

The Tarot Connection – Episode 63:

Tarot Spreads, Threads and Mandalas with Gina Estevez

A Scavenger Hunt – The Universe

It is August 12, 2007. My life is incredibly busy and almost unbelievably full. My son begins high school in a couple of weeks, and I hope to continue to be the Mom that he needs while I evolve along my own path. I am in a program working toward ordination. I teach metaphysical classes every weekend; and September, October and November are full of festivals and workshops. I am writing another couple of books, and don't forget the full-time day job! I am blessed and just a little overwhelmed as I am truly realizing all that I desire.

So, I ask All There Is to give me a card that will help me focus on integrating each element of my life – mother, student, teacher, author, worker bee – into a coherent whole.

I shuffled the Voyager Tarot by James Wanless, and set it on the dining room table, fanned out and face down. I stepped into my bedroom to pick up my journal and find a pen, and wrote my thoughts for the focus of this scavenger hunt. When I came out of the room, my other half met me.

“Were you going to pull a card from the deck that’s on the table?”

“Yes, I am. It’s for a scavenger hunt and mandala to help me pull my life together over the next few months. I’m looking for a holistic perspective.”

Chris laughed, “Well, I just pulled the card off the top for you.” And he handed me the Universe (XXI).

How apropos. And so, my scavenger hunt begins. A list of all that I see in this card:

- Seagull
- Stars
- White lotus
- Water – reflecting
- Footprint on the moon
- Someone dancing
- 4 earths
- Fish coming and going – head and tail
- Moon
- Satellite
- Saturn
- Comet
- Snake
- Ankh
- Fissures
- Cracks
- Lightning
- Sunset
- Thai Buddha
- Grapes
- Sun
- Clouds
- Statue – man in stone – beautiful, but unfinished (Slave Awakening or awakening slave, Michaelangelo, circa 1519-1536 – “dramatic effort of the sculptor to embody an idea”¹)
- DNA
- Someone on all fours, hands and knees, rising from the water, and reflecting in it
- Nebula
- Flame
- Green egg or ball
- Spiral nebula

¹ Yes, I did a little homework. Couldn't help myself. Had to remember where I saw this particular piece of art. The quote is from this website.
http://www.kfki.hu/~arthp/html/m/michelan/1sculptu/giulio_2/slave3.html

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- Stone
- Entire color spectrum, but leaning toward purple, red and blue
- Monkey or ape from evolutionary chart
- Hubble telescope

Possibilities of the answer that I seek are already swirling around my head, much like that spiral nebula. But I know that a common trap of having read the cards for twenty years is that sometimes I leap to the most common answers and go no further. I am determined to learn something “new” with this exercise, and I type up my list and begin looking for corresponding items. Over the next week, I’ll look at home, at work, at my favorite restaurant, at my Mom’s house, where I shop, where I play, where I live, and bring each piece of the Universe home, crafting a three-dimensional mandala out of the very stuff of my own world.

I place a white cloth on a table and put the Universe card face up in the center of the table.

Things I found at home:

DNA mandala – I pull another card from The Voyager Tarot and place it face down on the table, as the card back has the DNA spiral found on the face of the Universe. No, that’s not cheating, she says emphatically!

Thai Buddha and White Lotus, Flame – I have a box of white candles that are etched with the Thai Buddha image on one side and the white lotus on the other.

Man carved in stone – My Mom gave me a stone years ago from stuff that she and Dad had collected. A man’s face is etched into the front of the stone and it appears that his arms are crossed. The back of the stone is smooth, but otherwise, not carved, though the stone is flattened at the bottom so that it may stand upright.

Trivet with Moon, Sun, Saturn and Comet – My son painted this trivet years ago. It usually sits on my altar, supporting my incense cauldron and protecting my altar from the heat.

DNA – My father, youngest sister and grandmother have all crossed over in the last three years. I keep a handful of flowers from each of their memorial services, and select some of each of those petals of remembrance for the table.

Earth – I found two blue, soft rubber balls in my crochet basket – go figure. Looks like the water planet to me!

