

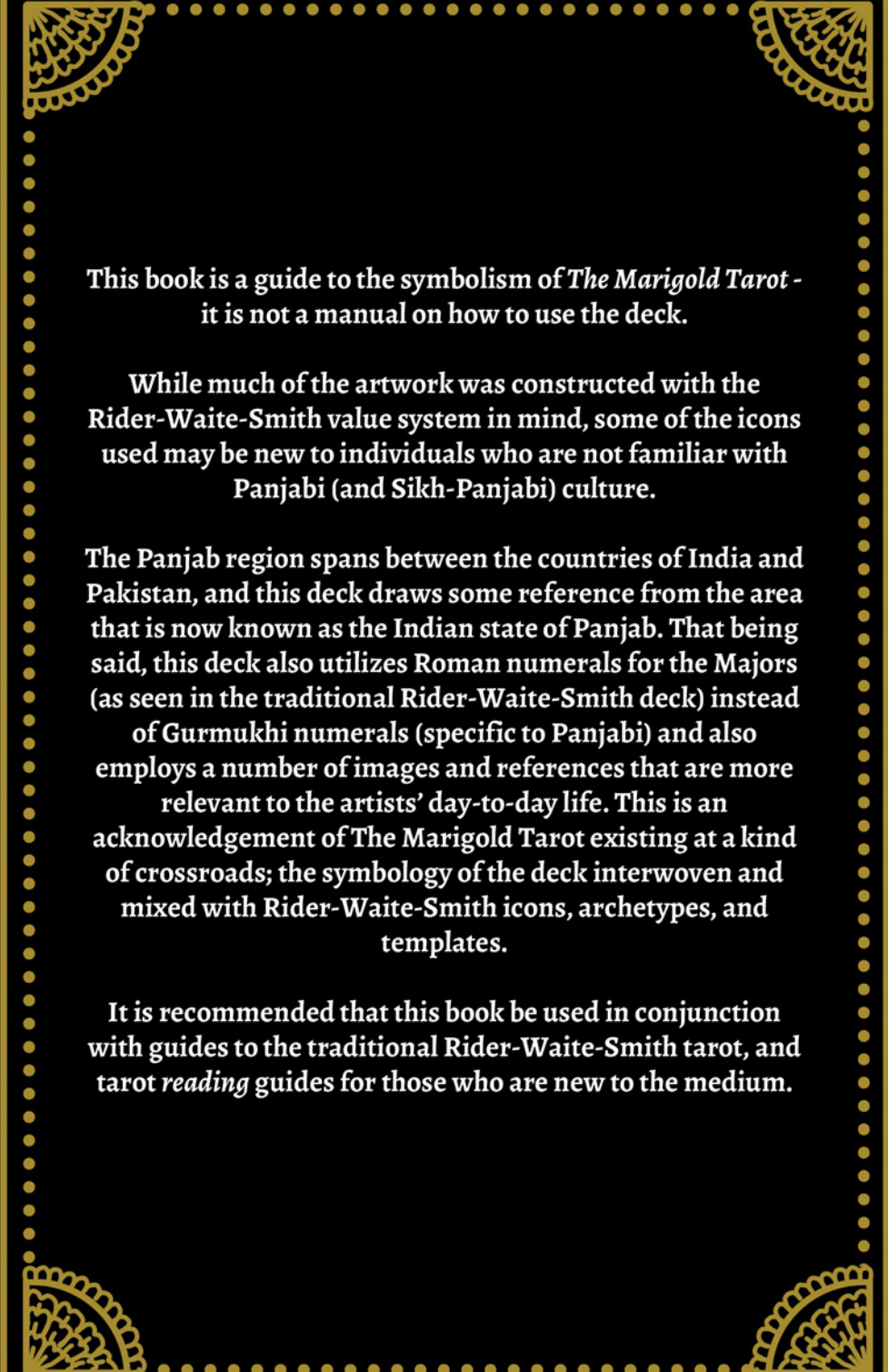

# THE MARIGOLD TAROT

*a guide to the symbolism*



AMRIT BRAR







This book is a guide to the symbolism of *The Marigold Tarot* - it is not a manual on how to use the deck.

While much of the artwork was constructed with the Rider-Waite-Smith value system in mind, some of the icons used may be new to individuals who are not familiar with Panjabi (and Sikh-Panjabi) culture.

The Panjab region spans between the countries of India and Pakistan, and this deck draws some reference from the area that is now known as the Indian state of Panjab. That being said, this deck also utilizes Roman numerals for the Majors (as seen in the traditional Rider-Waite-Smith deck) instead of Gurmukhi numerals (specific to Panjabi) and also employs a number of images and references that are more relevant to the artists' day-to-day life. This is an acknowledgement of *The Marigold Tarot* existing at a kind of crossroads; the symbology of the deck interwoven and mixed with Rider-Waite-Smith icons, archetypes, and templates.

It is recommended that this book be used in conjunction with guides to the traditional Rider-Waite-Smith tarot, and tarot *reading* guides for those who are new to the medium.



# THE MARIGOLD



Marigolds (or *gairinda*) are commonly seen throughout celebrations and auspicious occasions in an individual's life. They are worn as garlands, scattered freely, grown in abundance, and are featured prominently at festivals and weddings. With the advent of photography, it is not uncommon to see marigold garlands hung around photographs of the deceased, or placed upon bodies prior to cremation. It is a flower that finds itself entwined in the journey of life and death for many.





# THE MARIGOLD

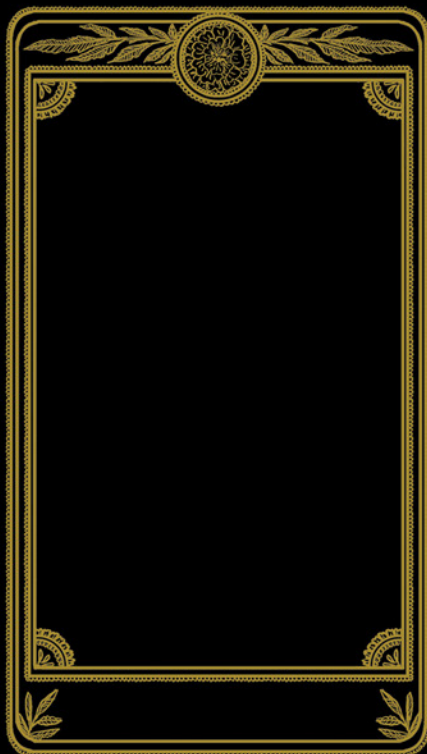


The same sentiment is communicated via the cards. The marigold flower persists on the back of each Major and Minor Arcana card, balanced in the event of a straightforward reading or a reversal. The flower is also displayed in the “framing” of the cards. In the instances where it is removed in favour of displaying the Major Arcana card numbers, the leaves of the plant are present.

Though there are a number of reoccurring symbols throughout the deck and its artwork, the marigold is the singular icon that is never absent: it is the frame of reference from which all possibilities are taken.



