

An illustration of two men in a forest. The man on the left is shirtless, has a beard, and is looking towards the right. He has a quiver of arrows on his back. The man on the right is seen from the back, wearing a hooded garment with a fur collar. The background shows trees and birds.

THE WOOD AND ♀ BONE

AND PATH UNKNOWN

GAY RUNIC ORACLE

GUIDE BY
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INTRODUCTION

Blessings to you and many thanks for your support of the divinatory art you hold in your hands. A considerable amount of time and energy has been spent creating a runic system for the gay community – of which representation is limited at best in this field. The intent was to create a deck that would merge the mysterious tradition of the runes with the perspectives and drives as experienced through the eyes of men-who-love-men. The runes are a reflection of the balance between male and female energies and the goal here was not to negate the feminine aspect but rather infuse into the images a new way of interpreting a gender role that has been restricted by rigid binary forms. It is a statement that masculine and feminine energies are not bound to gender identity but can exist in either design. The objective is not to highlight masculinity, but *divinity*, which is a genderless strength. This project is admittedly a departure from traditionalist views of the runes and is not intended to be historically accurate in regards to some of the artistic choices made (for example, liberties were taken with armor/clothing/tattoo designs etc.). With that in mind, we hope you enjoy the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle* and find inspiration from the divine message the runes hold for you and those you read for. You have our gratitude!

St. Jinx (artist/creator-NZ)

Walter Freyrsson (author-US)

A BRIEF ACCOUNT ON THE RUNES

The runes are a divination system rooted deep in history that has seen a resurgence in recent times. Associated with Norse magick, Viking lore and heathenry practices, the runes have evolved and expanded over the centuries so much so that it is a massive undertaking to provide one precise historical account or attribute to one specific time period. The runes have evolved in number and meaning depending on whether learning the Nordic, Anglo-Saxon or any other variation therein. Historical resources are limited, yet there are various published works that provide a wealth of information on the subject. The *Prose Edda* is one historical piece that provides reference and insight to the magickal properties and divinatory meaning of the runes as told through Odin's sacrifice on the world tree, Yggdrasil – as depicted on the back of the cards. For the sake of transparency, the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle* follows the Elder Futhark runes, the oldest form of the runic alphabets, as the format for the deck. For further reading, please refer to the bibliography section for recommended sources that guided the creation of the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle*.

WOOD AND BONE: GAY RUNIC ORACLE

The *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle* has taken over thirteen months of studying numerous resources – both historical and contemporary, conversations with like-minded, spiritual individuals, and deep, personal introspection to develop a divination tool that highlights the spiritual journey of gay men following the runic path. Along the lines of the *St. Jinx Tarot*, the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle* highlights the gay male community, its diversity, and the pleasure and pain experienced through the ebb and flow of love/lust/energy. There is no denying that it is quite the departure from traditional representations of the runes but the intention and integrity of runic energy is maintained and interpreted from a gay perspective. It's a union of the cultural past, modern art and gay magick.

A NOTE ON MERKSTAVES/REVERSALS

As in life, there are positive and negative influences that maintain the balance of natural order. Light cannot exist without darkness, good without evil, and so on – the universe is binary. This polarity is necessary for both well-being and challenges that allow us to grow as spiritual beings. The runes, like tarot, are no different in that the tool offers a multitude of possibilities

based on how they are drawn from the deck – either upright or reversed (known here as “merkstave”). There are some runes that usually would not have merkstave positions, as the runes themselves are rotationally symmetrical (such as Ingwaz and Dagaz, etc.) but as this system is a set of cards with images that can be reversed, merkstave options have been added for you. Using reversals/merkstaves with the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle* (or any other divination tool) is a matter of preference. Suggestions are provided to guide interpretations of the runes by their position. You are encouraged to study and examine the rune card based on its upright/merkstave position, the visuals that stand out most, the relation to the other rune cards in a spread, and of course, your instinctual feelings about the messages being presented to you.