Stars – A globe bearing the stars and constellations.

Snake – My son hasn’t played with his Harry Potter Basilisk toy in a couple of years, and it has found a place of honor on a bookshelf in our home. So, I dusted off the Basilisk.

Grapes and Fish – One of my roommates did some grocery shopping and came home with fresh fruit, including grapes, and a lovely cut of salmon! Can’t wait for dinner – gonna EAT that mandala.

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Items found at work:

Earth - I found another blue, soft rubber ball.

Clouds - I park on the top level of the parking garage at work, and have great view of the sky from there. I took several pictures of clouds from there. I also took some pictures of clouds from the parking lot at a shop where I teach on weekends. Funny, the clouds over the corporate office were heavy and threatened rain, and the clouds over the metaphysical shop were light and wispy.

Hubble Telescope - I have long kept images from the Hubble website on my desktop. I brought the mandala concept to work, and rotated out several nebula images this week on my work computer.

Person on hands and knees in the water - I can't believe I found this image! It is in my mind's eye, as I was driving and could not stop to take a picture. As I crossed a causeway that connects St. Petersburg to Tampa across the bay, I saw folks walking on the sand, fishing from the shore, and I witnessed a woman stoop down to pick something up out of the water. As I drove by, she lowered herself on her hands and knees, her silhouette reflecting in the water, the glare of the sun so bright off the bay, that she appeared a shadow herself.

Items found in the world around me:

Monkey - A dear friend of mine shared his thoughts this week that he needed to listen more to his "inner monkey." I laughed and thought that was quite an absurd way to describe inner voice, but he went on to say that his inner monkey gave him some great advice, but seemed at least as concerned with survival and instinct as with anything spiritual - and my friend is indeed learning to listen. And so, the monkey concept comes home with me and adds an odd twist to this mandala that is growing far beyond anything I had envisioned a week ago.

Seagulls - I live in Florida near the gulf coast. I have noticed their presence everywhere in the last week.

Lightning - We have had summer afternoon storms this week. I love this stuff!

There is still so much more to discover. What of the things that I did not find? The person dancing ... such a tiny figure at the top of the card. I don't dance. Perhaps I should dance or find a freedom of movement that allows me to express myself. I'll think on that. I am creative. I just don't dance. I found no Ankh. The shape reminds me of a great key. I have car keys and house keys and work keys. There was no green egg during this week's journey. But I could always re-read *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss to reclaim some of that innocence and silliness. I definitely need to be silly once in a while, and I just don't do "silly" very often at all. There were no great cracks and fissures in my life this week ... just a lot of little potholes, brought on by the summer storms washing away the roads.

It is Sunday, August 19, 2007, and I have scavenged and gathered objects, ideas, and mental images from the Universe. I found most of what I sought, discovered some unexpected things, and reluctantly admitted that I have an abundance of some items (where the heck did all those blue balls come from?). The centerpiece of the mandala is the candle with the Thai Buddha on one side and the Lotus on the

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other. I realize that I do not need to DO anything to obtain the holistic balance that I seek. I must simply accept what is and what comes, opening my heart and mind to the possibilities. And the possibilities are indeed limitless. As far as I can stretch, sending my own personal satellite to take pictures of stardust and flame – **that** is the ever-changing boundary of my Universe. I am not limited to this Earth. In fact, it appears that I have three possible Earth balls in motion – three potential realities – at any point in time.

I draw on my family, those that have crossed over, and those that remain with me, for perspective, strength and serenity. I believe that I should “play” more. The Basilisk wasn’t selected for the mandala until the last day, because it was a Toy; though I saw it the first day and said, “There’s the snake.”

I am also reminded that as much as I love to say, “Nothing is carved in stone,” often I do just that. In a Universe that is constantly changing, a little constancy can be heartening. I am crafting and creating myself slowly. This stone is already carved, and smooth from years of handling, and yet, there is plenty of space to continue the work of chipping away what is not me, thereby defining who I am. I am stone. I am nebulous. I am all cosmic dust in between. I am Universe. It just doesn’t get any more holistic than that.

Gina Estevez

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