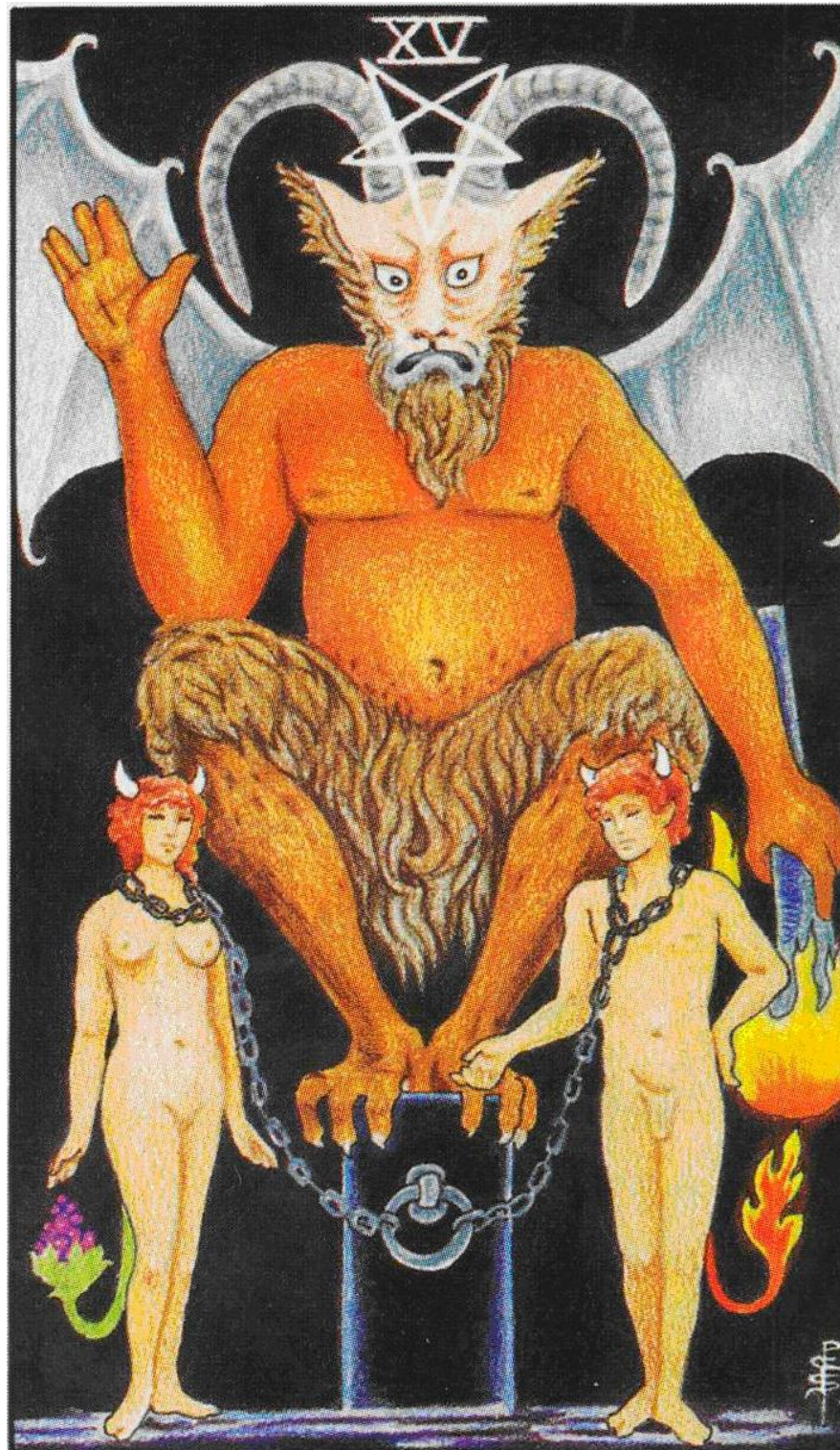


The Prophet's Price



Last night the prophet spoke to me in a dream. I saw a knight clutching a

golden coin, his eyes wild with greed. Around him was a forest that was not a forest, but enemies with their weapons held high. I saw myself, hung from a tree, my eyes bright and full of knowledge. I saw my wife staring sorrowful at the spilled cups of our lives. Finally, I saw the tower, magnificent in its glory, burning to the ground. These are things I know must come to pass, though I do not know what they mean. The prophet has gifted me with many abilities. I can see people and places as they truly are. I can ensure a transport to arrive safely no matter how treacherous the path or I can doom a competitor to be stymied along even the safest route. I know spells that will reshape the world. I have used these gifts to create a comfortable life for myself, but now I fear it must end. If the prophecy does not come true, then my covenant will be broken and I will lose it all. Others like me are gathering. I will soon meet The Emperor, The Ace of Swords, and Three of Cups. The Ace is an old friend, but I did not know of the other two. They too will need this prophecy to come to pass, but they may guide it in a way I cannot bear. No, this future must happen, and it will shaped be me and me alone.



The *Prophet's Price* is a role-playing game about breaking the world to fit your own needs. In this game,



one player will play the role of the Prophet, and enigmatic being who both empowers and demands from the players. This Prophet has revealed that a specific series of events must come to pass in order for the ultimate fate to be achieved. The rest of the players play individuals with extraordinary abilities, but are limited and defined their roles in fate. This game utilizes the art in meaning of a Tarot deck and is required to play the game. While there are many great versions of the Tarot, this game is best played with highly descriptive art on every card so that those who are not familiar with each card can draw inspiration from what they see. For this reason, I highly recommend using The Rider-Waite Tarot Deck. All art in this document is from this version of the Tarot.

Symbology: While there are many complete descriptions and interpretations of specific Tarot cards, here is a quick primer of some of the common symbols in the Tarot. Do not feel limited to these interpretations of these symbols as players are allowed to draw inspiration and control from any aspect of a card's art.

