

The Vanstone Tarot Definitive Edition Guide

This is an a short essay on the meanings, inspirations and ideas behind each of the Tarot Cards in the deck. It is too large to include in the booklet included with a purchase of either the standard or holographic physical tarot card deck.

The deck is intended to serve as illustrations for the Choose Your Own Adventure story “Sacred Heart Of The Purple Dawn” by William Vanstone available on this website. The story allows readers to make choices, that lead to alternate endings, such as an example like turn to page 7 to go left or page 12 to go right. Uniquely, the different choice “pathways” spell a word or phrase, based on the page numbers the reader flips to, and incorporates an added layer of sophistication, that being Gematria, a form of Qabbalistic Jewish Mysticism that acts as a cypher with letters corresponding to numbers i.e a=1, b = 2 , c=3 ...z=26. Because of this, its very complicated, and even after consult with experts in the genre, a print copy is not possible, so this deck is a substitute for that physical hard copy story.

The Major Arcana

- 0) The Fool = A self portrait of the author William Vanstone. It's based off another portrait of infamous horror author Thomas Ligotti, an avid “anti natalist” that believes having children is morally wrong. The author once subscribed to this viewpoint, but has back pedalled, and considers the anti life viewpoint perhaps foolish. The author is confused and has felt guilt, like being an ingrate. Life is an incomprehensible mystery and the jury is still out on life itself, so to speak.
- 1) The Magician = This is a picture of the drug dealer Eric, or perhaps William, featured in the story ala Breaking Bad. They grow the magic plants that take the protagonist to magical places? Or perhaps not?
- 2) The High Priestess= a vampire minion of the antagonist, she stands under the Free masonic pillars of Boaz and Jachin. The Masons were about rebuilding the temple of Solomon, which the author sees as a metaphor for the human body, spritual health is only as good as the human bodies health, our physical temple in this reality.
- 3) The Empress= a picture of the lead antagonsit Mikaela LeFevre, the arch vampire witch. She rules her kingdom with an iron fist
- 4) The Emperor= a picture of another antagonist Benoit Sylvestre , the leader of the werewolf biker gang. Is he possibly the protagonist, ala Fight Club? You decide.
- 5) The Hierophant + alternate= a picture of the Vietnamese Fire monk Thich Quan Duc , featured in a dream sequence in the story. The only moral and truly spiritual person during the Vietnam war, a locale the author lived in for short time, teaching ESL. He would rather self immolate in protest, than participate in the immorality of this world. A dark, modern Jesus or Saint. His sacrifice and self righteous suicide , saved others.
- 6) The Lovers= a picture of the author, with a random female lover. The symbolism features the one eyed monster, symbolic of the “sodomite gateway” a theme in the story. The garden of Eden is a metaphor or allegory for the transmutation of sexual energy to a higher purpose. The tarot develops and progresses. Notice how each card is a piece or part of a larger puzzle, developing the “great work.”
- 7) The Chariot= the Romeo Hearse, the getaway car driven by Clive, a getaway driver with “abandonment issues” in the story.
- 8) Strength/Lust= based off the Aleister Crowley version of the card, with playful humour, it speaks for itself.
- 9) The Hermit= features a character from the story , Old Man Thibodeaux , who owns the