SYMBOL GUIDE

Under each rune description you will find the following two symbols:



The symbol for keyword meanings of each rune when drawn from the deck in the **UPRIGHT** position.



The symbol for keyword meanings of each rune when drawn from the deck in the **MERKSTAVE/REVERSED** position.

THE FIRST ÆTT

(FREYR'S ÆTT)

Each ætt embodies its own nature and energies. The first eight runes of the Elder Futhark are ruled by Freyr, the Vanir God associated with male virility, prosperity and abundance. These are associated with daily matters such as *finance, health, communication, travel, and relationships*. When any of these runes appear in a reading, you may notice messages that are more practical and relatable to commonplace matters. The runes in this ætt are as follows:



FEHU

Livestock was considered one of the main forms of mobile wealth among the Norsemen. Wealth was not determined by any sort of currency but rather the ability to maintain self, family and/or the brethren/community. This card displays the work and benefits in raising, herding, caring and utilizing cattle for life sustenance.



UPRIGHT: *material gain, wealth, financial stability, transaction, labor/work, management.*



MERKSTAVE: *loss of finances, unstable/hostile environment, obsessive/envious behavior, poor management of contracts and/or finances.*



URUZ

Aurochs are an extinct land mammal that were hunted by Norsemen, typically as a rite of passage into manhood. The ability to battle and overcome these beasts was no easy feat. Therefore, this rune not only represents the challenge but the victory of conquering the battle. The triumph a proclamation of male virility, strength, and power. All of these are attributed to maintaining good health. The card not only shows a young man in celebration of his victory over the auroch but also his meditative pose of ensuring the body is in repose until the next challenge presents itself. He raises his horn of ale in toast to good health and wellbeing.



UPRIGHT: *strength, challenge, good health/vitality, rite of passage, power, tenacity, growth.*



MERKSTAVE: *illness, poor health/habits, giving into vices, lack of strategy and/or planning, cowardice, submission, defeat, stagnation.*



THURISAZ

The rune attributed to the revered god of thunder, Thor, and the symbol for lightning. Also attributed to the thorns of a plant or bush, from which this rune takes its shape. Thurisaz is associated

with protection but also with proactive retaliation. Like the power of a storm, the force of this rune can be quite powerful and unwieldy so use caution. Like Thor's hammer, Mjolnir, this rune is a vessel to channel protective energy and strike ruthlessly. Only fitting this card features Thor on the offense in the heat of battle, with the intention to end things.



UPRIGHT: *protection, defense, proactivity, uncontainable energy, dispensing justice, focus, purging/cleansing, male sexuality.*



MERKSTAVE: *negative forces, looming defeat, uncontrollable rage, lack/no control, overconfidence, overwhelming environment, fighting a losing battle.*



ANSUZ

The Divine Breath. Communication in its most divine form, this rune is associated with expression, knowledge, and the ability to invoke/provoke insight. Ansuz is also known as Odin's rune, tied strongly with the passing of runic knowledge through need and sacrifice. This card depicts two men sharing an exchange of words, the breath carrying a divine message to seal communion. The power of the word is underestimated and can carry such force as to elevate the soul, seduce the heart or cut another person down. Once the words are spoken, little can be done to reverse its force as it is

reverberating out in the world.



UPRIGHT: *open and clear communication, eloquence, poetic, wisdom, divine voice, sweet-talker, insight, power of words.*



MERKSTAVE: *lack of tactfulness, empty words, poor ability to express oneself, gossip, meaningless conversation, waste of energy, more listening and less talking.*



RAIDHO

This rune is associated with travel, exploration and desire for adventure.

As the Norsemen had the need to acquire riches, land and resources they also had a need to journey to new locations and explore the world outside of their own. Man himself is always on a quest to discover something new and the sense of adventure is present in this image of the young man on his steed, prepared to go forward into the unknown.



