

****Taroteca-Studio****

Guidebook

The Slavic Legends Tarot - Major Arcana

Introduction, or a few words about the guidebook and our inspirations.

While esoterica and Tarot are globally recognized topics, knowledge about Slavic Legends and Deities, which we believe have much in common with esoterica, is not as widespread.

We have recognized that combining the unique magic and atmosphere of Slavic Legends would be an ideal backdrop for a Tarot deck. These are two worlds that can complement and enrich each other splendidly. Of course, it was impossible for each card in the Tarot deck to depict a separate Slavic deity or legend, as there are many more Tarot cards than well-known legends and characters from Slavic mythology. Therefore, many cards simply portray Slavic folklore from bygone centuries. On these cards, you will also see ordinary people, their traditional attire, and the tools they used. All of this together creates an incredible atmosphere that is consistent throughout the entire Slavic Legends Tarot deck from Taroteca-Studio.

We also made sure that the Slavic Legends Tarot is easy to interpret, even for people who are not familiar with Slavic deities, legends, and customs. That is why, as with previous Tarot decks created and produced by Taroteca-Studio.com, we largely relied on the classic, easy-to-read and interpret system of Rider-Waite.

The guidebook for The Slavic Legends Tarot will focus on the Major Arcana, as it is in these cards that we have included classic Slavic legends, the heroes of these legends, and Slavic deities.

The second part of the guidebook, which will be released in the near future, will be based on explaining the meanings of the cards in terms of Tarot interpretation, rather than explaining Slavic symbolism.

This is because mainly Slavic background and folklore will be used there, without the use of specific characters, deities or legends... - with a few exceptions ;)

0 - THE FOOL

The Fool card is inspired by the legend of the Fern Flower.

- The Legend of the Fern Flower is a popular Polish legend that tells the story of a mysterious flower that blooms only once a year and brings luck to whoever finds it.

According to the legend, on the night of St. John's Eve, when the moon is at its brightest, the Flowery Princess appears in a clearing deep in the forest. Her long hair intertwines with the ferns, and a crown of fern flowers rests upon her head. She is accompanied by the enigmatic Knight of the Fern, who serves as her protector.

On St. John's Eve, the Flowery Princess plucks a single fern flower and holds it in her hand. Whoever manages to obtain it before dawn receives the gift of their deepest wish coming true. However, the task is not easy, as the clearing changes its location and hides from intruders who seek to find it.

Many brave individuals have attempted to locate the Fern Flower, but only a few have returned from the clearing. Those who succeeded had their most secret desires fulfilled but were bound to keep them in secrecy. Others spoke of the beauty and magic they experienced in the presence of the Flowery Princess and the Knight of the Fern.

One version of the legend also tells the story of a boy named Jacek, who finds the magical fern flower and must choose between great wealth that he cannot share and true happiness.

The Legend of the Fern Flower is often associated with St. John's Eve, a time in Poland when traditional rituals, bonfires, and festivities take place. This tale reminds us that beauty and happiness can be accessible to those who believe in magic and have the courage to follow their dreams.

I - THE MAGICIAN

Our inspiration for the Magician card comes from the legend of Master Twardowski. According to the legend, Master Twardowski was a sorcerer and alchemist who lived in Krakow during the 16th century. He was incredibly intelligent and talented but fascinated by magic and the mysteries of immortality. He decided to make a pact with the devil to gain eternal youth and knowledge.

The main plot of the legend tells the story of how Master Twardowski arranged a meeting with the devil on top of Mount Slezza. In exchange for eternal youth, Twardowski agreed to give his soul to the devil after his death. However, the cunning Twardowski extracted a promise from the devil that he would not take his soul if he found himself in a place that was neither on earth nor in heaven.

Master Twardowski used the power of his knowledge and magical abilities to achieve great success and wealth, but ultimately his deal with the devil brought him misfortune. However, when the time came to repay the debt, Master Twardowski attempted to outwit the devil and reclaim his soul. In one version of the legend, he tried to take advantage of a moment of distraction from the devil and leap onto the Moon to avoid eternal damnation. Another version tells that when the time came to give up his soul, Twardowski tried to evade the devil but failed to find a place that fulfilled the conditions of the agreement, and thus Twardowski is condemned to eternal wandering in search of such a place.

