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# Timely Tarot: The Element of Water By Lisa De La O Wyman



## TIMELY TAROT: THE ELEMENT OF WATER

By Lisa De La O Wyman

### The Hanged Man

Here we are, nestled in the heart of Cancer season – that watery sign of emotion, home, belonging, imagination, and nurturing. It represents the incubation space that protectively holds what is not yet ready to come forth. It feeds, watches over, and eventually it releases. It is part of the symbolic and spiritual power of water. In Tarot, water is represented by the Major Arcana card The Hanged Man, the Ace of Cups, Court Cups, and the Minor Arcana suit of Cups (I won't be covering them all here). The story of the element is one of sacrifice, surrender, and regeneration. How will you change, and what are you willing to change for? Can you move with the cycles of life? What sacred quests and acts of love fuel your sense of meaning? Do you believe that you can transform – again?

We begin with where we all began – the mysterious and watery world of the womb. Our relationship with water may go back even further, with some evidence suggesting that human beings originated in the ocean as marine creatures. True or not, this theory reinforces the preeminence of water as a source of creation. We incubate in it, our bodies are made up of it, we drink it to stay alive, and we secrete it as part of healthy release and regulation.

Symbolically, water is a medium of transition for coming into and out of this world. In ancient mythology and works like Dante's "Inferno," souls must journey across one of several rivers, like the Styx, to begin a new form of existence. Many cultures around the world have long regarded the direction of West, associated with water, to be where the departed reside. Water represents a numinous, liminal space which cannot be located on a map or linear timeline; it is in-between, indefinable, perhaps a dimension that only exists within another state of consciousness. In most traditions, water represents emotions, intuition, receptivity, adaptability, dreams, and spiritual connection. Purification, cleansing, and baptismal sacraments are also related. It renews and refreshes. It is also devotional and can represent the level of surrender that must occur when seeking unity in the name of love or mystical experience. It speaks to a profound desire for connection and blending. Intuitive and creative abilities are often tied to water because one must submit to the imagination and be willing to receive the impressions that come through. Water is reflective; we see images in its surface. It is impressionable and takes different forms with no set form of its own. It is the essence of fluidity.

Astrologically, Water is associated with the zodiacal signs of Cancer ("I feel"), Scorpio ("I desire"), and Pisces ("I believe"). All three are considered to be water signs and demonstrate different ways in which water can be expressed as distinct energies in the cycles of life. In Tarot, the story of water is one of birth, death, and resurrection as told through these three signs. It also tells us about the sacrifices and gifts we encounter along the way.



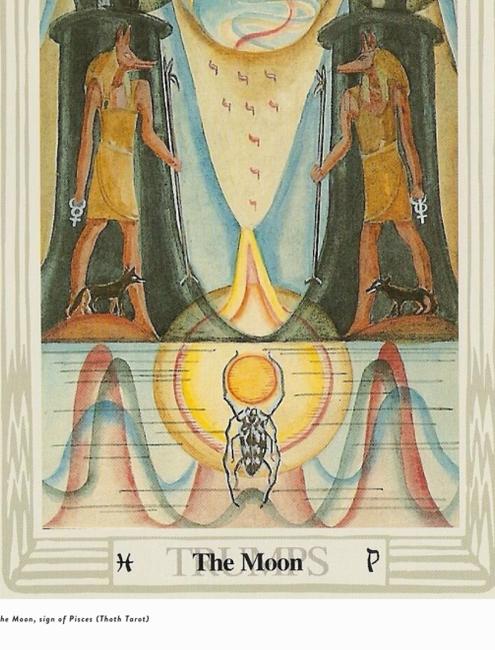
The Chariot card, sign of Cancer (Tarot of the Divine)

In the cards of Cancer (The Chariot and 2-4 of Cups), cardinal energy initiates the path. A desire is born – a spiritual quest, a spark of connection, an urge to create and bring forth something new out of love. The Chariot depicts a knight on a sacred journey, venturing beyond what is familiar in service of a greater aim. It is an adventure that will demand courage, faith, and deep devotion from the heart. The knights of the Holy Grail, like Sir Galahad, are connected to this card. Their sojourn was sanctified by belief and love, and they were committed to serve as guardians of the one precious thing. We can see this reflected in the very Cancerian theme of motherhood, where the carrying and protection of the child is the ultimate act of love. Like the crab that represents the sign, Cancer is connected to containers, the shells or homes you create, procure, and carry to secure what you most value. Sometimes you realize you have outgrown them and must be brave enough to step beyond and seek a new container that can hold your burgeoning power, creativity, and love.