UPRIGHT: *travel, exploration, adventure, energetic, always in motion, restless, relocation, evolution/change.*



MERKSTAVE: *obstacles in one's path, complacency, stagnation, ignorance, lack of progress/motivation, attention to means of mobility (limbs, vehicles).*



KENAZ

Fire is the ruling element of this rune and it is interpreted as a torch that illuminates two lovers in carnal ecstasy. Fire symbolizes passion, the heat between two souls, friendship, illumination, sustenance, comfort. However, since the runes are embedded with unstable energies, this power cannot be fully contained if left unattended. Just as Kenaz can provide positive benefits, it can destroy in its wake if mishandled so be cautious when invoking. In the thrall of lust/love, these men can also burn their abode to the ground if they lose control of their bodies.



UPRIGHT: *friendship, passion, sexually driven/sexual love, lust, heat, pleasure in all forms, transformation/regeneration.*



MERKSTAVE: *destruction, selfishness, opportunist behavior, falsehood, pretention, lacking desire, low sex drive, jealousy/envy.*



GEBO

As with most traditions, the Norse engaged in acts of mutual exchange. This rune is essentially the concept of providing a gift but it is not exclusively one directional. Gifting is performed by all parties involved. This card depicts a playful young man giving the viewer an axe – a tool for

hunting or battle, but means more than just the mundane object taken at face value. The favor is to be returned to maintain the balance within transaction/bartering systems. The action of the gifting process is more significant than simply that of the material objects involved. For example, the canine companion (perhaps a gift to the young man?) symbolizes the playful nature, comfort and loyalty infused in the gift-giving process.



UPRIGHT: *the act of gifting, sharing, bartering, transaction, negotiations, planning ahead, life/work balance.*



MERKSTAVE: *greed, bribery, dependence, over-committing, after-thought, ulterior motive, obligation, loneliness – a disconnect from others.*



WUNJO

In accompaniment of the previous rune, this card depicts a smiling man providing a horn of drink to the receiver. The energy conveyed is the meaning for the rune, which is joy in its purest form. Hearth and home can only be maintained harmoniously if joy is present through celebration, honor for the harvest, conquest against a challenge, etc. Even upon death, Viking warriors are escorted to Valhalla - a massive hall where warrior spirits feast and drink to their heart's content. As in death, life should be

enjoyed to the fullest.



UPRIGHT: *joy, celebration, happiness, self-worth, honoring others, harmony, comfort, ecstasy, reward.*



MERKSTAVE: *sadness, depression, defeat, ungratefulness, deceit, distrust, greed, elevating material worth over sincere appreciation.*

THE SECOND ÆTT

(HAGAL'S ÆTT)

The second ætt is ruled by an element rather than a deity. These runes are more abstract in guidance, reflecting *chaos, obstacles, needs/ desires, time, and destiny*. This ætt serves as a reminder of the shadow aspects we must concern ourselves with to gain valuable introspection.



HAGALAZ

Nature's beauty and fury have been witnessed since man began walking the Earth. This polarity in natural law is no different to that which exists in all living things – light and darkness, good and evil, and so on. This rune is associated with hail – a phenomenon that unexpectedly occurs and can cause significant damage in no time. Yet, after

the fact, the hail melts into water that nourishes the land and promotes rejuvenation and growth. Here, Hagalaz is depicted as the cold and powerful force momentarily held until it is to be unleashed onto the world. This is a rune that can be wielded as a curse, a protective talisman (like Thurisaz) or a means to banish/clear a path for something new to flourish. Regardless, this rune informs the querent that the energy must run its course.



UPRIGHT: *hail, destructive force, reinvention, growth, sustenance, reconstruction, tests/trials.*



MERKSTAVE: *affliction, illness/disease, anguish from lack of progress, frustration, drought, depletion, lack of self-control, mental imprisonment.*



NAUDHIZ

All living species have a need, from basic/primary up to excessive luxury. It can be assumed that due to the harsh environmental conditions, the lack of basic supplies prompted the Norsemen to overcome obstacles and seek what they needed elsewhere. This card represents need through hunger but not in the literal sense. The young man is in need of sustenance - physical, emotional, spiritual. The flame in the image is barely kept lit but the desire to keep it burning is there and requires both human and divine

intervention for the benefit of one or all.