Swords: The suite of violence, war, and death. This suite often depicts the suffering of someone but sometimes for the benefit of someone else.



Cups: The suite of merriment, family, and excess. This suite often depicts scenes of joy, but can also show the aftermath of debauchery.



Wands: The suite of health, competition, and movement. This suite has a very broad range of depictions, but will often show journeys, upheavals, and contests.

Pentacles: The suite of money, greed, and prosperity. This suite often depicts a person's financial status, good or bad, as well as their ethics.

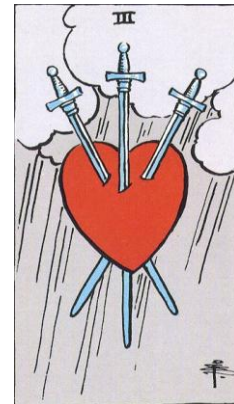
Kings: Often represent an older or authoritative character or situation. While this card often is used to represent men, it does not need to be limited to this gender.

Queens: Often represent characters or situations which are powerful through the use of emotions. They could be caring and nurturing, or manipulative and dismissive. While this card often is used to represent women, it does not need to be limited to this gender.

Knights: Often represent driven and dedicated people or situations. Most knights are very mobile, rushing towards their goals.

Pages: Often represent youth and discovery with a hint of irresponsibility. This suite is often used to represent teenage boys or girls.

Major Arcana: Cards without suites. They represent important events, unique people, or rare attributes. Each card has a very different meaning.



The World: The world of The Prophet's Price is not much different than our own. People go about their daily routines, never really thinking about their place in fate. Prophecies are rare and generally ignored and few people believe in magic of any sort. Instead people put their faith into cell phones, computers, and the seven o'clock news. But underneath it all there is magic. There is fate. There is the prophet.

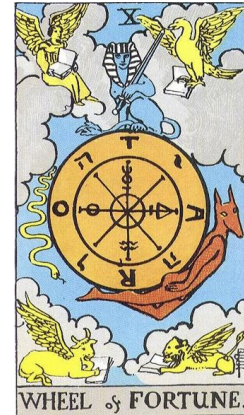
Nobody really knows who or what the prophet is. Nobody has met them. Nobody has heard them speak (at least in a literal sense), and nobody has seen them with their own eyes. But those who use fate cannot deny the Prophet's power.

Then there are the Pivots. These are people who see the world for what it is. They know the fate prescribed to those around them as well as their own. They have the ability to call upon this fate to take control over a part of the word and can even call forth other fates to change the world.