- Deppaneur/Convenience store that is critical in the story, he looks reminiscent of Odin.
- 10) The Wheel Of Fortune and alternate= based off the Buddhist Wheel of Rebirth and Reincarnation or Samsara, spun by the demon Maya. The author traveled to this region of the world, and did pick up on a demonic presence at some of the historical sites in Cambodia. Each segment is a different realm, Heaven, Human, Titan, Animal, Hungry Ghosts (addiction) and Hell. The problem is not suffering, it is simply that we can not go to any state of being and simply just stay there, that we cannot go to a place and stay there, or so it seems.
 - 11) Justice= The Black Cube of Saturn is a culprit behind Adjustment, it is fairness. The protagonist is arrested, and all the guilty are held accountable, a source of structure and discipline.
 - 12) The Hanged Man= a picture of the Chaotic Neutral character Jayson Ferguson from the story, a mischief maker and clown.
 - 13) Death= the personification of Death as Father Time, the pagan god of old, based off Saturn an old god, the reaper of souls and originator of the current cosmic order. Saturn is a theme and character in the entire story, based off a book called "The Saturn Myth" by Dave N Talbott, an alternate history of cosmology. He visits our protagonist in dreams.
 - 14) Temperance= Art as the Ouroboros, the ancient religious symbol of infinity. Remember there are two kinds of infinity. This one is a form of synchronicity, the idea that there is no real past or future, there is just the present, which is forever. The story features themes of time loops, that time is cyclical and circular, with no beginning or end, just the eternal present. A symbol embraced by the Gnostic order of Essenes, influential to the ascended master Jesus. Also as Jormungandr, by the ancient Vikings, referenced in the story. Death is an illusion in the sense of an infinite present, with no beginning or end.
 - 15) The Devil= drawn when the author was undergoing psychiatric assistance and addiction recovery, a very important theme in the story and this particular card itself.
 - 16) The Tower= Bart Simpson of the iconic T.V show allegedly predicted the events of September 11th 2001 (9/11) according to "conspiracy theorists" and while this has nothing to do with the story, it does capture the meaning of the card, and the author is into conspiracies.
 - 17) The Star and alternate version= The Star Of Ishtar. Also the Eight Pointed Star. It is based off the book "The Saturn Myth" by Dave N Talbott, in an alternate version of cosmology, claims that we once looked at a configuration that resembled this in the night sky, it was an old version of our Sun. The large circle is our old Sun, Saturn, with Mars and the comet Venus in orbit in front. See his work for more details and a better description, The cover of that book features this drawing.
 - 18) The Moon= The Fujian province of China, Lady Fujian, Sea Goddess, whose 30 foot likeness is a large white marble statue in Macau, China's casino island. She is a popular sea goddess in the South China Sea, closely associated with the cycles of the moon.
 - 19) The Sun= le soleil est brille.
 - 20) Judgement/The Aeon= the strange pillar/obelisk that keeps appearing in the story.
 - 21) The World= The World Tree Yggdrasil, created after a battle with Thor and the Jormungandr/Ouroboros (see #14 Temperance) and our current epoch/paradigm
 - 22) The Rebis= an obscure Tarot card not found in most decks, The Rebis is the legend of a creature created before Adam and Eve in The Garden Of Eden, supposedly a perfect being, an androgenous/hermaphrodite mix of male and female. Sometimes associated with the current Transhumanism/Transsexual agenda in the modern culture. The author sees it differently, that this card is the culmination of all the other cards, where the Tarot journey has created a project, leading to an outcome, what is that? The sexual act that consummates the creation of a new human being, the only real meaningful act in this world. The philosopher's stone, in a way: immortality or true symbolic immortality as Ernest Becker discussed in his book "The Denial of Death", the only way most of us to live on into the future is to reproduce, others live on in

memes or ideas in the culture.

Death is an illusion in this sense. See card #14 Temperance

The Suit Of Cups

- 1) Ace of Cups= a cup, featuring the Sun Cross publications logo. The Sun Cross, pagan/Christian symbol, it heralds positive emotions.
- 2) 2 of Cups= Love. A gargoyle with wings and two cups. Its based off drawings from several other old medieval Tarot decks
- 3) 3 of Cups= a treasure chest of abundance, influenced from playing cards.
- 4) 4 of Cups= The 4 is spelt with the Jupiter symbol. A floating claw holds a cup, based off other deck drawings. The phallic looking enclosure that says Luxury, was not intended as that, this piece was more stream of consciousness, and the tree is almost a flower.
- 5) 5 of cups= Disappointment, a stream of consciousness abstract medieval "Plague Doctor"
- 6) 6 of Cups= another self portrait of the author, drinking alcohol from a flask. The author actually owns a similar looking flask, with a Marilyn Monroe looking lady, cards, dice and wine, this one is modified to look more gothic. The struggle with addiction is a theme to the story, and aptly portrays this cards meaning of pleasure.
- 7) 7 of Cups= based off several other Tarot illustrations, debauch has a drunken greco-roman imbiber, a judgemental hooded figure, a castle, dragon, serpent, wreath and trasure chest, these are phases to the meaning of the card.
- 8) 8 of Cups= Indolence is expressed by Father Time/Saturn beholding with disapproving gaze three Giza esque pyramids with mountains and the all seeing eye.
- 9) 9 of Cups= features the chinese symbol "Double Happiness"
- 10) 10 of Cups= a happily married couple with a rainbow, in satisfaction of their life, this ties in with cards #6The Lovers and #22The Rebis nicely
- 11) Page of Cups= orginally a scrap drawing, that the author alomsot threw out, its not quite a self portrait, just an abstract version of himself.
- 12) Knight of cups= based off of traditional poker playing cards, another self portrait of the author
- 13) Queen of Cups + alternate= these two pieces were originally made as gifts for a friend, serving as a birthday card, they show the postive and negative aspects of Cat ownership with females. Felines can not serve as a substitute for motherhood, so females be warned.
- 14) King of Cups= a larger poster, based off of Hieronomous Bosch's piece "The Garden of Earthly Delights" This served as a birthday card for my father, who is a fan of Bosch, both the artist and dectective T.V show, it incorporates some of my fathers own art, his cartoons about cleaning the refridgerator joke, Oscar The Grouch for The Toronto Garbage Crisis, his Smiley Face T.V sculpture, his Devil painting. The artistic touch and merit with this deck was inculcated by both of my parents.

