change

**Mariel's Commentary:** We begin with the swan boat approaching a magical island upon which stands a Stone Circle. The crossing of waters is often a symbol of transition, just as the stone circle is a portal between different dimensions. In this card, we are in the process of change and transition, moving across the water, but we have not yet reached the full promise of what may unfold, a promise held within the embrace of the Stones. I would therefore call this card THE PROMISE.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** This is the Grail card, the center of the circle of the Transition Suit. In the Stone Circle, it would be equivalent to the Howe, the place of beginning and synthesis.



## THE PENDANT AND THE GLYPH (The Inner Portal)



**Description:** A pendant bearing a carved glyph of a spiral and line hangs from a leather necklace.

**Keywords:** Portal, Connection, Mobility, Individuation, Partnership

**Mariel's Commentary:** A pendant carries the Glyph of the Sidhe. This is indeed a portal, one that you carry upon your person and thus is symbolic of what you carry in your heart. In the end, you do not need magic or special places to connect with us. Your loving heart and mind attuned to the qualities and interests we share in common will suffice. I would therefore call this card THE INNER PORTAL.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Earth, the place of Identity, Initiation, and Conception. It represents the Identity of soul and sacredness—the Generative Mystery—within us which we carry like a pendant into the world as the source of who we are and what we do.

## THE OVERGROWN DOOR (Threshold)



**Description:** A weathered door set back into a stone wall is partly obscured by tall plants and flowers that have grown over the path before it.

**Keywords:** Secrets, Hidden, Discovery, Memories, the Past, Obstruction, Caution

**Mariel's Commentary:** We see a closed and ancient door in front of which grows a plant. Does the plant obstruct? Does it beckon? Is the door

locked? Or is it simply forgotten? What I see here is the ancient portal, the ancient power of transition, between your realm and ours, or even, I might say, the door that opens you to all the inner worlds that are at the moment locked away and forgotten. This is a human door; it is within you, part of you. But to come to it, you must use nature as your ally. It's through your connection to the living world around you that you discover the door to the deeper worlds around you, including the secret gardens of your own soul. This card can symbolize what blocks—the thorny plant, the locked door—and prevents transition, but it can also symbolize what will make transition possible. I would call it simply THRESHOLD, but what kind of threshold it is, is up to you.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Dawn, the place of Vitality, Activity, and Birth. In this position, this card represents the portal of possibility which, when we discover and open it, becomes a threshold of new expression in the world. This threshold is marked with the vitality of life but to open the door, one may need to go beyond what has already grown and manifested itself.

## THE BRIDGE (Invitation)



**Description:** A stone bridge spans a river, while on the far side grows a tree whose leaves are the red and gold of autumn.

**Keywords:** Invitation, Transition, The Future, Change, Connection, Possibility

**Mariel's Commentary:** A bridge crosses a river to a land of color and life. What more perfect symbol of a transition can there be? New possibilities allure you and are open to you. You are invited to cross, and the way to do so is before you. I call this card INVITATION.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Stars, the place of Connection, Relationship, and Pathfinding. In this position, this card is the threshold and transition that crosses boundaries and brings together in relationship that which has been separated. It is the power to bridge differences, though crossing this bridge might at first seem daunting. Will you accept the invitation to cross, or extend an invitation to that which is strange and unfamiliar to you?

## THE PHOENIX AND THE STONE (Continuity)



**Description:** At sunset, with the sky red in color, a standing stone is surrounded with flames burning at its base while a fiery phoenix rests upon its top, gazing at the Light rising on the horizon as if preparing to fly to meet it.

**Keywords:** Transformation, Rebirth, Renewal, Continuity, Trust, Testing, Challenge, Endurance

**Mariel's Commentary:** A fiery Phoenix rests upon a stone around whose base fire burns. Here is both the promise and the risk of transition. Something old is consumed so that something new can arise from the ashes. Yet between the old and the new stands Sovereignty, the eternal Identity. Even in transitions, however fearsome they may be, there is renewal and strength. Your sacredness endures. You endure, though one form shifts to another. This card shows the power of being, that which both is and is becoming. It is the sacred fire of life itself which is ever renewing. I call this card CONTINUITY.

