@ ? d: -> =>

Lonelog: Card Notation Add-on

A Standard Notation for Playing Cards in Session Logs

Version 1.1.0



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Overview

Core Lonelog already acknowledges card draws as a valid way to resolve uncertainty or generate content. What it doesn't define is a compact, unambiguous shorthand for card identities.

Without a standard, logs fill with inconsistent spellings: "Q of spades", "queen♠", "Queen Spades", "QS". Tarot draws fare worse — "reversed Tower" and "The Tower (rev.)" and "XVI r" are all the same card. For tools that parse logs, and for players who share them, the inconsistency creates friction.

This add-on defines a compact notation for three types of card draws:

- **Standard playing cards** — the 52-card deck plus jokers
- **Tarot** — Major Arcana, Minor Arcana, and upright/reversed orientation
- **Oracle decks** — a lightweight convention for named-card systems

When not to use this add-on: If you play a single system with a single card type and never share logs, your current spelling probably works fine. Adopt this notation when consistency matters — for shared logs, tool support, or crossing between multiple card systems in one campaign.

What This Add-on Adds

Element	Purpose	Example in a log
`{rank}` `{suit}`	Compact standard card identity	`tbl: draw=Qs -> Dark omen`
`M{n}`	Major Arcana by number	`tbl: draw=M12r -> Blocked`
`{rank}` `{suit}` with tarot suits	Minor Arcana	`tbl: draw=KnCu`
`r` suffix	Reversed orientation (Tarot)	`tbl: draw=M16r`
Position labels in spreads	Named positions in a multi-card spread	`tbl: Past=5s, Present=Ks`

The add-on also uses two ordinary core tags for what a deck and a hand hold: a `[Deck:]` tag counts the cards left and lists the ones out of play, and a `hand:` category on the character lists the cards held (see *Deck State and Hands*).

No new core symbols. Card draws use `tbl:`, `d:` and `->` exactly as defined in core Lonelog. The card identity uses `=` as the drawn result; `->` carries the interpreted outcome.

Design Principles

Cards follow the same pattern as dice. `=` records the drawn card, `->` carries the interpreted outcome, `=>` carries the narrative consequence. `tbl: draw=Qs -> Dark omen` is the same structure as `tbl: Loot d100=42 -> A broken sword`.

Content or verdict decides the prefix (core Lonelog §3.2.2). Most draws give content — an image, an omen, a place, an encounter — and use `tbl:`. A draw that gives a verdict — a fate card answering yes or no, a card played against a target — uses `d:`.

Compact but readable. `Qs` over "Queen of Spades". Abbreviations should be recoverable without a lookup table by anyone who knows the card system.

No orientation assumption. Upright is the default and unmarked. Reversed is the exception and is always marked with `r`. A card with no suffix is always upright.

Part I: Practical Reference

How card draws fit into a log entry

Card draws follow the same structure as dice rolls. The card drawn is the raw result and uses `=`; the interpreted outcome uses `->`. Draws that give content use `tbl:`:

```
tbl: draw=Qs
tbl: draw=M12r -> The obstacle is myself.
=> The Hanged Man reversed. I've been the
obstacle all along.
```

For oracle reads that answer a question, pair with `?`. When the card gives an image to interpret, it's still `tbl:`; when your deck or method turns it into a yes or no, it's `d:`:

```
? Can I trust the merchant?
tbl: draw=Jc -> Scheming youth
=> No.

? Is the bridge still standing?
d: draw=Qh vs red -> Yes
```

For spreads, label each position with `=`:

```
tbl: Past=5s, Present=Ks, Future=ACu
```

Or split across lines when each card needs its own consequence:

```
tbl: Past=5s
tbl: Present=Ks
tbl: Future=ACu
=> Conflict led here. Authority holds the
present. Something new waits at the end.
```

Standard Playing Cards

Ranks: `A`, `2`–`10`, `J`, `Q`, `K`
Suits: `h` (hearts ♥), `d` (diamonds ♦), `c` (clubs ♣), `s` (spades ♠)
Format: `{rank}{suit}`

```
Ah    Ace of Hearts
7c    Seven of Clubs
Ks    King of Spades
10d   Ten of Diamonds
Jh    Jack of Hearts
```

Jokers: `Jkr` (generic), `RJkr` (red joker), `BJkr` (black joker).

When the game cares about color but not suit: `R` (red — hearts or diamonds), `B` (black — clubs or spades).

Card identities always follow `=`. Write `draw=4d` or `Past=4d`, never a bare `4d`. That keeps a card apart from a dice expression: `4d` after `=` is the four of diamonds, while `4d6` on its own is four six-sided dice. The rule holds in compact form too.