The Suit Of Pentacles

- 1) Ace of Pentacles= A claw holds a pentacle. The pentacle represents the five points of ancient greek Citius, Altius, Fortius , Socius and Moneta, literally, higher, faster, stronger, social cohesion and trust. These are also represented by the five circles of the Olympic rings. The symbol is old and pagan, and not to be conflated with the upside down Satanic Pentagram.
- 2) 2 of Pentacles= The Ouroboros, again, this time showcasing the nature of duality with

Ying/Yang symbolism. See card #14 Temperance

- 3) 3 of Pentacles= a scene from the finale of the story, the protagonist meets Mikaela and Benoit in the Cathedral for a final confrontation
- 4) 4 of Pentacles= the protagonist is crowned and beholds the fortress that protects the Cathedral, in the story, as well as the Strange obelisk, see card #20Judgement/TheAeon
- 5) 5 of Pentacles= the word meaning of the card is omitted by choice , breaking the pattern of the other cards, as it doesnt fit in the scene. Hobos from the story, gather outside the Cathedral, they are minions of the antagonists.
- 6) 6 of Pentacles= a scene from the story, where homeless hobos perform a ritual around a fire, smoking and drinking, while Mikaela hides in the forest.
- 7) 7 of Pentacles= The Seven O'Clock Man or Le Bonhomme de Sept Heures, is the boogeyman from French Canadian/ Quebec lore, used to frighten children, he supposedly would come to kidnap children after 7pm, here, pictured as Father Time. Quebec is the setting for my story.
- 8) 8 of Pentacles= based off an olde medieval tarot card, the serpent surrounds an arch.
- 9) 9 of Pentacles= a portrait of the main antagonist Mikeala LeFevre from the story.
- 10) 10 of Pentacles= this is a depiction of the Kabbalah / Qabbalah Tree Of Life popular in Jewish Mysticism.
- 11) Page of Pentacles + alternate= this originally was intended to serve as the cover art for a new short story/graphic novel project by the same author called "2002 Uighurian Nights" and acts as a sneak peek preview of that developing project, while the alternate is a depiction of the "hidden" constellation Monoceros The Unicorn, which can genrally only be seen around December, supposedly an omen of Jesus / The Resurrection of The Sun.
- 12) Knight of Pentacles= another picture of the main antagonist from the story, Mikaela
- 13) Queen of Pentacles= just like the Queen of Cups, this was originally intended as a birthday card for the same friend, with a picture of that friend and the author as a kitty.
- 14) King of Pentacles= the authors least favorite card, artistically lackluster, a random minion of the lead antagonist in the story.

The Suit Of Swords

- 1) Ace of Swords= this is based off an eagle statue that the author found while hiking at a beachfront trail near him, he found it on the shore, cleaned it up and spray painted it silver, and kept it for his exhibits. Its not a fascist eagle, the eagle is used in flags all over the world.
- 2) 2 of Swords= the peace symbol with 2 lady justice characters. The peace symbol is an alledgedly "Satanic" symbol, according to the DOJ Manual on Satanic cults, which is a theme in the story.
- 3) 3 of Swords= a depiction of the Sacred Heart Of Jesus, which ties into the story title and theme of the novel as a whole.
- 4) 4 of Swords= a scene from the novel, where the antagonist Mikeala is revealed in her vampire coffin in the diocese cathedral.
- 5) 5 of Swords= while the actual scene in the novel is inside, there is a part outside the diocese cathedral, the protagonist and antagonist Mikaela are defeated by the other antagonist Benoit. Could Benoit possibly be the actual protagonist? You decide.
- 6) 6 of Swords= a ship based off a Hong Kong/South China sea pirate ship, with the iconic flags and sails. This was a happy tourist moment in the authors real life, with the author being in possession of an actual postcard similar to this image, which can be found in his room.
- 7) 7 of Swords= A Vanitas, a medieval style of painting that typically featured a skull with flowers

and books, that served as a “memento mori”, remember that you will die, and enjoy life. The character, Romanian/French philosopher Emil Cioran, arch pessimist says in French, so it sounds much nicer “ It isn't worth the bother of killing yourself, because you always kill yourself too late!”Cioran is quoted a few times in the novel.

