

Fortunes

a Card Game

by

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Fortunes: a Card Game

Fortunes is a game for four players. The game operates on two levels: as a betting game, and as a divinatory one. As with all divinatory forms, the game can be considered from a personal perspective or a broader one.

If a Fortunes deck is not available, a standard Tarot deck may be substituted.

The Deck

The Fortunes deck has 5 suits:

- Wands (or Staves)
- Cups
- Swords
- Pentacles
- Stars (or trumps)

There are 14 each of the four primary ("mundane") suits and 22 Stars. The primary suits are numbered from the Ace to 10, with court cards of the Herald or Page, Knight, Riga, and Righ. The Ace always scores low.

When a Tarot deck is substituted for the Fortunes deck, the Major Arcana take the place of the suit of Stars, and the court cards of the various suits (the Page or Princess, Prince or Knight, Queen, and King) take the place of the Fortunes deck's Herald, Knight, Riga and Righ.

Game Preparation

Players are divided into two teams: the dealer's team or High team, which is considered to occupy East-West, and the opposing team or Low team, which is considered to occupy North-South. For the purposes of game play it is not necessary for players to physically orient themselves to the cardinal directions, though purists believe it yields better divinatory results; it is acceptable for the players to consider the dealer as occupying the East position and identify themselves in relation to him. Thus the player across from the dealer occupies West, the player to his right North, etc.

The Fortunes deck has two more cards than are needed for four people, so before play begins two cards are drawn from the deck and discarded. In classic play these two cards are drawn by the players at South (left of the dealer) and West (across from the dealer); but it is not uncommon for the dealer to simply draw out two cards and set them aside. The dealer will set these cards down on the table (face down) in front of himself as a reminder of who is dealer and which team is High for this game.

Now the dealer distributes all the remaining cards to the players. Each player receives 19 cards.

Betting

Betting can be done in a number of ways. Places and players that focus on the divination aspect of the game generally place bets before the players look at their hands. Places and players that do not concern themselves with divination frequently place bets after the players look at the cards in their hands.

Alternatively, players may place an ante at the start of the game, once players look at the cards in their hands, and then either raise the ante or keep the ante the same (staying the ante) at the beginning of each round. If any player chooses to fold, the game ends and the player with the most points takes the pot. In situations where players on the winning team both have an equal number of points, the pot is split.

In another variation, team members must bid at the beginning of the game how many rounds they will win. Scores are only determined if the players on the team win, at minimum, the number of rounds they bid.

Another variation is for teams to play full games until a team reaches a pre-determined number of points. A subset of this variation is for players to attempt to play to a pre-determined number of points without going over.

Game Play

Play opens with the dealer laying the first card. The lead for subsequent hands moves clockwise, regardless of who won the previous hand. When a member of the Low team leads a hand, low scores win the hand; when a member of the High team leads a hand, that hand will be won by the high-scoring card. Whatever suit the leader of a hand chooses is now the suit in play, and other players must follow suit if they can. If a player has none of the suit in play available, then he may "throw off" a card from another suit or play a card from the suit of Stars.

When a player introduces Stars in a given hand, the scoring of that hand switches. A high-scoring hand becomes a low-scoring hand or vice-versa, regardless of who began the play in that round or who played the Star. Each time a player lays down a Star, the advantage for that hand switches. Once Stars are in play in a given game, anyone can play them, regardless of whether they still have the suit theoretically in play available.

If, however, the player who begins a given round opens that round in the suit of Stars, the advantage for that hand cannot be changed, and any card but a Star is essentially "thrown away".