**Relationship to Stone Circle:** In the Stone Circle, this card is the equivalent to the Gate of Twilight, the place of Thresholds, Portals, Transitions, Endings and Beginnings. In this position, this card suggests the challenge of change and transition. Often for something new to appear, something familiar must be discarded or must die away.

## PART VI: USING THE NEW CARDS

### Using the New Cards by Themselves

You can use the twenty-two new cards of the Grail of the Sidhe extension deck on their own, especially for reflection and meditation.

For example, each of the four Suits represents a Quadrant within the Stone Circle and thus a Principle in action; the Suit of Shapeshifting, for instance, is the Principle (and Quadrant) of Identity. Each Suit could be laid out with its Grail card at the center as if it were the Howe and the other four cards in the place of the four Gates as shown on the pages with the Suit descriptions. This creates a pattern than can allow reflection and meditation on how that particular potentiality or Principle, such as Shapeshifting, manifests in your life in your identity, your creative expression, your relationships, and your transitions and thresholds.

The new cards also provide others ways of working with the four Principles (or Quadrants of the Stone Circle). Thus there are five new cards related to Identity and Conception: **The Lion, the Sword, and the Stone (Sovereignty)** (this card being the Grail Card of Identity), **The Robe and the Owl (Wisdom)**, **The Shadowy Stag and Bird (Listening)**, **The Feast (Compassion)**, and **The Pendant and the Glyph (The Inner Portal)**. The other Suit cards may be similarly related to Birth and Emergence, Relationships and Pathfinding, and Transitions and Thresholds, the other three Quadrants. This reveals new patterns of relationship between the cards that can be used either for meditation on their own (for example, laying out the four cards named above and reflecting on what they inspire within you about your own Identity) or to deepen the oracular meanings of a particular card in a layout.

You can also create simple layouts using just the twenty-two new cards. You could draw one card for a simple reading, for example, or you could use three cards in a line representing Past, Present, and Future with respect to a specific question. When interpreting or reading such a layout, pay attention to the specific meaning of the card in relationship to its position in the layout you've created but also remember that each card carries the meaning of its Suit and also of its particular position within its Suit (i.e. is its native position one of Identity, Emergence, Relationship, or Transition?).

## Blending the Two Decks

You will gain more flexibility and depth, however, when you blend the two decks together. After all, the new extender deck is designed to add to the original deck, not to stand independently on its own.

The original deck of Sidhe cards is divided into two parts, Stones and Dancers. The Stone cards form a circle which is divided into four Quadrants represented by the four Gates. These form fixed positions around which the Dancer cards weave their meanings. In the new extension deck, twenty of the cards are divided into four Suits, each of which is related to one of the Gates and thus to one of the Quadrants of the Stone Circle. In this way, the cards in each Suit may be seen as elaborating the meanings within a particular Quadrant and thus are more focused than the original Dancer cards. The remaining two cards, the Knight of Fiery Hope and the Grail Person, may be considered Dancers but they can also stand alone representing specific inner conditions that are served and brought into manifestation by both the Stone Circle and the Dancers. As described earlier, they can be seen as forming a "Suit" all on their own, the Suit of the Quest.

## More Dancers

The simplest way to use the new cards is to add them to the Dancers, giving 38 Dancer cards altogether. You can then incorporate them into Stone Circle layouts as described in the original manual, using them as you would any of the older Dancer cards.

When you do so, you can add another layer of interpretation to your reading. There is the meaning of the card itself but the new cards also bring with them the meaning of the Suit to which they belong. In a reading, their meaning is determined not only by their position in a layout and their relationship with other cards in the reading but also by the Suit to which they belong and their position within that Suit and thus their relationship to one of the four Quadrants of the Stone Circle: Identity, Emergence, Relationship, and Transitions. Thus, if you draw the **Fish in Bubbles** card in a reading, it brings with it a resonance with its Suit with Priestcraft and thus with the Third Quadrant of the Stone Circle and the Gate of Stars (thus a Suit of mediation and connection); further, its native position within its Suit relates it to the Second Quadrant of Emergence

and Expression and to the Gate of Dawn. Any or all of these additional connections may deepen your understanding of what the card is telling you within its position in the layout you are using.