UPRIGHT: *need in all forms, desire, motivation, intention, foresight, delays, endurance.*



MERKSTAVE: *saturation, withering desire, selfishness/greed, disregard for fellow man or community at large, guilt, fear, weakness.*

ISA

Continuing along the vein of nature's force, this rune is similar to Hagalaz in that it can be as useful as it is destructive. Isa is Ice. It preserves, it cools down, it nourishes. However, too much of it can cause freezer burn, frostbite, dangerous travel conditions and so on. This is a rune of patience, maintain awareness and take cautionary moves, go into repose, take time to balance the mind and the body so you can strategize your next course of action. Work/life balance is essential. The young warrior is treating his body in ice water to quell the exertion of battle (or calm the fires of passion?) and revitalize himself so he can proceed with the next step in his journey, whatever that might be.



UPRIGHT: *patience, perseverance, self-care, meditation, calculated action, strategy, planning.*



MERKSTAVE: *loss of direction, energy cannot be contained or controlled, clutter, disorganization, erratic behavior and/or environment, proceed with caution, appearances aren't what they seem, unbalanced living, stagnation.*



JERA

This rune is associated with the cycle of the year, such as the seasons.

Since ancient times, the cycle of the year was determined by the position of astral bodies, the weather, and the time of harvest. Skilled farmers had to maintain awareness of seasonal changes in order to best utilize their strength and energy (as a lot of both is required) to ensure a fruitful harvest. A slight miscalculation could cost him and his family both financial loss and well-being. The farmer in the card is steady at work, reaping the rewards of the harvest at the peak of the year cycle. He has secured sustenance for himself and his brethren. They will be well-off during the harsh winter months. Yet, he is already anticipating preparations for the next harvest.



UPRIGHT: *life cycle, year, harvest, seasons, organization, planning ahead, observation, physical/mental activity, caring for others.*



MERKSTAVE: *laziness, waning desire/waste of energy, poor planning, ill will to others, carelessness for oneself, no sense of direction.*



EIHWAZ

A warrior engages a bear in battle. Either as a trial of strength or a hunt for sustenance. This rune traditionally represents the Yew tree which is one of the most resilient of woods and has been utilized for the creation of tools, weapons, and even rune staves for divination. As the revered Yggdrasil is considered a Yew tree, the power within the tree is elevated to divinity. This is where Odin hung for 9 days and nights to receive the knowledge of the runes and lingered between life and death. Eihwaz lays between the mundane realm and that which is beyond – practical tool and ethereal practices. The warrior is wielding great power in full awareness of his life journey and his potential arrival in Valhalla upon his death.



UPRIGHT: *strength, will, courage, balance of power, spiritual warrior, tactfulness, endurance, Yew tree.*



MERKSTAVE: *weakness, disregard for the past, lacking faith, impulsive, capricious, false sense of ability, confusion, instability.*



PERTHRO

One of the most mysterious of runes, Perthro has been attributed to various meanings, from birth to luck by gambling. Studying various interpretations that led to the development of this card's image, it appears the two aforementioned meanings lead to unknown opportunities. This is the rune of chance. The card shows a man seeking to test his luck against whatever destiny has in store for him. In his hand he holds a woven relic that foretells his destiny, known as "Wyrd." He carries runic charms on his person – he may be desiring money, a closer relationship to the Aesir or something much deeper. He is open and willing to take the risk to move ahead by not fearing chance or his destiny.



