

The Mystical School Presents:  
The Mythic Tarot Deck and the stories behind the Greek myths  
By Cheryl Hill © 2009

The first suit I'll write about is that of the cup cards. They are represented by Eros, the Greek version of Cupid, and Psyche, a mortal. Eros was the son of the love goddess, Aphrodite. Psyche was human but so beautiful the people began to worship Psyche instead of Aphrodite. The goddess did not like the adoration and worship of the people being taken from her and when Aphrodite looked upon Psyche, even Aphrodite became jealous of the mortals beauty. Aphrodite commanded Eros to kill Psyche. So, it was Aphrodite's jealousy which inadvertently unleashed a series of events that would bring to light an unlikely love story.

Psyche, who had committed no wrong and whose only crime was her beauty, was to be condemned by the jealousy and fear of others. Psyche had two other sisters who had married. Psyche was not married yet, not because she didn't have a suitors, in fact, she had many. But, her would be suitors were so intimidated by Psyche's beauty, they didn't dare approach her. Psyche was left alone and lonely. Psyche's father became worried that perhaps there was something terribly wrong with his daughter, so he paid the local oracle a visit and was instructed by the psychic that if he didn't want disaster to fall upon him, he would have to take Psyche to the sea, tie her to a rock, and await to be eaten by a sea monster! The poor girl seemed to be doomed.

Meanwhile, Eros, enroute to accomplish his mother's bidding, was fully prepared to throw the woman to her death via the sea monster but when he gazed upon her he was so immediately enraptured by her beauty that he staggered and pierced himself with one of the love arrows he carried. Now, Eros was under the spell of his own powerful love potion. In a soft whisp, Eros' unseen image carried Psyche away to a magnificent palace where the invisible Eros invited Psyche to stay. Eros stipulated that Psyche could have anything she wanted, except she was never permitted to look upon him. So, Psyche lived in the lap of luxury; her every need attended to. At nighttime Eros would visit with Psyche. Psyche could feel Eros' body next to hers and sense the mate she had so desperately long for, but in the morning, her love would be gone.

One day, Psyche's sister's were permitted to visit. One look at the life of luxury Psyche was living immediately invoked her sister's jealousy. The sisters devised a plan to ruin Psyche's peace and contentment. They began whispering doubts of Psyche's mate's intentions telling Psyche the reason Eros wouldn't let Psyche see him, was because he was so ugly a monster that would devour her as was to be her fate when Psyche met Eros. Her sisters warned Psyche to be prepared for this attack and it would be better if Psyche would uncover the mystery first instead of being taken by surprise. So, Psyche became worried. What if her sisters were right? What if Eros wasn't the man she had been waiting for all her life, but he was some type of hideous monster? The only thing Eros wanted of her was for Psyche never to attempt to gaze upon him but Psyche's sisters had filled her mind with terror and now, all the love she felt for Eros, fell by the wayside. Psyche determined she would catch a glimpse of her lover. So, after Eros had fallen asleep, Psyche lit a lamp and held it by his face. Psyche was so relieved at seeing Eros' beautiful features, she didn't notice a drop of hot oil fall from the light. Eros awoke from the pain of the burning oil and looked into his lover's eyes. Eros instantly arose and fled the palace. All that Psyche had disappeared, too. Psyche, because of her mistrust, was left alone.

Psyche searched for Eros, but to no avail. Psyche finally decided she should go to Aphrodite and beg the goddess to help her find Eros. Aphrodite's was still angry at Psyche for all the trouble the girl had caused, but decided that she would give Psyche a semblance of a penance, so Aphrodite gave Psyche four impossible tasks for a mere mortal to complete. Psyche accepted the punishment and, despite the utter impossibility for her to perform all the tasks, nevertheless, because of her love for Eros, set off to attempt them. Unbeknownst too Psyche, Eros was still watching over her. The impossible tasks Aphrodite imposed were accomplished.