# GOTA & GOLD



The borders of the cards are inspired by *gota* embroidery, an embellishment found on many types of South Asian clothing and widely applied to hems and sleeves. *Gota patti* quite literally means “a strip of gota” or “a length of gota.” Traditionally these embellishments were embroidered with threads made of various metals, gold among them.

Gold is the only colour used in the deck alongside the black and white artwork. This references the dichotomies present in this metal - holiness versus wealth.



# TEETH & BONE


Much of the clothing, cultural, and religious references in this deck are particular to the cultures of the Sikhs of Panjab. As per Sikh scripture, there is no promise of an afterlife in a “heaven” or “hell.”

Sikhs traditionally cremate their dead, perceiving the body as empty upon expiry. The union between the body and soul has broken, and the physical form is now merely a shell in which a person once resided. The many skeletal figures throughout this deck do not directly imply darkness or an afterlife; they are, after all, the very same bones that reside alongside flesh, sinew, and viscera. It is an acknowledgement of the fact that enlightenment is within the reach of living flesh. Divinity exists inside of us and others in perpetuity, should we acknowledge it.

There is no need to fear teeth and bone when it is stripped of the pulp that makes up a human body. It has only ever been human, and nothing more. Those same skeletons wander and wonder and love and grieve.

While the deck does draw influence from particular cultural practices surrounding the Sikh faith, Sikhi as a religion does not hold with premonitions or fortune-telling. The use of poetry, allegory, and storytelling may be widespread, but it is a faith that demands a presence of conscience that focuses on the *now*.

This deck is a tool that can be used both in the fashion of traditional tarot, and as a means of meditating on questions concerning the present.



# MAJOR ARCANA



The Major Arcana is comprised of 22 cards that navigate significant experiences, relationships, and pathways in our lives. In the event that these cards are present and dominate a reading, they can point toward key issues that may need to be explored or addressed. Any Minor Arcana cards present in a reading alongside the Major Arcana will often provide supplementary information and guidance.





*Key symbols: tumbi, sun, pomegranate tree.*

The Fool is shown wearing a *dastaar* (turban) tied in a fashion traditionally referred to as a *turla*, but it does not halo his entire head as is proper - implying carelessness. He holds a tumbi, a one-stringed instrument commonly found in Panjabi folk music. The pomegranates represent multiple avenues and outcomes, as plentiful as their seeds.

The Fool often implies new beginnings, spontaneity, change, and innocence. Instead of walking forward, he is alone at rest, suggesting that many of the most significant journeys we take are not physical, but mental. Reversed, this card symbolizes naivety and recklessness.



*Key symbols: the star, clementine, tun branches.*

The star and the clementine in the hands of the Magician pay homage to things both earthly and celestial; all of the tools required to navigate through this life can be found down below or up above. The tun (otherwise known as toona) branches, meanwhile, are a reference to the many uses of the tree as both timber and medicine.

The Magician is a card traditionally associated with manifestation, whether that means putting one's dreams into action, realizing goals, or seizing the moment. It is a card that can also imply insecurity or manipulation when reversed, and it asks us to take full advantage of our resources, both physical and metaphysical.



*Key symbols: the moon, pomegranate, flower garlands.*

Traditionally, the High Priestess is associated with feminine power, seeking truth, knowledge, and understanding one's secret desires. She encourages us to attain knowledge from both the physical and celestial world. She holds the pomegranate (traditionally associated with femininity, power, and fertility) in one hand, and is backlit by the moon. The flowers in her hand and the flower garlands above her imply that knowledge must be cultivated before it can fully bloom.

She wears a traditional *salwar kameez* with little in the way of embellishment or physical trappings, removed from the material world. Scrolls and books are not present as an intentional nod to the importance of oral histories. Reversed, this card can mean harmful secrets, confusion, and mental disconnect.



*Key symbols: abundant jewellery, dagger, amla branches.*

The Empress sits upon a throne. She represents maternal figures, love, abundance, and, in some cases, excess. She wears a wealth of heavy jewellery, showcasing an appreciation of luxury and the material world. She wields a short dagger in a quiet, unassuming fashion, implying that alongside her nurturing nature she is very protective of those she loves. The garlands of flowers above her head signify a love of beauty, the lush abundance of plants flanking her suggesting growth.

The Empress is associated with fertility, giving life to new beginnings, feelings, relationships, and projects. Reversed, this card can imply truth, indecision, inadequacy, and emotional detachment.



*Key symbols: identical environment to the Empress, sword.*

Per Sikh scripture, a marriage is composed of a couple who share a single soul between two bodies. In this way, The Empress and Emperor exist simultaneously - within the same room and the same plane, two sides of the same coin. The Emperor sits far less decorated than the Empress, a nod to practicality. His sword is held at his side in a stance that is more than deliberate - invoking power and authority.

The Emperor is associated with law, paternal figures, structure, ambition, power, and leadership. Reversed, this card can signify discord, disorder, overbearing control, and a breakdown in power dynamics.



*Key symbols: haloed finger, amla branches.*

The Hierophant is depicted gesturing upward - haloed in gold, hand to his chest as if delivering an address or sermon. He requests that we turn our gaze from the physical trappings of this world and consider divine perspectives. It is a card that encourages spiritual awareness; the gesture to an endless sky a metaphor for the endless nature of the divine. He too is flanked by amla branches, this time in reference to their affiliation with *Amrit* (ambrosia or holy nectar/water).

The Hierophant is associated with gaining knowledge, conformity, wisdom, and the act of learning. We must pay mind to our teachers and mentors, and find wisdom in new places and people while respecting society. Reversed, this card can imply misplaced/lost faith, suppression, weakness, or feeling as though free thought has been restricted.



*Key symbols: the moon, pomegranate blossoms, bridal jewellery.*

This depiction of the Lovers is in direct reference to the poetry of Sheikh Farid, who suggests that all people are brides to the divine in death. A bride in this context refers to the soul, which departs the earthly home for another. Both of the Lovers are donned in *salwar kameez*, and each wear a *tikka* upon their forehead, typical of bridal jewellery. The pomegranate blossoms and the moon both symbolize femininity.

The Lovers expresses the act of navigating love and relationships, be they romantic, platonic, work partnerships, familial, or with the “self.” It implies clarity and honesty in one’s values. Reversed, it can suggest separation, mistrust, low self-esteem, and disharmony.



*Key symbols: bicycle, the sun, tun branches.*

As opposed to a literal chariot, a figure in a *salwar kameez* takes a more self-directed journey on a bicycle. In this fashion, the Chariot is intended to highlight the act of choice in both major and mundane decisions. The tun branches, meanwhile, symbolize the speed at which change manifests, as it is species of tree that is quick to propagate.

**The Chariot** is a card that navigates the triumph and the nature of choice when in a place of uncertainty or doubt. A situation has arisen that requires taking a stance, and the challenges that we face implore us to get on and begin pedalling in order to take action. Reversed, this card represents defeat, a loss of control, or a lack of direction.





