

FOUR OF SWORDS



Original 1909 printing,
illustrated by Pamela
Colman Smith, public
domain.

BEFORE YOU LOOK

What do you think this card means? Write it here before you read on.

WHAT WAITE WROTE

Vigilance, retreat, solitude, hermit's repose, exile, tomb and coffin.

This is the original meaning, in the words of Arthur Waite, who created the deck in 1909 with the artist Pamela Colman Smith.

ASK YOURSELF

How close were you? Where did your meaning come from? Was it a book, a video, or the card itself?

PLEASE NOTE

I am showing you Arthur Edward Waite's meaning to help you understand why this card exists in the deck and what it was intended for. Waite and the artist Pamela Colman Smith both belonged to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a society that studied the tarot as part of its teaching. Waite wrote that the cards held a higher meaning than fortune telling.

Please bear in mind that reading a card is different. When we read, we go to the thing we are most drawn to on the card. We read it for what lives in that moment, for that person and that question.

Imagine Jane, John and Louise each came to you for a reading. They asked three different questions, and you pulled this same card for each of them. Would you give all three the same meaning?