



The Tarot: History, Symbolism, and Divination

By Robert Place

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The Tarot is one of the few books that cuts through conventional misperceptions to explore the Tarot deck as it really developed in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Europe—not, as some would suggest, in the far reaches of Egyptian antiquity. Mining the Hermetic, alchemical, and Neoplatonic influences behind the evolution of the deck, author Robert M. Place provides a historically grounded and compelling portrait of the Tarot's true origins, without overlooking the deck's mystical dimensions.

Indeed, Place uncommonly weds reliable historiography with a practical understanding of the intuitive help and divinatory guidance that the cards can bring. He presents techniques that offer new and valuable ways to read and interpret the cards. Based on a simple three-card spread, Place's approach can be used by either the seasoned practitioner or the new inquirer.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review This may be the best book ever written on that deck of cards decorated with mysterious images called the tarot. Dozens of books provide sketchy information on the cards' history and evolution before turning more discursive on how to interpret them. Place inverts that formula. Well-researched, entertainingly written chapters begin the book with information on where the tarot comes from and how it gained so much prominence as a tool for divination. Far from developing from deeply magical sources, as many have claimed, the tarot was originally just a deck of cards used for playing games. Even at the start, however, those games included some fortune-telling. Over the course of centuries, the cards' lore was enriched by thoughtful practitioners who added cards, elaborated their meanings, and connected their imagery to mythology and dreams. At the beginning of the twentieth century, an inspired young artist, Pamela Smith, drew upon her occult training and her own visions to create the now classic Rider-Waite deck. In a comprehensively researched and passionately argued chapter, Place restores Smith to her rightful position as the genius behind the deck. That Place also offers excellent guidance to actually reading the cards makes the book that much more appealing, as a how-to as well as a why-bother. *Patricia Monaghan*
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About the Author

Robert M. Place, an internationally recognized artist, illustrator, and teacher, has designed and codesigned some of the most acclaimed Tarot decks of our time, including The Alchemical Tarot and Tarot of the Saints.

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