Scoring

The player who wins a round collects the cards from that hand into a single stack (trick) with the winning card on top (face-up) and lays them before him in a pattern that will allow all the players to identify the order in which those tricks were won. One common method is to lay them down from left to right, overlapping as necessary, but leaving enough of the top card exposed for it to be identified. If the hand won favored the winning player's team (e.g., a high-scoring round won by a player from the High team) the player lays down his trick facing himself. For divinatory purposes, these cards will be interpreted as well-disposed. If the hand won favored the opposing team, he lays down his trick facing his teammate, and when the time comes for divination interprets the top card as ill-disposed. These rule apply whether or not the scoring of the hand has been reversed by the play of a Star. For scoring purposes, each trick is scored as follows:

Well-disposed	2 points
Ill-disposed	1 point

Rules

1. Gameplay is clockwise.
2. The dealer is always on the High team. At the end of each game, the player to the left of the dealer becomes the new dealer.
3. The dealer always starts the first round. At the end of each round, the player to the left of the player who started the previous round starts the next.
4. The team membership of the leader of each hand determines the type of round being played. The Low team starts low rounds and the High team starts high rounds.
5. Aces are low.
6. Stars only count against one another for determining the winner of a round led with that suit.
7. Players must play the suit of the card that started the round, if they have any of that suit in their hands. If they do not, they may "throw off" a card of a different suit or a Star*.
8. Players may not lead a round with Stars until after someone has used a Star to throw off, after which the suit is considered "broken" and may be played at will.
9. Playing a card from the suit of Stars changes the round type from high to low or vice-versa.
10. If a player leads with a card from the suit of Stars, the round type cannot be changed.
11. The Star card zero (the Fool) is the lowest card in the Star suit, unless it is a high round and the twenty-one of Stars is in play, in which case it is the highest card.

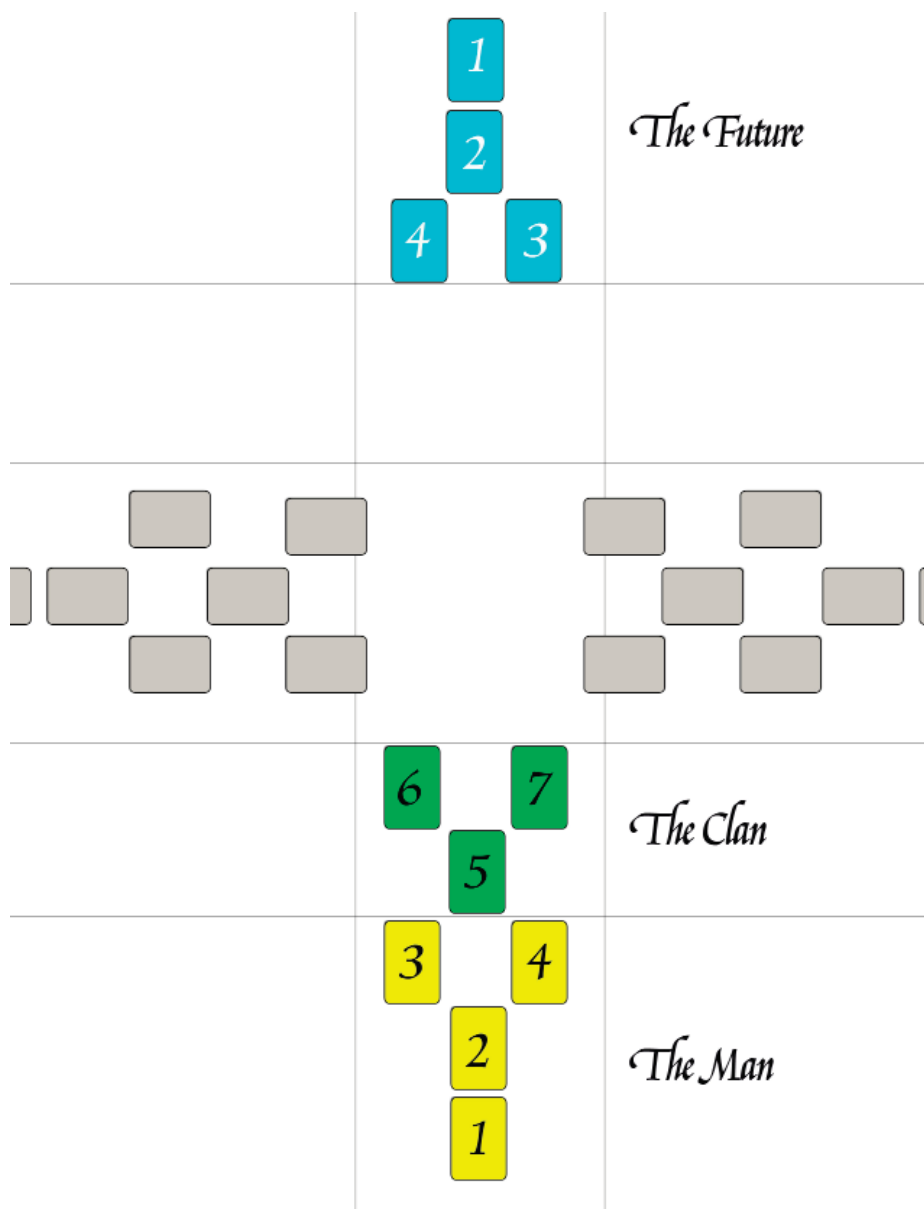
* Or, if a Tarot deck is being used, a card of the Major Arcana