The legend of Master Twardowski is often portrayed in literature, theater, and art. It is a

symbol of ambition, longing for immortality, and the inevitable punishment for making a pact with the devil.

However, it is worth noting that this legend has various variants and details depending on the region and the storyteller.

II - HIGH PRIESTESS

On the High Priestess card, we have depicted a Znachorka, also known as a "szeptucha" or "Wise Baba." Znachorki are important figures in Slavic culture, particularly in folk traditions and beliefs. Here is some information about them:

A Znachorka is a woman who possesses knowledge and skills related to folk medicine, magic, divination, and healing. They were widely respected in Slavic communities as individuals with the ability to communicate with the spiritual world and possessing knowledge about herbs, magical rituals, and traditions.

Znachorki were often associated with the healing of various illnesses and ailments using natural remedies such as herbs, potions, poultices, or prayers. It was believed that they had the gift of healing and the ability to foresee the future.

Additionally, Znachorki also served as advisors and spiritual guides in communities. People sought their help in various matters such as love, marriage, fertility, protection from evil spirits, or attracting prosperity.

In Slavic culture, Znachorki were often portrayed as older women with deep knowledge and life experience. They were sometimes regarded as intermediaries between the human world and the spiritual realm, being in contact with supernatural beings and ancestral spirits.

Unfortunately, due to the diversity of Slavic traditions and beliefs, there is no single specific definition or description of a Znachorka or Wise Baba. Their roles and functions may vary depending on the region or community in which they lived. However, in a general sense, Znachorki constituted an important part of the spiritual and medical life of Slavic communities, imparting their wisdom and helping others.

III - THE EMPRESS

The Empress card features the Goddess Żywie-Siwa, the daughter of the god Rgław and the goddess Reży.

Żywie is the goddess of life, nature, and fertility. Her name is derived from the Slavic root "to live" and refers to the life energy and creative power. She is revered as the guardian of nature, vegetation, animals, and human life.

In Slavic mythology, Żywie is depicted as a beautiful and youthful woman with a pale face, often dressed in green or floral garments symbolizing her connection to nature. She is perceived as the mother and caretaker of all living beings.

As a goddess of life and vital force, Żywie-Siwa is also associated with childbirth and the care of newborn children. She was venerated by women as the patroness of fertility and the protector of mother and child, thus she is also associated with female fertility and motherhood.

She was often invoked by women who desired offspring or sought protection during pregnancy and childbirth. Her presence is believed to bring blessings and prosperity to family life.

The Goddess Żywie is also associated with the cycles of nature and seasons. Her presence influences the growth of plants, abundance of crops, and harmony in nature. She is honored during rituals and festivals related to the arrival of spring and the rebirth of nature.

IV - THE EMPEROR

The inspiration for the Emperor card is Rod, who in Slavic mythology is considered the supreme god and is associated with fertility, the care of the family, and destiny. He was also the god of the family, nation, tribe, ancestors, judgment, fate, family and spiritual continuity, and fatherhood. Thus, his function aligns perfectly with the archetype of the "Emperor" card, representing the Father.

Unfortunately, information about Rod in Slavic mythology is limited and incomplete due to the lack of preserved written sources. Most of the information about him comes from scholarly research, speculation, and reconstructions.

Rod is often depicted as a male figure primarily associated with the fertility of the land and agriculture. His worship was connected with practices related to harvest, planting, and the abundance of crops. It was believed that Rod oversees the processes of life, ensuring fertility and prosperity.

Rod also had the role of protector of the family and lineage. He was considered a guardian of traditions, values, and family ties. He was often invoked for family blessings, protection against evil spirits, and the transmission of ancestral wisdom.

Nevertheless, due to the lack of available written sources, much of the information about Rod in Slavic mythology remains unknown or uncertain.

V - THE HIEROPHANT

The Hierophant card depicts a Slavic priest known as a Żerca or ofiarńnik, which literally translates to "one who offers sacrifices." Also referred to as the "Great Priest," they were an important figure in Slavic mythology. They served as intermediaries between humans and the spiritual world, with their role involving establishing contact with the gods, offering sacrifices, and conducting religious ceremonies.

