

which in turn dictates how far the arrow shall fly; in the *Odyssey*, the hapless suitors vainly try to string the king's great bow, demonstrating that none can match Odysseus in strength. The bow, the archer, and the string all share this tensile strength, which physicists contrast with compressive or shear strength.

The character for my last name. Notice the bow-shaped radical on the left.

Tensile strength depends not on hardness or toughness, but elasticity. (My own last name, *zhang* 張, derives from this property in archery: to stretch or expand under pressure.)

What about non-physical forms of strength? Human character has an analogue for tensile strength, and that is the quality of resilience. Our wounded warrior in the 9 of Wands has seen many battles in his time. His strength is defined by his experience: he knows what to anticipate as well as how to adapt. He conveys an air of readiness—even defensiveness—as if he knows that hostilities might break out at any moment. In fact, the wands behind him form, Waite says, a "palisade"—a structure meant to protect one's forces from attack. Crowley, in his own 9 of Wands text, linked the resilience of this card to its astrological decan ruler, the Moon. The Moon waxes and wanes on a regular cycle; thus, Crowley observed, "change is stability." Because changefulness is essential to the 9 of Wands, I've always felt the wariness depicted in this card is only one side of the coin—something terrible might happen, but equally, something wonderful might. The well-prepared mind greets both as an adventure! for this is Jupiter-ruled Sagittarius.

ONE BRAVE THING

Several years ago, this idea came to me out of nowhere (8 of Wands-fashion!) and changed my life. If I'd articulated it as a statement, which I didn't at the time, it would have sounded something like this: *Each day, I can expect myself to do One Brave Thing.*

The One Brave Thing has become my constant companion over the years. It's OK if it doesn't happen, and I can do more if I want, but the idea is that it's reasonable, once a day, to ask myself to do one thing that I feel nervous or uncomfortable about. And then I can feel good about it afterward. The One Brave Thing can be anything that's not life-threatening or hurtful. On various occasions my One Brave Thing has been:

- Disassembling and cleaning the bathroom drain with the help of a YouTube video.
- Asking for a raise.