But if fate changes then the Pivots will lose their position and thus their power. If the fate set forth by the Prophet does not come to pass, then roles will change and Pivots will lose their ability to read these changes. They will be left with nothing but the memory of what it was like to be powerful.

Starting the game: To play this game you will need three to six players, a standard Tarot deck (again, Rider-Waite is the recommended art), several pieces of paper, some sticky notes, and writing utensils. First you should choose one player to play the Prophet, who will act as the arbitrator of what happens and also play all npc's. Everyone else plays Pivots, people who can see the roles of fate and can use their own role to exert control over the world.

Once the roles have been chosen, separate the twenty-two major arcane (any card without a suite) and shuffle them. The Prophet will take one card randomly and look at it, but not show any other player. This card represents the prophet and its nature. The Prophet should think about what that card might mean and what the prophet might be. This card might describe the prophet themselves, an attribute they hold, the outcome of the prophecy, or even a future they are trying to prevent.



Next the Prophet should shuffle the remaining major arcane back into the deck, and deal one card face up to each player. This card represents their character's role in fate. This position is completely up to the player to interpret, but the player will be limited by the art and meaning of the card itself. Keep these cards in clear view since all player characters (PC's) will easily recognize each other's fate. It is common practice for Pivots to refer to each other by their role. On a sheet of paper, the player should fill in the following traits based on their card.



Domain: By accepting their fate, each PC will have control over a single aspect of the world. This aspect must be present on their card, and no two characters can have the same (or similar) domains. Players should feel welcome to discuss their domains before choosing. For example, a PC with the six of wands may claim attention as their domain.

Failing: All power comes with a price. By accepting the power of a domain, the character must also accept an inability to handle an aspect of the world. When dealing with their failing, a character is unable to succeed without the help of another or one of their magical spells (described later). For example, the same PC with the six of wands might be unable to obtain privacy when they want it unless they get help.

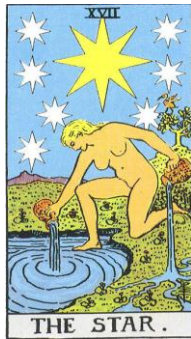
Desire: Though Pivots are willing to play the role fate dealt them, they are still people with everyday wants and desires. However there should be one that takes precedent above others. This desire must be related to the PC's card, but can be in contrast to that cards position. For example, a PC with the five of pentacles may desire a place to call home, even when their role suggests they are destined to lack this.

Taboo: There is one line your character believes should never be crossed. This does not need to be related to their card. For example, one character may believe killing is always too far, while another might have a hatred for selling out.



Place in society: A Pivot's fate does not always decide how they fit in with the mundane world. Players should describe how their Pivot is seen by society. For instance, a PC with the five of pentacles may have a fate of homelessness or destitution, but may in fact be a successful musician who is always on the road and hence does not have a true home.

Societal Name: While your fellow Pivots will call you by your fated role, that is not what npc's will call you. Choose a name that the rest of the world will use (and for the Prophet's benefit keep it easy view).



After all Pivots have been fully created, it is time to determine the events that make up the Prophecy. Deal seven random cards in a line from left to right (making sure that each card is right side up). These are the seven events that the Prophet have revealed to the Pivots, and will lead to the ultimate fate they have planned. The Prophet will decide how they reveal these seven events to the Pivots, but they will be able to choose how they perceive them. The Pivots will be compelled to try to complete these events in order. If an event ever fails to happen, or an event was completed out of order fate has been altered and the Pivots will lose their place and all of their powers, leaving them a regular mortal. While a character might wish for this to happen, their instincts will always tell them to preserve their place.

Finally deal each Pivot four more cards face down. These are spells that the PC's know, but they will now know what each other's spells are.

