



THE PICTORIAL KEY

to the

TAROT

with 78 plates in four colors

by Arthur Edward Waite

and

THE AUTHENTIC

TAROT CARDS

in four colors

Created by Pamela Colman Smith
and Arthur Edward Waite

THE PICTORIAL KEY TO THE

Being Fragments of a
Secret Tradition under
the Veil of Divination

by Arthur Edward Waite

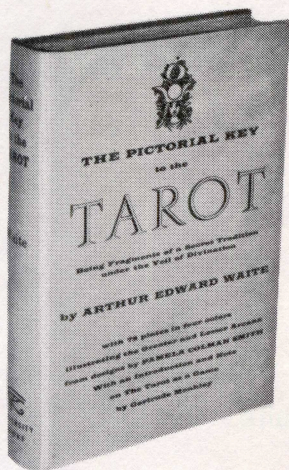
With 78 plates in full color
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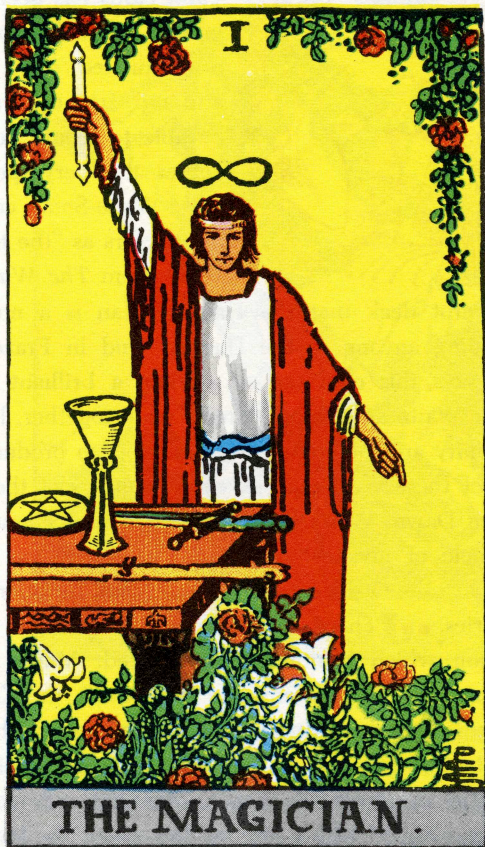


THE BOOK

If you have never seen them before, Tarot cards must seem at first very strange. Yet you will notice that fifty-six of the cards, the four suits of swords, cups, wands, and coins or pentacles, are not so very unlike the four suits of ordinary playing cards. The unnumbered card called the Fool is apparently a cousin of the joker in an ordinary deck. It is the remaining twenty-one cards, the trumps, which give the Tarot its mysterious fascination. ■■■ The set of mystical Tarot cards, which Arthur Edward Waite and Pamela Colman Smith developed, has become the most authoritative pack in existence. Most people who have seen Tarot cards recently have seen these—unfortunately, however, not in their original beauty, but in a plagiarized and debased form, without the graciousness and colors of the original. Those who have seen the debased cards appreciate all the more the treasures that are in store for them

TAROT

THE CARDS



THE MAGICIAN

in THE PICTORIAL KEY TO THE TAROT and the accompanying deck of 78 cards. ■■■ The Tarot cards now offered to us are beautiful, exact replicas, in four sumptuous colors, of the original Waite-Smith cards.

MORE 

Even more remarkable, we now have for the first time what even Waite was unable to provide for us in his own lifetime: an edition of THE PICTORIAL KEY TO THE TAROT in which all 78 cards are reproduced in four colors! To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time



in modern times that a complete deck of Tarot cards has been reproduced in a book in full color. The publishers may well be congratulated on a notable achievement, and our friends are fortunate indeed to be able to secure both book and cards together at a very special price. ■■■ It is to these Waite-Smith cards that the poet T. S. Eliot refers as "the traditional Tarot" in his great poem *The Waste Land*. It is only in