The Żerca possessed extensive knowledge of Slavic rituals, rites, and beliefs. They were

responsible for maintaining harmony between humans and the gods, as well as ensuring the prosperity and well-being of the community. They performed various functions such as divination, healing, dispute resolution, and conducting initiation ceremonies.

Slavic beliefs revolved around the concept of offering sacrifices to the gods in exchange for blessings, protection, and abundance. The Žerca played a crucial role in these practices, performing sacrificial rituals and presenting offerings on behalf of the community. It was believed that through these rituals, one could establish a connection with the gods and gain their favor.

Often, the Žerca also served as an advisor to rulers or community leaders, providing them with guidance and counsel on important political and social matters. They were highly respected teachers, transmitting knowledge and traditions of their people.

VI - THE LOVERS

The Lovers card is inspired by the Night of Kupala, also known as St. John's Night - a traditional Slavic festival associated with the summer solstice, which falls around June 21-22. It is a time when the day is longest and the night is shortest, holding great symbolic significance.

The festival has its roots in ancient Slavic beliefs and is celebrated to honor nature, fertility, and fire. It is an occasion for joyful rituals, dances, singing, and offering sacrifices. People gather around bonfires where they engage in dances and may even jump over the flames, symbolizing purification and renewal.

The Night of Kupala is also a magical time when special properties were attributed to herbs and water. It was believed that plants gathered on this night possessed magical powers and had the ability to heal and protect against evil spirits.

The festival also carries romantic elements, and in the evening, young people often come together to celebrate and spend time together. The traditions associated with the Night of Kupala vary depending on the region, but a common element is the joyful atmosphere linked to the summer solstice and the rejuvenation of nature.

The Night of Kupala is an important part of Slavic cultural heritage and is still celebrated in some regions, especially in rural areas. This festival serves as a reminder of the close connection Slavs had with nature, the cycles of the year, and the magic that surrounded their lives.

It is worth noting that the details and customs associated with the Night of Kupala may vary depending on the region and time, as Slavic traditions were passed down orally and underwent certain changes over the centuries. Nevertheless, the spirit of joy associated with the summer solstice and the celebration of nature remains a common theme among various Slavic communities.

VII - THE CHARIOT

The protagonist of the Chariot card is Baba Yaga, a character appearing in Slavic legends and fairy tales, known as a fearsome witch.

Baba Yaga is depicted as an old woman with a terrifying and unusual appearance. She is often described as a hunched figure, wearing rags, with missing teeth and a distinctive hat. Her recognizable feature is also her extraordinary houses, which are mounted on chicken legs and can rotate.

In Slavic legends, Baba Yaga is portrayed as an independent and powerful figure. She is sometimes depicted as the ruler of the forest or a witch associated with nature and magical powers. She often has the ability to predict the future and use magical objects.

Baba Yaga often plays the role of a tester or adversary in stories. Meeting her is often a trial that the hero must undergo to achieve their goal. At the same time, in some tales, she may provide the hero with helpful advice or gifts if they are needed.

Her character and behavior are usually unpredictable - sometimes cruel and dangerous, and other times helpful and mysterious. She is often associated with danger and evil, but her character also symbolizes wisdom, magical knowledge, and the tests that must be overcome on the path to achieving goals.

Baba Yaga is one of the most well-known figures in Slavic mythology and folklore. Her stories and image have survived for centuries, inspiring numerous fairy tales, stories, and artworks.

There are many variations of her stories and many different aspects associated with her character. However, her role as a dark witch and mysterious figure in Slavic legends is widely known.

VIII - STRENGTH

The inspiration for the Strength card was Dziejanna. She was revered as the goddess of nature, hunting, and wild wilderness. She symbolized the strength and beauty of forests and was the protector of animals. Her presence was particularly important for hunters, who sought her blessings and successful hunts.

Goddess Dziejanna was depicted as a young woman with a pale, delicate appearance, often dressed in a gown made of plants and flowers. Her hair was long and flowing down her shoulders, and she held wreaths of green leaves in her hands. As a goddess of nature, Dziejanna had influence over the fertility of plants and animals. She was associated with the arrival of spring and the rebirth of nature after the period of winter slumber. It was believed that her presence brought abundance and prosperity. As the patroness of hunts, she aided in successful hunting and ensured the availability of wild animals.

