



The Chariot

HENRY CRAWFORD ADAMS

I grew up in what is now known as Atlanta, Georgia, the traditional homelands of the Mvskoke (Muscogee) and Tsalagweti (Cherokee) peoples ... the “City in the Forest.” Ever since I was a child, I have found joy and sanctuary in the beings of woodlands, streams, swamps, and skies. Birds, specifically, have always been symbols of power to me ... their beauty, enormous importance to global ecosystem functionality, and interwoven connection to human communities have made them a fixture of my life as an ecologist and an artist. Researching avian conservation allows me to better understand the intricate and nuanced relationships between ecosystem, wildlife, and human health, and how I can become a better advocate for environmental justice and equity. Bringing avian ecologies into my artwork as they relate to my experiences and the experiences of my communities, helps me process my emotions, share myself with others, and better navigate the world. My three pieces in this publication were inspired by, of course, avian ecologies and the Major Arcana of Tarot. Since its creation in the 15th century, Tarot has been used for a variety of intents, including gameplay and divination, and I’ve found it to be a wonderful tool for both interpersonal connection and introspection. While I am working on illustrations for all twenty-one major arcana, I felt particularly drawn to the three you will see herein and thought they combine into what I hope to be an empowering reading for my beloved Queer community.

THE CHARIOT

This card represents directionality and confidence in movement. I see The Chariot as an invitation to set out on the path I carve with a grounded and ardent ferocity. But, this ferocity does not exist without flexibility, without opportunity to refuel, to revel in my journey. After all, bold movement calls for bold rest. As a child of the southeastern coasts of North America, I see this combination of bold movement and rest in seabirds. Like many other piscivorous species, the northern gannet uses its extremely aero- and hydrodynamic body to plunge from air to ocean as it pursues its quarry; wings tucked back; third eyelid shielding its vision. Along this bird’s seventy-foot descent into the water, coupled with its own ardent ferocity, is mutability: fish dart unpredictably, tides shift, and it must invite recalculations to achieve its goal. By the end of its plunge, fish in bill, inertia running its course, there are moments of stillness. Sun glimmers off of a vortex of scales and fins, the deep cobalt of the ocean stretches out before the bird’s eyes. In those moments, I like to think it pauses to see the beauty in its journey, before returning to the surface to rest, to enjoy its meal, feel the sun on its feathers, and plunge once more. This piece is a reminder to move and rest in confidence, to put our trust in self and community to support action and joy.

Henry Crawford Adams (They/He) is a wildlife ecologist, educator, and illustrator and currently serves as the wildlife management coordinator at the Lincoln Park Zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute.



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On the cover of this issue

“Strength,” a Tarot illustration representing a radiation of power coupled with inner understanding and love. | [HENRY CRAWFORD ADAMS](#)