*Key symbols: golden skull, rose bushes.*

**Strength emphasizes mental fortitude over physical strength. We must inspect our weaknesses, confront that which terrifies us, and continue to grow tenderly and with compassion. It asks us to put a name to the existential despair and difficult circumstances that lurk at the periphery of our consciousness.**

**Standing in rose bushes, the figure of Strength gazes at a golden skull - the individual coming to terms with their own shortcomings, mortality, and reality. This card is associated with self-control, self-inspection, and finding the power to navigate adversity with grace. Reversed, this card can imply weakness, breaking down, losing control, or having difficulty problem-solving.**



*Key symbols: lantern, amla branches.*

The Hermit sits quietly and considers his next move. He is surrounded by young amla branches, a symbol of connecting with the divine when beginning to look inward. The lantern shines brightly in the darkness, a metaphor for new perspectives and spiritual enlightenment.

The Hermit expresses our need for solitude and personal reflection. We must make the time to take self-inventory of our abilities, resources, feelings, and limits. When we find ourselves overwhelmed while navigating the problems and lives of those around us, do we make certain that we reserve time for ourselves? Reversed, this card can imply loneliness, alienation, extreme caution, and isolation.



*Key symbols: Chaff cutter, chrysanthemums, severed fingers.*

Hand-cranked chaff cutters are traditionally used on Panjabi farms to cut hay for livestock feed. Chaff cutters are known for amputating fingers in the event of their operators losing focus of their work. The chaff cutter and its blades are the Wheel of Fortune, bordered by four hands; some of which sport missing fingers. Amla branches and chrysanthemum flowers imply healing and optimism.

The Wheel of Fortune is typically associated with positive changes in luck and monetary pursuits. It implies that a change in one's destiny is apparent, but caution should be employed before jumping into something that sounds too good to be true. All things are cyclical, good fortune among them. Reversed, this card suggests poor luck and failure.



*Key symbols: amaltas flowers, golden mace.*

Justice holds a spiked mace and waits. It is patient, deliberate, and unavoidable - whether in this world or the next. Perfectly balanced, the figure of Justice takes a stance that is not grandiose, but instead quietly promises a strong (and at times, even brutal) resolution. The amaltas tree and its flowers hanging overhead have widespread medicinal uses, a reference to the restorative properties of Justice.

Justice is often affiliated with righting wrongs, accepting consequences, abiding by the truth, and legal matters. Justice requests that we truly consider a situation before taking further steps forward. Reversed, this card can imply false accusations, disharmony, and general unfairness.



*Key symbols: bahera trees, gold cord.*

The Hanged Man swings from the branches of two bahera trees on a gold rope. The tree shows no fruit; too early in the season to determine how much it might bear. In this same way, the Hanged Man is suspended in time; positive and negative outcomes stretched out before him.

The Hanged Man is a complex card that can take on a myriad of meanings. He can symbolize martyrdom, hardship, confusion, facing consequences, and forcing oneself to consider different perspectives.

The world may turn upside-down in the event of new problems and conflicts arising, but the Hanged Man asks us to consider our position and see what we can learn from it. Reversed, this card can imply indecision, unforeseen difficulties, and an unwillingness to change.



*Key symbols: short sickle, wheat halo, barren land.*

Death is depicted as a farmer. His head is haloed with a pattern resembling wheat, his hand holding a short sickle traditionally used for harvesting crops. Death operates as the farmer does: allowing the seeds of life to have their time to grow and flourish before making room for new life to take its course. The land on which he stands is currently barren, but growth occurs behind him, implying that new life will soon take root.

Death is associated with transformation. It is a card that asks us to accept changes and evolution, especially in the event that it is painful or hard-won. The passage of time brings new obstacles and opportunities as old ones fall by the wayside. Reversed, this card can imply stagnation and resisting change.



*Key symbols: wings, assam tea plants, tea flowing between vessels.*

The figure of Temperance here is intended to invoke Ajrail, the Angel of Death, the only angel briefly mentioned by name in Sikh scripture. Temperance pours hot tea back and forth between two vessels in order to cool it and is flanked by black tea leaves - the cycle between the life of the plant and the byproduct of its death.

This is a card deeply concerned with healing, balance, harmony, cycles, and the natural order. We must recognize the inevitability of all things, adjust to our circumstances, and make the best of our situations without being rash. We look to the future and manifest visions of what we wish to make and achieve, much like the tea leaves. Reversed, this card can imply hostility, indecision, and disharmony.



*Key symbols: Chain Viper, bird's-eye chili pepper plants.*

The Chain Viper was specifically chosen as its pattern emulates The Devil's associations with bondage and the traps laid by vice. Chain Vipers are incredibly venomous and often categorized as aggressive. The snake hangs loosely, not so tight as to restrict the figures, but the possibility looms over them. The bird's-eye chili pepper plants are present as a reference to the act of burning the peppers in order to undo *nazar*, or the Evil Eye.

The Devil often navigates entrapment, vice, sexuality, bondage, addiction, a lack of control, or a prison of one's own making. Reversed, it can point toward the act of breaking bonds, freedom, and detachment.





*Key symbols: stormy skies, lightning, carnations.*

Lightning strikes a lone tower and stormy skies hang overhead, implying that the scene will soon be overtaken. Below the chaos, carnations signify an attempt to remain poised in the face of strife.

The tower is associated with calamity, struggle, conflict, misjudgement, challenge, and momentous change. A situation is arising or has arisen that is a cause for concern, and the outcomes could be disastrous. The Tower requests that we take a step back to inspect ourselves and our conflicts, take the initiative to act and evolve. Reversed, it could imply an unwillingness to see problems for what they are, looming disaster, or avoiding change.



*Key symbols: six feathers, house crow's skull, star overhead.*

First of the celestial siblings, the Star is symbolized by a house crow's skull, six feathers, and a star etched in gold overhead. The markings on the crow skull are intended to evoke drops of water, which is associated with purity. In folklore, many bird species are commonly believed to navigate using the stars. We prepare ourselves to navigate through new beginnings, new opportunities, liberation, and freedom in the same fashion.

The Star asks us to put our faith in ourselves and our abilities and to approach self-expression with optimism. Reversed, this card can mean mistrust, insecurity, or a loss of hope.



*Key symbols: bindi, Indian flying fox skull, the moon.*

Second of the celestial siblings is the Moon. Subconscious fears, deception, and illusions are all things The Moon attempts to make us aware of. The skull is that of an Indian flying fox, a bat that navigates the same dark nights (literal and metaphorical) that send so many of us into tailspins of anxiety and fear.

This species of bat is largely regarded as vermin, despite evidence to the contrary. This alludes to the Moon's nature of miscommunication, trauma, or misunderstanding, negative behaviours that we may still practice despite knowing better. Take note of the knowledge available and seek further information to form a more complete picture of your circumstances and surroundings. Reversed, this card can imply a lapse in judgement and holes in one's intuition.



