

GUIDE TO THE TAROKKA: A DIVINATION TAROT DECK FOR GAMEPLAY AND ILLUMINATION

*Learn the wisdom of the cards... Listen to the voices
of the spirits.*

Introduction: *This is an alternative system to the Tarokka cards for use in D&D campaigns and divination, and supplement to the existing Tarokka materials from WotC. Its main purpose is to provide a guide to reading Tarokka cards in a regular D&D game as if they were Tarot cards. Although the Tarokka deck was originally developed for Curse of Strahd, they can be used in any D&D campaign to tell the characters' fortunes or provide them with insight to deeper truths.*

by ELLIS LIGHT

Sources Used: *Learning the Tarot* by Joan Bunning



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THE TAROKKA DECK

Originally used in the *Curse of Strahd* campaign setting, the Tarokka deck is a prophecy card deck that can be used for divination and prediction in D&D games. Within the *Curse of Strahd* campaign, the Vistani seer Madam Eva is a Tarokka expert. Many characters' first encounter with the Tarokka deck will be in Eva's caravan. You might choose to add Tarokka readings elsewhere in your *Strahd* campaign, or use the Tarokka deck in other D&D settings.

The Tarokka deck comprises two tiers of importance. The High Deck is made up of 14 cards that represent archetypes and correspond, in this guide, to various cards within the classic Tarot Major Arcana: the Fool, the Devil, the Moon, the High Priestess, and so on. These cards are considered more universal, stable, and iconic than the others in the deck. They are given extra weight in a reading.

The Common Deck is made up of 4 suits, each with 10 cards. In this guide, the Common Deck suits each correspond with a classic Tarot suit: Stars with Wands, Coins with Pentacles, Glyphs with Cups, and Swords with Swords. While the High Deck expresses universal themes and weighty archetypes, the Common Deck represents circumstances, conflicts, activities, and emotions that characters may encounter in their adventures. The meanings of these cards are more mutable and up for interpretation.

In building this guide, I consulted my own experience with divination readings as well as Joan Bunning's excellent book on the subject, *Learning the Tarot: A Tarot Book for Beginners*. This is not meant to replace but to supplement the Tarokka material already included in the *Curse of Strahd* campaign book and elsewhere from Wizards of the Coast. Enjoy!

USING THIS GUIDE

This is an introduction to the Tarokka cards for use in D&D campaigns and divination. Its main purpose is to provide a guide to reading Tarokka cards in a regular D&D game as if they were Tarot cards.

Each card can function as a harbinger, a warning, a motivator, a wake-up call, a reminder of values, or even a call to action. They can foreshadow events that are yet to come, remark on past events, or give the characters advice or insight.

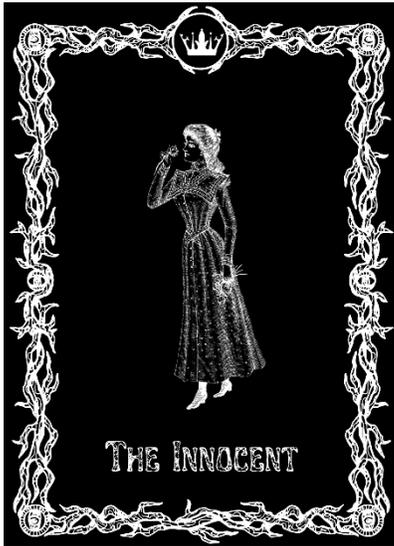
A huge part of any reading is intuition, storytelling, and observation. Look closely at the Tarokka card you draw, and pay attention to its mood, details, and visual rhetoric. What kind of story does the illustration on the card tell? How does it relate to the character's personality, alignment, values, or situation? Does it remind you of an event that is yet to befall the character, or an NPC they know or are yet to meet? Use your imagination in observing the card's details and don't be afraid to make intuitive leaps.

Each of these cards, when drawn, could refer to the **subject** of the reading (e.g., the PC whose fortune is being told), OR to **another** figure or person who is influencing the situation somehow (an NPC or perhaps another PC in the game). For example, if a character draws the 6 of Coins (The Beggar), they themselves could be experiencing (or will soon experience) a period of hardship, material loss, illness, or rejection from society. Or maybe they need to reconsider their relationship to the poor, sick, or disenfranchised. Maybe they've been too greedy and need to think about those less fortunate. Or maybe they know someone (or are about to meet someone) who is experiencing hardship, and this card might refer to that character instead. Ask your players to reflect on what each individual card might mean for their character.

I have given each card in the High Deck a parallel in the Tarot Major Arcana, and each suit has its parallel suit in the Minor Arcana. These parallels aren't perfect, but if you are interested in drawing further connections you can look up the Major Arcana card or Minor Arcana suit to further imagine possibilities for your Tarokka readings.

There are 4 card configurations provided in the Appendix. You can use these configurations to predict the future, obtain information about the present, divine possibilities, and gain insight into evolving situations.

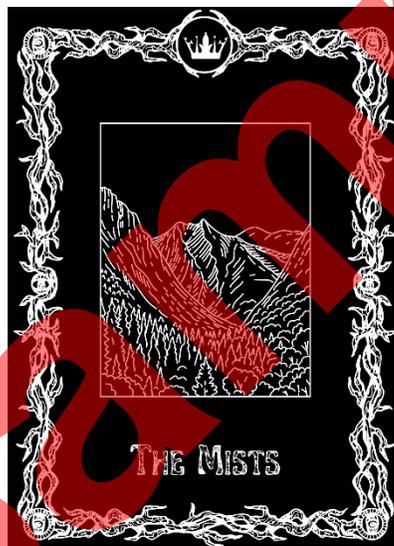
THE HIGH DECK



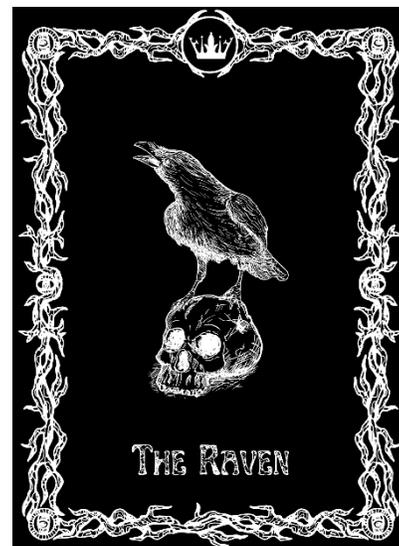
1. The Innocent. Beginnings, kindness, being the victim, inexperience, needing guidance, foolishness, beauty, youth, not having all the facts, having faith, being blind to the truth, being unaware or foolhardy. *Tarot Parallel:* The Fool.



3. The Marionette. Madness, bondage, materialism, control (or lack of it), addiction, lack of emotion, something inhuman, loss of power, external or hidden source of power, unknown agents. *Tarot Parallel:* The Devil.



2. The Mists. Transition, being lost, exploration, the unknown, fear, imagination, bewilderment, wandering, wilderness, illusion, uncertain future, lack of confidence, lack of direction. *Tarot Parallel:* The Moon.



4. The Raven. Introspection, searching, guidance, solitude, cleverness, watchfulness, call to attention, playfulness, wisdom, a wise person, a guide, a lone ally. *Tarot Parallel:* The Hermit.