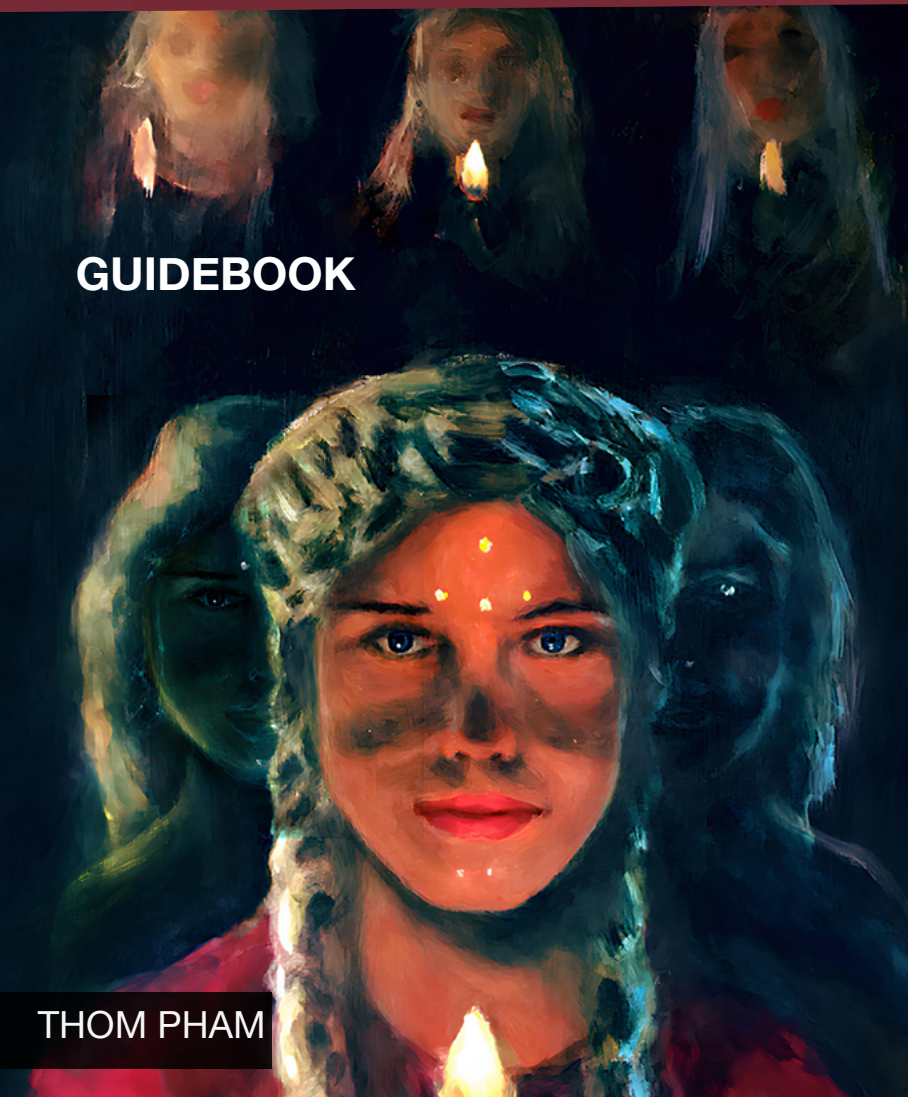




THE ELDER RUNES  
ORACLE CARDS

GUIDEBOOK

THOM PHAM





# THE ELDER RUNES

ORACLE CARDS

**GUIDEBOOK**

## Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Preface  | 7         |
| Introduction   | 9         |
| Chapter 1: The Runes: A Brief History                      | 11        |
| Chapter 2: Understanding the Esoteric Meaning of the Runes | 13        |
| Chapter 3: Runes in Magic and the Eddas                    | 15        |
| Chapter 4: Fate and the Runes                              | 17        |
| Chapter 5: Working with the deck                           | 19        |
| <b>Fehu</b>  | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Uruz</b>  | <b>28</b> |
| <b>Thurisaz</b>  | <b>30</b> |
| <b>Ansuz</b>   | <b>32</b> |
| <b>Raidho</b>  | <b>34</b> |
| <b>Kauna</b>   | <b>36</b> |
| <b>Gebo</b>  | <b>38</b> |
| <b>Wunjo</b>   | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Hagalaz</b>   | <b>42</b> |
| <b>Nauthiz</b>   | <b>44</b> |
| <b>Isa</b>   | <b>46</b> |
| <b>Jera</b>  | <b>48</b> |
| <b>Ihwaz</b>   | <b>50</b> |
| <b>Perthro</b>   | <b>52</b> |
| <b>Algiz</b>   | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Sowilo</b>  | <b>56</b> |
| <b>Tiwaz</b>   | <b>58</b> |
| <b>Berkana</b>   | <b>60</b> |
| <b>Ehwaz</b>   | <b>62</b> |
| <b>Mannaz</b>  | <b>64</b> |
| <b>Laguz</b>   | <b>66</b> |
| <b>Ingwaz</b>  | <b>68</b> |
| <b>Dagaz</b>   | <b>70</b> |
| <b>Othala</b>  | <b>72</b> |

## PREFACE

The creation of The Elder Runes Oracle Cards was a journey that spanned a few years and saw several different unpublished versions of the deck. Unlike my experience designing a Tarot deck, which took only a few months, the more I worked with the runes over time, the more they took me on a journey that influenced the designs I was creating.

With this deck, I felt motivated to pick up more traditional mediums that I hadn't used in a very long time. Watercolor, gouache, pencils, pastels, and mostly acrylic paint became part of my process, while digital tools were reserved for minor color retouching in a few illustrations. This return to hands-on artmaking deepened my connection to the craft, as well as to the evolving symbolism of the runes.

This project posed not only a creative challenge but also a personal one. It required a deep exploration of the runes' symbolic meanings, which I discuss further in Chapter 2. As I engaged with the runes, I realized that their meaning wasn't fixed—it grew and changed alongside my own experiences and



interpretations. The process became a personal reflection of my own growth, a journey of self-discovery as much as it was about creating art.

Now, as I share The Elder Runes Oracle Cards with you, I invite you to find your own meaning and inspiration within these ancient symbols. Whether you are a seasoned practitioner or just beginning to explore the world of runes, I hope these cards will offer you guidance, clarity, and a way to connect to the wisdom that speaks to you personally. There is no one right way to work with them—only the way that resonates with you.

Thom

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the world of the Elder Runes Oracle Cards, a powerful tool for connecting with the ancient wisdom and magic of the runes. This deck of 24 oracle cards is based on the Elder Futhark runes, the oldest version of the runic alphabets that originated in Scandinavia around the first century. The runes were originally used for language and communication, and also carved as symbols of power and used for magic and divination.

The runes are divided into three groups, or aetts (Old Norse: ætt, pronounced ett), with each group containing eight runes. These aetts represent different stages of personal and spiritual development and are associated with various realms of existence. The first aett represents the material world and physical reality; the second aett represents the emotional and mental realms; and the third aett represents the spiritual and divine realms.