- 8) 8 of Swords= The antagonist Mikaela captures the antagonist Benoit and ties him to a pole behind bars, a scene from the novel.
- 9) 9 of Swords= the protagonist Vanstone sits in bed at the start of the novel, reflecting on past events, with a crippling sense of dread, déjà vu and depression. He is experiencing a time loop but is unaware.
- 10) 10 of Swords= all 3 characters, Mikaela, Benoit and Vanstone meet their untimely demise, Is this the end of Vanstone?
- 11) Page of Swords= this card was originally a throwaway joke card called “The 4 of Snakes”, which was repurposed for this, it features 4 ouroboros looking snakes.
- 12) Knight of Swords= a close up picture of the face of Benoit Sylvestre, a lead antagonist in the novel.
- 13) Queen of Swords= this card, like the Queen Of Cups and Queen of Pentacles, originally served as a birthday card/present for the same friend. This friend in real life, is actually associated with Taurus and thus Pentacles, not Cups or Swords, her personality is that and is unsuited to the suit itself, it was meant as a joke.
- 14) King of Swords= another poker card inspired picture of one of the werewolf bikers from the gang Choix De Diable, lead by Benoit in the story.

The Suit Of Wands

- 1) Ace of Wands= inspired by several different drawings from old Tarot decks. Nothing else significant to note
- 2) 2 of Wands= Father Time holds a globe, Saturn holds dominion over this Earth, see card #21 The World
- 3) 3 of Wands= An Asian themed Father Time looks at the sea, to a Hong Kong Pirate boat, with its iconic flags and sails, and toward 3 Giza style Pyramids. The author is hung up on the pyramids of Giza, and all the pyramids around the world, in China, the Aztecs etc, as he believes another conspiracy, that those pyramids were once electrical power plants.
- 4) 4 of Wands= the protagonist looks onward at the castle that guards the diocese cathedral, and at the strange obelisk that keeps appearing throughout the story. The author, like the protagonist, craves completion, the meaning of this card, and one of his favorites.
- 5) 5 of Wands= based off a Wiccan Tarot deck, the 5 wands that look like tree branches criss cross and overlap each other, a classic design concept.
- 6) 6 of Wands= one of Father Times minions rides a pale horse, holding a wreath of victory, and while this has nothing to do with the story, its a good esthetic choice and based off of old medieval tarot cards
- 7) 7 of wands= the lead antagonist Mikaela holds a Hamsa symbol, while 4 planets top tree branch wands, based off old tarot deck drawings from the medieval period.
- 8) 8 of Wands= From the Aleister Crowley Thoth deck, tree branch wands creat the “Chaos sigil” iconic symbol.
- 9) 9 of Wands= an injured Benoit sylvestre holds a wand, in fron of the strange obelisk that recurs throughout the story.
- 10) 10 of Wands= This image is of Nikola Teslas “Vortex math” and what the Daoists thought was a manifestation of “God” the sequence and algorithm of 369, with some bible quotes. This is also

an inverted meaning of the card, and this inversion is thematic of the entire deck, the meanings are sometimes the opposites. God is not an oppressor.

- 11) Page of Wands + alternate= a drawing of some cats, originally a gift for a friend. The other is a drawing from the 1990's clay-mation animated Cartoon series "Mr.Bumpy." Both contain innocence, and that in itself can sometimes be inspiring, like the suit of wands itself.
- 12) Knight of Wands= a picture of a character from the story Jayson Ferguson, who is also featured in card #12 The Hanged Man, based off of classic poker cards, he captures the mischief of this card very well.
- 13) Queen of Wands= There is no female depicted in this card. The author struggled with this card, and decided to re purpose a drawing, inspired by the Netflix T.V show "Manifest" which is a show that also deals with similar themes such as time loops on flight 828. The show has a complicated investigation, where there is a clue about Zechariah and the Book of Revelation. The suit of wands is about whatever ignites or leads to inspiration.
- 14) King Of Wands= another hidden constellation, like the Page Of Pentacles Monoceros the Unicorn, Ophiuchus is a constellation that can typically only be seen in late November/Early December, and used to be an old Zodiac sign, seen here with its corresponding symbol in the 4 corners of the card. There are many meanings to the number 13, which my novel deals with in the story and its related essays, but did not cover this aspect yet. There are now 12 signs of the Zodiac and there used to be 13, so instead of 12 months, there were 13, and if that were the case, we divide 365 by 13, each month would have 30 days and be closely aligned with the cycles of the moon and lunar calendar. There are many reasons why long term this would not be practical, like leap years and so on, but it is interesting.
Its another way in which we are not aligned with time in this reality, and time is a major theme in my story. While this constellation has nothing to do with the Suit of Wands itself, again, the suit is about what ignites or inspires us as a whole, in which case these various constellations served that purpose for myself.

Thank you for reading, and happy divination with my deck!