*Key symbols: Asiatic lion's skull, three dots, the sun.*

Third of the celestial siblings, the Sun is represented by the skull of an Asiatic lion haloed in its mane, much as the sun is haloed above. Lions are perceived as symbols of power, prosperity, strength, and optimism. The three dots on the chin of the lion skull are marks intended to ward away *nazar*/the Evil Eye and encourage the continued accumulation of good fortune. The Sun above, gold and bright, points to warmth, happiness, comfort, and growth.

Commonly this is a card linked to positive news, confidence, and good luck. Reversed, this card can imply misfortune approaching, depression, or unsuccessful ventures.



*Key symbols: chrysanthemums, golden arrows.*

A figure bears down on another, almost oppressive at first glance as they push their arrow-struck body into the depths of the chrysanthemums. We have experienced fundamental change, some of it painful (as alluded to by the arrows). Judgement transforms us, and the bed of chrysanthemum flowers into which the figure falls refers to a place to experience rest, rebirth, and arise from again, stronger and more complete. Judgement does not always appear positive in its execution, but ultimately seeks what is best for us. Painful lessons may need to be experienced in order to embrace true change.

Reversed, Judgement can signify past regrets, ignoring the call to transform, disappointment, and false accusations.



*Key symbols: mustard blossoms, skull, dagger, ring of teeth, bat.*

All four symbols of the minor arcana are present here: the skull for Cups, the Ring of teeth, the dagger for Swords, and the stems of mustard blossoms acting as Wands. Above, the small mouse-eared bat is intended to represent mortals existing alongside the deceased. The World is constantly in flux, a medley of growth and decay occurring simultaneously. We must live and work our way through the hardships, triumphs, and challenges that every suit represents in order to lead a more complete existence.

This card is associated with movement and completion, growth, success, and enlightenment. Reversed, this card can imply directionlessness and a loss of ambition or vision.

# WANDS



The suit of Wands is traditionally associated with the element of *Fire*, and explores ambition, creativity, change, the ego, and growth. In this deck, Wands is represented by stems of a variety of flowers, the significance of each flower mirroring the original intentions of the suit. Growth, in the most organic of fashions, is unavoidable - all things live, evolve, and die to make room for others to do the same.



*Key symbols: rose, gold thorns.*

This card stands for creativity, ambition, and opportunities actively in bloom as the rose unfurls.

Reversed, this card can imply ruin, delays, setbacks, trials, and challenges in creative pursuits, as indicated by the thorns.



*Key symbols: flowering dill.*

This card signifies courage, power (of which dill is a symbol), and venturing forward into new experiences without fear. The dill is crossed, mimicking the many branching forks in the path of life.

Reversed, this card can mean vulnerability, powerlessness, and warn of a possibly inflated ego.





*Key symbols: forsythia stems.*

Forsythia stems symbolize foresight, which this card encourages us to exercise with an open mind. We must consider the many routes we may take and plan accordingly, and in doing so, we will benefit.

Reversed, this card can signify a lack of vision for the future, or ignorance of the present.



*Key symbols: chrysanthemums.*

This card symbolizes home, celebration, joy, and harmony, much as the chrysanthemum flower does. It encourages us to enjoy our time with those we love, and to get our homes in order.

Reversed, it can imply social disputes and prioritizing others at the risk of our personal development.



*Key symbols: mustard flowers.*

This card signifies rivalry, obstacles, competition, and trickery. Wild mustard is an incredibly competitive plant when growing alongside wheat or other crops and can greatly reduce their yield.

Reversed, this card can imply assuming the worst and misunderstanding one's own or others' needs.



*Key symbols: evening primrose.*

This card symbolizes victory, superiority, confidence, and pride - as the primrose flower centers itself among its ilk.

Reversed, this card can point to failing to recognize one's own shortcomings due to one's pride or superiority.



*Key symbols: mignonette branches, fruit, and flowers.*

This card concerns itself with disobedience, resistance, and determination. The mignonette branches are shown in different stages of their lives. Mehndi, made from the leaves, is used to mark the body; in the same way this card symbolizes marking oneself.

Reversed, this card suggests embarrassment, anxiety, or an inability to stand up for oneself.



*Key symbols: ber branches and fruit.*

This card symbolizes new developments, action, completing projects, and resolving conflicts. The ber tree grows very quickly and yields fruit, much as one's efforts will by being decisive and determined.

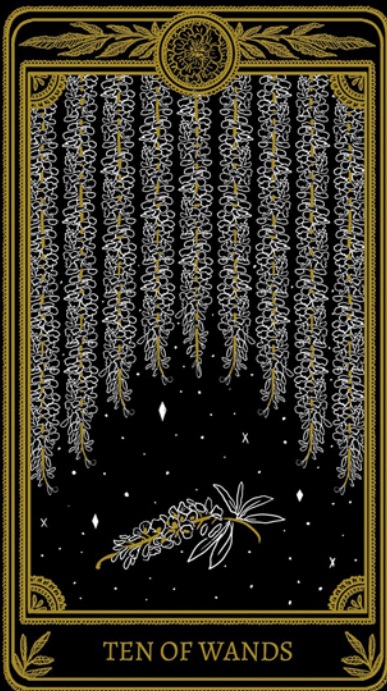
Reversed, this card can imply quarrels, delays, and needing to slow down in order to reevaluate goals and circumstances.



*Key symbols: sunflowers.*

This card symbolizes persistence and resilience in the face of adversity. Despite being challenged when pursuing new goals, it is important to rise to the occasion and stand proudly, much as the sunflower does.

Reversed, this card can signify pessimism, dread, and resignation.



*Key symbols: amaltas flowers.*

This card implies heavy burdens, being overwhelmed, and struggle. The amaltas flowers hang heavily over the lone branch that has fallen, almost oppressive as they loom overhead.

Reversed, this card can mean overextending oneself or one's resources and avoiding responsibilities.



*Key symbols: roses.*

The Page of Wands stands for wonder, optimism, creativity, and confidence. They carry a bouquet of roses, bereft of thorns, as they have had the foresight to protect themselves. The Page is inspired and excited to move forward in the next step of their journey, but does so in a fashion that is more constructive than foolhardy.

Reversed, this card can imply that an excess of excitement has resulted in overlooking key details on how to move forward and maintain new projects and relationships.



*Key symbols: gladiolus.*

The Knight of Wands contains high, near-foolhardy amounts of energy. This is a card that implies that impetuosity and grandstanding is present, as well as rashness, overconfidence, and infatuation (as the gladiolus represents). This card may signify a need to act more recklessly, be more assertive, and take the opportunity to be more brash or forthright.

Reversed, this card can imply ill-placed infatuation with an idea or person, overhanging doubts, confusion, and a dent in one's confidence.