As you explore this deck, you will discover a rich tapestry of symbolism and mythology inspired by the Nordic gods and goddesses, as well as the energies and themes associated with each rune. Each card features an illustration that brings to life the essence of the rune, along with

an affirmation that can help you tap into its power and wisdom.

Whether you are a seasoned practitioner or new to the world of runes, these cards can offer guidance, clarity, and a deep connection to the wisdom of the ages. So, take a deep breath, shuffle the deck, and let the runes guide you on your journey of self-discovery and transformation.

## CHAPTER 1: THE RUNES : A BRIEF HISTORY

The word rune comes from the old Norse word “rún,” which means secret, mystery, or whisper. It has been associated with “council” or a meeting where wise people were discussing matters in secret.

Runes are a set of letters that forms runic alphabets that emerged around the First Century and were used to write early Germanic languages. The oldest form of this runic alphabet is called the Elder Futhark. Its name comes from the sound of the first six runes: “F - U - Þ ( th ) - A - R - K” and contains 24 runes that were used until around 700 AD. A shorter version consisting of 16 runes called the Younger Futhark, also known as the Scandinavian runes emerged during the 7th Century and was used until the 12th Century.

There is much debate about where the runes originated from, but a likely hypothesis is they came from Germanic tribes that came in contact with Roman culture during the early 1st Century in Northern Europe and spread around to the neighboring countries. There is no consensus among runologists as to which

alphabet could have been the forerunner of the runes, with some linking their origin towards a Greek or North Italic/ Etruscan alphabet.

Runes have traditionally been carved onto hard surfaces such as metal, stone, wood, bone. They can be found on many objects, such as weapons, jewelry, amulets, tools, and runestones, but only around 400 artifacts can be attributed to the Elder Futhark's early period.

Besides their uses for writing and communication, runes were used for magic and divination. The first mention of the possibility of the runes being used for divinatory and magical purposes comes from the Roman historian Tacitus in the First Century. In his book *Germania*, he describes ancient practices of Germanic people and how they used symbols carved into small pieces of wood that were randomly thrown onto a white cloth to reveal a message. It is unclear if it was the Elder Futhark runes Tacitus referred to though.

Runes are heavily linked with the Viking Age (793–1066 AD) but Vikings used the Younger Futhark runes and not the Elder Futhark. Nonetheless, it is from that period

that we can gain the most insights into the magical use of the runes, as they left behind the most runic inscriptions during their time of travel.

From around the 5th century to 1000 AD, another revised version of the runes emerged, called the Anglo-Saxon Futhorc, and was developed by the Anglo-Saxons and Frisians. This rune system consisted of 33 runes and was in use until the 12th century. In Scandinavia, around the late 10th century, the Younger Futhark was gradually adapted into the Medieval Futhork, which was fully formed in the 13th century.

Elder Futhark (around 160-700 AD)  
Younger Futhark (700 AD -1200 AD)  
Anglo-Saxon Futhorc (500 AD -1000 AD)  
Medieval Futhork (1000 AD—fully formed 13th century AD)

Alongside those later sets of runes were poems that were meant to help memorize the names of the runes, called the Old Norwegian, Old Icelandic, and Anglo-Saxon rune poems. Because there were no records found from the time of the Elder Futhark's runes that

could give info into their name or spiritual meaning, it was only through the collection of those later poems that their possible meanings were extracted.

## CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE RUNES

The meaning of the runes' spiritual and esoteric interpretations comes mainly from the Scandinavian, Icelandic, and Anglo-Saxon poems. However, these poems are not without problems, as they were created many centuries after the Elder Futhark during the Middle Ages and were influenced by Christianity. Some of the poems have many runes with different interpretations; this inconsistency presents a challenge to anyone seeking spiritual guidance from the runes.

However, modern rune practitioners have agreed on a common meaning for each rune. Therefore, the meaning of the runes that the spiritual community has established may be different from the original meanings. It is up to each practitioner to establish their own relationship with the runes, find new meanings and symbolism, and imbue the runic symbols with positive and inclusive energy.

Spiritual authors have drawn inspiration from other spiritual traditions such as Tarot, I-ching, The Kaballah, and Alchemy, among others. They have created their own systems for reading with the runes. For example, the Armanen

runes, created by occultist Guido Von List in 1908, were a popular runic system based on the Younger Futhark that reconstructed the structure of the runes by using 18 runes instead of 24. Popular authors like Ralph Blum added an extra “Wyrð” rune (blank rune), rearranged the order of the Futhark, and gave meanings that were influenced by the I-ching.

While some may criticize these adaptations for inaccurately interpreting the runes to fit a spiritual agenda, the fact remains that a symbol’s power is in the meaning attributed to it. The runes have a history of being appropriated as symbols to represent extremist groups’ ideology.

Nonetheless, the meaning of the runes that the present spiritual community has acquired has become part of our symbolic and spiritual vocabulary, and it is up to us to imbue the runic symbols with positive and inclusive energy.

In conclusion, while the poems have their shortcomings, it is the meaning that modern practitioners agree upon that matters the most. It is up to us to establish our own relationship with the runes and to find new meanings and symbolism in them while remaining faithful to the tradition.

## CHAPTER 3: RUNES IN MAGIC AND THE EDDAS

Evidence of runic magic has been found in many different artifacts and sites such as amulets, weapons, jewelry, piece of bones, or runestones. One example is seeing the runes Ansuz and Tiwaz, known to be associated with the god Tyr and Odin, carved repeatedly, as if to invoke the gods for protection. The word ALU (Ansuz, Laguz, Uruz) is also seen carved repeatedly, with some interpreting it as some sort of spell for protection and others connecting it with the word “ale” (beer), which played a very important role in ancient Norse culture during ceremonies and rituals, such as childbirth, sacrificial rites, funerals, etc.

Other runic inscriptions have been found inside graves, whose purpose was to guide the spirit of the dead in the afterlife and to prevent the ghosts from haunting places. Many large runestones have also been found in Sweden’s grave fields, with curses written on them and directed at whoever attempts to destroy them. Runes were likely combined with other forms of magic, like Seidr, Galdr,

and Spà. Seidr was shamanistic magic that involved rituals and visions, not only to foresee events, but also to influence them. Galdr was the incantation of magic spells in the form of chants, and Spà was the art of divination and prophecy, as incarnated by the three Norns goddesses, the weavers of fate from the Nordic myths.

To better understand the runes and their magical use, we cannot disassociate them from two of the major sources of literary knowledge about the Norse myths and gods, called the Poetic Edda and the Prose Edda. The Prose Edda is a collection of Old Norse writings written by Snorri Sturluson during the early 13th century, and the Poetic Edda is a collection of 34 Icelandic anonymous poems written during the Viking Age (793-1066 AD).

In the Poetic Edda, a poem called the Hávamál, which translates as “The Sayings of the High One,” Odin (the High One), chief of the Norse gods, shares his wisdom on many subjects about life and also shares a list of 18 runic spells for incantation, called Galdar (singular galdr). Those spells protected

against fire, swords, arrows, and storms, or they could conjure up the dead to speak to them. The Sigrdrífumál is another very important section from the Poetic Edda that contains information on rune magic. It follows the hero Sigurd, who wakes the Valkyrie Sigrdrífa (or Brünhild) from a deep sleep spell cast by the god Odin. In return, she gives him many pieces of advice concerning rune magic and its different uses: malrúnar are speech runes, hugrúnar are memory runes, sigrúnar are victory runes, brimrúnar are sea runes, and limrúnar are limb/healing runes.

