

The Tarot

Your Guide to Tarot Mastery

The Rider-Waite Tarot is the deck that I choose to use in my readings. It's so full of obvious symbolism that the meanings can become clear with only a little practice.

The designs on each card have influenced so many of the Tarot packs produced after its release in 1910, that the Rider-Waite deck is now regarded as the 'standard' of modern Tarot cards.

But even within the genre of Rider-Waite decks, the colour and style can differ greatly. If you do a computer search for The Original Rider-Waite Tarot, and compare the images to the 'Radiant' deck, or the 'Universal Waite', you'll find that the line drawings are virtually indistinguishable from each other, but the colours in the newer versions are much more subdued.

The image shown on the right of this column is from the Universal Waite Tarot. I've been using this deck for many years because I like its subtle style—it looks as though it's been drawn with coloured pencils. The outlines are based on the original drawings by Pamela Colman Smith, and the colouring is by Mary Hanson-Roberts, a well known designer and illustrator of comic books and Tarot decks.

The muted effects of this pencil art is particularly appropriate for the image of The High Priestess with her soft, feminine nature, but it can also produce dramatic results when required, as in the card called The Devil.

On page two of this newsletter, I've written some more about the 'original' Rider-Waite deck, and I've explained how this deck has changed over the years. Grab your Tarot deck and we'll have a look at an example of the similarities and differences.

Tarot blessings,

Don McLeod



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THE ORIGINAL RIDER WAITE TAROT

As mentioned in the last newsletter, while on my recent overseas trip, I spent a bit of time doing more research on the history of Tarot.

At the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, I had access to a 1916 version of the Rider-Waite cards. The colouring is quite different to the standard ones being printed today. For example, in the original card of the Seven of Pentacles (shown on the right) all the leaves on the plant are a vibrant green and both of the man's boots are tan in colour. However, in my modern pack (lower right) half of the leaves are green and the rest are a dull olive colour. Also, one of his boots is brown, and the other is almost orange.

As a result of these varying colours, diverse interpretations can develop. In my book *Real Tarot*, I mentioned that the man in this card wore boots of different colours. In my interpretation I suggested that this variation symbolised that he was in two states of mind about his crop.

That representation was based upon the image in a modern Rider-Waite deck, and someone who looked at the image in a Radiant, Universal, or an original deck could be forgiven for wondering what I was talking about!

This is just one example of how significant changes have accidentally crept into the designs of the cards over the last century. When reading about a card's interpretation, it is easy to be confused if the description doesn't match the style of Tarot cards that you are using.

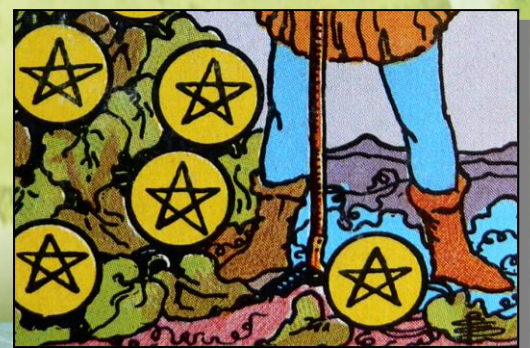
In the next newsletter I'll include some more information about the varying designs that are found within 'standard' sets of Tarot cards.



At the Victoria and Albert Museum



1916 version



Modern version

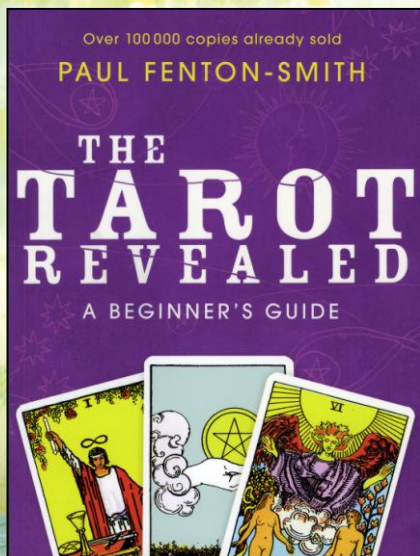
Insights from Tarot Gurus

The High Priestess "...is a positive card for psychic and spiritual development. In everyday terms, it suggests a time to reflect upon plans while waiting for seeds to germinate."

