

The Lion tamer

The Lion tamer delves into the cages of ferocious beasts to direct them through risky tricks, always keeping them on the edge of frustration. Every night they face their wrath, while Zombo had only himself to count on, but the moral is one and the same: Performing means risking one's life for the amusement of paying strangers. This knowledge is enough to chill the spine of the bravest carny.

II

The Clown

The Clown was Zombo's apprentice. The old man taught them all they knew, more like a father than a simple mentor. They loved him and his tragic departure has wounded them deeply. Yet they cannot deny the thrill of becoming the first clown, of finally having the stage to themselves. At the wake, this petty, despicable feeling makes them burn with shame and self-loathing.

III

The Freak

Being a Freak is hell. There is no worse life, at least not away from the circus. Here, at least, they feel at home, they feel like part of the family. The obstacles and challenges of their life are no less harrowing, but pain bears wisdom and strength of character, to share in the moment of greatest need. Inside their monstrous body lies a noble spirit, capable of bringing solace to the entire crew.

IV

The Dancer

The circus is its own world, terrible and raw, sublime and full of wonder. None know it better than the Dancers who celebrate it through their performance. Death is part of the circus, always lurking behind the corner: There is no surprise when a carny dies. The only thing left to do is to huddle closer, to lean on each other to keep standing and go back to the stage tomorrow, for the show must go on.

V

The Dancer

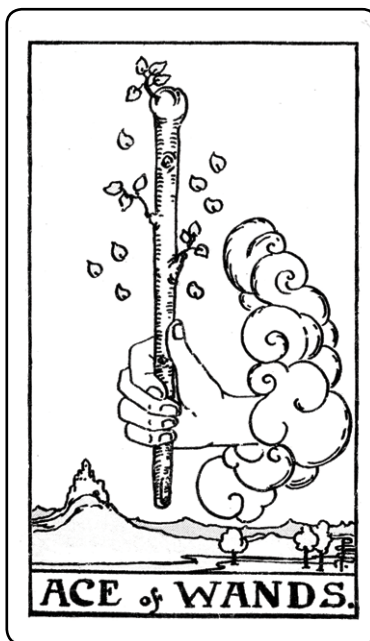
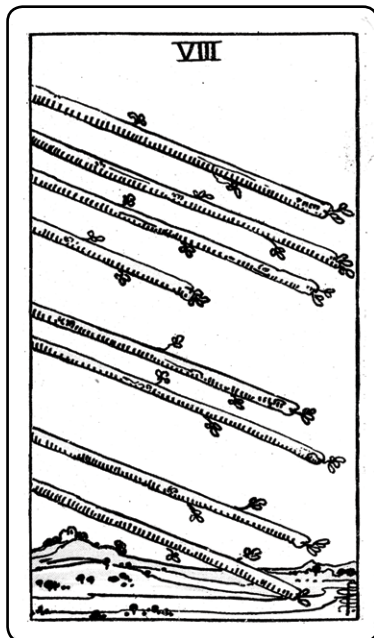
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VIII

The Acrobat

The Acrobat is alone. They live on the stage, hanging from the trapeze, balancing on a stretch of rope, vaulting through the air and dancing on their hands. These are their loneliest moments, the ones where they feel most alive. Yet the worth of a circus is the sum of its carnies' talents. Thus they cannot be indifferent to the death of a fellow crew member, not even if he's a lowly clown.

P

The Equestrian

The Equestrian, vain, egotistical and charismatic, has always looked down on their fellow carnies. Yet, though they are an expert at hiding their weakness, they do love their travelling companions. Who knows? Maybe this night of sorrow will give them the chance to lay down their armour and huddle closer to the others, if just for a while. Like a carnies among carnies.

Kn

The Herculean

Mighty in body, tender in heart. The Herculean, once capable of stunning the audience with their sheer strength, has been devastated by the death of dear Zombo. Nothing and no one seems to be able to comfort them. Tonight they need the affection of all their fellow carnies, for even the tallest mountains can crumble to dust, if their heart is shattered by an infinitesimal, invisible crack.

Q

The Ringmaster

The Ringmaster is first and foremost an entrepreneur, but they do care about their carnies, the only family they ever had. They will do what they can to comfort them and to keep them united through this tragedy. Because it's the right thing to do, because they can only count on each other, and because, in the end, the show must go on. For people like them, there is no other commandment.

Ki

The Magician

The Magician hypnotises the audience with their trickery, but against death they can do just as much as everyone else: not a thing. This time they can't hide their powerlessness behind the usual wall of cynicism and their only solace lies in the others' company, or at the bottom of a bottle. Here's to Zombo, the old, crazy drunkard! What kind of wake would this be without a toast or two?

A

11 IL TEATRO DEGLI ARCANI MAGGIORI THE THEATRE OF MAJOR ARCANAS

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AM	540	600	700	800	1200	1400	1700				