Even though we may speculate as to what those different categories of runes may refer to, there is no specific mention in the Eddas as to which runes constitute malrúnar, hugrúnar, or sigrúnar runes. However, the verses give us an idea of the purpose of certain runes. For example, the victory runes are likely associated with Tiwaz, as it is linked with the god Tyr and victory. The speech runes could be associated with Ansuz, which is linked with speech and communication. The healing runes could be associated with Berkana, which is linked with growth and rejuvenation.

## CHAPTER 4: FATE AND THE RUNES

In ancient Norse society, fate was a central concept, and the Three Norns were believed to weave the threads of destiny for each individual.

As we explore the meanings of the runes in the Elder Runes Oracle Cards, we can see how they reflect the Norse understanding of fate and the cyclical nature of life.

Runes were used in magic and ritual to shape the future and influence events. The use of runes in magic was seen as a way to harness the power of fate and shape one's destiny.

While the Vikings faced a harsh and often unpredictable reality, their use of the runes in magic and ritual allowed them to tap into a sense of agency and control over their fate. By using the runes to gain insight into the future and shape events to their advantage, they were able to confront the challenges of their world with greater courage and resilience. With the Elder Runes Oracle Cards, we can tap into this legacy of Norse wisdom and magic to gain insight into our own lives and shape our destinies.

In the Elder Runes Oracle Cards, we can tap into this legacy of Norse wisdom and magic to gain insight into our own lives and shape our destiny. By exploring the meanings of the runes and working with them in divination and magic, we can cultivate a sense of agency and empowerment that helps us navigate the challenges of life with greater confidence and courage.

## CHAPTER 5: WORKING WITH THE DECK

The Elder Runes Oracle Cards are a tool for self-discovery and personal growth. While spreads similar to Tarot can be useful, it's important to remember that the heart of the oracle lies in the simplicity of asking one question and receiving one answer through the card that is drawn. To work with the deck, start by centering yourself and focusing on the question you want to ask. This question should be specific and focused on your own life and experiences. The more specific your question is, the more precise and relevant your answer will be.

While there are no rigid rules for using the deck—and some may prefer a past, present, and future spread—I encourage working with one rune at a time, drawing a single card for each question until you feel a sense of clarity about the overall situation. By focusing on one rune at a time, you allow its message to fully unfold, providing deeper insights. From there, you may begin to see connections between the runes, helping you piece together an overall picture of your situation. More often than not, you'll find that “simpler is best” and that one card is often sufficient to bring the guidance you need.



As you draw each rune, take a moment to visualize the image in your mind. Feel the energy of the card and the rune's symbol, allowing it to stir your intuition. By engaging with the image, you open yourself to receiving a deeper message beyond the words of the guidebook. As Henri Matisse said, "Feel! Do not think!"—this is the essence of connecting with the oracle. By feeling their energy, you can uncover a more profound understanding of the guidance they offer.

Remember, the oracle is not merely about predicting the future, but about offering insight and guidance for the present moment. Use the message of the card to reflect on your current situation, and consider how you can apply this insight to make positive changes in your life.

Ultimately, The Elder Runes Oracle Cards is a tool for self-discovery and personal growth. By working with the deck, you can gain valuable insights that can help you navigate the challenges and opportunities of life with greater clarity, purpose, and wisdom.

## THE FIRST ÆTT



The First Aett is traditionally linked with the Vanir god Freyr, associated with peace, prosperity, and the harvest. Freyr's Aett, which includes the runes Fehu, Uruz, Thurisaz, Ansuz, Raidho, Kenaz, Gebo, and Wunjo, represents the material and physical aspects of life. It reflects the foundations of existence—resources, strength, protection, communication, and movement in the world.

This aett focuses on practical matters such as wealth and resources (Fehu), physical strength and vitality (Uruz), protection and choices (Thurisaz), and communication (Ansuz). It also highlights the paths we travel (Raidho), creative inspiration (Kenaz), relationships and exchange (Gebo), and joy in accomplishment (Wunjo).

Working with the First Aett invites us to reflect on how we build and sustain our material lives—through wealth, health, relationships, and action. It reminds us that balance in the physical world is key to achieving peace and prosperity.



## FEHU

ƒ

Intention • Gratitude • Abundance

Grateful, I am abundance.

## FEHU

*Cattle*

**Key concepts : Intention, gratitude, abundance, wealth, manifestation.**

Fehu, the rune of wealth and abundance, symbolizes the power of intention in guiding the flow of resources and prosperity. In this card, the scene depicts a fertile, abundant landscape, where a woman sits in connection with the earth. This serene figure may represent the Norse goddess Gefjon, associated with fertility, prosperity, and plowing the land, or Freya, goddess of love, fertility, and wealth. Both figures embody the nurturing, creative energy of abundance.

The lush, verdant fields, along with the presence of cattle, symbolize the wealth that comes from the earth, reminding us that intention shapes the cyclical nature of prosperity and gratitude strengthens it. Fehu calls upon us to recognize the resources we already possess, both material and spiritual, and to affirm our connection with the flow of abundance in the universe.

When we affirm, “Grateful, I am abundance,” we acknowledge that setting purpose allows wealth to move freely through life and aligns us with the creative power of manifestation. Just as the land continuously nourishes life, so too does the energy of prosperity nourish our growth, dreams, and goals. By first setting a strong intention, then embracing the flow and expressing gratitude, we create positive change in our lives and in the world.



## URUZ

Strength • Earth • Energy  
Grounded, I am full of energy.

## URUZ

*Auroch*

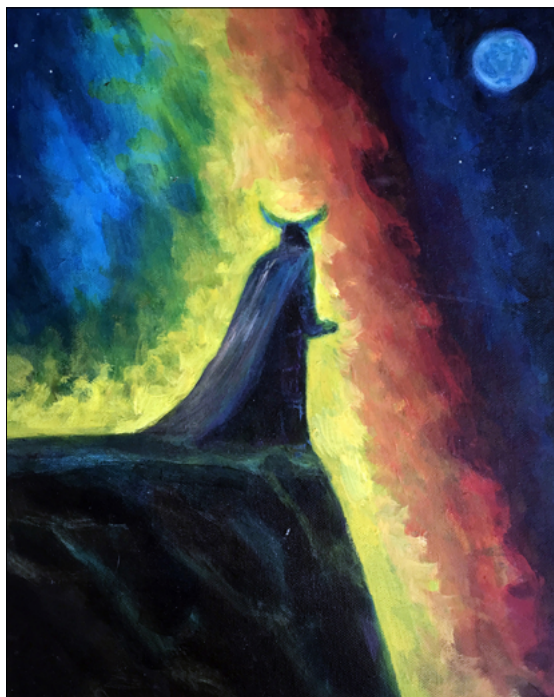
**Key concepts: Strength, vitality, primal energy, grounding, stability.**

Uruz is a rune that represents strength, vitality, and primal energy. It is often associated with the aurochs, a powerful wild ox that once roamed the forests of Europe and Asia. With its massive size and imposing presence, the aurochs embodied the raw, untamed force of life itself — a reminder of the primal power that lies within us all.