Death, sign of Scorpio (Tabula Mundi Tarot)

The cards of Scorpio (Death and the 5-7 of Cups) exemplify a fixed, intense energy that sustains even while it deconstructs. There are extremes of emotion, endings, and the alchemical changes that both break down and engender something new. It is a journey through the three stages of the sign – scorpion, snake, and eagle. While the scorpion is a desert creature, its most infamous feature is its watery poison contained in the stinger – a veritable womb of death. Yet Scorpic energy is incomplete without the impulse towards rebirth. Regeneration is intrinsic to its watery nature as it flows from one extreme to another – from delirious pleasure to heartbreaking loss, cruel vengefulness to the healing balm of forgiveness, and ultimately, from death to new life. Your life consists of many cycles, each one requiring a death so that another may begin. The Death card invites you to see how natural, inevitable, and beautiful this is and to make peace with and work with the rhythms. Being alive is sometimes painful, often exhilarating, but dammit you are ALIVE! It's a wild ride, and it will end... and begin again in another form. You will never end. The impulse to BE surges in us all.



The Moon, sign of Pisces (Thoth Tarot)

In the cards of Pisces (The Moon and 8-10 of Cups) mutable energy moves into murky waters of the subconscious where complexities are explored and hope is reborn. An emotional release, the fulfillment of a cherished wish, and an attachment to the illusion of permanent bliss play out under mysterious lunar light and shadows. The Moon holds dreams and nightmares, wishes and delusions. It's reflective and ever-changing. You see and feel differently under its influence, and it takes you into your own sea of fears and urges, fantasies and phantoms. The emotional experience of The Moon card is like walking through fog on an unfamiliar road or swimming in dark waters. What you see may or may not be real and might delight or terrify you. It reflects you back to yourself, the parts you tend to avoid – only now you must see to release what binds you, to free yourself and be reborn anew. We prefer to ignore or deny our emotions because they scare us and often seem uncontrollable and inconvenient. The Moon card urges us to communicate with them instead, to try and understand what they need. Lunar energy is also about bounty and good fortune – what if you gave your sadness, grief, anger, or frustration some love and understanding? It's a form of prosperity we often overlook but that has the power to transform our hearts and heal our spirits.



The Hanged Man, Elemental Water (Phoenix Tarot)

The Hanged Man is the card of elemental Water in the Tarot deck, and it is where we find the heart of the birth-death-resurrection journey. The figure depicted is in an extremely vulnerable physical (and emotional) position. They are suspended and their perspective has completely shifted. When will they be able to get up and leave? What do they see? Are they choosing to be like this? This card is often connected to the Norse god Odin, whose desire for spiritual wisdom was so profound that he sacrificed his eye and chose to hang upside-down from the tree of Yggdrasil for nine days to receive knowledge of the mysteries of life and death. He gave up one form of sight for another with far greater insight and vision. In his own words, his sacrifice was "given to Odin, myself to myself." His quest was self-initiated in order to fulfill his greatest wish. Like Odin, the Hanged Man experience moves you out of the illusion of control into one of listening, receiving, and connecting with the transcendent. You emerge from it richer than before – you gave up something but gained something else far more valuable. Sometimes you get forced into this suspended position, and it feels frustrating and scary. It might feel like everything is on hold. The illusion of mastery is gone, and you must float in the waters until you can begin to see with new eyes.

So how do we connect with water beyond the mundane habits of the washroom? For those fortunate enough to live near a body of water, spending time in and around them is wonderful. If that's not an option, you might buy a fountain for your patio or yard so that you can enjoy the sound of water in motion. You might also keep a bowl of water near you as you meditate or pray. Dip your fingers in and feel the texture, coolness, and simple pleasure of its contact with your skin. There are also endless apps and free videos of waterfall, ocean, and babbling brook sounds online. Listen to them while you work, clean the house, or study. Immerse your senses in the expression of water – how does it make you feel? Of course taking baths is incredibly healing, even more so if you mix some salt in the water. If you don't care for baths, take a shower and imagine the water rinsing away stress, tension, energies from other people that don't feel good, etc. Shift your awareness of water, notice how it washes away, makes clean, and renews and relaxes your body and mind. Perspiration and tears are also incredibly powerful; let your body and emotions release whatever is ready to go. Think about it – how good do you feel after you've worked up a sweat or had a good ole' ugly cry?

If you enjoy working with the chakra system, the Sacral Chakra is connected to water, emotion, creativity, sensuality, and adaptability. Meditate on this energy point in your body, surround yourself with the color orange, eat orange foods, move your body in gentle and fluid ways, and practice greater emotional flexibility in your daily life. Can you be okay with changes today? Is it alright that those plans fell through? Experiment with your comfort levels here. As Bruce Lee said, "Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but just to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. . . . Be water, my friend." May your waters flow and sparkle with freshness and vitality this summer, my friends.



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Lisa De La O Wyman is a Tarot reader and writer based in Redondo Beach. At Tarot for Empowerment she works with individual clients, private parties, and special events. Through her work she seeks to connect people with their innate power as well as encounter the mystery in everyday life. She can be reached via Instagram and Facebook at @tarotforempowerment.

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