UPRIGHT: *luck, chance, risk-taking, creation/birth, exploration, aspirational, goal-oriented, mysteries, secret matters.*



MERKSTAVE: *fear of the unknown, deterioration, ignorance, lacking skill/creative energy, unwilling to learn from the past, carelessness, folly.*



ALGIZ

Invoking the Gods, the warrior stands at the ready to enter battle, prepared to defend what he holds most dear. He is shown only with a shield rather

than with a weapon for he has called upon the Aesir to protect him on his quest. Algiz is the rune of protection and can be seen as a person standing and invoking the Gods to bestow protective power over them. This rune is also associated with the Elk, a land mammal seen as spiritual in nature by numerous cultures. The warrior wears the antlers in reverence of the majestic beast known to engage in battle to conquer a mate and rule over the other males. Hence, the mating ritual leads to the great responsibility of protecting what one has earned.



UPRIGHT: *protection, defensive, life/death, praise, honor, responsibility, leadership, shield.*



MERKSTAVE: *defeat, weakness, instability, submission, undependable, absent-minded, no sense of self or community, susceptible to attack.*



SOWILO

This is the Sun rune. The Sun, like many astral bodies, has been a fascination for all humans and has been attributed Godly aspects.

Typically associated with both masculine and feminine energies, the Sun provides light and heat but also healing energy, joy, and fulfillment. The young man in the card appears to be reaching for the light of the Sun, to absorb its power and energy. Yet the power is too intense

hold so his hand also protects his eyes from the glare. He is content knowing the Sun is a blessing on the world for all creatures to enjoy, to bask in its power, and nourish the soul.



UPRIGHT: *energy, nourishment, power, kindness, comfort, clarity, opportunity – open road, success, goals achieved.*



MERKSTAVE: *dimming of the light, shadow, something hidden/unseen, despair, eclipsing opportunity, sudden change.*

THE THIRD ÆTT

(TYR'S ÆTT)

Governed by the warrior god Tyr, who willingly lost his hand while binding the cosmic wolf, Fenrir, these runes deal with sacrifices to better oneself and for the greater good. The third ætt reflects 'social' matters such as *interactions with family and other kinfolk, home life, beliefs, and personal growth.*



TIWAZ

This is the rune associated with Tyr - a God who battles and binds Fenrir, the monstrous father of wolves and loses a hand in the process. Not only does this surmount to a massive amount of

bravery but also alludes to making sacrifice to achieve a goal, and the honorable fulfillment of a contract. This rune has become a symbol for warriors in battle, brandishing the rune to advance a victorious conquest. The card recreates Tyr's journey but the contemplative look on the warrior is one of reflection, strategy, knowing a sacrifice is necessary for a victorious outcome. Even with the greatest feat ahead, anything is possible if you set your mind to it.



UPRIGHT: *bravery, strong-will, victory in battle, sacrifice, understanding, justice oriented, strategic approach.*



MERKSTAVE: *cowardice, gluttony, defeat, weak of will, suppression, selfishness, lacking honor, susceptible to outside forces.*



BERKANO

A young man offers all of himself to his lover, ready to give into the thralls of passion. For the man assuming this position, there is exposure, anticipation, and a level of vulnerability. But from this uncertainty comes great pleasure. This is a rune associated with another sacred tree, birch, which is strong and used for various spiritual and cleansing purposes. Understanding that this rune is associated with birthing and bringing new life to the world, in respect for the context of this work, it is bringing forth one's power to create,

explore, and achieve a heightened sense of being.



UPRIGHT: *creativity, open-mindedness, vulnerability, nurturing/giving, fertility, arousal, ecstatic spirituality, birth.*



MERKSTAVE: *sloth, close-mindedness, stifled desire, empty relationships, low energy/drive, dependency on others, opportunistic, family/domestic issues.*



EHWAZ

Two men stand on the beach, one facing forward and one with his back to his partner. Their tattoos form the Ehwaz rune. In the distance are their horses. This rune is associated with the horse as relates to the companionship and power the animals provided to humans – for travel, work, war, etc. The horse is also associated with intuition and the ability to detect emotions in their surroundings before a human ever could. This heightened sense of awareness is reflected in the vigilance of the two warriors for they know what is in front and behind them. Power of the mind and body, this rune embodies the relationship between two entities, be it human, animal or astral – of a team working in unity towards a common goal, and overall, of trust.