The affirmation, “Grounded, I am full of energy,” connects us with this current of vitality. By speaking these words, we acknowledge our link to the primal energy of the universe and affirm our own strength, resilience, and commitment to living fully.

When we embrace the energy of Uruz and connect with the spirit of the aurochs, we tap into this reservoir of life force to achieve our goals and dreams. At the same time, Uruz is not only about wild strength but also about grounding and stability. Like the aurochs rooted firmly in its terrain, this rune teaches us to draw strength from the earth and remain centered, even in the face of adversity.

By affirming, “Grounded, I am full of energy,” we claim both our vitality and our balance. It reminds us that true power arises not from scattered force but from focused energy guided by stability. Uruz teaches us to harness our primal essence with clarity and discipline, so that we may move through life strong, steady, and aligned with the natural world.



## THURISAZ

Contrast • Focus • Desire



With focus, I pierce illusions.

## THURISAZ

*Giant*

**Key concepts: Contrast, control, focus, desire.**

Thurisaz means “giant.” In Norse mythology, the giants (Jötnar) were chaotic forces, constantly in conflict with the Aesir gods like Thor and Odin. This struggle represents the balance between order and chaos, wisdom and raw desire.

In the card, a lone figure stands before a rift in reality, where cosmic light meets darkness. Crowned with horns, he may be Baldr guarding the light, Heimdall at the edge of the Bifröst, or a Thurs giant himself—holding the weight of primal power. Thurisaz teaches that wisdom must guide our impulses, just as the gods had to contain the giants’ force.

The towering presence of the threshold reflects the challenges that refine our desires. By facing contrast directly, we gain clarity. The figure’s stance reflects not surrender, but poise—the readiness to act with discernment rather than instinct. It reminds us that true discipline comes from allowing our higher desires to overrule our lesser ones, thus guiding us toward evolution rather than stagnation.

When we focus on what truly matters, we let go of distractions and align ourselves with our purpose. The affirmation, “With focus, I pierce illusions,” reminds us that challenges sharpen our goals. By balancing desire with wisdom, we can move forward with clarity and purpose.



## ANSUZ



Message • Clarity • Breathing

Through breath, I bring clarity

## ΔNSUZ

A god

**Key concepts: Message, clarity, breathing.**

In the card, two ravens sit calmly on a fence beneath a clear blue sky, facing each other as if engaged in quiet exchange. These are Huginn (thought) and Muninn (memory), the companions of Odin. Normally, they fly across the worlds, gathering knowledge and wisdom for the god, but here they rest, reflecting on what they have learned.

The stillness of the scene represents a moment of contemplation, where communication is not about action but thoughtful reflection. Huginn and Muninn symbolize the balance of thought and memory in gaining clarity and delivering meaningful messages. Their presence reminds us that clear communication arises when we pause to reflect, exchange ideas, and integrate our experiences.

The blue sky above suggests openness and clarity, reinforcing the idea that communication requires space and calm to become effective. Like the ravens resting and exchanging information, we too must take time to process our thoughts before sharing them.

The affirmation, “Through breath, I bring clarity,” encourages us to slow down and connect with our breath. Through this mindfulness, we can align our thoughts and memories to communicate with greater ease and precision. Just as Huginn and Muninn exchange their insights, we can refine our communication by taking the time to listen, reflect, and share with purpose.





## RAIDHO

R

Will • Travel • Expansion  
As I journey, my power grows.

## RAIDHO

*Ride*

**Key concepts: Will, travel, expansion.**

In the card, Thor rides in his chariot, pulled by two powerful, magical rams, through shifting, vibrant landscapes. The colors surrounding him reflect the energy of movement and transformation. Thor, the god of thunder and protector of humanity, embodies strength, willpower, and the courage to act. His presence here symbolizes the journey of self-discovery and expansion that Raidho represents.

Thor's journey is not just one of physical travel but a deeper, multidimensional exploration. The more he travels through the realms, the more he understands himself and his purpose. In the same way, Raidho reminds us that true expansion comes from within. As we grow spiritually, gaining insight into who we are, we gain the willpower to act decisively in the world. The magical rams pulling Thor's chariot guide him with strength and purpose, symbolizing the support we have as we expand our consciousness and take action in our lives.

The affirmation, "As I journey, my power grows," speaks to this multidimensional journey. As we learn more about ourselves, our desires, and our place in the world, we gain the inner strength needed to manifest our will. The more we understand ourselves, the more power we have to shape our reality and move forward with purpose.



## KAUNA



Vision • Creativity • Fire

Fire fulfills my vision.

## KAUNA

*Torch*

**Key concepts:** Vision, creativity, fire.

In the card, we see Loki locked in a fiery contest with the elemental being Logi. Flames swirl around them, illuminating the intense battle of will and power. Loki, though often associated with fire, is not a fire god. His connection to fire comes from this very encounter with Logi, the embodiment of fire itself. This contest is a test of strength and endurance, where Loki faces the raw force of the flame.

Kauna, the rune of fire and illumination, represents the transformative power of this element. Fire, with its destructive and creative energy, reveals truth and fuels vision. The battle between Loki and Logi reminds us that fire can challenge us, but through challenge comes growth and transformation.

The affirmation, “Fire fulfills my vision,” speaks to the power of tapping into the energy of fire to manifest our desires and bring our visions into reality. Just as Loki faces Logi’s raw elemental force, we too must confront the fires of transformation in our lives. Through this process, we gain clarity, burn away what no longer serves us, and illuminate the path ahead.

Kauna encourages us to embrace the power of fire as a creative and illuminating force. As we channel its energy, we are able to fulfill our highest vision, expanding our creativity and willpower. By accepting the challenge that fire presents, we are transformed, gaining the insight and strength needed to move forward with purpose.



## GEBO



Gift • Magic • Exchange

Giving myself fully,  
I create magic.

## GEBO

*Gift*

**Key concepts: Gift, magic, exchange.**

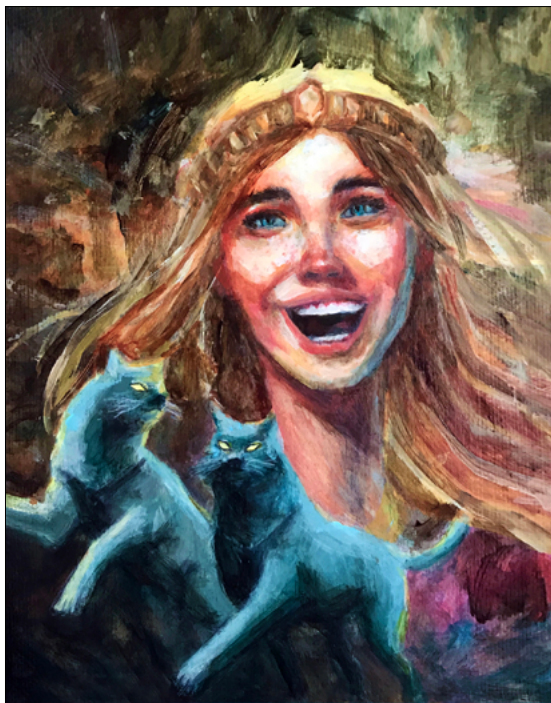
In the card, Gefjon sits closely with her partner, her cow grazing peacefully behind them. Gefjon, the Norse goddess of fertility and the earth, symbolizes the abundance that comes from giving and receiving in harmony. The cow reflects the gifts of the earth and the prosperity that arises from balanced exchange.

