

INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS THIS?

The **TAROT OF SERVANTS** is a supplement for **BLUEBEARD'S BRIDE**, a tabletop roleplaying game of supernatural horror set in a familiar fairy tale. The game is a little different than the story, in that a group of players explore Bluebeard's home together as the newest Bride and create their own version of the dark tale.

In the original tale, a young woman is married to an older man with the namesake beard, despite rumors of previous wives with unknown fates, and whisked off to his secluded home. Bluebeard then leaves on business, and the new bride is left to explore the house—except for one forbidden room. This room grabs her imagination, and the bride's curiosity festers within her until she finally succumbs and opens that door, sealing her fate.

During the game, the players spend their time in the rooms of Bluebeard's house. They learn about themselves, and about Bluebeard's former wives, and about the many terrible things that can be hidden behind a door with a lock. That last room, however, is where the game ends, and their story is concluded.

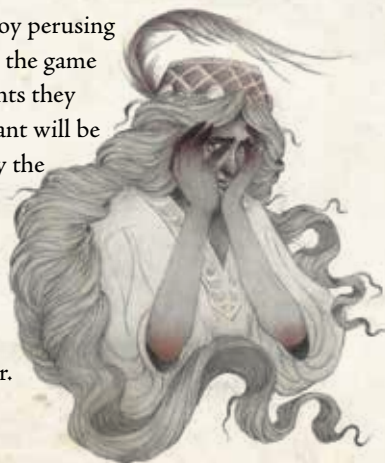
How Do I Use THIS DECK?

If you are running **BLUEBEARD'S BRIDE**, you will create servants for your players to encounter while they explore the rooms of Bluebeard's home. You can base aspects of the house's inhabitants on information the players gave you at character creation, the keys they describe, or you can generate servants by using this deck. You will need the **BLUEBEARD'S BRIDE** core rulebook to play the game.

The **TAROT OF SERVANTS** is a play aid to help the Groundskeeper—the person running the game for the players—generate servants on the fly. All it takes is a quick reading of a few cards, and the Groundskeeper will be ready to introduce another face from Bluebeard's mansion, tailored to the house's dark secrets. It can also be used as a traditional tarot deck with a few modifications.

This book contains the information you need to create a servant, plus a section on how to do a reading with the **TAROT OF SERVANTS**. We've included examples for you to use as a base for your custom servants.

Players and others may enjoy perusing the book for a hint of what the game is like, or to see what servants they could have met. Every servant will be different each time you play the game, and do not assume you know if someone is a servant or a horror—for there is a thin line between the two, and that line may change during an encounter.





CHAPTER 1

TAROT
READING

THE CARDS

Coins, cups, swords, and wands. Maids, Valets, Housekeepers, and Butlers.

The **TAROT OF SERVANTS** is not your usual tarot deck. The imagery contained within is based on not just the Bluebeard fairy tale, but is steeped in the blood, pain, and violence that mark some lives. The artist and authors drew upon some of the darkest recesses of their imagination for inspiration, and so, we urge you to take care when using this deck for readings. It would be most useful for readings that explore the sinister side of femininity, fairytale like cycles in your own life, and exposing your own biases. Take care, then, and don't say you weren't warned.

Tarot decks aren't just used for readings, however. You might select a card each morning to meditate on its meaning, or pin it to a inspiration board in hopes that some of the imagery influences your life. Do not choose cards from this deck lightly. Every bit of light shown in the images casts a shadow as well. When we open ourselves in hope, sometimes what answers is not what we expect. Know your own desires, and prepare yourself for what they reveal about your true nature.



THE DECK

Although this deck contains all the cards you may be familiar with if you have used a Rider Waite or related deck, it has several additional cards from the Thoth tradition. This is not a judgement upon any tradition, but is intended to make the deck useful to a wide range of practioners. You may want to consult your favorite Tarot book for tips on interpreting the cards when doing a reading.