Divination

When the game is complete, players lay out their tricks in the pattern in the illustrations for reading. Fortunes may be interpreted by each player according to his own lights. The interpretive tradition for Fortunes is long and varies from reader to reader. The winning team is considered to win--and share--their fortune, based on the cards facing their axis of play; and the losing team is considered to receive and share a doom based on theirs. Naturally some view this part of the game as whimsy, while others take it very seriously.

Interpreting Common Results

The complexity of the layout depends on the number of tricks won. Most games can be interpreted with this simple layout:



The Man (player's Zone 1)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence
1	The Self	Root, Origin	The World
2	The Astral/Aether or Collective Unconscious	Reflection & Imagination	Moon
3	The House of Magic	Intellect and Logic: Structure	Mercury (Nabal)
4	The House of Illusion (Time)	Creativity and Sensitivity: Anarchy	Venus (Ista)

The Clan (player's Zone 2)

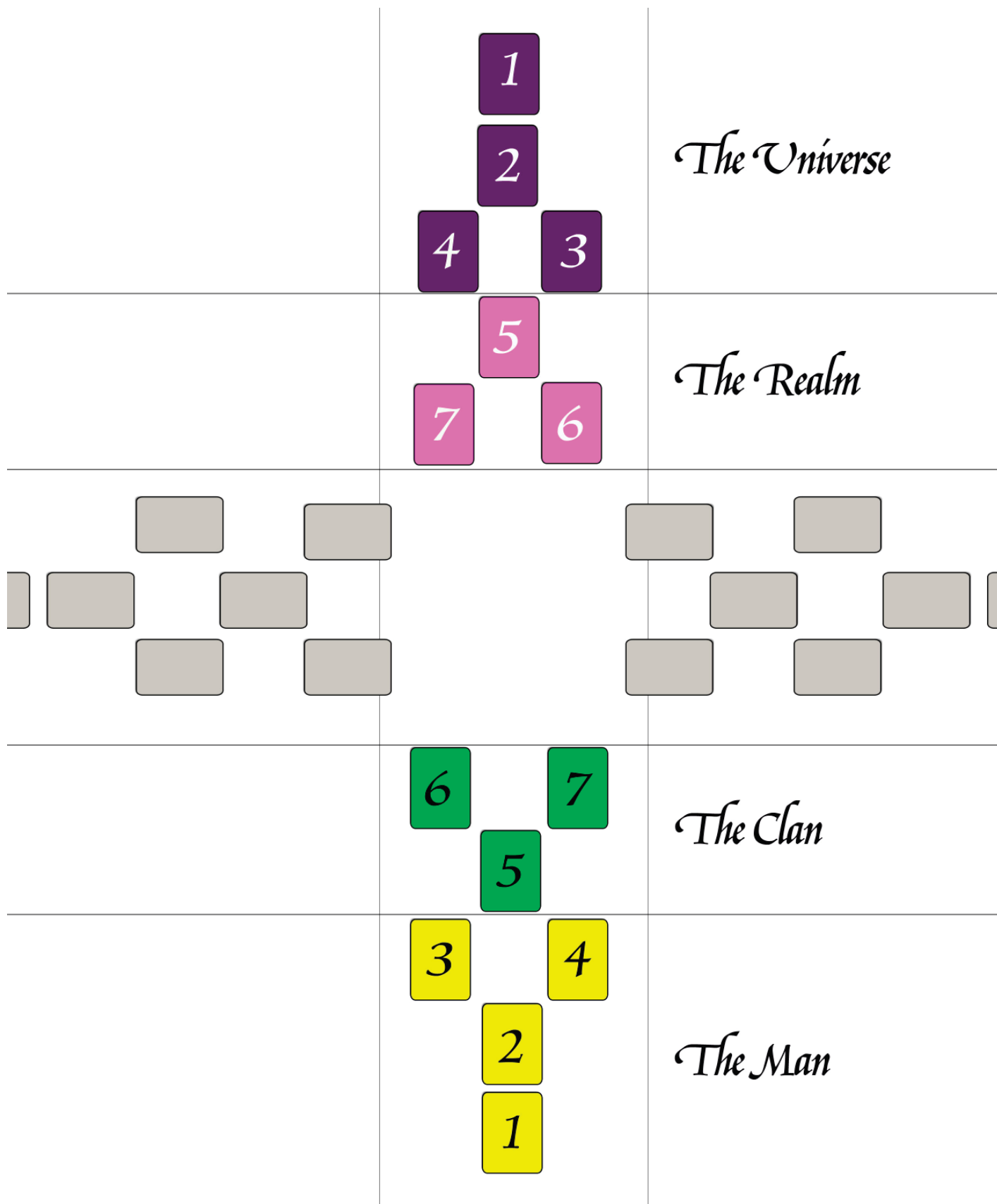
Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence
5	The House of Consciousness	Center and Balance: Devotion	Sun
6	The House of War	Movement and Change: Destruction	Mars (Neuru)
7	The House of Peace	Stability and Expansion: Manifestation	Jupiter (Zenos)

The Future (partner's Zone 1)

Partner's Card	Meaning
1	Hopes
2	Fears
3	Enemies
4	Allies

Broader Readings

If the player and his partner accumulate enough tricks that the team's cards fall outside these zones, interpretation shifts:



The Man (player's Zone 1)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
1	The Self	Root, Origin	The World	10
2	The Astral/Aether or Collective Unconscious	Reflection & Imagination	Moon	9
3	The House of Magic	Intellect and Logic: Structure	Mercury (Nabal)	8
4	The House of Illusion (Time)	Creativity and Sensitivity: Anarchy	Venus (Ista)	7

The Clan (player's Zone 2)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
5	The House of Consciousness	Center and Balance: Devotion	Sun	6
6	The House of War	Movement and Change: Destruction	Mars (Neuru)	5
7	The House of Peace	Stability and Expansion: Manifestation	Jupiter (Zenos)	4

The Realm (partner's Zone 2)