UPRIGHT: *strong awareness, swift action, physical strength, insightful, intuitive, teamwork/collaboration/union, trust.*



MERKSTAVE: *hesitation, confusion, volatile environment, fear of things to come, treason/betrayal, confinement, lethargy/lacking stamina, tension.*



MANNAZ

Whereas the previous rune related to partnership/companionship, Mannaz represents the individual being as an element of a collective. As humans, we have self-awareness, the ability to think, create, feel a myriad of emotions and honor/love earthly and astral beings. Although imperfect, man strives to learn, grow, be of use to himself and others, and establish himself in the world by making an impact, no matter how small. The man on the card sits attentively, alone yet prepared to contribute to his fellow man or community. His eyes contain the fires of desire, to achieve greater things, and aspire to reach the grace of the Gods. The potential to do great work on this earthly plane is in his hands.



UPRIGHT: *introspective, observant, intelligence, devout, orderly yet free-thinking, student becomes the teacher, aspirational, artistic, awareness, the self.*



MERKSTAVE: *insecurity, isolation, solitude, agoraphobia, inability to empathize or relate to others, lack of foresight, arrogance.*



LAGUZ

The rune is associated with the lake and the fluctuating energies of water. Most villages established themselves near bodies of water for access to the resource as well as to create a port for farming/travel. Water sustains all living creatures on the planet - it nourishes, it cleanses, it purifies, it can extinguish fires. Yet water also cannot be fully contained, can cause destruction, can carry toxins. As a lake is a landform where the water comes from rain, melted ice or other water sources, it holds connections to the divine/spiritual/astral powers. Water is used for various spiritual purposes, from initiation and spiritual cleansing, to breaking spells/curses. In tarot, the water element is associated with emotions and matters of the heart. This card reveals a young warrior prostrating himself in shallow water to rejuvenate his energies and give himself to the element. He is in a meditative trance, requesting the divine element to heal, cleanse, regenerate and empower his body with loving energy.



UPRIGHT: *nurturing, protection, divine blessing, rejuvenation, cleansing, initiation, empathetic/sympathetic, emotional, mystic, a fertility source-*

dreams, mysteries/fantasies, hidden and psychic matters.



MERKSTAVE: *deep secrets, bad intentions, nightmares, volatile mood, toxicity (figurative and literal), drowning in despair (sometimes over insignificant matters).*



INGWAZ

Resembling a seed, this rune is associated with fertility – both in terms of agriculture/vegetation as well as procreation among earthly creatures. Ingwaz can be seen as Jera meeting together, representing the height of the harvest and the abundance collected. The God Freyr is associated with this rune and has been revered to bless the land as well as male virility – he is usually depicted well-endowed and erect, and so it is of little wonder that Freyr presides over male sexuality, especially gay men. Like Laguz, the Ingwaz card shows another man prostrating himself on the earth, submitting to the element and Freyr - to ground him, invigorate him, ravish him and make him a vessel between earthly and spiritual energies. In the distance is the flourishing land as blessed by all five elements – Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Divine Spirit.



UPRIGHT: *male sexuality, fertility, union, elemental energy, grounded, spiritual, growth, relief, a time of rest.*



MERKSTAVE: *sabotage, wasting resources/energy, lacking interest, procrastination, slipping into despair, vulnerability, mishandled/manipulated.*



DAGAZ

A young man witnesses the rising sun or perhaps the end of a fruitful day. The points where the sun rises and sets are two powerful times of the day (along with being at its highest point at midday) that hold a wonder over sentient beings and are ideal times for conducting magickal works. It is where day and night meet and powers converge in harmonious balance. The symbol of the rune itself bears resemblance to the lemniscate (or infinity loop) and therefore represents the cyclic power of nature. There are highs and lows but in constant motion – energy is in constant flux and not bound by space or time. The young man is in wonder of such power and may be contemplating opportunities that lie ahead for him, in the moment, and in the near future. He is destined for great things as the light reveals the vast world before him.