In a log:

```
@ Search the body
tbl: draw=3h -> Minor find
=> A folded note, damp and illegible.

@ Fate check
tbl: draw=Jkr -> Chaos surge
=> Everything changes.
```

Tarot

Major Arcana

Format: `M{n}` where `n` is the card's number (0–21).

n	Card	n	Card
0	The Fool	11	Justice
1	The Magician	12	The Hanged Man
2	The High Priestess	13	Death
3	The Empress	14	Temperance
4	The Emperor	15	The Devil
5	The Hierophant	16	The Tower
6	The Lovers	17	The Star
7	The Chariot	18	The Moon
8	Strength	19	The Sun
9	The Hermit	20	Judgement
10	Wheel of Fortune	21	The World

Reversed: append `r`.

- `tbl: draw=M0` — The Fool, upright
- `tbl: draw=M16r` — The Tower, reversed

When space allows, add the name as an inline description:

```
tbl: draw=M12 // The Hanged Man
tbl: draw=M16r // The Tower reversed
```

Minor Arcana

Suits: `Wa` (Wands), `Cu` (Cups), `Sw` (Swords), `Pe` (Pentacles)
Ranks: `A`, `2`–`10`, `Pg` (Page), `Kn` (Knight), `Q`, `K`
Format: `{rank}{suit}`

```
ACu     Ace of Cups
7Wa     Seven of Wands
PgSw    Page of Swords
KnPe    Knight of Pentacles
QCu     Queen of Cups
KWa     King of Wands
```

Reversed: append `r`.

- `tbl: draw=5Swr` — Five of Swords, reversed
- `tbl: draw=KnCu` — Knight of Cups, upright

In a log:

```
? What force opposes me here?
tbl: draw=KSw -> Adversary: principle,
not malice
=> The King of Swords — cold logic. He
acts on conviction, not cruelty.
```

Oracle Decks

Oracle decks use proprietary card names that cannot be standardized. Use the card's name as free text with `=`, optionally with an inline description naming the deck. A deck that answers yes/no questions, like Mythic's fate cards, gives a verdict and uses `d:`.

```
tbl: draw // Ironsworn Oracle=Darkness
and Shadow
d: draw // Mythic Fate=Exceptional Yes ->
Yes, and...
tbl: draw // Crow's Eye Oracle=The
Lantern -> Safe passage
```

For decks you use repeatedly, a short deck tag in the label keeps things scannable:

```
tbl: Crow=The Lantern -> Safe passage
tbl: Crow=The Abyss -> Something follows
```

Spreads

A spread is a multi-card draw where each card occupies a named position. Write position labels with `=` for each card.

Single-line (compact, for short spreads):

```
tbl: Past=5s, Present=Ks, Future=ACu
```

Multi-line (when each card needs interpretation space):

```
tbl: Past=M16r -> Collapse that was
delayed, not avoided.
=> The Tower reversed. I should have
fallen sooner.

tbl: Present=KWa -> I am the force at
work here.
=> The King of Wands. The fire is mine to
wield or waste.

tbl: Future=ACu -> Something new if I let
go.
=> The Ace of Cups. Grief first, then an
opening.
```

Labeled spread with deck name:

```
tbl: Celtic Past=7Wa, Celtic Present=M12,
Celtic Future=3Cu
```

Deck State and Hands

Many card-driven games care about what is left in the deck. Track it with a `[Deck:]` tag, using core Lonelog's update rules: the count of cards left is `×N`, and the cards out of play are an `out:` category.

```
[Deck:Main|×52]
tbl: draw=Qs -> Dark omen
[Deck:Main|×-1|out:+Qs]
tbl: draw=M16 -> Collapse
[Deck:Main|×-1|out:+M16]
```

When you reshuffle, reset both:

```
=> I shuffle the discards back in.
[Deck:Main|×52|out:none]
```

A **hand** is a category on whoever holds it. Add cards as you draw them and remove them as you play them:

```
[PC:Kael|hand:Ah, Kd, 7c]
[PC:Kael|hand:+Qs]
@ Play the Ace against the guard
[PC:Kael|hand:-Ah]
```

Use several `[Deck:]` tags when a game uses several decks: `[Deck:Encounters|×20]`, `[Deck:Fate|×22]`.