In the end, Aphrodite agreed to the union of Eros and Psyche, but so Psyche would not be worshipped as a mortal like before, she petitioned to have Psyche made immortal.

Psyche's journey of love is perceived in The Mythic Tarot as relating to another person and the developing feelings that come with the emotion of love. Love is a spiritual emotion - you can't see it, but you know it's there. Psyche hadn't seen Eros, but she felt the emotional spiritual connection of love.

Newly divorced and single clients who come to me for readings regarding their love lives, have one common factor – they all are looking for a lasting relationship. The client doesn't ask, "When am I going to have my next fling?" but quite the opposite, "When will I find Mr. or Mrs. Right?" My clients kept running into the problem of manifesting the same type of man or woman as their ex, but with a different face! What were they missing here? They were focusing on the physical features they wanted in their next partner, not the spiritual qualities. I had them concentrate and write down what they wanted in a partner's attributes that would make their future solidarity with that person complete and compatible.

Psyche went through great pangs to bring Eros back and knew the trials she was going to go through were worth the prize. Psyche also was aware there was the possibility that she might die, but that thought didn't dissuade her from trying – because she knew love was worth the effort.



The next suit is that of swords and is represented by Orestes and the House of Atreus. Orestes is a young man trapped in the middle of a family curse, a selfish and arrogant father, and a revengeful mother. Throw in a ticked off goddess and a Greek god who made it Orestes job to avenge the murder of Orestes' father, and you have one sad, confused, threatened kid. Orestes agonized over his fate and decided to do what most of us who've been through the emotional wringer do, and that was to do nothing. But, as in real life, those of us going through a similar stalemate, are sometimes kick-started in action by an outside source.

Orestes did not feel lucky when the god Apollo forced him into making a choice about proceeding with the punishment of death upon his mother for murdering his father. Orestes was trapped in a precarious situation. On the one hand if Orestes disobeyed Apollo he could be made to go mad by the god. But if Orestes killed his mother, he would be haunted by the witch-like furies. Orestes weighed his options and chose not to go against Apollo.

Orestes fulfilled his deed. With his mother dead by his hands, the furies' wrath descended. But luck as well as justice was on Orestes side. Orestes fell into despair and sought the help of the goddess, Athene, who is the goddess of justice. Athene weighed Orestes predicament and felt pity for him. After all, the curse was not any of Orestes doing as it was handed down through generations. Through Athene's divine justice, everything was made right and Orestes was free.

To often, when we are faced with life's challenges, we will "shut down" emotionally and choose to either to ignore or avoid the problem. Maybe you had an Apollo in your life who forced you to take action and take your life back. I know after many of these stagnant periods of my life, I can look back and thank the Universe for the opportunity given me by "pushy" people so I would take action instead of wallow in my depression. After my dilemma was over, I was a stronger person. I was free of the fear to not act on my behalf.

The next suit is that of pentacles and is represented by Daedalus and the minotaur. Daedalus was a skilled and gifted craftsman. Daedalus perfected his skills and was famous for his gift. Daedalus also had a few problems. One of his character flaws was jealousy. Daedalus was so jealous of his pre-teen nephew, who exhibited craftsman's skill on his level, that he murdered the boy. Thus, with the sin of murder, a great and gifted craftsman succumbed to fleeing for his life. Daedalus took to the road and found himself in the city of Crete and the ruler, King Minos. Daedalus found favor and protection with the king and started his trade all over. The god Poseidon wanted Daedalus' employer to perform a sacrifice with a white bull the god provided. But King Minos disrespected the god and ignored Poseidon's order. Daedalus was not the direct target of Poseidon's revenge, but, nevertheless, was drawn into the drama. Daedalus jeopardized his value of loyalty to King Minos when he fell into an arrangement of helping the king's wife, whom Poseidon put a spell upon to fall in love with the bull. Daedalus, without compromising his favor with the king or bringing the wrath of Poseidon upon him, worked at this problem. When Daedalus' scheme worked, he pushed his luck afterwards with King Minos one to many times. The end result, King Minos found out of Daedalus' betrayals and Daedalus, once again, fled. Daedalus found favor with the king of Sicily. King Minos hunted Daedalus, but in the end, it was Daedalus who lived a satisfied and rich life.

