

Eldritch Tarot



You had heard that a deck was here, a hundred miles from the nearest town, and nearly a mile up a sheer cliff. You all but fell to your death more times than your bleeding hands and frayed rope can testify to. But you now stand before the deck and the reader of the cards, a gnarled, pale creature, its neck twisted so far that you can only see the back of its bald, veined head. It talks between rasping breaths, trying to gulp air through its coiled throat. It says something about death and misfortune, but you wave the warnings away and ask for five cards. A quivering, clawed hand holds the deck out to you; you try not to think about how the creature's head became torqued the way it is. You draw five cards, each placed face down on the stone between you and the reader. He turns the first card over, and you gasp as it reveals

Throughout the known world there are a handful of Eldritch Tarot decks. Each of these decks has nearly limitless power, potential, and possibilities, causing the fortunes and deaths of kings and commoners throughout the ages. No one knows where these decks originated from, but they tend to find their way into the hands of gypsies, the rare spell caster, or unusual creatures in out-of-the-way haunts. But most of the owners come to realize that the cards are more a curse than a blessing, thus a deck may change hands often.

The card reader may ask any price for a reading; king's have, according to legends, offered entire kingdoms for a reading, while often the reader will allow anyone fool or brave enough a free reading. Regardless, the reader is, fortunately, usually immune to the cards dealt to the drawer, so the gypsy will not be the foe or the friend the cards often designate.

The drawer may take as many as five cards in a reading, face down, turning them over one at a time, being affected by only one at a time. If a card, say the Death card, affects the reader in ways which would obviously keep the reader from realistically turning the next, then the next card is not turned over. Also, card readings are given one at a time, allowing all of the cards to be possible for each reading. In other words, two people cannot draw from the same deck at the same time. As a rule, when a card alters a person's form or skills, the effects are nearly instantaneous, meaning that the person who is given, say, an inspiration point, must decide where that inspiration point will be allocated and immediately roll verses her skill to see if it improves, instead of waiting until the end of the adventure.

Many of the cards are vague enough to allow the GM to interpret them as she sees fit, letting their interpretations further the adventure in ways advantageous to the flow of the campaign. Also, since no two people are alike, the cards themselves may be twisted in meaning a little even when the meaning seems very straightforward. Interpret the cards as they will best work in the story. And to keep the characters from abusing the cards, think of creative ways to keep them from simply having a dozen readings a day. Perhaps the reader will demand 10,000 bronze for the second reading, whereas the first was only ten. Perhaps a reading can only be performed once per year, or even per lifetime, per person. Chances are, the drawer will draw cards that hinder as much as help, warning her away from indiscriminately and endlessly picking card after card.

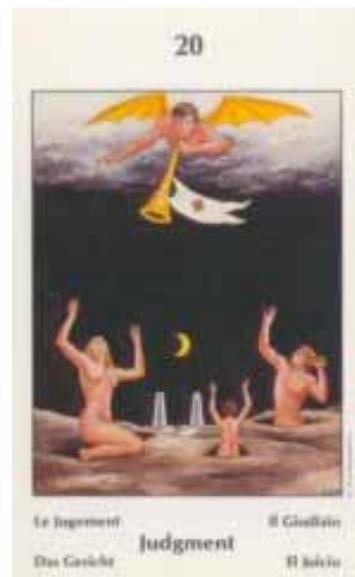
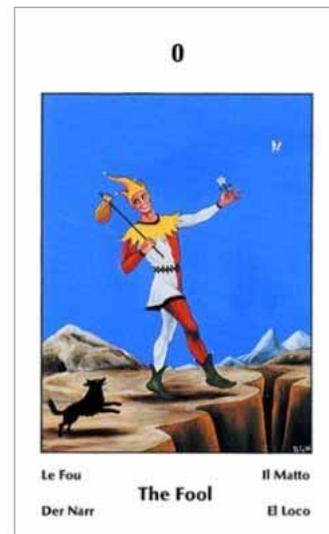
Regardless, the Eldritch Tarot should be an instrument to frighten and excite your players, daring them to temp fate. So here are the cards, and all you need is a deck of tarot cards. These readings are generally based on Barbara Walker's tarot cards, a symbolically-charged deck, often offensive, but always enticing.

The following interpretations are based on Barbara Walker's amazing Tarot deck. Each card is infused with detailed symbolism. Other decks can be used, and if the images on the cards don't agree with the interpretation listed below, then please feel free to change them.

