

Castle
Falkenstein

THE TAROT VARIATION

AN ALTERNATIVE SORCERY DECK FOR
CASTLE FALKENSTEIN



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With hundreds of support books, visual aids, campaign settings, and quality stock art, Fat Goblin Games continues to provide exciting content and fantastic worlds in which gamers can immerse themselves.

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ADDING A TOUCH OF MAGIC TO THE SORCERY DECK

In *Castle Falkenstein*, Sorcerers must harvest ambient Magickal energy from the ether around them by drawing cards from the Sorcery Deck. As the rules are written, the Sorcery Deck is intended to be an ordinary deck of cards, joker included, with each of the four suits intended to represent a different type of Magick, also known as a Harmonic.

In the *Tarot Variation*, the ordinary deck of playing cards used for the Sorcery Deck is replaced with a Tarot Deck. Over the centuries the Tarot Deck has been used both for playing games and for divination and, because of this, these colorful cards, rich with imagery and symbolism, can perfectly represent a more robust and fascinating Magick. With a Tarot Deck, Magic in *Castle Falkenstein* becomes more than just a form of energy divided into four types but a living, breathing thing with whims and purposes of Its own.

The *Tarot Variation* assumes the Tarot Deck being used utilizes the arrangement of cards as presented in the Rider-Waite-Smith deck (also known as the Rider-Waite deck). The system might need to be adapted when used with other variations of the Tarot.

For Hosts who keep track of such things, the *Tarot Variation* changes the amount of Thaumaturgic Energy available in a region from 143 TE to 158 TE, with the amount of clean power now becoming equal to 119 TE.

THE MINOR ARCANA

The Minor Arcana portion of a Tarot Deck corresponds to a regular deck of playing cards. It has four suits, numbered cards, and face cards, though there is one extra member, the Page, in each court. Just as in a normal Sorcery Deck, in the *Tarot Variation*, each suit represents a specific Magick Harmonic and the face cards have a numerical value.

MINOR ARCANA HARMONICS

Tarot Suit	Playing Card Suit	Harmonic
Cups	Hearts	Emotional Magicks
Pentacles	Diamonds	Material Magicks
Swords	Spades	Spiritual Magicks
Wands	Clubs	Elemental Magicks

MINOR ARCANA VALUES

Card	Value
Ace	15
2 thru 10	2 thru 10
Page	11
Knight	12
Queen	13
King	14

MAJOR ARкана EFFECTS

Card Number	Card Name	Effect
0	The Fool	The spell goes wild, as if a Joker were drawn in an ordinary Sorcery Deck.
1	The Magician	The Sorcerer gains control over the Harmonics of one specific knot of energy. She can convert the suit of one card in her hand to the suit of the spell.
2	The High Priestess	Spiritual Magicks are strong in this area. Convert the suit of one card, chosen at random from the Sorcerer's hand, to Swords.
3	The Empress	The Sorcerer tugs as she gathers and is rewarded with a rush of extra energy. Treat the next card drawn as if it were the next card higher in the suit (i.e. 6 becomes 7). If the card's suit does not match the Harmonic of the spell, consider it to be worth two points instead of one.
4	The Emperor	A nearby Sorcerer pulls at the energy as well. One card is chosen at random from the Player's hand and discarded. Devious Hosts might instead insist on a Sorcerous Duel over the energy.
5	The Hierophant	Material Magicks are strong in this area. Convert the suit of one card, chosen at random from the Sorcerer's hand, to Pentacles.
6	The Lovers	Emotional Magicks are strong in this area. Convert the suit of one card, chosen at random from the Sorcerer's hand, to Cups.
7	The Chariot	Just as the Sorcerer takes hold of the energy, a nearby spellcaster does as well, cleaving it in twain. Cut the numerical value of the next card in half (i.e. 6 becomes 3).
8	Strength	Wards become more powerful in this area. Double the duration and multiplier if a Ward is being cast, but not the cost.
9	The Hermit	As the Sorcerer gathers power, she is possessed by an insight into the nature of the Spell. Treat her Sorcery skill as if it were a Rank higher (i.e. Great instead of Good) and recalculate the cost of the Spell.
10	Wheel of Fortune	Harmonics enter the Spell, no matter what cards are played. Draw until you pull a Minor Arcana card from the deck. The Harmonic leaning of the Spell will be in the form and strength of the card drawn.
11	Justice	Magick seems to judge the purpose of the spell. If it is noble, then the Spell can be cast as normal. If it is selfish or cruel, the Spell will turn on the caster. Just what the definitions of noble and selfish are in this scenario are left up to the judgment of the Host.
12	The Hanged Man	The Spell warps and becomes a new Spell entirely. The Host decides what form the new Spell takes.
13	Death	The Sorcerer is locked into Gathering Power and must continue to collect Energy until the TER is met, but the spell will fizzle when the Casting is attempted.
14	Temperance	The duration of the Spell is cut in half, though the cost remains the same.
15	The Devil	The Sorcerer's Spell attracts the attention of a nearby Unseelie Faerie (or perhaps something even worse).
16	The Tower	The energy slices through the Sorcerer and causes her to unravel part of herself. She suffers damage equal to her Sorcery Rank and the energy is lost.
17	The Star	The intent of the Spell shines through the Harmonics. No matter what cards are played, the Spell is cast as if it has no Harmonic influences.
18	The Moon	The Sorcerer's spell attracts the attention of a nearby Seelie Faerie.
19	The Sun	Thaumaturgic Energy flows more easily than normal to the Sorcerer. For the rest of the Gathering period, she draws two cards every two minutes instead of one.
20	Judgement	The Energy gathered has been influenced by the Sorcerer's Order. If the spell is not directly in line with the goals of the Order as decided upon by the Host, it fails.
21	The World	Elemental Magicks are strong in this area. Convert the suit of one card, chosen at random from the Sorcerer's hand, to Wands.

THE MAJOR ARCANA

The Major Arcana portion of a Tarot Deck are twenty-two unique and named cards, each fully illustrated and rich with story and symbolism. In the *Tarot Variation* they represent the unpredictability and perhaps even the living will of Magick. Each card in the Major Arcana is assigned a unique trait and affects the casting of Magic in some specific way.

Hosts have two options when dealing with the Major Arcana as part of the Tarot Variation. First, they can treat the Major Arcana cards as full Sorcery Deck cards. Any Major Arcana card drawn counts as a full draw, albeit one which provides no actual Power Gathered. The Sorcerer cannot draw another card from the Deck for two minutes, as per normal. As an alternative, if a Sorcerer draws a Major Arcana card, she is allowed to draw another card immediately. If the next card drawn is also a Major Arcana card she draws again and continues to do so until she draws a Minor Arcana card, which she adds to her hand as Gathered

Power. Any Major Arcana cards drawn should also be added to Sorcerer's hand. The Host has the option of limiting the number of Major Arcana cards allowed to influence a single spell should she so choose. If such a limit is in place, any Major Arcana cards beyond the allowed amount are set to the side and shuffled back into the Sorcery Deck after the spell has been cast.

The cards of the Major Arcana, and the effect they have on a spell if drawn, are as follows.

A FINAL WORD

As with any rule in *Castle Falkenstein*, the purpose of the *Tarot Variation* is to make the game interesting, challenging, and entertaining. If these variant rules interfere with the enjoyment of playing an Adventure Entertainment, we encourage the Host to tailor them to suit the campaign or abandon them, either for a specific scenario or entirely, as need be.