Dziewanna also had a magical aspect and was regarded as a witch or sorceress. In some stories, she was portrayed as a master of magic, possessing abilities for spells and enchantments. She was often seen as a guide to the spiritual realm and had the power to communicate with other supernatural beings.

Dziewanna was also associated with fertility and rebirth. Her cult was tied to the cycle of nature, where forests rejuvenated after winter. During spring, she played a significant role in rituals and celebrations, where homage was paid to her and offerings were made in exchange for prosperity.

IX - THE HERMIT

The Hermit card is inspired by the character of Leszy.

Leszy, also known as Leshy, is a woodland creature, a guardian and protector of forests. Leszy is often depicted as a wild-looking man with long hair and beard, dressed in green garments, often intertwined with leaves and moss in his hair.

Leszy is closely associated with wild and inaccessible forest areas. It is considered a spirit of the forest, caring for the ecological balance and the protection of animals and plants. According to Slavic beliefs, Leszy can both protect the forest and its inhabitants, as well as punish those who disrespect it.

It is described as a shy and distrustful creature, especially towards people who enter its territory with harmful intentions towards nature. Leszy is known for leading wanderers astray in the forest, diverting them from their path or causing disorientation. However, if someone passes through its territory with respect and caution, they may be graciously bestowed with protection and support.

In Slavic mythology, it was believed that Leszy possessed magical powers and control over animals and plants. It was regarded as a being with mysterious and unfathomable abilities. Leszy had the ability to change its appearance and become invisible to human eyes, making it difficult to be noticed.

Leszy was an object of reverence and respect by people living in forested areas. There were rituals and offerings made to seek favor and protection from Leszy. Beliefs in this creature have survived in folklore and folk tales to this day.

X - WHEEL OF FORTUNE

The Wheel of Fortune card represents the Rodzanice, the invisible demons of destiny, in Slavic mythology.

Rodzanice, also known as Rodzinki, are beings that exist in Slavic mythology and are invisible demons of destiny. They usually appear as a group of three entities, often depicted as sisters or mothers. Their exact appearance may vary depending on the stories and sources.

Rodzanice are responsible for shaping and overseeing human fate. It is believed that they control various aspects of life, such as birth, life, and death. They are guardians of human destinies and influence their trajectory and the events that unfold around them.

They are often described as capricious and unpredictable beings. They have the ability to undergo sudden mood swings and can act both favorably and unfavorably towards humans. In some stories, they are perceived as benevolent beings who assist people in difficult situations. However, in other stories, they may be seen as malevolent, causing chaos and misfortune.

Rituals and offerings were made to the Rodzanice to seek their favor and protection. It was believed that maintaining their favor could bring happiness and prosperity, while their anger could lead to misfortune and failure.

In Slavic mythology, there are many variations of stories about the Rodzanice, and their role and character may differ depending on the context. Nevertheless, Rodzanice were widely present in Slavic beliefs and folklore as beings that influence human destinies and constitute an important element of the mythological landscape.

XI - JUSTICE

The Justice card features Sudenica, one of the three daughters of the god Sud. Sudenica is a character from Slavic mythology who was regarded as the goddess of fate and justice. Her name derives from the word "sąd," which refers to her role as a judge who decided the fate of people.

It was believed that Sudenica resided in an underground palace, where she, along with other goddesses of fate such as Dziewona and Karmazyna, prepared strict and relentless judgments for people. Her character was often depicted as an elderly woman in a long robe with a crown on her head, sometimes accompanied by a sword and scales.

According to folk beliefs, Sudenica had an influence on people's destinies, determining their experiences and the rewards or punishments they would encounter. People would often pray to Sudenica, seeking luck, protection, or mercy in difficult situations.

Sudenica was also associated with rites of passage such as births, weddings, or funerals, where her presence was evident in rituals and prayers.

In some beliefs, she is perceived as a benevolent goddess who rewards people for their good deeds, while in others, she is portrayed as a stern and uncompromising judge who punishes wrongdoing.