Gefjon is known for her power to transform barren land into fertile fields, a reminder that true abundance comes through offering one's gifts fully. This act of giving is not only material but spiritual, creating a powerful exchange that brings both fulfillment and growth.

Gebo reminds us that through generosity, we create deeper bonds and mutual prosperity. The more we give of ourselves—whether it's our time, energy, or love—the more we receive in return. True magic happens when we give with an open heart, trusting that our gifts will be met with gratitude and reciprocity.

The affirmation, "Giving myself fully, I create magic," speaks to the transformative power of generosity. By embracing the spirit of Gebo, we open ourselves to the harmony and prosperity that come from exchanging gifts, whether material or spiritual, with open hearts.





## WUNJO



Bliss • Excitement • Joy

Following my joy, I am blissful.

## WUNJO

*Joy*

### **Key concepts: Bliss, excitement, joy.**

In the card, Freya, the goddess of love and pleasure, laughs joyfully, with her two cats, Bygul and Trjegul, by her side. Freya, known for her beauty and radiance, symbolizes celebration, sensuality, and abundance. Her cats, who pull her chariot, represent the playfulness and freedom that come from embracing joy.

Wunjo is the rune of bliss and happiness, and Freya embodies these qualities in their fullness. Her laughter reflects the power of following one's joy, bringing light and contentment to life. Bygul and Trjegul remind us that joy is often found in the simplest moments, where we feel most connected.

The affirmation, "Following my joy, I am bliss," reminds us that joy is essential for our well-being and spiritual growth. When we align with what brings us happiness, we tap into a deep well of bliss that nourishes both us and those around us.

By embracing the energy of Wunjo and Freya, we can celebrate what excites us, indulge in beauty, and follow the path of joy. Freya's radiant laughter encourages us to live in harmony with our joy, creating a ripple of bliss that transforms the world around us.

## THE SECOND ÆTT



The second Aett is traditionally linked with the god Heimdall, protector of the Bifrost bridge, which separates Asgard from the lower realms. This aett, consisting of the runes Hagalaz, Nauthiz, Isa, Jera, Ihwaz, Perthro, Algiz, and Sowilo, represents the emotional and mental realms, where we encounter transformation, challenges, and growth.

This aett explores forces of change and necessity, such as the disruptive power of Hagalaz (hail) and the internal struggle of Nauthiz (need). It reflects the cycles of time and nature in Jera (harvest), the stillness and retreat of Isa (ice), and the deeper journeys of fate and mystery in Perthro (unknown). Protection and guidance are found in Algiz (elk), while spiritual illumination is represented by Sowilo (sun).

Working with the Second Aett invites us to confront inner and outer challenges, pushing us toward transformation and resilience. It asks us to consider how we handle adversity, embrace change, and evolve emotionally and mentally, ultimately leading us to greater clarity and understanding.



**H** **HAGALAZ**  
 Shock • Chaos • Change  
 Through the storm, I transform.

## HAGALAZ

*Hail*

**Key concepts: Shock, chaos, change.**

In the card, Hel, the goddess of the underworld, stands amidst a storm of swirling hailstones. She is calm and composed in the chaos, embodying the power of Hagalaz. Hel, ruler of the land of the dead, represents the inevitability of destruction and transformation. The hail around her signifies the sudden shocks and crises that force us to face the unknown and embrace change.

Hagalaz is the rune of storms and upheaval, representing destruction as a force for growth. Just as hail can be fierce and damaging, it eventually melts into water, bringing renewal. Hel reminds us that even in moments of disruption, there is potential for transformation and new beginnings.

The affirmation, “Through the storm, I transform,” speaks to the idea that chaos and destruction are often necessary for deep transformation. When we embrace the storms that come, we release old patterns and step into a new version of ourselves.

By connecting with the energy of Hagalaz and Hel, we tap into the power of transformation. Though the storms may feel overwhelming, they serve a greater purpose in our spiritual journey, helping us shed what no longer serves us to create space for growth.



## NAUTHIZ



Lack • Need • Surrender

With heart, I overcome lack.

## NAUTHIZ

*Need*

**Key concepts: Lack, need, surrender.**

In the card, Skadi, the giantess who lives in the mountains, stands amidst snow and ice, symbolizing isolation and the struggles of need. Skadi was forced to marry the sea god Njord, a union of opposites—mountain and sea. This myth reflects the theme of Nauthiz: the necessity of accepting challenging circumstances and finding strength through endurance and sacrifice.

Nauthiz is the rune of necessity and sacrifice. It teaches us that by confronting our limitations and embracing the difficult choices we must make, we discover the power to transform our lives. Like Skadi, who had to navigate the challenges of her marriage to Njord and her isolation in the mountains, we too must sometimes face difficult situations in order to grow.

The affirmation, “With heart, I overcome lack,” reminds us that recognizing our needs allows us to rise above them. When we embrace the power of necessity, we turn obstacles into opportunities for personal growth.

By connecting with the energy of Nauthiz and the myth of Skadi, we learn that through struggle and sacrifice, we can transform our lives. Embracing challenges empowers us to tap into the strength needed for growth and spiritual evolution.



## ISA

Cold • Retreat • Stillness

In stillness, I remain.

## ISA

Ice

### Key concepts: Cold, retreat, stillness.

In the card, Skadi, the giantess of winter, sits in deep contemplation amidst a barren, icy landscape. Her connection to the frozen mountains reflects the stillness and retreat that Isa represents. Skadi, often known for her strength and independence, is now in a moment of solitude, where the cold forces her to turn inward, embracing the silence of the frozen world around her.

Isa, the rune of ice, speaks to the power of stillness and introspection. Just as ice halts the flow of water, Isa invites us to pause and reflect. In this frozen state, Skadi reminds us that sometimes we must withdraw from the world to find clarity and reconnect with our inner selves. It is in moments of stillness, when everything seems frozen, that the deepest transformation can occur.

The affirmation, “In stillness, I remain,” speaks to the idea that by stepping back and embracing stillness, we create space for self-discovery and inner growth. Like Skadi, who thrives in the cold wilderness, we too can find strength in solitude and reflection, uncovering hidden truths about ourselves.

By connecting with the energy of Isa and Skadi’s retreat, we learn that there is power in stillness. The frozen landscape may seem desolate, but it holds the potential for transformation beneath its surface. In retreat, we find the clarity and wisdom we need to move forward with renewed purpose.





## JERA



Cycles • Patience • Time

With patience,  
my harvest comes.

## JERA

*Year*

### **Key concepts: Cycles, patience, time.**

In the card, Idun, the goddess of youth and renewal, stands in a field ready for harvest, holding her sacred apple. Idun's association with the apples of eternal youth makes her a powerful symbol of natural cycles, growth, patience, and renewal. Her apple reflects the abundance and vitality that come when we align ourselves with the rhythm of nature.