### Knight of Fiery Hope and Grail Person

These two cards may simply be used to indicate the questioner or the person for whom the reading is being done and the objective of the reading. Used this way they would be two fixed cards around which the whole layout is constructed to indicate how they are connected. They would “bookend” the layout indicating the beginning and the ending, the seeker and the goal. If these two cards are used simply as Dancers, then their meaning depends on their position in the reading. However, as with the other new cards, they also carry a resonance with their own unique Suit, the Suit of the Grail Quest, which can deepen their positional meanings within a layout.



## Quadrant Readings

A “Quadrant Reading” makes use of the parallel structure of the four Suits of the new card deck with the Stone Circle Quadrants of the original card deck. A reading of this nature begins with determining which of the four Quadrants or Suits best fits the question you are posing or the information you are seeking. Each Quadrant or Suit will consist of five basic cards from the new deck.

If, for instance, you wish to work with the first Quadrant of Identity, Initiation, and Conception, then you would use all the “Identity” cards from the new deck: **The Lion, the Sword, and the Stone (Sovereignty)** (this card being the Grail Card of Identity), **The Robe and the Owl (Wisdom)**, **The Shadowy Stag and Bird (Listening)**, **The Feast (Compassion)**, and **The Pendant and the Glyph (The Inner Portal)**.

- Lay down the Grail card at the center (in this case, the card of **Sovereignty**).
- Shuffle the other four cards and lay them face down in a circle around this central Grail card.
- Once they are all laid out, turn them over and see what cards are in what position. Which Identity card, for instance, is in the Identity position (the Gate of Dawn position)? Which is in the Relationship position (the Gate of Stars position), and so forth?
- What insights arise for you relative to your question about Identity, Initiation or Conception based on the relationship of these five cards?
- Now shuffle the original Dancers cards (you can include the Stone cards and the rest of the new extender deck if you wish a more complex reading) and lay face down one card in each of the five positions on top of the cards you’ve already laid down, beginning with the center and working counter-clockwise from the bottom around the circle.
- Turn these cards over. How do they relate to, affect, or modify the Identity cards? What new or further information or insights come to you as a result?

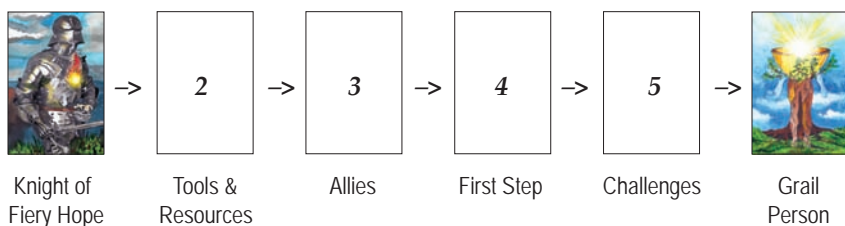
Working with Suits follows the same pattern except that your question or the information you seek is related to one of the four Suits, such as

Priestcraft or Singing. Then the five cards you lay down initially are those belonging to that Suit. As described above, you then shuffle the Dancers from the original deck (or, if you wish more cards, add the rest of the extender deck and the Stone cards) and lay five new cards down, one on top of each of the Suit Cards. How do these new cards relate to, modify, or affect the cards of your chosen Suit? What new or further information or insights come to you as a result?

You can also do a Quadrant Reading just using the Grail cards. Use the **Grail Person** as the central card, then shuffle the other four Grail cards together and lay them out around it as above. What information comes to you from seeing the positions occupied by the other four Grail cards? Now shuffle together the original Dancer cards but include the **Knight of Fiery Hope**. (Again, if you wish a more complex reading, you can add the rest of the new extender cards plus the Stone cards.) As above, lay out five cards, one in each position of the Grail cards layout. If the **Knight of Fiery Hope** appears, it will add additional emphasis and power to the card and the position where it lays.