XII – THE HANGED MAN

The Hanged Man card depicts Veles (also known as Weles or Veles/Volos), one of the main Slavic deities, the god of the earth and water, cattle and the underworld, also associated with

harvest and falsehood.

He is considered a deity with multiple aspects and functions. Veles is usually associated with the underworld but is also connected to nature, cattle, and wisdom.

Veles was often depicted as a giant or a dragon, sometimes as a human with animal features such as horns and a tail. He was regarded as the ruler of the underworld, responsible for the realm of the dead and all aspects of underground life.

However, Veles was not only a dark figure. In many beliefs, he was also considered a deity of fertility, protector of animals, guardian of shepherds, and patron of craftsmanship. Veles was perceived as the lord of cattle, and his presence was believed to ensure good harvests and successful livestock breeding.

Veles also played an important role in mythological narratives, particularly in relation to the god Perun. Veles often appeared as a rival or adversary to Perun, and their conflicts symbolized the struggle between the forces of the heavens and the underworld.

In Slavic mythology, Veles was also associated with wisdom and esoteric knowledge. He was considered a spiritual guide and guardian of magic, as well as a protector of secrets and hidden knowledge.

It's worth noting that there may be differences and variations in the stories about Veles across different regions and Slavic cultures, which can lead to some ambiguities in his characterization.

XIII - DEATH

In the Death card, we depict the Slavic goddess Marzanna (also known as Morana, Morena, or Mora), a figure from Slavic mythology who was considered a goddess associated with life, death, and rebirth. Her name derives from the words "marzyć" or "umarzać," which refer to the cycle of changes in nature and human life.

Marzanna was typically portrayed as an elderly woman with a somber or rugged appearance. She was associated with winter and the end of the winter season, and her presence symbolized the departure of winter and the arrival of spring.

It was believed that Marzanna had the power to influence plants, crops, and fertility. Simultaneously, she was also associated with declining life, illnesses, and death. In some Slavic regions, rituals were held in which a doll representing Marzanna was crafted and then either thrown into a river or burned, symbolically getting rid of winter and ushering in the anticipation of new life and the rebirth of spring.

Sometimes Marzanna was also associated with water and rivers, and her rituals often took place near bodies of water. Water was believed to have purifying properties, hence it was a common element in rituals associated with this goddess.

Marzanna was also frequently linked to rites of passage and rituals related to births, weddings, and funerals. It was believed that she had control over life and death and served as

a guardian of the boundary between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead.

XIV - TEMPERANCE

The inspiration for the Temperance card is the "sacred grove," also known as the "living" grove. In Slavic mythology, the term "sacred grove" refers to a place considered holy and particularly connected to the spiritual realm. It was an area where the boundary between the sacred (holiness) and the profane (worldliness) was blurred or erased.

Sacred groves often consisted of natural spaces such as groves of trees, oaks, stones, or springs. They were regarded as spaces where people could establish contact with deities, ancestral spirits, or other supernatural forces. People would come to these places to perform rituals, pray, offer sacrifices, and seek spiritual support, protection, or guidance.

It was believed that in the sacred grove, spiritual forces were particularly strong and influenced the human world. It was a place where encounters between humans and gods or spirits took place. Such a place was believed to be accessible to both realms, serving as an intermediary space where the material and spiritual worlds intertwined.

Sacred groves also held significant social importance as gathering places for festivities, celebrations of holidays, and rituals. They were locations where communities came together, decisions were made, disputes were resolved, or important life moments were celebrated.

In Slavic mythology, there are many descriptions and interpretations of sacred groves that varied depending on the region, culture, and time. These places held great significance for Slavic communities, serving as centers of spiritual life and cultural identity.

XV - THE DEVIL

On the Devil card, we depicted Chernobog. Chernobog (also spelled as Czernobog, Czornyj Bóg, or Chernobog) is associated with darkness, evil power, and ill fate. His name can be translated as "Black God" or "God of Darkness."

Chernobog was believed to be the opponent and counterpart of other Slavic deities, such as the god of light and goodness - Belobog. He was considered the ruler of dark forces, evil, and misfortune. He was often associated with darkness, night, death, and other negative aspects of life.

The portrayal of Chernobog varied depending on the region and time period. In some beliefs, he was depicted as a giant or a man with a dark appearance, sometimes with horns or other animal features. He was also associated with wild animals like wolves or vultures.