Jera is the rune of cycles and time, reminding us that everything has its season. Just as the earth takes time to produce its crops, we too must be patient and trust the process. Idun teaches us that the rewards of our labor come when we work in harmony with nature's rhythms, knowing that growth cannot be rushed.

The affirmation, "With patience, my harvest comes," speaks to the idea that by cultivating patience and persistence, we are able to achieve our goals and enjoy the rewards of our efforts. Just as the harvest follows a season of growth, we too can trust that the fruits of our labor will come in time.

By connecting with the energy of Jera and Idun, we tap into the power of natural cycles and growth. Patience allows us to trust the process, knowing that everything has its time. With Jera as our guide and Idun as our symbol, we create a life that is rich in abundance, growth, and transformation.



## IHWAZ



Integration • Shadow • Endurance

Rooted in shadow, I rise.

## IHWAZ

*Yew tree*

**Key concepts: Integration, shadow, endurance.**

In the card, the giant yew tree stands with its roots deep in the dark soil, symbolizing the balance between shadow and light. The yew tree represents strength and transformation, where growth comes from embracing both the darkness below and the light above. Its roots stretch into the shadow, while its branches rise toward the light, embodying the cycle of life and change.

Ihwaz, the rune of endurance, teaches us that true strength is found through integrating our challenges and unseen aspects. Just as the yew is rooted in shadow, we too can rise toward light by accepting and transforming our inner darkness.

The affirmation, “Rooted in shadow, I rise,” reminds us that through self-discovery and embracing our fears, we grow stronger. By connecting with Ihwaz, we learn that exploring our hidden depths leads to greater understanding and resilience.

As we rise from shadow to light, we transform, overcoming limitations and evolving toward our highest potential. With Ihwaz as our guide, we create a life of spiritual growth and personal evolution.



## PERTHRO



Unknown • Fate • Mystery

I trust the mystery of fate.

## PERTHRO

*Unknown*

**Key concepts: Unknown, fate, mystery.**

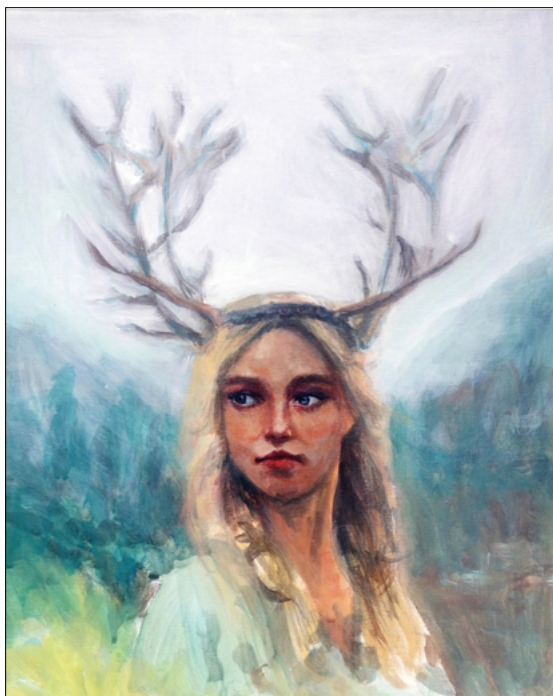
In the card, one of the Norns, the keeper of the present, stands at the forefront, with the past and future Norns depicted behind and beside her. Together, these powerful figures of Norse mythology weave the threads of fate and destiny, representing the mysterious forces that guide our lives. The Norns remind us that we are part of a greater, unfolding mystery beyond our control.

Perthro, the rune of fate and the unknown, encourages us to trust the unpredictable turns life can take. Just as the Norns oversee the web of destiny, Perthro invites us to embrace the unknown with openness and trust.

The affirmation, “I trust the mystery of fate,” speaks to the power of letting go of control. When we release our need for certainty, we allow ourselves to flow with the rhythm of life, discovering creativity and possibility in the unknown.

By connecting with Perthro and the energy of the Norns, we can embrace the unpredictable and trust that we are being guided toward our highest potential. The unknown, though daunting, holds the key to our personal growth and transformation. With Perthro as our guide, we can create a life rich in mystery, creativity, and spiritual evolution.





## ALGIZ



Protection • Security • Guidance

Guided at all times, I am secure.

## ALGIZ

*Elk*

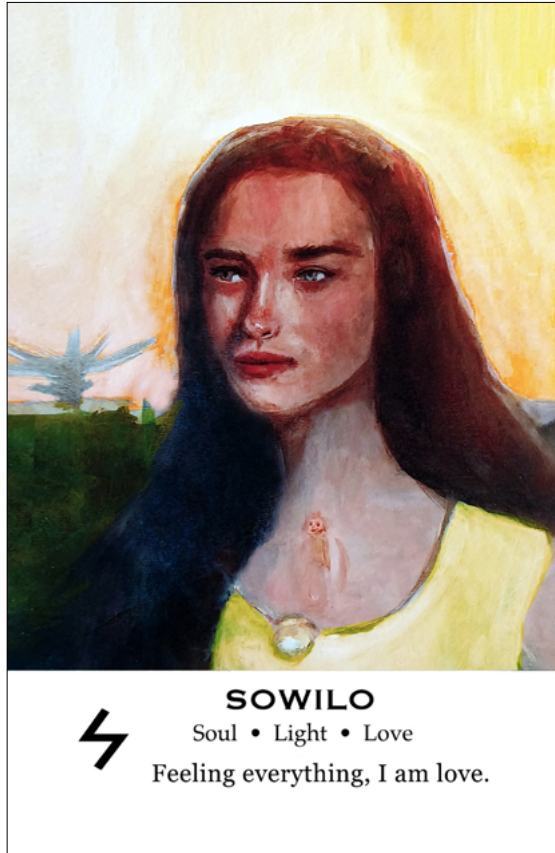
**Key concepts: Protection, security, guidance.**

In the card, Freya stands strong with antlers growing from her head, symbolizing the protection and endurance of the elk. As the goddess of war and magic, Freya embodies the protective and guiding energy of Algiz. Her antlers connect her to the natural world, representing spiritual protection and guidance.

Algiz is the rune of protection, reminding us that we are always watched over by powerful forces. Freya's presence assures us that we are never alone in facing life's challenges. She guides us with strength and wisdom, helping us navigate obstacles with confidence.

The affirmation, "Guided at all times, I feel secure," speaks to the trust we place in these protective forces. By opening ourselves to Freya's guidance, we move through life with greater security, knowing we are supported and protected.

By connecting with the energy of Algiz and the presence of Freya, we tap into the power of protection and guidance. With Algiz as our symbol and Freya as our guide, we can trust that we are always being led toward our highest good, creating a life rich in spiritual connection and security.



## SOWILO

*Sun*

### **Key concepts: Soul, light, love.**

In the card, Sol, the goddess of the sun, stands radiant, with a glowing jewel at her neck. From this jewel, the spirit of her daughter begins to emerge, symbolizing the continuation of Sol's duty as the sun goddess. This reflects the myth where Sol's daughter inherits her role, ensuring the eternal cycle of life, renewal, and the unending presence of light in the world. But perhaps Sol herself is the yellow backdrop, and she is the daughter? This highlights the indistinguishable cycles of light, where mother and daughter are inseparable, both embodying the eternal flow of love, always passing from one to the other.