*Key symbols: field of sunflowers.*

**The Queen of Wands symbolizes steady, well-deserved confidence. She stands charismatic, innovative, bright, and strong - much like the sunflower. She has reached a point of self-awareness wherein she is completely comfortable with her identity and projects it out to the world.**

**One must ask themselves if they have achieved this level of self-awareness or need to work toward it.**

**Reversed, this card can signify being held back, not having the opportunity to try new things, and overbearing scrutiny of oneself and one's behaviours.**



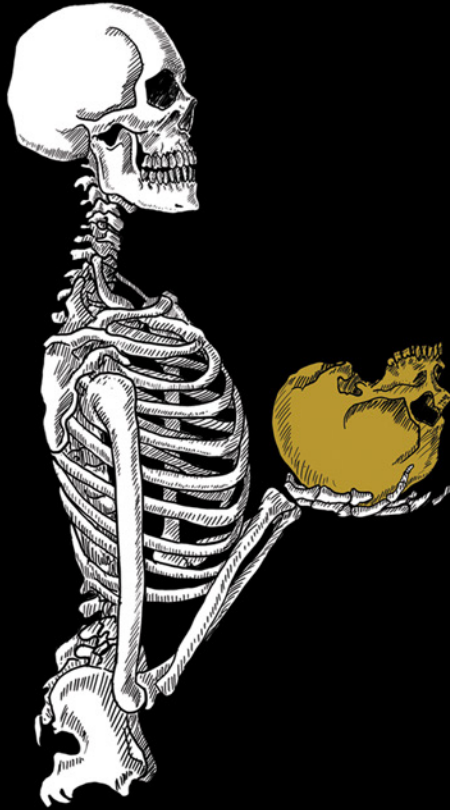
*Key symbols: field of marigolds.*

The King of Wands holds a marigold aloft as he stands among the flowers, his gesture sweeping, his presence undeniable. Although he is donned in simple clothes, his character speaks for itself. The King of Wands symbolizes drama, authority, power, unapologetic self-expression, and confidence. This card steps forward into new opportunities with flourish and makes itself known, as golden and undeniable as the marigold flower - recurring and ever-present.

Reversed, this card can suggest a conflict with an authority figure or person of high standing, a power struggle, or a need to confront one's own (possibly ill) relationship with power.



# CUPS



The suit of Cups is traditionally associated with the element of *Water*. It navigates our emotions, love-lives, and relationships. In *The Marigold Tarot*, Cups is represented by skulls behaving as a vessel, as the skull is the home of an individual's emotional experiences and mental wellbeing. This suit asks us to confront how we navigate our feelings in regards to ourselves and those around us.



*Key symbols: pomegranate seeds, pomegranate blossoms.*

This card symbolizes romantic desire, pining, wanting, new love, and new beginnings. The pomegranate seeds are plentiful alongside their blossom.

Reversed, this card may signify delusion or a disconnect with reality in regards to relationships.



*Key symbols: roses.*

This card concerns itself with partnership and palpable romantic energy; lovers excited to fall into new relationships and opportunities, or finding ways for old love to endure. The skulls gaze at one another as if enraptured.

Reversed, this card can often imply codependence, miscommunication, and misunderstanding.



*Key symbols: sunflower, pouring tea.*

This card associates itself with friendships, ties, and bonds. It is a card of celebration: golden tea to be shared pouring over onto a jubilant sunflower, good intentions and news being passed from individual to individual.

Reversed, this card can suggest being too entangled in celebration, which results in neglecting one's responsibilities or duties.



*Key symbols: periwinkle.*

This card can symbolize disinterest, introspection, doubt, pessimism, and an inability to see the good in life. Despite an abundance of optimistic periwinkle flowers, the skulls rotate around the frame, heads tipped downward.

Reversed, this card can refer to new beginnings, new perspectives, and favouring pessimism.



*Key symbols: mayapple.*

This card concerns itself with regret, loss, mourning, and disappointment. It features five skulls turned upside-down, mayapple flowers protruding from within them at different stages of the plant's life. The plant's poisonous nature is a reference to the destructive nature of sorrow in excess.

Reversed, this card suggests regaining inner strength and alliances.



*Key symbols: periwinkle.*

This card signifies innocence, positive relationships, nostalgia, and harmony in the home. The periwinkle flowers bud, grow, and die, as is the natural order of all things - people, places, and relationships.

Reversed, this card can signify naivety, disharmony, or holding onto the past in an unhealthy fashion.



*Key symbols: night gladiolus flowers, feathers, third eye.*

This card symbolizes wishful thinking, imagination, and preoccupation with fantasy. The night gladiolus flowers allude to memory, the feathers to the flighty nature of thought, and the third eye to introspection and our inner voice.

Reversed, this card can suggest preoccupation with wishing for the impossible, an overabundance of options, and indecision.



*Key symbols: poppy.*

This card can represent a change of direction, moving on from disharmony to seek balance, disappointment, and abandonment. The poppy and the opiates derived from it can be used to assist in healing, but can also cause harm when abused.

Reversed, this card can suggest joy, moving forward, and that stagnation is the root cause of the majority of one's challenges.



*Key symbols: peruvian lily, coins.*

This card stands for self-satisfaction, good fortune, and contentment. One finds joy in what one has and finds it abundant; the coins springing from each skull. The peruvian lilies express warmth and goodwill to oneself.

Reversed, this card can indicate greed, potentially shallow fulfillment, and concerns with the material world.



*Key symbols: marigolds, hangman's knot, third eye.*

This card symbolizes completion, peace, self-awareness, and family. The marigolds grow uninhibited and suggest a complete understanding of the cycles life has to offer: birth, death, and enlightenment.

Reversed, this card can imply preoccupation with the perfect life, a broken familial/relationship bond, violence, and discord.



*Key symbols: orange blossoms, orange fruit.*

**The Page of Cups is represented by a skull overflowing with oranges and orange blossoms. This card concerns itself with budding relationships and ventures, creativity, new desire, and intuition. Oranges and their blossoms are bright, cheerful, fragrant, and youthful. It implies that inspiration is on the upswing, new and exciting possibilities, ideas, and people may be explored, and that stagnation and old habits may need to be challenged.**

**Reversed, this card can suggest deception and re-evaluating whether a relationship or goal is truly fulfilling.**



*Key symbols: bull horn, overflowing tears.*

**The Knight of Cups signifies romance, idealization, and being charmed.**

That same idealization can lead to over-emotional fantasies, grand gestures, and “blowing the horn,” only for one’s intentions to pour over like tears. This can be either in reference to oneself, or in reference to another individual in a relationship.

**Reversed, this card can suggest falling in love with the concept of being in love, jealousy, and needing to be tethered back to reality.**





*Key symbols: lotus flower.*

The Queen of Cups represents unconditional love, compassion, empathy, and patience. The Queen blooms as the lotus flower does. Much like the flower rooted in the mud, she emerges from hardship, filth, and ruin and is incredibly beautiful, deeply thoughtful, and willing to consider the circumstances of others.