*- from "Tarot Masterclass"
by Paul Fenton-Smith*

"Look carefully at Smith's picture. You can see what lies behind the veil by looking between the veil and the pillars. And what lies behind is water. No great temple or complex symbols, simply a pool of water, a line of hills, and the sky. The pool signifies the unconscious and the truth hidden there. The water is motionless, the secrets in its darkest depths, hidden under a smooth surface. For most of us, at most times, the turbulent unconscious remains hidden under a placid layer of consciousness."

*- from "Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom"
by Rachel Pollack*



Book Review

The Tarot Revealed - a beginner's guide

The Tarot Revealed, by Paul Fenton-Smith was first published in 1995.

There are not many Tarot books around that have sold over 100,000 copies. Most beginner's guides to Tarot fall by the wayside because they are too simplistic, or too full of mystical jargon, or too advanced for those who have just picked up a deck of cards. Paul's book *The Tarot Revealed* goes beyond the basics, but has manageable chunks of information that are easily digested.

The Tarot Revealed has just been revised and re-released. It's now through a new publisher and it has a new look that marries it to Paul's recent book, *Tarot Masterclass*. It has the same stylish layout and design as *Masterclass*, and it includes similar, handy reference charts. Colour images of the whole deck are shown in this section.

Spreads for different situations and specific needs are offered of course. And for those of you who look to Tarot for a deeper understanding of your true selves, the *Spiritual Direction Layout* offers awareness regarding your spiritual options.

This is a well-crafted book that helps you to understand Tarot cards in a way that leads you to greater awareness of your inner nature.

Title: The Tarot Revealed

Published by Allen and Unwin

ISBN: 978-1-74175-259-5

About the Author: Paul Fenton-Smith lived in Adelaide, South Australia, until the early 1980's, then he moved to Sydney and founded the **Academy of Psychic Sciences**. Since then he has studied and practiced in Europe and the USA. Paul also teaches palmistry and Tarot reading, and has a private practice as a clairvoyant and counsellor. Paul is a best-selling author of eight books on Palmistry, Tarot and Astrology.

Symbols of The High Priestess

I've been reading Tarot Cards for over 25 years. You'd think that by now I would have noticed every symbol on every card, but no...I'm still being surprised by subtle (but significant) imagery and symbolism that I'd previously missed.

The High Priestess is such a card. Just moments before typing these words I looked at the image to work out which symbols I'd like to discuss with you. The first things that I noticed were the letters **B** and **J** on the pillars. Then my eyes drifted to the solar cross on her chest. It was here that I found a missing piece of another puzzle set by the designer A. E. Waite, and his artist Pamela Colman Smith.

The letters **B** and **J** stand for the Hebrew words *Boaz* and *Jachin*, the two pillars at the front of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. These Hebrew words traditionally meant *in strength* and *he establishes*. In modern Tarot, *Boaz* and *Jachin* are not thought of in biblical terms—they represent extremes such as: severity and mercy, dark and light, night and day.

Waite calls the equal-armed cross on her robe a *solar cross*, even though a true solar cross usually has a circle around it. A solar cross represents the sun and the seasons of the year, and by having the crescent moon (at her feet) and a sun symbol (the solar cross) in the same image, this card reinforces the concept of duality, as seen in the two pillars.

But this solar cross is not a true solar cross—by leaving off the circle, it has also become a plus (+) sign. Therefore, the image shows **B + J**. The High Priestess does not sit **between** justice and mercy, she is justice **and** mercy—she is darkness **and** light!

Her crown indicates this too. She wears the crown of Isis, which is normally shown as a sun disk between two cow horns, but Waite's symbol looks like a full moon between a waxing moon and a waning moon. She is the light of the sun **and** the moon.