To make a living, especially at something you've been employed at for a long time, may dead end when you find you can't go any further in your pursuit. Unlike Daedalus' life, it doesn't take a murder for your mediocre job to end suddenly. You know you can't go any further up the ladder and won't be receiving more pay, so sometimes, in order to grow, you may be forced to take a different road to gain other perspectives. Over my life I've had many different professions: secretary, corrections officer, property manager, author, and tarot instructor. These radical changes were due to sometimes circumstances beyond my control, and also, the fact that I was simply bored. In the beginning of these job changes, I have to admit I based on money. But now my work has led me, not so much to the money, but to satisfaction and contentment. I, like Daedalus, hope to live a satisfied and rich life.

The last suit is that of wands and is represented by Jason and the Argonauts. This is a story of journeying into the unknown realm of hopes and dreams brought about by the imagination.

Jason was, like a lot of us, on a quest. A quest by definition is: the act of pursuing a goal. Jason's goal was to obtain a golden fleece. This journey was brought about because Jason wanted to claim what was rightfully his, which was to take his deserved place as king. Jason's uncle, Pelias, had overthrown Jason's father's kingship when Jason was a child. Now, Jason was fully grown and made aware of his sovereign right. So, when Jason confronted his uncle about his right to rule the kingdom, his uncle said he would give up the throne, but Jason had to do something first. Jason's task was to bring back the golden fleece from a ram that the god, Zeus, had provided years before to help two children escape. The ram was sacrificed by one of the children when he reached the safety of another shore, and the golden fleece was offered to the king of that country who set the fleece in a tree and also had a dragon there to guard. Jason's uncle wanted Jason to return this fleece back to the kingdom so the uncle could give the golden wool back to Zeus' temple.

In order to begin his trip, Jason had to construct a ship. When built, this ship was named, the Argo. Jason also needed the support of men he knew would be an asset to him on the trip. The voyage was not without its perils. Jason had to fight the dragon as well as men before he could journey home. When faced with the dragon, Jason was assisted by a sorceress to fight and obtain the fleece. Jason and his Argonauts persisted in completing their mission and then began the journey home. But this journey proved to be just as, if not more, treacherous than the onslaught. The Argo was tossed and pushed about by rolling waters and dangerous passages that had dangerous, sharp rocks that could split any boat apart. Jason and the Argonauts finally hit smoother waters and look toward their final destination. Their goal is in site, but a final struggle is imposed upon them. They still need to navigate through the stretch. This one final challenge makes Jason rise to the occasion and fight once more the one last obstacle in his way.

Now, the goal is reached; Jason's mission accomplished, but he and his boat are in shambles. Jason feels weighted down by the completion of his goal, but he cannot see any further on. His creativity is dampened by a weary body.

The fiery energy of the suit of wands can transfer our imagined

hopes and dreams into the reality of working to achieve and manifest them in our lives. But, along with the goal comes the work and obstacles that we run into that may dampen our dream.

Prayer to a higher power results in help that permits us to defeat the dragon that seems bigger than we are. When this hurdle is jumped then we go to the next, which still causes problems, but not as problematic.

Our goal is sited, and finally our mission accomplished. But, to what avail? This is the lesson of materiality and what obtaining it means. Jason found out too late that his goal was selfish and one sided. He wanted to become king, but didn't go any further in his wants. What might have happened if his aim was to be king **and** help his subjects? Or, to be king **and** set up a school for ship building?

When our goal to accomplish what we set out for in our hopes and dreams does not include how this may benefit others, it will, like Jason's goal, come back to us an empty victory.