## The Quest Layout

This layout uses the **Knight of Fiery Hope** and the **Grail Person** as “bookends” for the layout. In between are positions representing items that connect (or disconnect) the two. For example, one possible layout might look like this:



Here the **Knight of Fiery Hope** represents yourself or the person for whom you’re doing a reading. The **Grail Person** represents the object of the Quest, that which you or the subject is trying to accomplish. These cards begin the reading face up. In this example, the first position asks the question, “What tools or resources does the subject have or should acquire in order to do the Quest?” The second position asks “What allies does the subject have or should he or she seek out to help with the Quest?” The third position asks, “What is the first (or next) step the subject of the reading should take?” The fourth position asks, “What challenges or obstacles will the subject meet which he or she must overcome or resolve? What stands in the way of reaching the Quest?”

The cards that answer these questions are drawn from a deck in which all the **Dancer** cards (or the **Dancer** and the **Stone** cards for a more complex reading) have been shuffled together. They are then laid down in the corresponding position.

Of course, you could ask different questions and add other positions to this layout if you needed to. It’s a very simple and flexible layout.

## The Grail Layout

This layout uses the form of the Grail. The full layout consists of nine cards.

Cards 1-3: The Base

Card 4: The Stem

Cards 5-9: The Bowl

If you wish, you can do a smaller layout leaving out cards 1 and 3 and cards 8 and 9, thereby creating a smaller base consisting just of card 2 and a smaller bowl made up of cards 6 and 7.

You can assign any meanings you wish to the Base, the Stem, and the Bowl, as well as to the individual cards in each section. Here's one possible example:

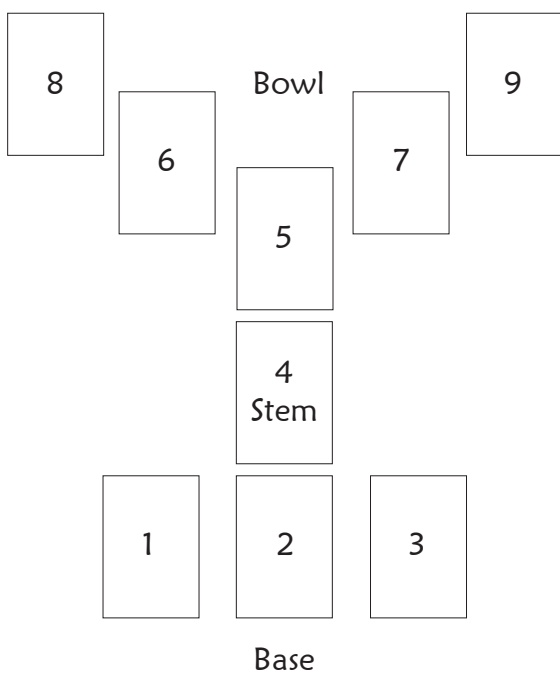
**The Base** represents the basic question that is at the foundation of the reading. The cards can be assigned whatever meanings seem appropriate, such as the Past of the matter, the current state of the matter, and issues or challenges affecting the matter at hand.

**The Stem** represents the forces at work giving support or helping the matter to unfold. If you wish a more detailed reading, you can add another card to the stem.

**The Bowl** represents how the matter at the heart of the reading is unfolding or will unfold and possible consequences that may result.

Alternatively, the Base can represent what has happened, the Stem what is happening now, and the Bowl what is going to happen, i.e. Past, Present, and Future. Other interpretations and meanings are certainly possible.

## Grail Layout



## Be Creative and Inventive

A key to working with the Sidhe cards, both the original and the new cards, is to be playful and inventive when developing layouts or ways to use the deck. Use the cards to tell stories, allowing them to evoke your imagination and intuition. The cards are designed to be flexible. If in doing a reading or a meditation, a particular card seems to you in that moment to mean something different from the meanings described in this manual, pay attention to your own insights and inspiration. In a sense, the cards themselves embody the shapeshifting qualities of the Sidhe who inspired them, adapting to the situations in which they find themselves.

The original intent of the Sidhe cards was to promote a felt sense of connection and contact with the Sidhe and with the Sidhe-like qualities within ourselves. This is even truer of the new cards which represent what we bring back into our human world from our engagement with the Sidhe through the magic of the Stone Circle. The Stone Circle is itself a form of a Grail, a container for sacred Mysteries. The original deck was about journeying into that Circle to touch the energy of the Sidhe and to find that Grail. The new cards are about what we bring back from that encounter, bringing the spirit and life of the Grail back with us into our own lives and into the world around us.