Game Play: The Prophet's Price takes place over the course of several scenes. Players will take turns as a scene's Pivot and frame the scene that they will be the center of with the first and last scenes are always framed by the Prophet. The first scene always involves a gathering of all the Pivots. In every other scene, the acting Pivot will decide where the scene takes place, who is in it, and what their goal is. The Prophet normally determines who's turn it is to frame a scene, but generally it should go around in order. The Prophet can break this convention if A) the Pivots think it makes sense to change the order, B) there is a strong narrative reason to approach a certain Pivot's scene out of order, or C) just about any other reason that will improve the game experience



Pivots not in the scene might be able to know what is happening, interact with the scene, and even enter the scene through use of their domain. Pivots who are not chosen for the scene who do not have a relevant domain are left in the dark. Scenes will last until the objective has been met or failed, or the scene concludes in some other way. Scenes can be extended beyond the resolution of the objective if the aftermath is immediate and important.

The first scene always starts with the Prophet describing how the prophecy was delivered to the Pivots. Each player should take some time to think about how the Prophecy was perceived by them. This perception will not be the same for each Pivot. For example, in the flavor text at the beginning of the game, the Chariot perceived himself to be the Hanged Man, while The Emperor perceived her son to be in that role. This does not imply a relationship between the two Pivots, just a difference in the

subconscious of the two. It is both alright and expected that players will feel confused about the meaning of the Prophecy, but if a player feels confident that they know that is acceptable (that doesn't mean they are correct). Once the players feel comfortable with their perception of then the first scene begins with a gathering of the Pivots, but the Pivot chooses where they meet. The Prophet will determine the location of the gathering, but will let the Pivot's interact without further interference. Players are allowed to determine if they know each other before this meeting occurs, but it is not a requirement. This scene continues until each Pivot has answered at least three of these questions about each of their peers:

- Who is this person to me?
- How will they hinder me?
- How might I make use of them?
- Why can't I trust them?
- What do they have that I lack?
- What must I do to influence them?



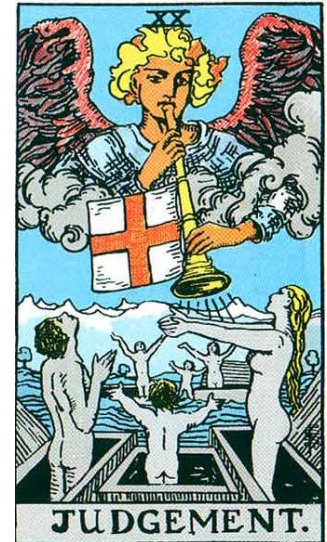
Framing a Scene: When a Pivot frames a scene, it should serve a specific purpose. This purpose can be an attempt to fulfill a piece of the prophecy, an attempt to tie up loose ends, a pursuit of their desires, an attempt to prevent their taboo, or to further develop the character and their life. The player should state what they are hoping as a player is hoping to get from the scene and what the pivot intends to achieve. For example, a player might choose to have a scene having dinner with their spouse. The player's purpose might be that they want to get a better idea of who their character is and what their life is like before they pursue making changes to their world. The Pivot's motivation as a character might be that they just want to maintain an important relationship, or even to savor the life they live before it drastically changes. While this scene has little to do with the prophecy and the other Pivots, it is just as important as any other scene. The Pivot also needs to decide where this scene takes place, and which characters are in the scene (both Pivots and npc's). Players do not need to choose a scene where their Pivot is the center of attention, but the Pivot needs to be central to institution of the scene. For instance, a Player can choose a scene where a different Pivot's spouse confronts them about their infidelity, if the active Pivot was responsible (either mystically or mundanely) for the spouse finding out. To summarize, when framing a scene a player needs to:



- State the player's intention for the scene.
- Explain what their Pivot's goal for the scene is.
- Establish who is in the scene.
- Decide where the scene is taking place.

Playing the Scene: Once the scene has been established, play it out. Players should say what their Pivots say and do, and the Prophet will say how npc's respond. If there is ever a conflict about what occurs, follow the rules below. This scene will last until the Pivot's objective has been met or failed, or the scene concludes in some other way. After the scene is over, the Pivots will decide if they think a piece of the prophecy was fulfilled or failed. If there is a disagreement, the players will vote, thumbs up for fulfilled, thumbs down for failed, and thumbs sideways for neither. Then the Prophet will decide if they agree with the majority. If the Prophet disagrees then nothing happens. If they agree then one of the following will occur:

- If the Prophet agrees that the piece of the Prophecy was neither fulfilled nor failed, then nothing happens.
- If the Prophet agrees that the current piece of the prophecy was fulfilled, then they will flip that card over, and Pivot will instinctually know to work on the next part of the prophecy.
- If the Prophet agrees that piece of the Prophecy has failed or that the wrong piece of the Prophecy was fulfilled, the Prophecy is broken and the game will end. See below for the end game rules for this scenario.
- If the last piece of the Prophecy was fulfilled, then the Prophecy has been realized and the game will end. See below for the end game rules in this scenario.