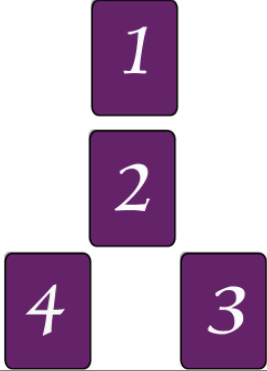
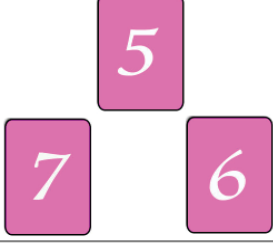
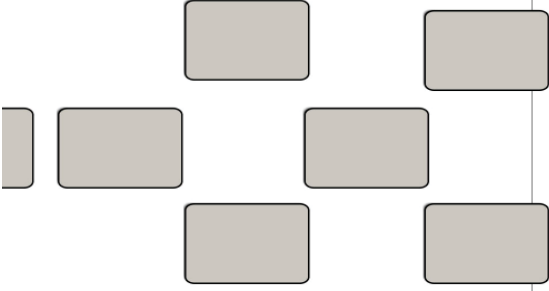
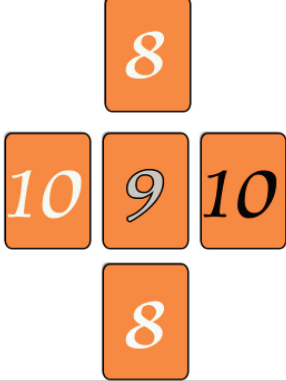
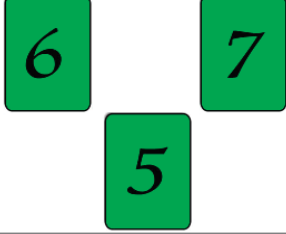
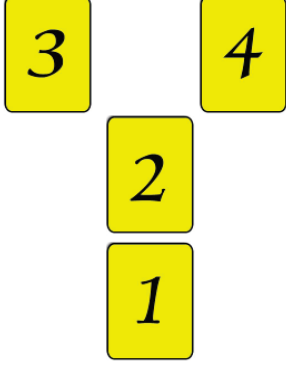
Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
partner 7	The Shrine of the Goddess	Understanding, Female Force: Conception	Saturn (no corresponding planet)	3
partner 6	The Father's House	Raw Power, Male Force: Creation		2
partner 5	The Center	The Eternal		1

The Universe (partner's Zone 1)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
partner 4	The Abyss	Violation of Universal Law: Separation	The Bull	earth
partner 3	The Grey Realms	Inaction and Forgetfulness: Failure	The Eagle	air
partner 2	Tír inna n-Óc	Heroism and Ethics: Success	The Man (Water-Bearer)	water
partner 1	The House of Peace	Return to Balance: Union	The Sphinx	fire

"Fate" Readings

Layouts behind the above are rare and considered highly significant. Should a team win more than fourteen tricks, layouts spread into the table's central zone:

		<p><i>The Universe</i></p>
		<p><i>The Realm</i></p>
		<p><i>The Fate</i></p>
		<p><i>The Clan</i></p>
		<p><i>The Man</i></p>

The Man (player's Zone 1)

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4	The House of Illusion (Time)	Creativity and Sensitivity: Anarchy	Venus (Ista)	7

The Clan (player's Zone 2)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
5	The House of Consciousness	Center and Balance: Devotion	Sun	6
6	The House of War	Movement and Change: Destruction	Mars (Neuru)	5
7	The House of Peace	Stability and Expansion: Manifestation	Jupiter (Zenos)	4

The Realm (partner's Zone 2)

Card	Court	Meaning	Astronomical Correspondence	Sphere
partner 7	The Shrine of the Goddess	Understanding, Female Force: Conception	Saturn (no corresponding planet)	3
partner 6	The Father's House	Raw Power, Male Force: Creation		2
partner 5	The Center	The Eternal		1

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partner 3	The Grey Realms	Inaction and Forgetfulness: Failure	The Eagle	air
partner 2	Tír inna n-Óc	Heroism and Ethics: Success	The Man (Water-Bearer)	water
partner 1	The House of Peace	Return to Balance: Union	The Sphinx	fire

The Fate

Card	Meaning
8	The Gift (given)
9	Shared Fate
partner 8	The Gift (received)
10	Outcome--1 Trap avoided--2
partner 10	Outcome--2 Trap avoided--1