Common Patterns by System

Standard deck as oracle (e.g. *Carta, For the Queen*):

```
@ Explore the next hex
tbl: draw=7d -> Forest path
=> Tall pines, no trail. I mark it as
unmapped.
```

Tarot for scene framing:

```
? What is the mood of this place?
tbl: draw=M18 // The Moon -> Illusion,
hidden things
=> Nothing here is what it seems.
```

Oracle roll plus a complication card:

```
? Is the bridge still standing? (Likely)
d: d100=47 vs 75 -> Yes
tbl: draw=Ks -> Complication: authority
figure
=> The bridge is there, but a city guard
holds the crossing.
```

Reversed card as obstacle:

```
? Does my contact show up?
tbl: draw=M6r // The Lovers reversed ->
```

```
Divided loyalties
=> He's here, but he brought someone I
didn't expect.
```

Horror game — Joker as catastrophe trigger:

```
tbl: draw=RJkr -> The Worst Thing
=> The lights go out across the whole
building. Something found the generator.
```

Part II: Complete Reference

1. Standard Deck Notation

Ranks

Symbol	Card
`A`	Ace
`2-10`	Number cards
`J`	Jack
`Q`	Queen
`K`	King

Suits

Symbol	Suit	Color
`h`	Hearts ♥	Red
`d`	Diamonds ♦	Red
`c`	Clubs ♣	Black
`s`	Spades ♠	Black

Jokers

Symbol	Card
`Jkr`	Joker (generic, when color doesn't matter)
`RJkr`	Red Joker
`BJkr`	Black Joker

Color Shorthand

When a system cares about red/black but not the specific suit:

Symbol	Meaning
`R`	Red card (hearts or diamonds)
`B`	Black card (clubs or spades)

Full Card Examples

```
Ah    Ace of Hearts
2c    Two of Clubs
10d   Ten of Diamonds
Jh    Jack of Hearts
Qs    Queen of Spades
Kd    King of Diamonds
Jkr   Joker
```

Note: `10d` (Ten of Diamonds) is two characters before the suit. All other ranks are one character. Parsers should treat `10` as a complete rank token.

2. Tarot Notation

Major Arcana

Format: `M{n}` where `n` is 0–21.

Reversed: append `r` — `M0r`, `M16r`.

n	Card	Symbol	Reversed
0	The Fool	`M0`	`M0r`
1	The Magician	`M1`	`M1r`
2	The High Priestess	`M2`	`M2r`
3	The Empress	`M3`	`M3r`
4	The Emperor	`M4`	`M4r`
5	The Hierophant	`M5`	`M5r`
6	The Lovers	`M6`	`M6r`
7	The Chariot	`M7`	`M7r`
8	Strength	`M8`	`M8r`
9	The Hermit	`M9`	`M9r`
10	Wheel of Fortune	`M10`	`M10r`
11	Justice	`M11`	`M11r`
12	The Hanged Man	`M12`	`M12r`
13	Death	`M13`	`M13r`
14	Temperance	`M14`	`M14r`
15	The Devil	`M15`	`M15r`
16	The Tower	`M16`	`M16r`
17	The Star	`M17`	`M17r`
18	The Moon	`M18`	`M18r`
19	The Sun	`M19`	`M19r`
20	Judgement	`M20`	`M20r`
21	The World	`M21`	`M21r`

Note: The Thoth Tarot and some other decks swap the positions of Strength (VIII) and Justice (XI). The `M{n}` notation follows the

Rider-Waite-Smith standard (Strength = 8, Justice = 11). If you use a different numbering, note it in your session header.

Minor Arcana

Suits:

Symbol	Suit	Element
`Wa`	Wands	Fire
`Cu`	Cups	Water
`Sw`	Swords	Air
`Pe`	Pentacles / Coins	Earth

Ranks:

Symbol	Card
`A`	Ace
`2–10`	Number cards
`Pg`	Page
`Kn`	Knight
`Q`	Queen
`K`	King

Format: `{rank}{suit}` — `ACu`, `7Wa`, `PgSw`, `KnPe`, `QCu`, `KWa`

Reversed: append `r` — `7War`, `PgSwr`

Orientation

Suffix	Meaning
(none)	Upright (default)

Suffix	Meaning
`r`	Reversed

3. Oracle Decks

Oracle decks use proprietary card names. No compact symbol system can cover them all. Use the card's name as free text with `=`.

For logs that use a single oracle deck throughout, establish a short deck prefix in your session header or as a note, then use it consistently:

```
[Session: ...] [Oracle: Crow's Eye]

tbl: draw=The Lantern -> Safe passage
tbl: draw=The Abyss -> Something follows
```

For mixed-deck sessions, name the deck inline:

```
tbl: draw // Crow's Eye=The Lantern
tbl: draw // Ironsworn Oracle=Darkness
and Shadow
```

4. Spread Notation

A spread assigns each drawn card to a named position. The position label appears in the `tbl:` field with `=` for each card.

