

Nine of Swords: The Haunt



Card Description:

Restful sleep eludes her. She sits upright in bed, face buried in hand, in slight fetal position. The horned shadow hovering over her from behind is The Haunt.

Etched into the side of the figure's medieval-style bed is an astrological table of essential dignities. Starting with the top row, left to right, after the glyph for Fire is Aries, then Mars, its planetary ruler, and Venus, which is exiled or detrimental in Aries. Next is Taurus, then its planetary ruler Venus, and then Mars, which is in detriment under Taurus, and so on.

The backdrop is that of a crypt underneath a medieval cathedral. The three circular seals along the left column, covered by the spirit of The Haunt, is, top to bottom, the First Pentacle of Mars from the *Key of Solomon*, then Paracelsus's first zodiac seal for Gemini, and then his second zodiac seal for Gemini. To the right, first is the Magic Ring of Solomon from the *Goetia*. Below it is the AGLA Seal of Divine Protection from Demons, and finally, the Fourth Pentacle of Mercury, a magical seal used to acquire knowledge, to reveal that which is hidden, and to command the Allatori spirits. Mercury is the planetary ruler of Gemini, so its Seal is placed here to amplify your personal strength and fine-tune your perceptivity.

The four rectangular tablets forming the two columns of the archway are magical tablets for healing from the *Book of Abramelin the Mage*, Book III, Chapter 18, "To Heal Diverse Maladies," with the letters written in Agrippa's Celestial Alphabet. Top to bottom, they are: the magic square for curing disease, illness, and pestilence; tablet for curing feelings of imbalance; for healing a wound; and to cure physical bodily pains.

Crowley describes the Nine of Swords imagery as "a cathedral of the damned." In a moment of insomnia, the illusions cast upon the walls of the mind project outward and become your environmental reality. The endless hall of the cathedral crypt is but an illusion of space, one our sleepless figure has conjured. The nine swords—her thoughts—have created this crypt.

Yet her suffering has called forth She of the Earth and Underworld, Great One of Magic, who appears here in her younger version. Note the crone manifestation of her earlier in the Nine of Scepters.

This is Mother, though not in the sense of motherhood that humans are more familiar with; this is a spiritual Mother, waking from her own solace and leaving her cave to come in your moment of need, to tend to you until you fear the darkness no more.

The checkered tiles on the bed with the astrological glyphs represent Fate, while the checkered tiles of the floor behind her, where Mother Hekate stands, is blank, representing Free Will—the path into the future is unwritten.

You've been feeling haunted and bound by your Fate. Yet Hekate now approaches you, illuminating the crypt with her torch, reminding you that where there is a Will...

Card Meaning:

Mars in Gemini can bring on anxiety, yet we also see the potential of great achievement, and one who will serve as a model of inspiration to others. Mars in Gemini is truth that you don't want to hear, but truth that is medicine. Challenges in the short-term lead to the accomplishment of an extraordinary endeavor in the long-term.

Pictured here are the sleepless nights that come while contemplating solutions to your problem. It's you at a difficult crossroads, hence the appearance of Hekate. She is present as Mother, to cradle you in her arms and to protect you while you cry.

The spirit of The Haunt is scary, sure, but this is through and through a beneficent spirit. The Haunt is compelling you to confront difficult truths. You fear this spirit not because the spirit is malefic, but because you intuit that the news the Haunt will bring is not what you want to hear.

When the Nine of Swords shows up in your reading, pay attention to the signs your body or subconscious is trying to send you. There is something wrong and you need to stop ignoring the signs.

This is when something inside of you is aching, and it becomes real, psychosomatic. The pain is not the problem itself, but a symptom. Your inner voice is trying to communicate something to you.

The vision of Hekate, titan-goddess of liminal spaces, magic, and crossroads—of Ereshkigal, goddess who can help you navigate the underworld—of Werethekau, the personification of magic and your protectress in the underworld—a Divinity comes to help you face your fears, to confront that which is causing your anxiety, and because your spiritual Mother is here, right by your bedside, there is nothing to fear in this momentary darkness.

There's a spell in the Greek Magical Papyri for a Hekate protective charm. Take a piece of lodestone and upon it, carve a three-faced Hekate as follows:

- the middle face is a maiden wearing horns;
- the left face is that of a dog;
- and the right face is that of a goat.

When the carving is done, cleanse the stone with natron and water. Natron is a naturally occurring salt mix of sodium carbonate and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) that's naturally harvested from dried lake beds.

Dip that cleansed stone in "the blood of one who has died a violent death." And "make a food offering to it." A practical and accessible modern-day equivalent to that might be to use animal blood from the butcher's, such as pig's blood.

Burn an incense blend of styrax resin, myrrh resin, sage, frankincense, and a fruit pit. Then recite the following spell over the stone:

Hail, goddess, and attend your epithets,
I burn for you this spice, O child of Zeus,
Dart-shooter, heavenly one, goddess of harbors,
Who roam the mountains, goddess of crossroads,
O nether and nocturnal, and infernal,
Goddess of dark, quiet and frightful one,
O you who have your meal amid the graves,
Night, Darkness, broad Chaos: Necessity
Hard to escape are you; you're Moira and
Erinys, torment, Justice and Destroyer,
And you keep Kerberos in chains, with scales
Of serpents are you dark, O you with hair
Of serpents, serpent-girded, who drink blood,
Who bring death and destruction, and who feast
On hearts, flesh eater, who devour those dead
Untimely, and you who make grief resound
And spread madness, come to my sacrifices,
And now for me do you fulfill this matter.

Having petitioned and brought yourself into the presence of the goddess Hekate, speak your wish or intention.

Artist Notes:

This drawing is deeply sentimental to me. It reminds me of my girlhood, when I'd wake up from nightmares and my mother would rush to my bedside. She never dismissed my fears when I told her there were monsters lurking in the dark. Instead, she taught me how to stay calm, centered, and how to call upon higher divine forces to help me whenever I was scared. Real or imagined, I

don't even think that matters—that my mother always believes in me, that she always takes my side, is what I took with me into adulthood.

To me, the deepest underlying cause of a Nine of Swords moment in your life is not feeling believed, not feeling validated. I don't think we as humans are so weak as to crumble just because there's been suffering. The suffering is amplified and made nearly unbearable when no one recognizes our suffering, when we don't feel seen. It's crying out in fear in the middle of the night and there is no one rushing to your bedside to hold you.

To know there will always be someone who rushes to your bedside when you're scared is to have all the inner strength it takes to combat suffering. That's why this rendering of the Nine of Swords has added the invoked detail of the spiritual Mother.

PRIMORDIAL INFLUENCES:

- Astrological: The Tower, The Lovers
- Numerological: The Erudite, The Necromancer

MATHERS ATTRIBUTION:

Despair and Cruelty

NINE OF SWORDS: THE HAUNT



MINOR ARCANA