Major Arcana

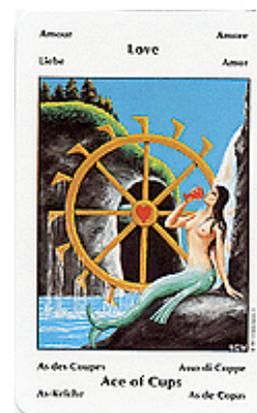
Major Arcana	
SUN	Gain four inspiration points, 100 bronze coins, and a minor magic item appropriate to the drawer's profession.
MOON	Two limited wishes (Any Spell cast at skill 20 with permanent effects) but they must be used within the day.
STAR	The drawer regains all lost magic skill points, is healed of all wounds, and regains the lost skill points lost from a single critical wound (if any have been suffered).
LOVERS	Either charm or entertain is increased by one point, and any person the drawer asks to marry within one week of drawing the card will consent to marriage.
WORLD	Gain access to a genuine treasure map, a skill 10 Earth magic scroll, and 1000 bronze to help you on your way.
STRENGTH	Drawer's Strength and Will gain +1 each, but Bully and Interrogate both decrease by -2.
DEATH	The drawer's soul is captured by the card, and the card instantly teleports to the most dangerous monster's lair or NPC's home within 1000 miles. A wish will recover the card, while anything less will only give the card's location. The drawer will be released by the burning of the card at midnight by any magical flame.
DEVIL	The drawer is cursed with a form of lycanthropy--a supernatural goat-beast (a powerful creature with ram horns, canine teeth, and almost club-like hands). The character will change to her lycanthropic form every full moon, uncontrollable and insatiable in all manner of appetites, her Will skill reduced to one quarter normal. Harmed only by magic or silver while in this form and possessed of unnatural strength and power, she will wreck havoc on everything nearby, especially loved ones. The GM should figure the drawer's characteristics while in this form.
POPE	If the card holder has any negative personality traits, he is attacked by three rogue zombies. If anyone attempts to help the drawer, another rogue zombie will appear to fight that person. If the character has no negative personality traits, he perceives the divine presence and receives +1 Devotion.
TOWER	Lose half of all real wealth immediately (only monies, weapons, and land).
EMPRESS	-2 columns vs. petrification for five years, but the drawer gains +1 Artistry.
HERMIT	A random henchman or hireling will turn against the drawer. But if the drawer does not have a follower of some sort, she gains +1 sanity.
HANGED MAN	Gain one inspiration point or two additional draws.
CHARIOT	The holder of the card is attacked by the taloned hand of a killer frog for Good damage. If anyone attacks the arm, then the rest of the frog comes through, otherwise it disappears back into the deck after one turn. The Frog: Good magic resistance; Good, Great, Great, Superior, Awesome, Awesome Defense; Two claws for Good damage. Great Strength, Great Agility, Great Run, Awesome Hostility.
WHEEL OF FORTUNE	Holder receives 10d10 gems of 1d10 carats apiece; each carat is worth 2d10 bronze . . . or the character may draw two more cards, and the drawer can keep only one card of his choice.
TEMPERANCE	The character gains either a new spell skill at half his base attribute, if a spell caster, or 1d6 scrolls written in the drawer's native language.

JUDGEMENT	The drawer is instantly teleported to an ancient keep in the WindWild Desert where she will be imprisoned eternally unless rescued. However, the drawer gains one inspiration point to apply to Will and one to Stamina, if she attempts an escape.
EMPEROR	The drawer's Intelligence is instantly reduced to half of what it was. The drawer will not be capable of his type abilities if IQ is below required. Obviously, the character will act less intelligent, but her other skills under Intelligence will be unaffected.
JUSTICE	The character gains an appropriate suit of magical armor and a magical weapon of the GM's choosing, but so does another being of opposite personality (GM should design a Foe for the drawer). Both beings will attack each other on sight.
FOOL	Lose two skill points from any one skill and draw two more cards.
PAPESS	The drawer gains two inspiration points automatically after conquering the next feat of skill (fighting, escaping a trap, saving a life, etc.) If the drawer fails, he cannot increase any of his skill until he spends seven inspiration points to remove the affects of the card.
MAGICIAN	Allows the drawer to add one inspiration point to each of three skills of his/her choice.