Reversed, this card can imply dishonor, mistrust, being too preoccupied with the problems of others to address one's own issues, and a disconnect from one's emotions.



*Key symbols: mango, mango blossoms, coins.*

The King of Cups stands for abundance, generosity, security, level-headedness, reliability, and tolerance. Mangoes and mango blossoms symbolize sweet, fruitful abundance. The coins suggest financial and mental security. The King is aware of his power and limitations and is able to reap the benefits of both.

Reversed, this card can point to behaviours that may be considered self-destructive, controlling, dishonest, and manipulative.

# SWORDS



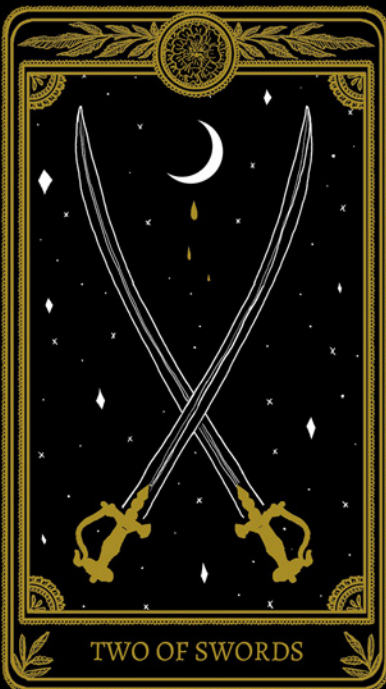
The suit of Swords is traditionally associated with the element of *Air*, and explores the realm of knowledge, communication, and comprehension. Conflict, anguish, suffering, and the subsequent quest for a resolution are all themes that the suit of Swords seeks to examine. Swords asks us to approach things with a mind that values logic and reason, imploring us to broaden our perspectives to consider new solutions.



*Key symbols: impaled rose.*

This card signifies breakthroughs, confronting facts and problems, actively working on solutions, and seeking triumph. A sword pierces a rose effortlessly, symbolizing that while some issues may appear beautiful if problematic, they must be dealt with decisively.

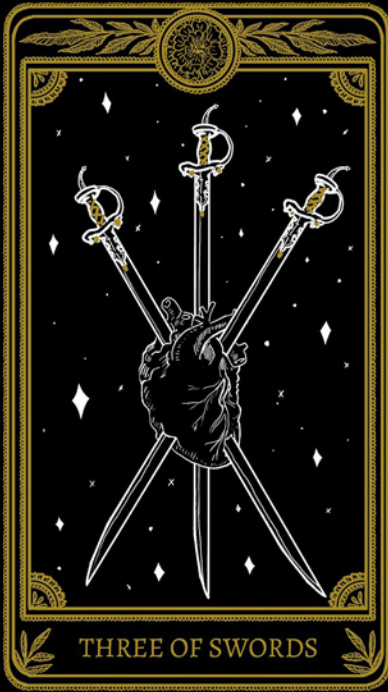
Reversed, this card can suggest an excess of force being applied to a situation, potentially leading to disaster.



*Key symbols: reversed handles, the moon.*

This card concerns itself with denial, stalemate, and indecision. This is illustrated by the reversed handles on the swords, rendering them virtually unusable. The moon hangs overhead, a nod to its affiliation with illusions.

Reversed, this card can imply disloyalty and feeling pressured or lost.



*Key symbols: impaled heart, reversed handles.*

This card symbolizes heartbreak, betrayal, division, hard truths, and rejection. The heart is impaled by three swords, two of which have their handles reversed; a reference to how the indecisive nature of the Two of Swords can grow into something more destructive.

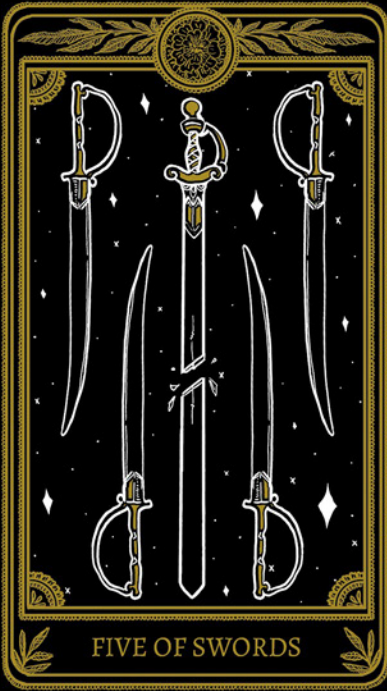
Reversed, it can signify a need to move on, feelings of alienation, and love or relationships long-lost.



*Key symbols: gardenia.*

This card represents solitude, reevaluation, and rest. The gardenia flower in the center symbolizes self-reflection and renewal, and all four blades are pointed inward, as if directing their attention to it.

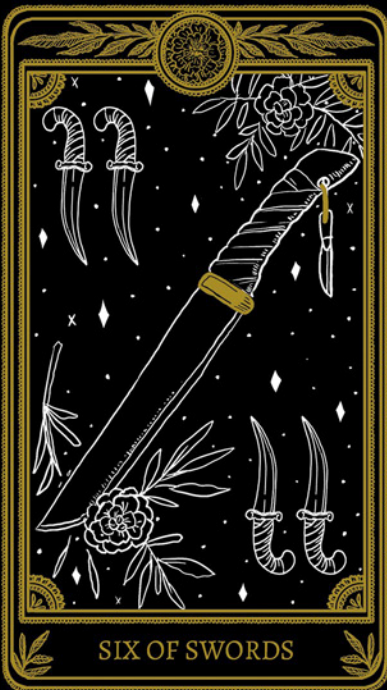
Reversed, this card suggests stress, restlessness, and an unwillingness to take risks.



*Key symbols: broken sword.*

This card symbolizes loss, dishonor, and defeat. The khanda (double-edged sword) within the middle of the composition lays broken. This is defeat even in the event of victory, as some triumphs can feel ill-won or hollow.

Reversed, this card can suggest closure, working toward resolution (though not necessarily positive resolution), and hostility.



*Key symbols: machete, marigolds.*

This card stands for travel and inner journeys, growth and evolution after difficult times. The machete is a utility-based, practical blade and suggests a personality that will adapt to new situations without immediately appearing threatening.

Reversed, this card can represent an inability to move forward, obstacles, and waiting.



*Key symbols: kard dagger, nerium oleander.*

This card represents thievery, lies, betrayal, and avoiding the truth. The thin blades of the kard dagger make it useful for stabbing and little else. Nerium oleander, meanwhile, is a highly poisonous plant despite its deceptively beautiful appearance.

Reversed, this card can suggest slander, isolation, and being manipulated.



*Key symbols: tooth, sissoo leaves, kadam leaves.*

This card can signify bad news, powerlessness, loneliness, and self-sabotage. The tooth symbolizes the mouth and the words that come from it; the daggers facing inward suggest it is something of a negative nature. The sissoo and kadam leaves represent attempted healing.