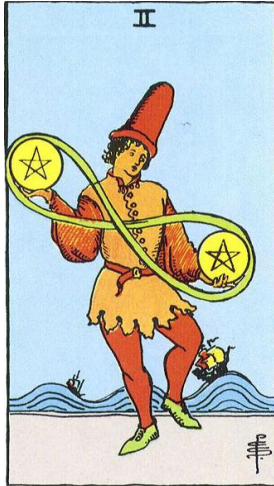
After each piece of the Prophecy is completed, the Prophet will reveal a hint to its nature or the fate the Pivots are drawing closer to. This hint should be telling but remain vague. The Prophet may choose any medium to reveal this hint.



Using a Domain: Pivot's have significant knowledge and power over their domains. In game play, this can be seen in a several ways:

- Players can introduce facts about their domain and they will be have always been true.
- Pivot's can alter existing facts about their domain, but these changes are always noticeable by other Pivots and sometimes noticeable by npc's (Prophet's discretion).
- To spy on or enter scenes where their domain is prevalent or in abundance.
- Domain's can be used to determine the result of a conflict (see below).
- Domain's CAN NOT be used to overcome the effect of spells or the results of the Prophecy.

Whenever a player wishes to use their domain, they just need to say what they want to do and it happens, simple as that.



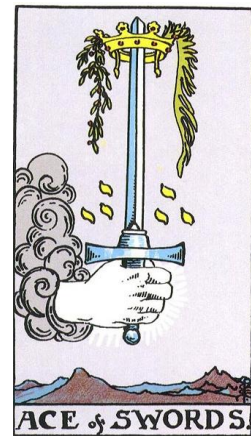
NPC's and Locations: Mundane mortals are still connected to fate and the Prophecy even if they are unaware and powerless against such forces. Pivots can introduce these characters in two different ways:

- They can introduce a specific character in a scene and randomly assign a role in fate for that character.
- They can search out a specific fate and discover who that character is.

In either case, use a sticky note on the npc's card to keep track of information about the character. Specific locations can also hold special resonance with fate and the Prophecy. Pivots can introduce important locations the same ways that they can introduce npc's. If a location is discovered to be important, then the Prophet will assign a card to it.

Conflict: Occasionally Pivots' actions will conflict with each other and a winner needs to be determined. When this happens, every character in the conflict should state what they intend to happen if they succeed. If the players agree on a narrative outcome (even if their Pivots are not happy about it) then that is the result. Otherwise the Prophet will arbitrate the outcome and make the final decision if necessary. Use the following list of criteria to help determine the resolution. Start at the top of the list and if it fits the situation then use that entry to resolve the conflict, if not continue down to the next step until a match is found.

1. If the conflict takes place within a single Pivot's domain (even if they are not part of the conflict) they determine the resolution.
2. If the conflict is connected with only one of the domains of the conflicting Pivots, that Pivot wins the conflict.
3. If one Pivot has their failing taken advantage of, they lose the conflict.
4. Any Player can offer the opposing side a complication for success. If they agree, then they win the conflict but the conflict takes place.
5. If both sides of the conflict have relevant domains, the side with the most relevant domain (as decided by the Prophet) wins the conflict.
6. If both sides of the conflict have equally relevant domains, the side with the active Pivot wins.
7. If the active Pivot is not involved in the conflict and both sides have equally relevant domains, then neither side wins, instead horrible complications arise from the clashing domains.
8. If neither side has a relevant domain, then the conflict goes unresolved until a narrative solution is found or the situation changes enough to test for conflict again.