The High Priestess is therefore a combination of extreme qualities that results in a harmonious blend of spiritual perfection.

Symbols & the Subconscious Mind

Understanding symbols and reading Tarot cards go hand in hand. Regardless of whether you consciously hunt for symbols in the cards, or just get an intuitive flash of inspiration for a card's meaning, the process is the same: your mind notices a symbol on the card and gives your subconscious a poke in the right direction.

Symbols are the basis of Tarot, and in the book **Myth, Religion and Mother Right**, the author **J.J. Bachofen** describes the power of symbolism in the following way...

Human language is too feeble to convey all the thoughts aroused by the alternation of life and death and the sublime hopes of the initiate. Only the symbol awakens intimations; speech can only explain.

The symbol plucks all the strings of the human spirit at once; speech is compelled to take up a single thought at a time. The symbol strikes its roots in the most secret depths of the soul; language skims over the surface of the understanding like a soft breeze.

The symbol aims inward; language outward. Only the symbol can combine the most disparate elements into a unitary impression. Language deals in successive particulars; it expresses bit by bit what must be brought home to the soul at a single glance if it is to affect us profoundly. Words make the infinite finite, symbols carry the spirit beyond the finite world of becoming into the realm of infinite being.

Isn't that a beautiful and eloquent description of how the mind makes use of symbols!

Future Events

San Antonio Tarot Conference

20 to 23rd April 2011

This gathering has a focus on scholarly research for academic participants.

Subjects include Tarot and Art History, Tarot and Literature, and Tarot Artists.

For more info, see: <http://ccwe.wordpress.com>



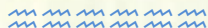
The Readers Studio

Hundreds of tarot readers, teachers, authors and artists will gather for three extraordinary days of Tarot study and play at The Readers Studio on...

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see: <http://www.tarotschool.com/RS11/index.html>



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The Tarot Guild of Australia Inc. has established a code of ethics for Tarot practitioners, and provides a forum for professional development. For a state-by-state listing of monthly Tarot gatherings around Australia, see their website: www.tarotguild.org.au



Your Newsletter: So far in these newsletters, I've been writing about topics that interest me...Tarot history, symbolism, interpretations of the cards, relevant quotes, etc., but I am interested in hearing what you would like to see in these pages. If you have a request for specific Tarot information, please contact me by email: MisterTarot@yahoo.com.au

My Website: When I've met some of you at public talks, I've had some lovely feedback about *Real Tarot* and *The Workbook*. If you have found the books useful, I'd really appreciate it if you could write a comment or testimonial on the Guest Book at my website. Hopefully your comments will inspire others to take the Tarot journey too. You can leave your message on my blog: www.MisterTarot.com





Difficult Cards

In the card called Six of Swords we see a man, a woman, and a child in a boat. Is it a family going on a riverside picnic? Is it a married woman escaping with her lover and their illegitimate child? Or has the lady paid a ferryman to take her and the child across the river to a new life?

The way that you see this image is going to help you to determine your interpretation. The traditional meanings for this card relate to a journey by water, or making your way from a difficult set of circumstances towards a calmer situation. Obviously this meaning will vary depending on the question asked by the person you are doing the reading for, but in general it may help to know that the designer of this card (A. E. Waite) simply intended to show a ferryman taking a woman and her child across a river.

Interpretations for The High Priestess

The young High Priestess represents the subconscious. She helps you to strengthen your intuition. Mysticism, New Age studies, the greater mysteries, and psychic powers are her realms.

The High Priestess holds the inner knowledge of your purpose in life. She honours and reveres inner truth. She brings reflection, perception and insight. The most spiritual aspects of femininity radiate from her.

In our modern world, The High Priestess is the individual who seeks knowledge; the one who delves into the esoteric arts for a greater sense of purpose and destiny in this world. She is the dreamer, the idealistic person amongst your cynical friends. Perhaps she is you!

*Nothing is learned
except through joy.*

Ioanna Salazar

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