Reversed, this card can imply unrest and an inability to move on.



*Key symbols: jawbone.*

This card symbolizes guilt, deception, despair, anxiety, and lies. The jawbone alone under the daggers and flanked by the swords suggests that words may be the root of one's despair - whether they are those that were said or those that were heard. Self-confrontation and self-inventory must be carried out with honesty.

Reversed, this card can suggest doubt, shame, and suspicion.



*Key symbols: impaled skull.*

This card concerns itself with matters of suffering, betrayal, and desolation. Pain has reached or is reaching an apex and a resolution will soon be found. The skull is impaled in every possible direction, heavy with gold, and can be torn asunder at any moment. Arriving at a precipice and needing a new starting point.

Reversed, this card signifies power, advantage, domineering, and authority.





*Key symbols: roses, headless figure.*

The Page of Swords lacks a head, their insides entwined with a rosebush and a single dagger hanging over the vertebrae that compose their neck. This card concerns itself with vigilance, contemplation, thought, and the growth of new ideas. However, these very ideas may lead to the head quite literally leaving the body in order to pursue the Page's desire for an intellectual challenge. Still the knife hangs over them, a reminder that caution is of utmost importance.

Reversed, this card could suggest failing to notice issues arising, fearing the unknown, or willfully ignoring the answers to one's problems.



*Key symbols: snapdragons.*

The Knight of Swords is considered intellectual, defensive, skilled, brave, and wrathful. Likewise, snapdragons are also associated with duality; simultaneously linked with graciousness and deceptiveness. He can be tactless; casting aspirations, setting goals, and making statements without thinking twice about how appropriate they may or may not be.

Reversed, this card can imply suppression, lacking discretion, or feeling incapable of expressing oneself fully.



*Key symbols: khair branches.*

**The Queen of Swords stands poised and ready to strike if necessary. She is decisive (if mournful) in her pursuits and execution. This card symbolizes perceptiveness, sadness, and honesty in the face of all decisions - especially difficult ones. The extract taken from khair trees is considered healing, but very bitter, much like the act of confronting necessary and painful truths.**

**Reversed, this card can suggest lies, maliciousness, cold-heartedness, and being judgemental.**



*Key symbols: pansies, thyme.*

The King of Swords sits at rest, his sword braced before him, unlike the dynamic gestures of the Knight and Queen. He represents authority, integrity, connections, intellect, and fortitude - both physical and mental. The thyme alongside him stands for power, the pansies for remembrance. He is a commanding presence that demands respect.

Reversed, this card can imply cruelty, manipulation, ill-intentions, injustice, and narrow worldviews.

# RINGS



The suit of Rings (otherwise known as Discs, Coins, or Pentacles) is traditionally associated with the element of *Earth*. It navigates earthly matters and concerns, such as money, physical or financial security, material wealth, and the home. In this deck, the suit is represented by physical rings and hands rendered in flesh instead of bone, with the exception of the Court cards (King, Queen, Knight, and Page).



*Key symbols: eye, wood anemone.*

This card symbolizes wealth, prosperity, and contentment. The eye suggests vision and the presence of spiritual wealth alongside physical wealth. The wood anemone is a flower often associated with protection, adaptation, and a bright future.

Reversed, this card can imply a fixation on the material world, anxiety, and greed.



*Key symbols: eye, gold kara, joined hands.*

This card represents balance, adaptability, and problem-solving. The hands hold one another; finding resolutions with confidence in oneself. The bracelets around their wrists behave as the kara does - a symbol of the eternal and cyclical nature of the divine. The eye reinforces this vision.

Reversed, this card suggests false joy and overtaking oneself.



*Key symbols: poppy.*

This card concerns itself with cooperation, skilled labour, and completing projects. The rings behave as a lens from which the poppy (a symbol of both success and sloth) can be observed. If focus is applied, triumph will follow.

Reversed, it can represent weaknesses in work or team situations, incompetence, and an inability to delegate.



*Key symbols: eye, sword, full moon.*

This card symbolizes greed, possessiveness, and unkindness of spirit. The hands reach for one another over the moon; a symbol of the illusions and dreams of this world. The sword suggests suffering; the vision granted by the eye on the palm will easily be obscured by a closed fist.

Reversed, this card implies opposition, or feelings of being controlled.



*Key symbols: eye, stinging nettles.*

This card represents financial and material troubles, struggle, victim mentalities, and rejection. The hand finds itself surrounded by stinging nettles, pained by unfavourable circumstances. The eye in proximity to the nettles suggests understanding that one's strife is self-inflicted.

Reversed, this card can imply chaos, discord, or resolution.



*Key symbols: knife, eye.*

This card symbolizes generosity, prosperity, gratification, reflection, and loss versus gain. The hands wield a short knife - utilitarian or dangerous in the right circumstances. The eye suggests understanding the material world and considering both the harmful and helpful facets of it.

Reversed, this card implies envy or a lack of desire to think critically of one's own actions.





*Key symbols: cardamom plant, gesturing upwards.*

This card represents reflecting on finances, social standing, business, and the fruits of one's labour. The gesture upward suggests reflection, and the spices derived from the cardamom plant and its seeds can be notoriously hard to cultivate.

Reversed, it can suggest insecurity, wariness about finances, and a need to act on one's plans instead of ruminating over ideas.



*Key symbols: crossed fingers, wood anemone.*

This card symbolizes craft, diligence, dedication, and skill. The wood anemone, a symbol of adaptation, emphasizes the need to commit to one's craft in order to achieve results in projects, finances, and life.

Reversed, this card can imply vanity, dashed ambitions, or a lack of challenge in life.



*Key symbols: rose, successively larger rings.*

This card represents success, discipline, enjoyment, and safety. The rose blooms within the view of the largest ring; a representation of expanding one's perspectives to see the bigger picture - not just petals, not thorns, not leaves - and focusing on what one finds wonderful.

Reversed, this card can suggest bad faith, burnout, and unfinished projects.



*Key symbols: rings in rotation.*

This card symbolizes juggling family affairs and financial matters, as well as a desire for tradition and affluence (which can refer to both spiritual or material affluence). The many gold rings rotate in bright abundance.

Reversed, this card can imply loss, theft, uncompromising values, and an obsession with socially-acceptable roles and routines.



*Key symbols: ring hovering in-hand, neem leaves.*

The Page of Rings represents reflection, contemplation, learning, practical goals, and a connection to reality. The Page observes the ring carefully, almost in reverence. This card concerns itself with new projects, taking tasks “in hand” and finding reasonable ways to make them work within one’s resources and limits. Neem leaves surround our Page, the tree’s many widespread uses in cosmetics, food, and medicine a nod to the practicality of the Page of Rings.

Reversed, this card implies bad news, wastefulness, or a preoccupation with projects at the expense of other priorities in life.