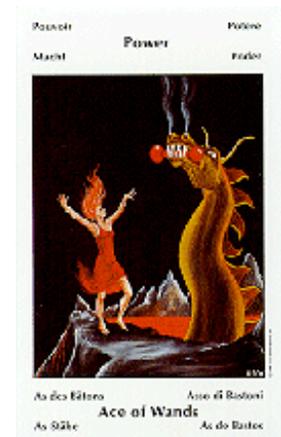
Cups

ACE CUPS	The drawer can cast a permanent love charm on one person of the character's choice within the next three days.
TWO CUPS	The character's loved ones cannot be charmed or be otherwise forced to hurt or betray the drawer.
THREE CUPS	The drawer gains +1 column shift vs. all Bewitch spells and insanities. The character becomes unusually joyful.
FOUR CUPS	The drawer automatically takes on the personality trait of selfish and must act accordingly. If the character is already selfish, then she gains an insanity.
FIVE CUPS	The drawer will regret the next instance he does anything wrong to a person of the opposite sex. He will lose one point from all skills and will not be able to sleep (-1 column shift on all rolls for each week after his first night with the curse) until he corrects himself.
SIX CUPS	Drawer becomes three-quarters her present age and gains one Intelligence point.
SEVEN CUPS	Drawer gains one point to one entertainment skill of choice, but loses one from one useful skill (GM's choice).
EIGHT CUPS	Drawer's most precious item or person will disappear and no longer be his. I.e. a lover will forget who the drawer is; a magic sword would disappear and change hands.
NINE CUPS	The drawer takes on the Personality Traits Helpful and Generous, and she loses one insanity.
TEN CUPS	The drawer is given a quest that is worthy of the character, and she is given a map of the location if possible. If the character succeeds, she gains an additional three inspiration points. The character feels compelled to fulfill the quest and will lose one point from a random skill for each day she does not work towards this goal.
PRINCESS OF CUPS	Drawer receives one inspiration point on divination or commune and/or gains a skill level 15 commune scroll.
PRINCE OF CUPS	Will follow code of chivalry to the letter (personality traits: Brave and Trustworthy) and gains +1 Charm.
QUEEN OF CUPS	Drawer receives +3 Defense vs. cold.
KING OF CUPS	Drawer's healing doubles while within 1/2 mile from sea.



Wands

ACE WANDS	Will be cursed with glowing eyes, causing others to fear her, decreasing Charm by two, but the character's Bully increases by two.
TWO WANDS	Drawer may choose any individual with whom he will develop a report with. The character will always be able to locate the person, and any skills used to mislead the other will be halved, while Empathy will be doubled, but if the other person dies, so does the drawer, though both gain +1 defense, being stronger for the union.
THREE WANDS	The character gains the ability to foretell the future as a gypsy.
FOUR WANDS	Drawer gains 100 bronze per month for ten years which magically appears at midnight every full moon.
FIVE WANDS	During one encounter of GM's choice, the character will suffer -2 columns on all rolls, but if the drawer survives, he receives three inspiration points.
SIX WANDS	Drawer will suddenly become famous. He will be considered at least twice as gifted/ powerful than he is and will be challenged, adored, mobbed, etc., but gains +1 Lie.
SEVEN WANDS	Drawer gains +1 to one skill that is dangerous and requires balance and equilibrium, but if any roll fails, it fails very miserably, dropping two column shifts toward Catastrophic, usually resulting in some disaster.
EIGHT WANDS	Drawer gains +2 to run but when running must make a Dodge roll to avoid falling for Feeble damage.
NINE WANDS	Drawer becomes compelled to trust no one with his belongings and wealth. Picks up Personality Traits of Miserly and Distrustful.
TEN WANDS	If drawer is killed unjustly, he will return as an undead to get revenge.
PRINCESS OF WANDS	The character will be compelled to let a spider inject venom into himself when next seen, suffering -2 column shifts on defense for that attack. If the character survives, he will gain +1 Agility and +2 Climb.
PRINCE OF WANDS	The drawer gains nightvision, and he now can see into the plane of Ghilra at all times. But he must make a Pathetic Sanity roll whenever he casts a spell or to avoid acting after an opponent because of these startling visions. The drawer is also given +2 columns vs. possession.
QUEEN OF WANDS	An exotic dancer (Superior Entertain) appears and serves the drawer. She is very beautiful and will serve faithfully unless she is treated poorly or without respect. She is also a skilled assassin and will not hesitate to use her skills on a cruel master.
KING OF WANDS	If a male draws the card, a crow will appear to deliver a 10,000 bronze piece necklace. If a female draws the card, a handsome male will appear of the same age as the drawer. He is an experienced thief and will constantly place everyone around him at risk, but he genuinely protects the drawer from harm even before his own life. He will remain until ordered to leave three times. Each time, he will try to charm the drawer into changing her mind (Will vs. Good).