In some beliefs, he was regarded as a guardian of the balance between good and evil, while in others, he was perceived as a ruthless and unpredictable god. He was sometimes depicted as the ruler of the underworld or as one of the cosmic gods.

Chernobog was often feared and respected by Slavic communities, and rituals associated with him aimed to appease his malevolent power or ward off his influence. It was believed that Chernobog influenced human destinies, bringing failures, illnesses, and misfortunes.

In contemporary interpretations, Chernobog is often seen as a symbolic embodiment of darkness, mystery, and the unknown aspects of human nature. His character serves as a reminder of the existence of unfathomable and elusive aspects of life and the universe.

XVI - THE TOWER

We have chosen Perun as the hero of the Tower card, considered one of the most powerful Slavic gods, the god of thunder, lightning, sky, and power.

Perun is worshipped as the god of storms, ruling the heavens and controlling the element of fire. His thunder and lightning symbolize his presence and might. He was seen as a guardian of order and justice, as well as a protector of people against evil.

In Slavic mythology, Perun is often depicted as a man with an imposing stature, a beard, and long hair. He holds an axe or hammer in his hand, which symbolizes his power and strength. He was revered by warriors who sought his support before battle.

Perun also had significant social importance as his cult was widespread among Slavic communities. He was widely respected and worshipped. His figure symbolized the power of nature, justice, and authority, and his presence was felt in the daily lives and rituals of Slavic communities. His name was often used in the names of rulers and heroes.

Perun played an important role in beliefs related to the struggle between good and evil. He was often portrayed as a rival or adversary of Chernobog, the god of darkness and ill fate. Their conflicts symbolized the battle between the forces of heaven and the underworld.

In contemporary times, the figure of Perun reminds us of the power of nature and its unpredictability. His name is often used in reference to thunder and lightning, and his presence can be found in Slavic literature, art, and culture as a symbol of strength and unwavering resolve.

XVII - THE STAR

Our inspiration for the Star card was Zorza, also known as Zorica or Zora, a figure associated with the dawn and morning light. She is often depicted as a beautiful woman in a golden or white robe, holding a torch or a flaming sword.

In Slavic mythology, Zorza is the goddess of dawn, hope, and rebirth. It was believed that she brings new beginnings, possibilities, as well as light and brightness to the world. Her appearance signifies the end of darkness and the arrival of a new day.

Zorza is an important figure in Slavic culture and is often celebrated in traditional rituals and ceremonies. She is associated with the spring equinox and the beginning of the agricultural season. Her role in mythology is also connected to fertility, growth, and abundance.

In some Slavic tales, Zorza is depicted as a protector of travelers and those who wander in darkness. It is said that she guides them towards safety and light. In other stories, she is portrayed as a warrior goddess, fighting against evil and protecting her people.

Zorza plays a significant role in the cycle of nature, representing the morning and the beginning of a new day. Her appearance signifies the end of the night and the arrival of light. She is also associated with fertility, rebirth, and hope. It was believed that her presence brings luck, prosperity, and good omens.

The cult of Zorza had great social and religious importance in Slavic communities. Her worship involved rituals, prayers, and offerings aimed at ensuring prosperity, protection, and success.

The figure of Zorza has been present in Slavic folklore for centuries and continues to inspire contemporary culture. Her significance in Slavic mythology emphasizes the importance of hope, rebirth, and the power of light.

XVIII - THE MOON

The Moon card depicts the twins and spouses: Jutrobog and Juternica, associated with the cult of the moon and hunting.

Jutrobog, also known as Jutro, is a god associated with dawn and sunrise. He was worshipped as the guardian of the new day and the beginnings of endeavors. His name is a combination of the words "jutro" (tomorrow) and "bóg" (god), emphasizing his role as a deity connected to the future and hope. Jutrobog was also linked to the cult of the moon and often considered the brother or companion of the Moon goddess.

