

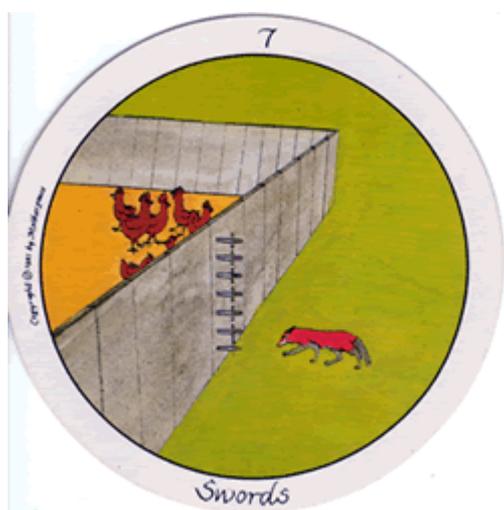
# Tarot imagery and the payoff

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

A couple days ago, I wrote the scene where Phoebe has a premonition of her own doom that involved tarot cards. For the scene, I shuffled the deck and pulled out two cards at random. The first was the Seven of Swords, which seemed really appropriate.



It is essentially a negative card, involving risky or sneaky plans, bad ideas, and good people in danger from people of ill intent. As such, it fit the book perfectly.

The other card I drew stumped me for a minute. It was the Three of Disks.



This is usually read as a card about people working together to achieve a goal, and is a positive card. But the scene of Phoebe's premonition is a negative scene – and then I looked at what the women are doing. They're building a wall – nice big solid wall, like the walls Phoebe is hiding behind. But built into that wall is a hole you could drive cattle through – and it's obviously there by intent – part of the design.

So in Phoebe's premonition, she goes through the same logic in reading the card that I did, and comes to the conclusion that the danger is going to come to her through a hole in the security of the place where she's staying, but a hole that everyone knows about – that is a feature, not a mistake – and that it's something all the care everyone has taken to keep her safe is going to be worthless.

Today, she discovers what that hole is. It's a whopper.

Even better, that single card draw gave me the ending of the book, which I hadn't known except in generalities. Once I figured out how Phoebe would read that card, suddenly I could do a sentence-per-scene outline of the last twenty scenes of the book. It fell into place for me in about an hour. It was an amazing experience.

Books come from some strange damned places.

Word goal the day, 66,513.

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