Pentagrams

ACE PENT	Drawer is given a large, perfectly cut diamond of 2d10+20 carats. And all money on the character will miraculously double.
TWO PENT	The character/player has one minute to trade his lowest attribute with his highest, or his/her sex changes to the opposite.
THREE PENT	The next time the drawer uses teamwork with another person she will be awarded with +1 Sincerity.
FOUR PENT	The character will become obsessed with obtaining a particular object that she has either seen or heard about. Most of her time will be spent on acquiring this object, which, once gotten, she will hide where it will never be found by another.
FIVE PENT	No priest or shaman or druid or anyone with a Devotion higher than thirteen will help the drawer no matter how dire the situation until the drawer gives all of his money (at least 1000 bronze) to an established church.
SIX PENT	Charity given to the truly needy and deserving will grace the character with a magic talisman and a ivory ring worth 15 bronze which keeps only the drawer warm when he is without shelter.
SEVEN PENT	The drawer loses any inspiration points he has not "cashed" in and is depressed for 1d6 days there after: -1 column on all skills during this time.
EIGHT PENT	The character gains either one inspiration point or gains an automatic +1 to one spell of the character's choice if she already knows a spell.
NINE PENT	The drawer gains +1 Charm and becomes extremely fertile
TEN PENT	It becomes very difficult for property to be stolen from the drawer. All attempts at picking pockets, picking locks of the drawer's home, etc. are at -2 columns or +2 columns for the character to detect the theft.
PRINCESS OF PENTAGRAMS	The drawer gains either +1 to Medical, Languages, Legends, or Arcane Lore; but she loses -1 from Dexterity.
PRINCE OF PENTAGRAMS	Drawer falls asleep for 1d4 days; when he awakes, he will be granted a wish (essentially a 24 spell of his choice), which must be used within twelve hours of awakening.
QUEEN OF PENTAGRAMS	Drawer is granted a remove curse to be used within one week. It will remove any one curse on the character or another single person.
KING OF PENTAGRAMS	Drawer is -1 column vs. petrification, but when petrified into stone, she will still be animate for 6d10 turns before wearing off. During this time, the character gains +2 to Strength and weapon skills and +4 on defense.



Swords

ACE SWORD	The drawer will return as a ghost after death and will not be able to rest until a quest is completed. You may want to review the <i>Lost Souls</i> game for designing ghostly powers for the spectral character.
TWO SWORD	The drawer becomes obsessed with destroying witches, being compelled to attack them (save Passable vs. Will to avoid attacking). The drawer gains +2 to Protection if she already knows the spell, and she receives +1 column shift vs. magic cast by a witch. If a witch draws this card, he is given six inspiration points to distribute among his spell skills as he sees fit, rolling immediately to see if the skills improve.
THREE SWORD	The drawer is teleported to a small, uncharted island. He will have some food and water, but no one else is on the island, and it will not be visited for at least one year by other intelligent races unless someone specifically comes searching for him.
FOUR SWORD	The drawer disappears for ten minutes and, when he returns, all hit points are regained, missing limbs repaired, etc. and the drawer possesses a Heal scroll (11).
FIVE SWORD	The drawer is given a duplicate of the card, while the original returns to the deck. At any one time the drawer admits defeat in battle and gives the winner the card, his life is spared; and he will be teleported to the place he drew the card.
SIX SWORD	The drawer is teleported to a derelict ghost ship piloted by a crew of 25 skeletons. They will follow the drawer's orders . . . except to return home before the appointed time. They will sail the drawer to an unexplored place. They will then sail the drawer back to where he drew the card. This could take months.
SEVEN SWORD	The character is given a random curse that can most likely only be lifted by the person who cast it. Anyone else who tries to remove the curse must make an Awesome roll vs. an appropriate spell (GM's call), and a failed roll means the "savior" is transformed into a duck or goose until either the curse is removed or until the some condition of the curse is met. The GM should set some clues about who the person casting the curse might be (most likely a witch or find something in the player's history).
EIGHT SWORD	One of the character's beliefs becomes apparent to him that it is false. Such as religion, chivalry, magic, stealing from others, etc. He will change his beliefs even as far as changing alignment and/or occupation.
NINE SWORD	Three priests of opposite alignment and/or religion will endlessly pursue the drawer until the card drawer is either converted or dead. They will be within twenty miles of the character at the time he drew the card.
TEN SWORD	The drawer has one body part amputated that is of importance to him, i.e. a hand if an archer, a tongue if a wizard or minstrel, essentially suffering a critical wound in that she will have to roll on the critical wound chart, losing one point from a skill as well.
PRINCESS OF SWORDS	The drawer's Will increases by one and she receives an additional +1 column shift vs. mind-altering spells, drugs, etc.
PRINCE OF SWORDS	If the drawer is essentially good, she takes Good damage. If essentially evil, she becomes mindlessly aggressive, attacking all of those around her for d10 turns, then permanently suffers from Hysteria.
QUEEN OF SWORDS	The drawer is -1 column vs. fear for three years. But gains +1 Quickness for those three years.
KING OF SWORDS	The drawer becomes slightly animal-like or becomes an animal if already part animal. The animal will be one that best represents the drawer. Skill bonuses and possible attribute adjustments are made by the GM. If the drawer becomes completely animal, he still posses all mental attributes but is otherwise an animal. He can still talk.

Skuld



Princesse des Epées Princesa di Spade
Princess of Swords
Prinzessin der Schwerter Princesa de Espadas