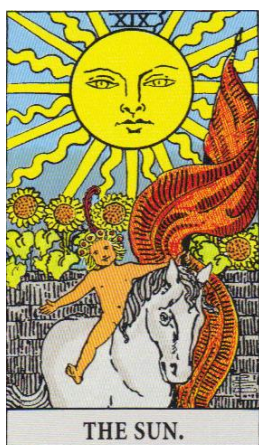
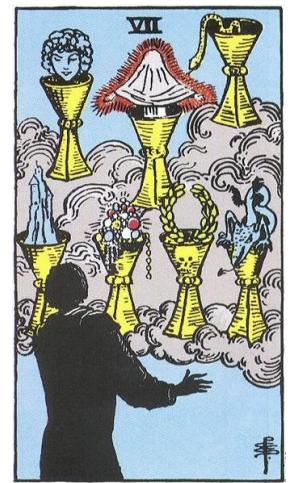
When a Pivot wins a conflict, they narrate the outcome of the conflict and others can respond. When the conflict is not resolved, the Prophet narrates the outcome and the Pivots may respond. Whenever a Pivot loses a conflict they may discard one of their spells to draw a new one.



Playing Around Failings: Failings represent an inability that your character has. If at any time a Pivot attempts to do something that falls under the purview of their failing, any play (Pivot or Prophet) may point this out and the attempt fails miserably. This is part of the price a Pivot pays for devoting themselves to their role in fate. If a Pivot wishes for a result that is within their failing then they need help. Pivots can ask, coerce, or otherwise obtain aid from other Pivots or npc's to get what they need. Using the example of a lack of privacy from earlier, the Pivot will be unable to ask a group of admirers to leave them alone. If they tried, the admirers will become more aggressive and insistent, perhaps taking what they wanted without permission from the Pivot they love so much.

However, if they had a friend tell the group to piss off and leave their buddy alone, then it is possible for the friend to succeed. This aide may well come at a price, especially when it comes from another Pivot.

Using Spells: Any decent bit of magic breaks all the rules and your spells are no different. Whenever a Pivot's normal abilities fail to achieve what you wish, or the result of a scene or conflict is not to their liking, they may use one of their spells to change reality. They are allowed to change any details about the scene and its outcome so long as those changes can be described by the card used. While using a spell, the Pivot has perfect information about the scene they are altering, even if they are not present. Once these changes have been made, nothing can alter them, not even another spell. After the changes are made, the spell is discarded and not replaced. For example, if the Pivot who is unable to obtain privacy finds that their admirer's have turned violent and have kidnapped them, they can use a spell to change how that scene played out. If that card was Strength, the Pivot would be unable to use this spell to convince their attackers to leave them alone. They could however use the spell to easily defeat their former admirers when they turned violent. History is rewritten, and only the Pivots and perhaps some npc's involved in the initial scene have any knowledge that a change has taken place. Pivots are always aware when a spell is used, even if they are not in the scene.



Completing the Prophecy: If the last piece of the Prophecy is completed then the Pivots have succeeded and their ultimate fate has been realized. The Prophet will frame one last scene in where the Pivots will witness and react to the fate they have created. Pivots may react, but they will be powerless to change this outcome. During this scene, the nature of the Prophet and the Prophecy will become apparent. Others, players should enjoy their success, even if it lead to the ruin of everything their Pivots ever loved.

Failing the Prophecy: If the Pivots have failed the Prophecy then they will lose everything that makes them special. They discard any remaining spells, will lose their domain and failing, and will no longer be able to see roles of fate in themselves or others. In other words, they are normal, but with full memories of the extraordinary world they were once a part of. This is a horrible burden for most Pivots, and many will do anything to return to the world of the Prophet. The Prophet will frame one last scene for each Pivot, showcasing all they lost in the process, and potential they little they might have gained. It is up to the Pivot to play through how they respond to the drastic changes to the world.



Principles of Play:



Pivots should:

- Be fatalistic
- Refer to each other by their card
- Think of the world in terms of roles in fate
- Pursue their desires
- Struggle with their failing
- Showcase their domain

The Prophet Should:

- Be a fan of the Pivots
- Complicate the Pivots' lives
- Showcase the Pivots' failings
- Arbitrate conflicts to promote interest
- Be intermittently mysterious and revealing
- Play to find out
- Destroy the world (or not, that's up to you)