## PART VII: FURTHER READING AND INFORMATION

If you would like to pursue some of the topics raised in this manual, here is a list of available books.

### On Faerie and the Sidhe

*Red Tree, White Tree*, by Wendy Berg

*Farie Blood* by Jeremy Berg

*Working With Angels, Fairies, and Nature Spirits*, by William Bloom

*Meeting Fairies: My Remarkable Encounter with Nature Spirits*, by  
R.Ogilvie Crombie (sold in Britain under the title, *the Gentleman  
and the Faun*)

*The Tree of Enchantment*, by Orion Foxwood

*Melusine of Lusignan & the Cult of the Faerie Woman*, by Gareth  
Knight

*The Wild Alliance: Awakening Your Inner Angel & Sidhe* by Søren  
Hauge

*Memoirs of an Ordinary Mystic*, by Dorothy Maclean

*How to See Faeries*, by John Matthews and Brian Froud

*The Sidhe*, by John Matthews

*Conversations with the Sidhe*, by David Spangler

*The Living World of Faerie*, by R. J. Stewart

*The Well of Light*, by R. J. Stewart

*The Real World of Fairies*, by Dora Van Gelder

### Working with Subtle Worlds

*Feeling Safe*, by William Bloom

*The Occult Diaries of R. Ogilvie Crombie*, by Gordon Lindsay

*Psychic Shield*, by Caitlin Matthews

*Working with Subtle Energies* by David Spangler

*Subtle Worlds: An Explorer's Field Guide*, by David Spangler

*Collaborating with Subtle Worlds: An Explorer's Field Guide*

(Pending) by David Spangler



## Incarnational Spirituality

*An Introduction to Incarnational Spirituality*, by David Spangler

*Journey into Fire*, by David Spangler

*World Work* by David Spangler

*Partnering with Earth* by David Spangler

*The Soul's Oracle Card Deck*, by David Spangler art by Deva Berg

*Manifestation: Creating the life you love*, by David Spangler

art by Deva Berg

*The Gathering Light*, by Jeremy Berg

Most of the authors listed above also have websites that describe their work more fully. Many of them give classes and workshops, some of which are online. Such sites can easily be found by googling the author's name.

For more information about Lorian and Incarnational Spirituality, please go to [www.Lorian.org](http://www.Lorian.org).

## About the Author



**David Spangler**, lives in the Northwest, is married and has four children. He has been a spiritual teacher since 1964. From 1970-1973, he was a co-director of the Findhorn Foundation Community in Northern Scotland. In 1974 he co-founded the Lorian Association, a non-profit spiritual educational organization, and continues to work with it today. David is also a Fellow of the Lindisfarne Association, a gathering of scientists, mathematicians, artists, spiritual and religious teachers, ecologists, and political scientists, all interested in promoting a new culture based on holistic and Gaian values. For further information on his work, writings and classes, please visit [www.lorian.org](http://www.lorian.org).

### Other Works by David Spangler

Apprenticed to Spirit

Facing the Future

The Call

Everyday Miracles

Call of the World

The Story Tree

Rhythms and Hues

Reflections on the Christ

The Flame of Incarnation

Blessing: *The Art and the Practice*

Parent as Mystic—Mystic as Parent

Crafting Home: *Generating the Sacred*

Crafting Relationships: *The Holding of Others*

## About the Artist



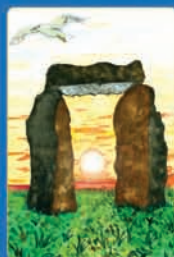
**Jeremy Berg, MCS** is owner of the Lorian Press and Starseed Books and past Director of the Lorian Association. He was trained as an architectural designer and holds a patent for a panelized arch structural system. His work in energy efficiency and earth sheltered construction have been well publicized including on the cover of Popular Science Magazine. He is a workshop presenter, holds a certificate in Spiritual Direction, has taught at both the secondary and post secondary level and has been a college administrator.

## About the Publisher

**Lorian Press** is a private, for profit business which publishes works approved by the Lorian Association. Current titles by David Spangler and others can be found on the Lorian website [www.lorian.org](http://www.lorian.org).

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# Stone Circle of the Sidhe

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