*Key symbols: ring as chakram, neem leaves.*

The Knight of Rings wields his Ring in his hand as a chakram. This is a card of duality, much like the other Knights, representing the extremes of his station. He symbolizes hard work, dedication, and responsibility, but can also stand for inflexibility and conservative attitudes. The chakram in his hand is a weapon that can save or harm. The neem leaves in the background symbolize the many practical uses of the plant, as well as the threat of poisoning if its oil is consumed in excess.

Reversed, this card suggest carelessness, pessimism, lethargy, or roadblocks in achieving one's goals.



*Key symbols: ring overhead, neem leaves.*

The Queen of Rings exemplifies intelligence, trustworthiness, security, generosity, and resourcefulness. She holds the ring overhead and turns her gaze upward, contemplating the greater world past the trappings of gold and heavily adorned clothing. This is a card of nurturing, support, and responsibility. The presence of neem, in the case of the Queen of Rings, refers to the plant's protective and restorative properties. Its seeds are ground and used as a natural insect and pest deterrent for other crops.

Reversed, this card represents mistrust, neglect, fear, and prioritizing others at the expense of oneself.



*Key symbols: ring as halo, neem leaves.*

**The King of Rings symbolizes power, knowledge, success, and reliability. In a fashion, one could suggest that everything he touches turns to gold.**

His "ring" haloes his head, indicating that he is rich in practical knowledge. His keen instincts, cooperative nature, and business sense are his greatest assets. The neem leaves surrounding the King of Rings refer to the sheer abundance and potential present within him.

**Reversed, this card can suggest corruption, an obsession with the material world at the expense of spiritual wellness, and greed.**





# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnold, Kim. *Tarot: Learn How to Read and Interpret the Cards*. Hay House, 2015.

Bamber, C J. *PLANTS OF THE PUNJAB: a Descriptive Key to the Flora of the Punjab, North-West Frontier... Province and Kashmir (Classic Reprint)*. FORGOTTEN BOOKS, 2016.



Bartlett, Sarah. *The Tarot Bible the Definitive Guide to the Cards and Spreads*. Godsfield, 2009.

Huggens, Kim. *Tarot 101: Mastering the Art of Reading the Cards*. Llewellyn Worldwide, 2010.

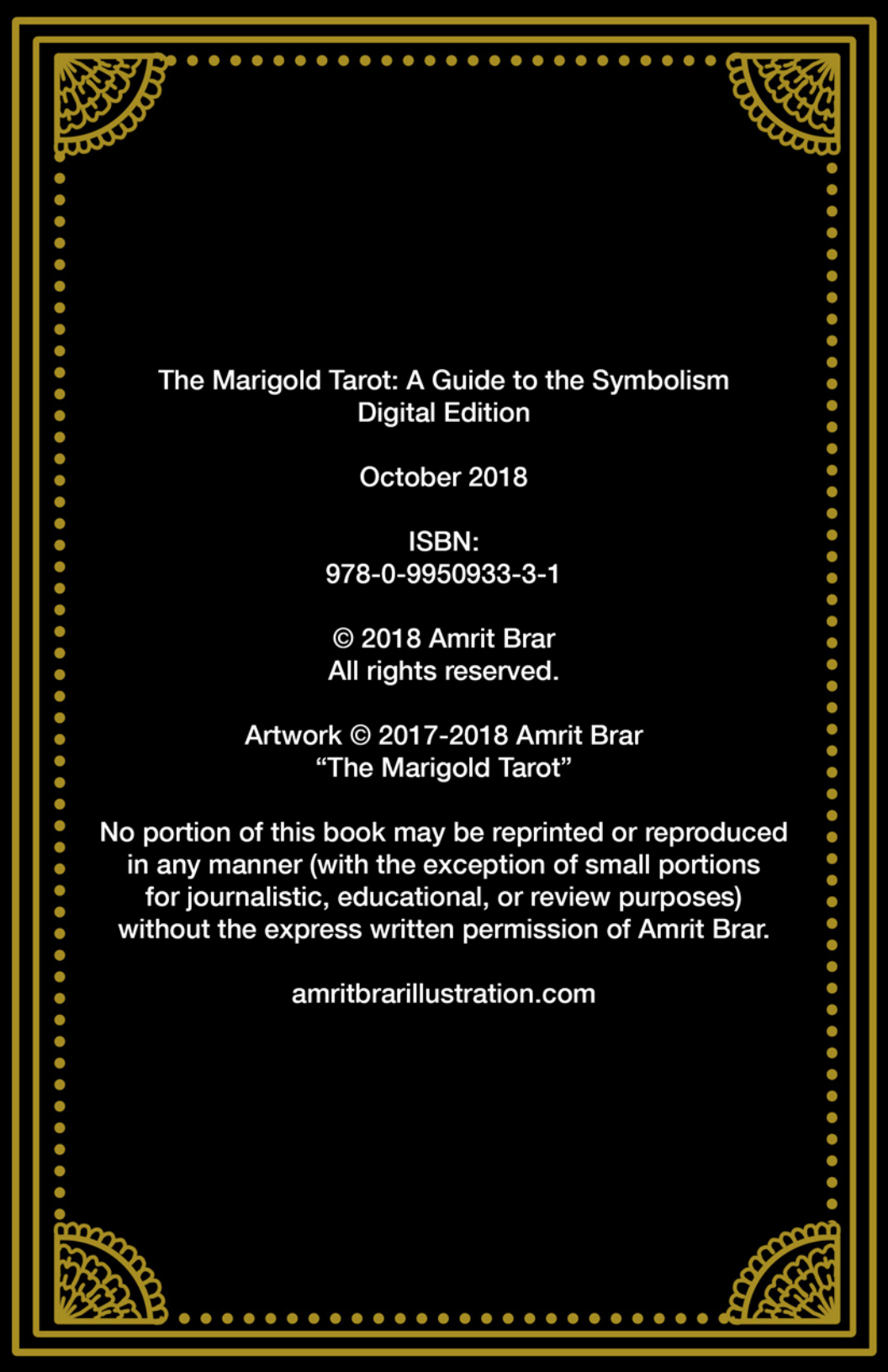
Pollack, Rachel. *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Tarot*. Gramercy Books, 2004.

Sahni, K. C. *The Book of Indian Trees*. Bombay Natural History Society, 2015.

Waite, Arthur Edward. *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot: Being Fragments of a Secret Tradition under the Veil of Divination*. U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 1993.







The Marigold Tarot: A Guide to the Symbolism  
Digital Edition

October 2018

ISBN:  
978-0-9950933-3-1

© 2018 Amrit Brar  
All rights reserved.

Artwork © 2017-2018 Amrit Brar  
“The Marigold Tarot”

No portion of this book may be reprinted or reproduced  
in any manner (with the exception of small portions  
for journalistic, educational, or review purposes)  
without the express written permission of Amrit Brar.

[amritbrarillustration.com](http://amritbrarillustration.com)