Juternica, sometimes called Zorya, is a goddess associated with evening and sunset. Her name can be translated as "Goddess of the Evening," symbolizing the end of the day and the arrival of night. She is a goddess of twilight and darkness. Her name derives from the word "jutro" (tomorrow), suggesting a connection with Jutrobog. Juternica was worshipped as the guardian of the night and responsible for the protection of people in darkness. In Slavic mythology, she sometimes appeared as three sisters known as Morning Juternica, Evening Juternica, and Northern Juternica, who had power over the periods of day and night. She was associated with mystery, tranquility, and rest, and her appearance signified the end of daily activities and the preparation for rest.

Both Jutrobog and Juternica were also associated with hunting and the hunt. It was believed that Jutrobog brought success and luck to hunters during morning expeditions, while Juternica ensured safety and successful hunts at twilight. They were worshipped by Slavic communities as deities with influence over hunting and the prosperity of hunters.

XIX - THE SUN

The inspiration for the Sun card is Dazhbog, the god of the sun, the conqueror of darkness, the guarantor of justice and prosperity. During his daily journey across the sky, he transforms from a young boy to an adult man and then into an old man.

Dazhbog is one of the prominent Slavic gods who symbolizes the power and light of the sun. His name means "God of the Day" or "God of the Sun." It was believed that Dazhbog travels through the sky in his sun and brings light and warmth to the earth. His presence influenced agricultural harvests, plant growth, and overall prosperity.

In Slavic mythology, Dazhbog was perceived as a warrior who fought against evil and brought victory over darkness. He was also regarded as the god of justice and order. His power was particularly strong during the summer months when the sun was brightest, and the long days bestowed abundance. In iconography, Dazhbog is often depicted as a young man with a radiant face, holding a shield with the sun or a radiant disc symbolizing the sun. He was worshipped by Slavic communities, who offered him sacrifices, especially during summer rituals and festivals, seeking prosperity, bountiful harvests, and protection from evil.

His cult had significant social and religious importance, symbolizing the strength and significance of the sun in daily life and Slavic beliefs.

XX - JUDGEMENT

Our inspiration for the Judgment card is Spring, the goddess of spring, here awakening the woodland sprites from their winter slumber.

Spring, also known as Marzanna, is the goddess of spring in Slavic mythology. She personifies rebirth, fertility, and the return of life to nature after the period of winter sleep. Her cult is associated with traditional rituals of awakening the earth and welcoming the warmer months.

Spring is depicted as a young woman wearing spring floral attire and a crown of flowers on her head. It was believed that her return signifies the end of the winter season and the arrival of rejuvenation. Joyful and colorful ceremonies often accompany her, celebrating the return of life to nature.

In addition to Spring, Slavic mythology also features woodland sprites. Sprites are spiritual beings often described as small, friendly creatures with extraordinary powers. They are connected to nature and care for its well-being.

Sprites are often associated with the protection of homes and farms. It was believed that they bring luck and assist in daily tasks. They can often be encountered near fields, gardens, and forests, where they tend to plants and animals.

Stories about sprites are often intertwined with folk beliefs and traditions, and their presence in Slavic mythology reflects the close connection between humans and the natural world's spiritual dimension.

XXI – THE WORLD

The World card depicts the world, which in Slavic mythology is represented as a giant sacred oak tree. Its branches represent the sky, the trunk represents the earth, and the roots represent the underworld. Perun sits atop the Tree, sometimes depicted as an eagle, while Veles resides between its roots, often depicted as a serpent.

In Slavic mythology, the world, or more precisely, the cosmos, is sometimes portrayed as a colossal sacred oak tree. This oak, known as the Lubawa Holy Oak, is considered the sacred center of the universe and the abode of Slavic spirits and deities.

The Holy Oak symbolizes the connection between the divine realm and the human world. It was believed that its crown touched the heavens, and its roots reached the subterranean realm. It was regarded as the center of spiritual energy and the source of life. This immense sacred oak represents an important element of Slavic cultural and spiritual heritage, signifying the relationship between humanity and the cosmos.

Important rituals and religious ceremonies took place around the Holy Oak. It was a place where priests and priestesses offered sacrifices and conducted prayers, invoking Slavic deities and spirits. The Holy Oak was the focal point of worship, from which emanated power and spiritual wisdom.

Furthermore, the Holy Oak was also a symbol of eternity and permanence. Its mighty branches symbolized the continuum of life and the eternal cycle of nature.