In order to use this as a regular deck in the Rider Waite tradition, first remove the following cards: Lust, Fortune, Art, The Aeon, The Universe, and The Root of Power. The deck is now ready for your use, although the court cards have been renamed to: maids, valets, housekeepers, and butlers.

In order to use this as a regular deck in the Thoth Tarot tradition, first remove the following cards: Strength, Wheel of Fortune, Temperance, Judgement, and the World. You will need to substitute Justice for Adjustment, as well as match the slight difference in some card names, such as Magician = Magus, Maid = Princess, and so forth.

COLOR

Since the Tarot of Servants adheres to a limited palette primarily composed of blue, gold, black, and red, practitioners using the cards for a reading may choose to ignore color symbolism in their readings entirely, or use these colors to tint their interpretations.

SYMBOLS

While some of the traditional symbolism of tarot has been retained, each card also contains details concocted by the artist and authors. Practitioners may find the inclusion of objects such as skeleton keys, stained glass, eyes, moths, meat, loss of gravity, paintings, etc, fire their imagination and lead their intuition to a fuller reading.

A SIMPLE READING

Although this short text can not hope to cover the multitude of practices, opinions, research, and feelings people have on the subject of tarot readings, it would be remiss to not include a sample for the inquisitive newcomer. We'll be using the Rider Waite variant and a four card spread.

The querent is a 24 year old cis woman, who is looking for guidance on how to get her husband to trust her more. She feels that he's become withdrawn and is relying on others for the support that should come from her. She doesn't think she's done anything wrong, and is curious what the cards have to say.

For this reading, the Queen of Wands is set aside for the querent, or person being read. The reader has her shuffle the Tarot of Servants, then draws four cards, placed in a vertical line with the first card at the top, and so on.

The Cards

- » The Hermit
- » Four of Coins
- » Three of Coins (Reversed)
- » Justice

In this simple spread, the third card signifies the heart, or love. The other three cards will expand on its significance and provide detail, but it is to the third card that the Reader looks for an answer, first concentrating on the overall meaning of the cards, then studying them to see how they apply to the querent's inquiry.

Their Meaning

Reversed, the Three of Coins symbolizes laziness, weakness, work going badly, or things worsening at a slow, steady rate.

The Hermit points to prudence, treason, corruption, learning, danger, and truth. The Four of Coins speaks of selfishness, dependence on material comforts, closing oneself off from the external world, and the imposition of structure. Justice represents rightness, equity, expert, wisdom, pompous, and hidden knowledge.

It is significant that the two drawn Minor Arcana are both Coin cards. This suite incorporates: authority, discipline, freedom, greed, loneliness, protection, power, and vengeance. The emphasis of gold seen in the coins, flame, and woman's yellow hair and thread point to both mental force as well as material wealth.



The Reading

The cards confirm our querent's fears - her husband is closing himself off from her, and their relationship is deteriorating bit by bit. From the placement of the Hermit, it appears that seeking the reason behind this withdrawal may lead to learning the truth, but could also lead to danger - whether to their relationship, or to the woman herself, is unclear, and restraint should be exercised in exploring the husband's reasons for his emotional distance. The Four of Coins in the second position tells us that clearer communication is needed, but without structure or an appeal to the husband's physical comfort, any discussion may be doomed to failure. The position of Justice at the end suggests that the woman may be able to resolve her concerns if she listens to her own intuition and focuses on clear action.

The Three of Coins suggests that change of some sort is inevitable, although the Four of Coins tilts it slightly towards the positive. The emphasis on material possessions and worldly matters suggests the woman may want to evaluate any recent financial decisions for their influence on her husband's mood. The appearance of the two lone older women (Hermit, Justice) against the two pairs of young lovers suggests that a mature consideration may lead to ending the relationship, or at least that a crossroads may be reached.

The woman took the reading well, and left with much to consider before deciding how to approach the rather thorny issue of her husband.



