

Notes from the  
Tarot School Salon



*Spreads for the New Year*  
by Ruth Ann & Wald Amberstone



# The Tarot School

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## Tarot Salon Agenda: Spreads for the New Year

### PART I: INTRO

The New Year is a feeling about time – a feeling of joyful optimism, and feeling that things can be new and better, that whatever we regret about the past can be left behind. It is the joy in the knowledge that we have a future, that it is unknown, and that everything is possible.

Tonight we'll be working with three forecast spreads incorporating both objective and subjective time, which look at the beginnings of new time periods for the coming year.

*Objective Time* is measured by inventions, by clock and calendar. These inventions unify us. They give us the feeling that we all share the same world. All events happen in objective time.

*Subjective Time* is unmeasurable. In subjective time, each of us lives in our own world. It's personal. All experience happens in subjective time.

Objective Time moves at a stately, uniform pace confirmed and maintained by communal agreement. Without community, objective time evaporates.

Subjective Time varies from person to person, and within each person. It moves quickly or slowly, changing its pace and its impact from experience to experience.

Tarot marks the objective future, and describes the subjective moment.

## PART II

### 6-Month Calendar Spread (7 cards)

This spread is an objective look at any 6-month period, and is perfect to do at the start of a new year.

Draw 7 cards by any method and lay them face-down in a horizontal row. Choose 1 of those cards and push it up so it's slightly higher than the others.

Each card will represent the general climate of an upcoming month (in sequence), except for the “pop-up” card. This card will represent something important and/or surprising that will happen within the 2-month period indicated by the cards immediately surrounding it.

Objective Time is indicated by the position in the timeline, which tells what will happen.

Both objective events and subjective experience are indicated by the content of the card, which expresses the experience in each time segment – how it feels.

#### PAIR OFF AND EXCHANGE READINGS

## PART III

### New Moon Spread (3 cards)

In this context, the New Moon Spread is used in conjunction with the 6-month Calendar Spread. So tonight, these cards will be an extrapolation of the card drawn for January.

All four cards work together, but each spread has a different emphasis. Whereas the card for each month of the calendar is an objective prediction of external events, the cards of the New Moon reading describe the way you subjectively experience those events.

- 1) Draw a card by any method of your choice from a shuffled deck and lay it face-down in front of you and to your right.
- 2) Draw a second card, and lay it face-down to the left of the first card, with a space between them about one card wide.
- 3) Draw a third card, and lay it face-down below and between the first two cards.
- 4) Turn over the first card. It will reveal **what will be given to you** in the month ahead.
- 5) Turn over the second card. It will reveal **what will be demanded of you** in the month ahead.
- 6) Turn over the third card. It will reveal **what path will open up before you** in the month ahead.
- 7) With each card, look for what is new in it and what creative opportunity it offers.

## PAIR OFF AND EXCHANGE READINGS

## PART IV

### Intro to Contemplation

Contemplation is easier to do than to explain. It's mostly holding an idea or an image in your attention without thinking about it too hard. A lot of times, your conscious mind gets in the way of the deep stuff that comes from lower down in your understanding. If you don't analyze or impose pre-learned formulas and definitions on the object of your contemplation, your intuition and some unknown wisdom inside you will suggest things that are quite amazing — that you could never have “thought” of intentionally.

The idea is to mentally relax while holding an image or a thought in your mind. Then, the mind will “melt” the thought the way your mouth melts a hard candy without chewing on it. Then the sweet center will eventually be released.

Contemplations can be short or long, a couple of minutes, or extended over a few days. The best times for contemplation are just after waking up and just before going to sleep. At those times, your logical controls have begun to soften and you have greater access to the creative layer that is usually suppressed. Also, if you can, write down what comes up in your contemplations. If you don't, they'll evaporate like dreams.

## PART V

### Year-Long Spread (5-6 cards)

#### PREPARATION:

- Separate the Major Arcana cards from the deck
- Determine your Birth Cards
- Take Birth Cards out the Majors and set them aside

The Year-Long Spread is a Tarot Practice. In order to do this spread properly, you will need to know your Birth Cards. (See Determining Your Birth Cards).

This is another spread that is good to begin at the New Year but you may start it any time. It is a combination of a spread and a practice that is done every day for a year. At the end of that time you may, if you wish, continue your practice with a new spread.

A day is a long time. A year has 365 of them — almost an eternity. As mentioned previously, it's a common practice among tarotists to pick a card everyday and contemplate its message. This spread will elaborate on that practice and give you a mighty piece of contemplation to do.

For this exercise you will need a dedicated deck that you don't use for anything else during the coming year. Prepare a special place to keep and refer to the cards you will be using for this exercise. There will never be more than five of them at a time so you won't need a big space. Your altar might do very nicely.

First, take your two (or three) Birth Cards out of the deck.

Second, make a separate deck out of the Major Arcana (minus your birth cards) and draw one card from this little deck for the year. Contemplate this card as your theme for the year. Spend some time every day for the next year doing at least a small contemplation on this card. Contemplate this Year Card in the context of your Birth Cards.

Third, shuffle the remaining Major Arcana back into the rest of the deck. Now pick one from this deck as your theme for the month. Contemplate this card within the context of the Year Card and your Birth Cards. These cards together will contain an augmented message for the month.

Each month, return the previous month's card to the deck and draw a new card for the new month. If you pick a card you've drawn before, draw again. Fourth, shuffle the remaining cards of the deck carefully and thoroughly once each day and then draw a card for the day. Add this card to the other four and contemplate the five cards together as your message for the day.

If you do this Five-Card Contemplation each day, changing the Day and the Month Cards at the appropriate times, by the end of the year your sense of yourself, your year, and tarot will be very intricate, very detailed, very large and very true.

## About the Amberstones

*Ruth Ann & Wald Amberstone* are co-founders of The Tarot School which they began in 1995. Together they teach, write, speak and publish about tarot on all levels from divination to psychology to esotericism and magical practice. They are perpetual pioneers of new tarot techniques and remain lifelong tarot students.

They are authors of *The Secret Language of Tarot* (Weiser) and *Tarot Tips: 78 Practical Techniques to Enhance Your Tarot Reading Skills* (Llewellyn). Articles by the Amberstones have also been published in most of Llewellyn's Tarot Reader almanacs. Their *Tarot School Correspondence Course* and many audio courses have been enjoyed by students all over the world.

Ruth Ann & Wald also wrote poetic card interpretations included in *Gateway to the Divine Tarot*, the book accompanying *Ciro Marchetti's Legacy of the Divine Tarot*. More recently, they worked with Schiffer Publishing to bring *The High Deck* into the world — the symbolic system and set of cards created by Wald's father, Arthur Amberstone, in the 1950s.

The Amberstones have taught numerous workshops at tarot conferences nationwide, as well as producing continuously successful tarot events of their own. The New York Tarot Festival, presented in June 2002, was the first international tarot symposium to be held on the East Coast. The Readers Studio, which the Amberstones began producing in 2003, is an annual tarot conference providing cutting-edge practical techniques to intermediate and advanced students, professional readers, teachers and authors.

Their weekly Tarot Salon in New York offers an intimate group of students a chance to experience tarot techniques that are sometimes experimental, sometimes experiential, often practical, and always fun.

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