Single-line format

```
tbl: {Position1}={card1}, {Position2}
={card2}, ...
```

Example:

```
tbl: Past=5Sw, Present=KWa, Future=ACu
```

Multi-line format

Use when each card warrants its own `->` or `=>`:

```
tbl: {Position}={card} -> [outcome]
=> [Narrative consequence]
```

Common spread names

These are conventions, not requirements. Any position label is valid.

Spread	Positions
Three-card	`Past`, `Present`, `Future`
Three-card (alt)	`Situation`, `Action`, `Outcome`
Three-card (alt)	`Mind`, `Body`, `Spirit`
Celtic Cross	`Self`, `Cross`, `Foundation`, `Past`, `Crown`, `Future`, `Self2`, `Environment`, `Hopes`, `Outcome`
Single draw	`draw` (no position label needed)

Quick Reference

Standard Deck

```
Ah  Ac  Ad  As    Aces
Kh  Kc  Kd  Ks    Kings
Qh  Qc  Qd  Qs    Queens
Jh  Jc  Jd  Js    Jacks
10h … 2h          Number cards (any suit)
Jkr  RJkr  BJkr   Jokers
R  B                Color only
```

Tarot

```
M0 – M21            Major Arcana (M0 =
The Fool, M21 = The World)
M0r                 Reversed Major Arcana

ACu  7Wa  PgSw  KnPe  QCu  KWa   Minor
Arcana
7War
Reversed Minor Arcana

Suits: Wa (Wands)  Cu (Cups)  Sw (Swords)
Pe (Pentacles)
Ranks: A  2–10  Pg  Kn  Q  K
```

In a Log

Log line	Meaning
`tbl: draw=Qs`	Single draw, no interpretation needed
`tbl: draw=Qs -> Dark omen`	Single draw with outcome
`tbl: draw=M16r -> Everything breaks`	Tarot, reversed, with outcome
`tbl: draw=M12 // The Hanged Man`	Draw with the card's name as a description
`tbl: Past=5Sw, Present=KWa`	Spread on a single line
`d: draw=M17 -> Yes`	A card answering a yes/no question: a verdict

FAQ

Q: Why does the card use `=` rather than `->` — isn't the card itself the outcome?
A: The card drawn is the raw result of the mechanic, just as `9` is the raw result of `2d6+2`. What the card *means* in context — the interpreted state — is the outcome, and that goes in `->`. `tbl: draw=Qs -> Dark omen` mirrors `tbl: Loot d100=42 -> A broken sword` exactly.

Q: What about card games that use multiple decks, or partial decks?
A: Give each deck its own `[Deck:]` tag, with a count of the cards left and an `out:` list of the cards out of play. See *Deck State and Hands*.

Q: My system uses pip value (Ace = 1, King = 13) rather than card identity. Should I write the card or the number?
A: Write the card: `d: draw=Ah -> 1`. The card identity is the raw result; the pip value is the interpreted outcome. Both are preserved.

Q: How do I note a hand of cards (drawn but not played)?
A: As a `hand:` category on the character: `[PC:Kael|hand:Ah, Kd, 7c, Qs, 3h]`. Remove a card with `hand:-Ah` when it is played. See *Deck State and Hands*.

Q: Tarot decks vary — some have different names or art. Does `M12` always mean The Hanged Man?
A: This spec follows the Rider-Waite-Smith numbering, which is the most common standard. If your deck diverges (e.g. Thoth swaps Strength and Justice), note it once in your session header: `[Deck: Thoth — Strength=M11, Justice=M8]`.

Q: Can I use `?` with a card draw instead of `tbl:` or `d:`?
A: Use `?` for the question, then `tbl:` or `d:` for the draw that answers it. They are separate events — the question is asked, then the card is drawn as the mechanical resolution.

```
? What does fate hold for this meeting?
tbl: draw=M10 // Wheel of Fortune ->
Chance rules all
=> Anything could happen. I prepare for
nothing and everything.
```

Q: What about digital tools that render suit symbols (♥ ♦ ♣ ♠)?
A: The letter abbreviations (`h d c s`) are the canonical form for logs. Tools that render logs may substitute suit symbols for display, but the stored notation should use letters to stay plain-text safe.

Credits & License

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This add-on extends Lonelog by Roberto Bisceglie.

Version History:

- v1.1.0: Added deck state (`[Deck:]` with `×N` and `out:`) and hands (`hand:` category); card identities always follow `=`; the oracle example no longer claims to be Ironsworn's. Aligned with Lonelog v1.7: draws that give content use `tbl:`, draws that give a verdict use `d:`. Explanations moved out of code blocks.
- v1.0.0: Initial release

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