Sowilo, the rune of the sun, embodies the power of light, love, and cycles of transformation. Just as Sol's daughter steps into her mother's place, we too are part of this greater cycle of growth, constantly bringing warmth and joy into the world.

The affirmation, "Feeling everything, I am love," speaks to embracing life fully, recognizing both our individual journey and our role in the world's cycles. The spirit of Sol's daughter, emerging from the jewel, reminds us of the constant renewal of love and light.

By connecting with the energy of Sowilo, we understand the beauty of these cycles in both nature and ourselves. Whether we are Sol or her daughter, we are part of this continuous cycle of love, shining with compassion and radiating light into the world.

## THE THIRD ÆTT



The Third Aett is traditionally linked with Tyr, the god of truth, war, and justice. This aett, consisting of the runes Tiwaz, Berkana, Ehwaz, Mannaz, Laguz, Ingwaz, Dagaz, and Othala, represents the spiritual and divine realms, where we engage with higher truths, personal transformation, and the collective consciousness.

The runes of this aett speak to the pursuit of justice and honor (Tiwaz), growth and nurturing (Berkana), and harmonious relationships (Ehwaz). They guide us in understanding our connection to humanity (Mannaz) and the flow of emotions and intuition (Laguz). Ingwaz brings the energy of potential and gestation, Dagaz symbolizes the dawn of new awareness, and Othala reflects the legacy of our ancestral wisdom.

Working with the Third Aett invites us to connect with our higher purpose, explore our spiritual growth, and understand how we fit within the broader web of life. It encourages us to seek truth, embrace new beginnings, and find harmony between our inner selves and the world around us.



## TIWAZ



Truth • Justice • Victory  
With Truth, I claim victory.

## TIWAZ

Tyr

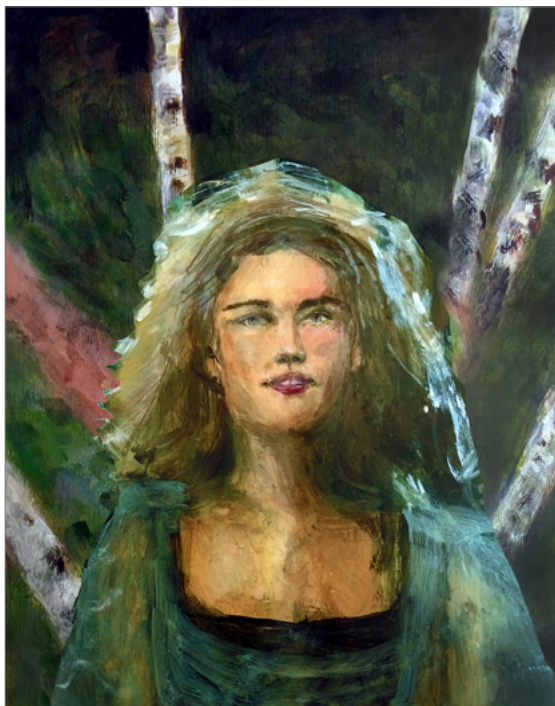
### Key concepts: Justice, success, truth.

In the card, Tyr, the god of war and justice, stands tall with his arm raised, symbolizing his sacrifice and unwavering sense of duty. The mountains behind him represent the strength and resilience required to uphold justice, while the sky reflects the clarity and truth that guide his actions. Tyr's story is one of honor—he sacrificed his hand to the giant wolf Fenrir to protect the other Aesir gods, ensuring peace even at great personal cost.

Tiwaz, the rune of justice and integrity, embodies the courage to pursue truth and fairness, no matter the challenges. Like Tyr, we are called to stand for what is right, finding strength in our convictions and the honor of living with integrity.

The affirmation, “With truth, I claim victory,” speaks to the idea that success comes from living in alignment with truth. When we embody the energy of Tiwaz and the example of Tyr, we can overcome obstacles with courage, knowing that integrity paves the way to lasting success.

By connecting with the energy of Tiwaz, we can tap into our own strength and sense of justice, guiding us through both personal challenges and larger societal issues. Whether facing internal struggles or fighting for fairness in the world, Tiwaz empowers us to live truthfully and with honor.



## BERKANA



Beauty • Nature • Intemporal

In nature, I am timeless.

## BERKANA

*Birch*

**Key concepts:** Beauty, nature, eternity.

In the card, Eir, the elusive goddess of healing and quiet mercy, stands within the birch grove—half-seen, half-felt. She carries no tools, speaks no words, yet her presence is a balm. The birch tree, pale-skinned and ever-renewing, surrounds her like a veil of breath and light. Together, they whisper of hidden growth, of healing that begins before we even know we need it.

Berkana, the rune of the birch, embodies the silent strength of nature's embrace. It is the rune of becoming, of nurturing from the unseen, of tending to what is just beginning to rise. Like Eir, who restores through presence rather than force, Berkana invites us to return inward—to tend to ourselves, and in doing so, tend to the world.

The affirmation, "In nature, I am timeless," reminds us that true beauty is born not in perfection, but in care—in the way we listen to the quiet, protect what is growing, and allow ourselves to soften. Just as the birch tree sheds to renew, we are invited to let go of what no longer serves and root ourselves in a deeper rhythm.

Through Eir's mysterious stillness and the medicine of the birch, we come into contact with the timeless force of renewal—not loud, but certain. Not imposed, but offered.





M

**EHWAZ**

Ease • Trust • Relationships

In trust, we move as one.

**EHWAZ**

*Horse*

**Key concepts: Ease, trust, relationship.**

In the card, Odin stands alongside Sleipnir, his powerful eight-legged horse. Sleipnir, known for his unmatched speed and strength, symbolizes trusted companionship and the ability to traverse great distances, both physically and spiritually. The deep connection between Odin and Sleipnir reflects the essence of Ehwaz, a rune that encourages us to trust in our companions and move forward with confidence.

Ehwaz, the rune of the horse, embodies the power of teamwork, partnership, and movement. Like Sleipnir guiding Odin across the realms, Ehwaz reminds us that with strong, trusted relationships, we can overcome challenges and achieve our goals with ease.

The affirmation, “In trust, we move as one,” speaks to the idea that when we build and maintain solid connections with others, we enhance our ability to succeed. By trusting in our companions and moving forward confidently, we create strong bonds that support us in both personal and collective growth.

Through Ehwaz, we are reminded of the importance of partnership and shared goals. By connecting with the energy of Odin and Sleipnir, we learn the value of trusting those by our side and embracing the journey with confidence and ease.



## MANNAZ

Mankind • Connection • Evolution

Connected with all, I evolve.

## MANNAZ

*Man*

**Key concepts: Mankind, connection, evolution.**

In the card, we see Heimdall standing tall by the Bifrost bridge, known for his vigilance and ability to see and hear what others cannot. But perhaps the figure is not Heimdall—one could also see the heroic Baldr, standing in the light, awaiting his return. This dual interpretation highlights the theme of connection, both with our potential and the greater forces of the universe.