this Tarot deck that the Hanged Man is a noble figure, capable of reminding anyone of the Hanged God in Frazer's *Golden Bough*, as Eliot says this card did. ■■■ When a brilliant man and woman like Arthur Waite and Pamela Smith work together, his masculinity and her femininity are sometimes flint and steel to produce new brilliance. ■■■ Both of these vivid persons were members of the magical Order of the Golden Dawn. Waite had transformed the ceremonial of the Order into a vehicle of mystical truth and his Tarot was intended primarily to convey to the Order's members the secret tradition taught by the ancient mysteries. ■■■ There was hardly any subject related to this secret tradition which Waite left unexplored. Magic, theosophy, occultism, alchemy, the Rosicrucians, the Holy Grail, the Kabbalah, freemasonry—he studied them all deeply and lovingly but with a skeptical eye quick to detect inconsistencies and exaggerated claims. He found in all of them the same central theme: Man has suffered a great loss and his heart is plagued with a longing to recover the lost treasure. Somewhere, deeply buried, this treasure still exists. The problem is to find the way to it. ■■■ We all know theoretically what it was he found: that there is really no separation between man and the rest of the universe. It is one thing to know this theoretically, and another to realize it. ■■■ This sense



THE FOOL

of union, Waite says, deepens eventually into the sense of unity. He himself attained this final liberation which enables one to take a child-like, ecstatic delight in the simplest experiences of life. ■■■ Like all genuine mystics, he left an impression of grace and charm with his acquaintances. To witness his working of a Masonic rite is said to have been an unforgettable experience for his brother Masons. His leonine head, lively dark eyes and majestic bearing did full justice to any ceremony, and he could recite the words as one who had full knowledge

MORE





THE HIGH PRIESTESS

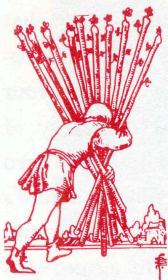
of the truths which they expressed. ■■■ Pamela Colman Smith believed in fairies. She had actually seen them. She loved the Order of the Golden Dawn because it took such things seriously and because of its pageantry and ceremonial. The one thing she lacked was an interest in the meaning of it. With visionaries this is often so. They see gods and fairies so vividly that they are completely absorbed in the beauty of the bright forms they see. It never occurs to them to ask, "What does this mean?" ■■■ Waite saw that Pamela, with her clairvoyance,

her imagination, and her artistic competence, was just the right person to produce, under his guidance, a Tarot which would be at once a work of art and a gateway to truth. Waite provided the meaning. ■■■ It pays to read everything Waite has said about the Hanged Man in several different places in this book, and to remember that it is just when he seems most matter-of-fact that he is pointing to a hidden mystery. Another clue: show the Hanged Man card to some friend who has never seen the Tarot before, and let him take the card into his own hand. Notice what he does with it. This must be done with the card itself, not with the book open at the reproduction of it; and it is best to



give no sign that you want to know what will happen. Another way is to give your friend the whole deck to look through, and again notice what happens when he comes to the Hanged Man. ■■■ Waite's *THE PICTORIAL KEY TO THE TAROT* is full of occasions in which he attracts your attention only indirectly to certain symbols. The gradual discovery of these is one of the delights of owning the book. ■■■ There are two more things you need to know in order to get the best out of Waite's book and the Waite-Smith cards. First, don't be misled by his quite arbitrary opposing of "occult" to "mystical." Most of us will agree with Waite in rejecting his predecessors' silly interpretation of the Tarot cards; but it is quite arbitrary of Waite to call these errors "occult" and to call the true interpretation "mystical." There is no real warrant for opposing these words to each other. ■■■ Second, and more important, one must know how to read with understanding Waite's apparent claim that Tarot cards have no history prior to the fourteenth century. If you read carefully enough Waite's own words, it becomes clear that his main purpose in dealing with the history of Tarot is to put an end, once and for all, to the myth that it is of Egyptian origin. This also served him to belittle the use of the Tarot for fortune-telling and divination. But as a repository of Secret Doctrine, and this is what he believed to be the deeper mean-

ing of the Tarot, Waite himself actually believed that the Tarot goes back at least as far as the Kabbalah – and that, of course, brings us deep into Hebrew antiquities. Note, for example, what Waite says of a number of Trumps Major: the High Priestess’ “truest and highest name is Shekinah,” and note that this Priestess bears in her lap the Torah (only the last letter is not showing). This, too, is why Major Trump – Wheel of Fortune – bears Hebrew letters. And that Major Trump XVII – The Star – is “in reality the Great Mother in the Kabbalistic Sephira Binah . . .” ■■■ In a word, Waite’s Tarot belongs to Kabbalah. No doubt, Waite’s vows to the Golden Dawn prevented him from saying it as plainly as we do, but more important, he has given us in his book a completely Kabbalistic interpretation of the Tarot. Perhaps even more to the point, it is this Kabbalistic interpretation which you will see pictured in the Waite-Smith Tarot cards, and which you can now have for your own in the original full colors.



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