UPRIGHT: *sun energy, illumination, healer, teacher, good sense of direction, seeing the big picture, optimistic, kinetic energy.*



MERKSTAVE: *daydreaming, self-doubt, not seeing the forest for the trees, pessimism, disbelief, lacking spirit, close-mindedness, neglect, negative forces.*



OTHALA

Partners embrace on the homestead they built together and rejoice in the love and affection they have for one another. They recognize their efforts and understand it has a greater value, which they are willing to share with their fellow men and build a welcoming, strong community together. This is the rune of completion in reference to the establishment of a stable home and contributing to the growth of the surrounding community/clan. It also recognizes the contributions of all those that came before and all those that will pass through in the future. This rune represents the strength of the community to ensure prosperous growth. All members of the homestead are essential for its development and maintenance – from the homemaker to the farmer to the blacksmith; no different from today's teachers, grocers, doctors. Othala is a rune commonly found embedded on various homes and buildings throughout the world as it honors Odin and invokes his protection for the home and all that dwell within and around it. Othala reminds us that we are greater than what we think, in our ability to lend our chosen skill and craft for the greater good and benefit of all that surrounds us, physically and spiritually.



UPRIGHT: *community, hearth and home, protective of others, selflessness, prosperity, accomplished craftsman, inheritance, completion, family.*



MERKSTAVE: *Anarchy, disorder, unstable environment, disarray, isolation/ ostracized, a detriment to society, adding to the problem rather than the solution, easily misled/taken advantage of, surrounded by enemies masquerading as friends.*

READING SPREADS

USING YOUR CARDS

A spread is the manner by which the card reader physically places the cards on the table. There are many different varieties of spreads, from those that use only a single card to those that include all cards of the deck. Spreads are often intended to draw focus to specific types of questions or readings - for example some spreads focus on emotional/spiritual matters (such as love/social relationships), where others are intended for use with more practical matters (business ventures and/or finances). Using spreads that are attuned to the type of query you intend to ask can help bring clarity to your readings. Below are some spreads recommended for use with the *Wood and Bone: Gay Runic Oracle*.

EYE OF ODIN

SINGLE CARD PULL

This is a very quick and simple method to consult the runes, typically for yes/no questions. An open-ended question typically would require a lengthier reading.

Shuffle the deck while thinking of your question.

Once done shuffling, select a card from the top, bottom or anywhere from the stack. You can also spread the cards face-down on a table and select a card that calls to you (by touch, intuition, etc.) Read the card and meditate on the images. The card will provide a positive (Yes) or negative (No) meaning based on what it shows you.

THE NORNS

3 CARD READING SPREAD

In Norse mythology, the Norns are three beings that weave each person's destiny as well as nurture the sacred tree Yggdrasil. This is a short reading spread that can be expanded if desired but weaves a pattern in time that could provide the client with much insight.

Have the client shuffle the cards with a question in mind. Once the shuffling is complete, the client selects three cards and places them face down on the table in front of the reader, as depicted below:



Card 1: Past

Card 2: Present

Card 3: Future

The reader will indicate that the card on the left is the *past*, the card in the middle is the *present*, and the card on the right is the *possible future*. The reader will interpret the cards according to the timeframe as per the cards' position. Once

the 3 cards are individually read, connections can be made between them to present a pathway that could help the client with their question and provide guidance.

If additional clarification is needed, another card can be pulled specifically to provide further information on the *possible future* card.

BIFROST BRIDGE

5 CARD READING SPREAD

This is the spread I have employed the most in the 15+ years that I have been reading tarot/oracle/rune decks.

