

# The H. P. Lovecraft Tarot

This interesting tarot deck was originally published in 1997 in a limited run and sold out fairly quickly, making it one of the most sought-after tarot decks on the market. This is one of the rare cases where you will actually hear these words: "Due to popular demand." This deck is the second printing from 2000, it is a blue deck, the 1st printing was red. Collectors take note!

Each card in the deck is done in a dark, blue (1st printing) then red (2nd printing).

Monochromatic decks appeal to me very much!

The image is centered in the card and on the average has a lot of good detail which is easy enough to see. The border is also in the dark blue colour, but there is not enough contrast in this printing to clearly make out the text on the borders. You can see that it is there though, but you have to hold the cards fairly close to the light and angle them around a bit until you have made out each word. In the top center of the border is an eye. Pentacles are on the sides and the title at the bottom; the four corners have the suit icon itself on each card. Fortunately the little booklet has a legend in the back which shows the suit icons more clearly.

In this deck, the figures of the Major Arcana are taken from various works of Lovecraft himself. The booklet that comes with this deck stresses that the Major Arcana cards have more power and influence over a reading than the Minor Arcana. Additionally, it is to be noted that their order is vastly untraditional. Essentially what has happened is that the numerical sequence of traditional tarot decks does not apply to the characters used in the deck. Fortunately the booklet does give an indication of what traditional card each character covers, since you can't tell by the order. I have listed their titles, numbers and the corresponding Major Arcana card below.

- O. Nodens (The Sun)
- I. Cthulhu (The Emperor)
- II. Nyarlathotep (The Magician)
- III. Shub-Niggurath (The Empress)
- IV. Yog-Sothoth (The High Priestess)
- V. Deep One (The Hanged Man)
- VI. Great Race of Yith (Temperance)
- VII. Hastur (The Hermit)
- VIII. Ithaqua (The Hierophant)
- IX. Shoggoth (The Lovers)
- X. Cthulhu Awakens (The Last Judgment)
- XI. Yig, The Serpent God (Justice)
- XII. Old One (The Tower)
- XIII. Hounds of Tindalos (Strength)
- XIV. Spawn of Cthulhu (The World)
- XV. Byakhee (The Star)
- XVI. Azathoth (The Fool)
- XVII. Ghoul (Death)

XVIII. Tsathoggua (The Devil)

XIX. Night-Gaunt (The Moon)

XX. Mi-Go (The Chariot)

XXI. Servitors of the Outer Gods (The Wheel of Fortune)

The Minor Arcana more closely resemble a traditional tarot deck, in that there are four suits, each one with the usual number of cards. In this deck the suits are Artifacts (Wands), Tomes (Swords), Sites (Pentacles), and Man (Cups). There are no court cards in this deck, however. Suit icons which are used for each suit do not necessarily match up to those on a traditional deck. For example, the symbol for the suit of Artifacts, which corresponds to the traditional Wands, is a Pentacle, ironically. Within each suit, the cards are numbered from 1 through 14. Roman numerals are used on these cards as well.

The cards themselves are larger than standard sized, approximately the size of the large Crowley deck, and is printed on a nice quality cardstock. They do have a feeling of having been almost hand cut, since when you jog the cards together the edges never come completely smooth. The corners are cut into a rounded shape. This deck shuffles fairly stiffly at first but it gets better with handling. The back design features a portrait of Lovecraft himself. The little white booklet which comes with this deck is very good. It does not give a lot of information but what is there is excellent. The booklet stresses that there is no one set meaning for each card; therefore who can say what is right or wrong. The reader is expected to use their intuition and feelings about each card. I think if you are familiar with the works of Lovecraft this will be a much easier task. However, many of the images gave me a feeling of what the card was about.

I would recommend this deck heartily for anyone who is interested in collecting in general. Those collectors who are also interested in the works of H. P. Lovecraft will find it appeals on more than one level. For this reason, it may appeal to Lovecraft fans who normally don't get into tarot. It definitely has more than one niche audience. Readers who enjoy working with dark decks (you know who you are!) will actually find this deck is workable, and not just an art deck. It is somewhat macabre but not intimidatingly so.

Look below for the cards!

































