

THE EMPIRE

Original: The World

Upright Meaning: Fulfillment, harmony, completion.

Reversed Meaning: Incomplete, lack of closure.

Notes: Changed The World to The Empire because in the setting, there's no difference. The Empire *is* the World.

THE PEARL

Original: The Sun

Upright Meaning: joy, success, celebration, positivity.

Reversed Meaning: Negativity, depression, sadness.

Notes: The card that made me realize I had to change the deck. The sun in this world is a shattered husk; a reminder of cataclysm more than a sign of joy. Pearls, something beautiful and valuable, seemed a better fit.

THE HAND

Original: The Star

Upright Meaning: Hope, faith, rejuvenation.

Reversed Meaning: Faithlessness, discouragement, insecurity.

Notes: Stars have mixed meanings in Duskwall; they're beautiful lights in the sky, yes, but they're also a quiet, constant terror on the Void Sea. The hand, as part of the revered body, seemed a better choice for the setting.

THE SOUL

Original: The Devil

Upright Meaning: Addiction, materialism, playfulness.

Reversed Meaning: Extremes, excess, lack of balance.

Notes: There are devils in Duskwall, but for the symbolism of this card, the much-reviled soul seemed a better choice. Souls are the cause of much evil in the world, and so are associated with spiritual failings like addiction and imbalance.

THE HOLLOW

Original: The Hanged Man

Upright Meaning: Sacrifice, release, martyrdom.

Reversed Meaning: Stalling, needless sacrifice, fear of sacrifice.

Notes: The idea of a physical body without a soul is highly revered by the Church. The ultimate sacrifice and an ascension beyond the corruption of flesh. But those who become Hollows are hardly in a state to say whether or not the sacrifice was worth it...

THE LEVIATHAN

Original: Wheel of Fortune

Upright Meaning: Change, cycles, inevitable fate.

Reversed Meaning: No control, clinging to control, bad luck.

Notes: The Wheel of Fortune in the real-world tarot deck is laden with very specific culturally bound symbols, none of which make sense in Duskwall. So I swapped it for the undying demons of the Void Sea. Their blood fuels change and innovation, the cyclical hunts happen every year—but those Leviathan hunters can just as easily face terrible fates, bad luck, and depravity.

THE HUNTER

Original: The Chariot

Upright Meaning: Direction, control, willpower.

Reversed Meaning: Lack of control/direction, aggression.

Notes: Tied very closely to The Leviathan and changed for many of the same reasons. The Chariot has a lot of cultural symbolism, so I switched it to The (Leviathan) Hunter. Positively, these massive ships are a symbol of the nobility's power and control; negatively, they can be lost at sea and face the wrath of the demons they hunt.

THE MAGISTRATE

Original: The Hierophant

Upright Meaning: Tradition, conformity, morality, ethics.

Reversed Meaning: Rebellion, subversiveness, new approaches.

Notes: The Hierophant is a religious authority, and while there is a state-approved religion in the Empire, The Magistrate felt like a better fit than the Elder of a religion that routinely experiments on vampires, hollows, and demons.

THE WEeping LADY

Original: The Empress

Upright Meaning: Parenthood, charity, nature.

Reversed Meaning: Dependence, smothering, emptiness, nosiness.

Notes: There has never been an Empress; only the Immortal Emperor. Like with The Emperor, I changed “motherhood” to “parenthood,” to reflect the more genderfluid societies of Duskwall and the Empire. I also exchanged fertility in the original meaning for charity, to better match the Weeping Lady herself.

THE WHISPER

Original: The High Priestess

Upright Meaning: Intuitive, unconscious, inner voice.

Reversed Meaning: Lack of center, lost inner voice, repressed feelings.

Notes: Whispers play a strange role in Duskwall. Their activities are technically illegal, but many people turn to them for help in dealing with spirits and the arcane. Their intuition and knowledge are respected, but spending so much time with ghosts risks the greatest loss of self imaginable.

THE SPARKWRIGHT

Original: The Magician

Upright Meaning: Willpower, desire, creation, manifestation.

Reversed Meaning: Trickery, illusions, out of touch.

Notes: Like the inventors of the Victorian era, Sparkwrights of the Empire are seen as magicians of electroplasm and technology. That said, there are plenty who distrust the Sparkwrights and their work, or who live in fear of an explosion leveling half the district.

THE SUIT OF BLOOD

Original: The Suit of Wands

Notes: The Suit of Wands is associated with creativity, passion, and inspiration. Leviathan blood, which has fueled the development of many of the revolutionary technologies of the Empire, fills the same role here.

THE SUIT OF VOID

Original: The Suit of Cups

Notes: The Suit of Cups is associated with water, as well as emotions, intuition, and the unconscious. The Void here refers to the Void Sea. I swapped the upright and reversed meanings of the suit as well, on the assumption that associations for the Void Sea would be more commonly negative than positive.

THE SUIT OF BLADES

Original: The Suit of Swords

Notes: Look. I couldn't *not*.

THE SUIT OF FLESH

Original: The Suit of Pentacles

Notes: The Suit of Pentacles is associated with earth, physicality, stability, and so on. In the Empire, with the reverence afforded the physical body, it made sense to me for this to be a direct expression of that reverence.