The reader shuffles the cards and asks the client to think of a question they have – ask them to be as specific as possible. The client does not need to share the question – if they want to, ask them to share after the initial reading is complete for further discussion/investigation. The reader places the deck in front of the client and asks the client to cut the cards and restack. The reader selects 5 cards and lines in a bell-curve pattern, starting from the reader's left to the right – this forms the bridge, as displayed below:



Card 1: The Question/Concern

Card 2: Background Situation that led to the
Question/Concern

Card 3: Client's Desire

Card 4: External Influence on the
Question/Concern

Card 5: Possible Outcome

NINE REALMS: BRANCHES AND ROOTS OF YGGDRASIL

9 CARD READING SPREAD

Inspired by the World Tree, Yggdrasil, which connects all of the Nine Worlds within Nordic cosmology, this spread was created to provide an in-depth reading (similar to a Celtic Cross reading) that covers various aspects of the client's life. These areas have been aligned to each of the Nine Worlds described below:

- **Midgard:** Earth/our world
- **Asgard:** land of the Aesir and heroic warriors that died in battle (Valhalla)
- **Niflheim:** misty ice world of the ice giants
- **Muspelheim:** fire world, home of fire giant Surtr - enemy of Asgard
- **Vanaheim:** home of the old Vanir gods – mysterious world of sorcery and magic
- **Jotunheim:** vast and inhospitable wilderness. Home of the giants
- **Alfheim:** home of Light Elves (guardian angels); ruled by Freyr – inspiration for the arts

- Svartalfheim:** home of Dwarves, craftsmen that work with precious metals
- Helheim:** the underworld for those who do not die a warrior's death.

The reader shuffles the cards and asks the client to clear their mind and/or focus on something in particular that they would like to know about. The reader places the deck in front of the client and asks the client to cut the cards and restack.

The reader will lay out the spread in the following order:



- Card 1/Midgard** – the present situation; area of concern or focus of the reading; the client's question
- Card 2/Asgard** – divine guidance; where you must be most proactive
- Card 3/Niflheim** – the past and how it affects the present
- Card 4/Muspelheim** - the challenge ahead
- Card 5/Vanaheim** – what is needed to overcome the challenge
- Card 6/Jotunheim** – relationships with others that may be involved
- Card 7/Alfheim** – advice/inspiration from guiding spirits
- Card 8/Svartalfheim** – uncovering the future
- Card 9/Hel** – hopes and fears

Experienced readers are encouraged to construct relationships between the runes revealed in correlation to their placement on the spread, to further expand and elaborate on the situation presented. For example, discuss the relationship of runes presented in Midgard (1) and Asgard (2) or discuss potential conflicts based on runes presented in Asgard (2) and Jotunheim (6).



CLEANSING & STORING

CARING FOR YOUR RUNE CARDS

CLEANSING

There are various methods to cleansing a new tarot/rune deck upon opening as well as after readings. Below are a few options you can utilize:

- Sleep with the cards under your pillow for an odd number of nights – 9 is suggested as it is associated with the time Odin hung from Yggdrasil to receive the knowledge of the runes.
- Using a sage stick or incense, carefully waft the smoke around your cards and the bag/box used to store them. You can choose to sage/smoke each card individually as well.
- Pass the deck through the elements – sprinkle sea salt (earth), waft incense smoke (air), handle high above a lit candle to feel the flame's heat (fire), and place briefly over a goblet of water (water). Visualize a white aura enveloping and cleansing your cards to finalize. Alternatively, you can ceremoniously wrap the cards in a white cotton or silk cloth when finished (spirit).
- The cards can be left under sunlight and/or moonlight to cleanse and absorb the astral energies.

STORING

Although the rune cards come in a safe-keep box, you can choose to store the cards in various ways. You can purchase a tarot bag of either cotton, burlap or silk (try to use natural fibers) in any color you like.

You can also wrap the cards in a cotton or silk cloth that can function as a reading cloth as well. The cards can be stored in a wooden box – either purchased or created by you.

Cards can also be placed securely on an altar to keep the aesthetic of being a sacred object.

As the cards are of paper material, take care in exposing to certain elements - refrain from getting the cards wet, too close to fire or exposed for prolonged periods of time to sunlight.

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