Baldr, beloved by all for his beauty and wisdom, symbolizes hope and renewal. His prophesied return after Ragnarok reminds us that even after loss, there is always the possibility of new growth and unity.

Mannaz, the rune of mankind, emphasizes the strength in community and cooperation. It teaches us that when we connect with others, we can evolve and achieve more than we ever could alone.

The affirmation “Connected with all, I evolve” reminds us that through unity, we can overcome challenges and grow into our highest potential.



## LAGUZ



Calm • Water • Healing

In stillness, I heal.

## LAGUZ

*Lake*

**Key concepts: Calm, water, healing, intuition.**

Laguz means “lake.” It is a rune associated with the unconscious, healing, and emotional flow. The card is depicted with Eir, the goddess of healing in Norse mythology, who is known for her ability to restore health and balance. In the illustration, she emerges from the waters, symbolizing the deep healing power found within the flow of life and the unconscious mind.

The energy of Laguz is often connected with the water element, which represents emotion, intuition, and healing. Eir, as the healer, guides us to dive deep into the waters of our subconscious to find the strength and clarity needed to restore balance in our lives. Just as water can cleanse and heal, Laguz encourages us to tap into our own natural healing abilities, both physical and emotional.

The affirmation “In stillness, I heal,” speaks to the idea that healing often comes through calm and quiet reflection. By embracing stillness and allowing the waters of emotion and intuition to flow freely, we can access our inner wisdom and restore balance to our lives.

Through Laguz and the guidance of Eir, we are reminded of the power of emotional and spiritual healing. By connecting with the energy of Laguz, we can heal ourselves by allowing our emotions to flow naturally and trusting the deeper wisdom within us to guide our healing journey.





## INGWAZ



Seed • Contemplation • Potential

I seed my potential.

## INGWAZ

God Yngvi

### Key concepts: Growth, potential, seed,

Ingwaz is a rune of potential and growth, associated with the god Yngvi (Freyr). It represents the power of planting seeds as symbols of new beginnings and latent potential. The image of Ing calmly gazing at a small flower reflects the quiet contemplation required for nurturing growth. Just as a seed holds the promise of life, our ideas and dreams hold the potential for transformation.

The comet scattering seeds hints at a cosmic connection, suggesting that life and growth are universal forces. This reinforces the idea that our personal growth is part of a greater unfolding, linked to the cycles of nature and the universe. By understanding our place within these cycles, we can align ourselves with the flow of life and transformation.

The affirmation “I seed my potential,” reminds us that by focusing on our intentions and nurturing them, we bring our dreams to life. Like a seed, each small action grows with care and patience.

By connecting with the energy of Ingwaz, we can trust that the seeds of our intentions, once planted, will bloom in their own time, bringing us closer to our highest potential. Through patience and trust, we allow our potential to manifest, knowing that growth takes time and care.



## DAGAZ

Awake • Space • Spirit

As vast open space, I awake.

## DAGAZ

*Day*

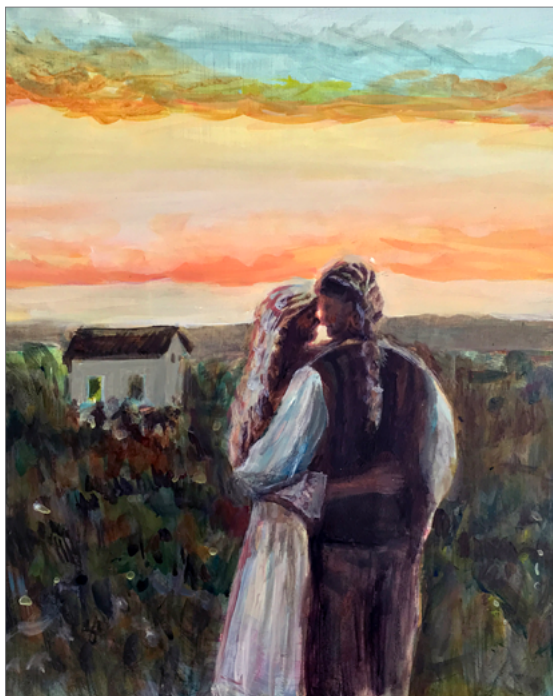
**Key concepts: Awakening, space, spirit.**

Dagaz is a powerful rune that embodies the energy of awakening and rebirth. As the rune of “day,” it represents the dawning of a new consciousness and the unveiling of our true nature. In the card, we see Dagr standing with his horse, while spirits rise into the sky, symbolizing the boundless potential within each of us.

In Norse mythology, Dagr rides across the sky to bring daylight, representing renewal and clarity. The spirits in the sky remind us that through this awakening, we connect to the vast open space of our true nature—a space where all possibilities exist and where we find clarity in the present moment.

The affirmation “As vast open space, I awake” speaks to the realization that our true self is not confined by the limits of the mind, but is as expansive as the open sky. By embracing the energy of Dagaz, we allow ourselves to awaken to this spaciousness, letting go of past limitations and stepping into the fullness of our being.

As we connect with the energy of Dagaz and the figure of Dagr, we are invited to awaken to the infinite potential of our true nature. Through this awakening, we rise into the light of awareness, embodying the vast, limitless space of our true selves.



## OTHALA

Home • Heart • Legacy

In my heart, I am home.

## OTHALA

*Home*

**Key concepts: Home, heart, legacy, ancestors.**

Othala, the rune of home, inheritance, and ancestral legacy, represents the deep connection to our roots and the wisdom passed down through generations.

In this card, we see a Nordic couple standing together, gazing out over a peaceful, fertile landscape. Once gods—Tyr, Skadi, Freya, Odin, Hel—they now stand as ancestors, their journey complete, at peace with the land.

This scene symbolizes the bond between home, heart, and heritage—the idea that our belonging comes not only from place, but from the legacy of those who walked before us.

The couple's union reflects the strength of shared history. The lush landscape around them speaks to the abundance born from love, wisdom, and resilience passed through generations.

The affirmation “In my heart, I am home” reminds us that when we honor the past, we find a deep sense of strength and rootedness.

Othala teaches that our true inheritance is spiritual. By walking forward with the guidance of those who came before, we build lives rich in connection, love, and purpose.



# THE ELDER RUNES

## ORACLE CARDS

The Elder Runes Oracle Cards” is based on the ancient runic alphabet from Scandinavia called The Elder Futhark. The guidebook explores the history of runes, their esoteric meanings, their use in Norse magic and their connection to Norse myths, gods and goddesses.

The guide details each rune of the 24 cards, offering interpretations and affirmations to facilitate their use in divination. Finally, it offers methods for using play to stimulate intuition and personal reflection.

Special thanks to : Nat, Losang, Luu-ly, Loman, Vietou, Ni Co, Diana, Tina, Nami, Haku.

### About the author



Thom Pham is a French-Vietnamese artist and creator of Tarot and oracle decks that blend mythology, spirituality, and art. Dividing his time between France, Vietnam, and Australia, he explores the intersection of creativity and ancient wisdom. Learn more at [heartofstars.art](http://heartofstars.art).

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