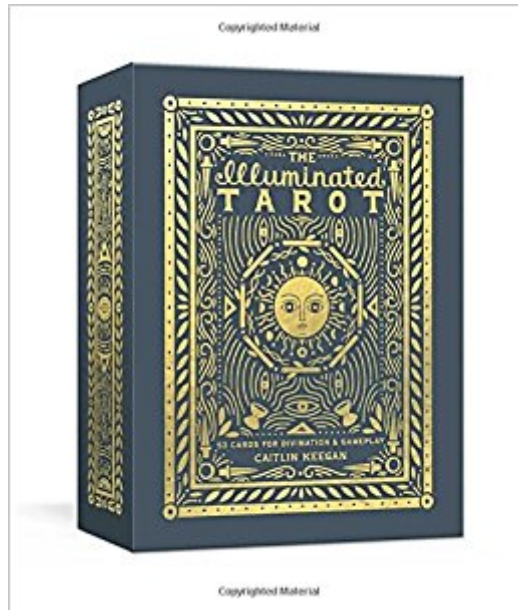




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# The Illuminated Tarot: 53 Cards For Divination & Gameplay



## Synopsis

This brilliantly colored tarot deck and guidebook will lead you to increased self-knowledge and enlightenment. The lavishly illustrated cards fold the Major and Minor Arcana of the tarot into a fifty-three card deck that can also be used for traditional card games.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Caitlin Keegan is an illustrator and pattern designer based in Brooklyn, New York. The Illuminated Tarot: 53 Cards for Divination and Gameplay is her first work as both author and illustrator.

You might wonder how a "real" Tarot deck could consist of just 53 cards. That's what I wondered too, until I got the deck and began using and studying it. The author "folded" the Majors and Minors together so that some cards do double-duty as either a Minor or Major or both, depending on how the reader wishes to interpret them or where the cards fall in a layout. In other words, you can give the Major/Minor cards as much weight in a reading as you like. But all the Minors (Clubs=Wands, Spades=Swords, Diamonds=Pentacles, Hearts=Cups) and all the 22 Majors are represented and accounted for (see the attached image), along with the very appropriate addition of a Joker card for the Fool. The Pages and Knights were blended into a single Jack, and this works quite nicely with combining the qualities of those two court cards into one. Each card has its suit symbol and either a number or court indication, but no words are used. The author based this Tarot on a traditional

52-card playing deck, and it could work for such purposes if you like. But it can also be used just as you would any other Tarot. It actually makes perfect sense that the author designed the deck this way, since one of the theories about the origins of contemporary Tarot is that it evolved from a standard deck of playing cards. So although this seems like a giant leap away from what many people have come to accept as the quintessential Tarot -- a deck of 78 cards, with 56 Minors (including four court cards and 22 Majors) -- this might be more of an "authentic" deck or perhaps a revisiting of Tarot's past. So don't let the uncommon construction of this deck put you off. It actually is a real Tarot -- just different from what you might expect. The cards themselves are phenomenally designed. The size (3.5 x 5 inches) is perfect, despite their larger-than-normal dimensions. Because there are fewer cards in the deck, the larger size of the cards is extremely easy to handle. I have very petite hands, but I can shuffle (riffle or under/over) with ease. The finish on the cards is magnificent. There's a heavy coating with a linen-like matte finish. This keeps the cards from showing fingerprints or dirt, making them easy to keep clean. The cards stick together a bit initially, perhaps because of the vertical "linen" lines in the finish. But the more you work with and shuffle them, the less this happens and the more they "soften" up and become "loose." This is my ideal size and finish for Tarot cards, so I couldn't be more pleased with them. The backs are gorgeous and reversible. The colors are cream, black, and white. There are no gilded edges with this deck, which I'm very happy about, since that tends to flake off and make a bit of a mess on hands and reading cloths. The edges do initially "shed" a bit from where they were cut at the print shop, but that diminishes with use. There are moderately wide borders on the cards, but some of the artwork intentionally bleeds into them, so I wouldn't suggest trimming the borders. They're perfect just as they are. The lavish illustrations are fresh, simple, and modern, but not precious or cloying, and the images have depth and inspire intuition. The colors are clear and distinct to each suit but create a well-coordinated family. Wands/Clubs: orange, green, and blue; Diamonds/Pentacles, soft yellow, burnt orange, violet/purple, green, and light brown; Hearts/Cups: red/pink, orange, brown, and green; Swords/Spades: blue, deep purple, violet, deep brown. As with any deck, there are some cards I'm greatly drawn to and others less so, but there aren't any that totally turn me off. The artwork incorporates a combination of animals, plants, symbols, and ethnically ambiguous humans. It can take a little time and study to understand why the author chose certain Minors to mesh with particular Majors, but her choices mainly follow and represent traditional Tarot concepts and make sense to me. In general, they're paired based on conventional meanings/interpretations, numerical value, or energy/suit. What's especially intriguing is that many of the cards, including the Jacks, are reversible (just like standard playing cards)! The

box is incredibly sturdy and beautiful, and it's even embossed! It has an inner "cupped" holder to keep the cards secure and a ribbon to help pull them out. If you like to store your cards in a box or bag when they aren't in use, you definitely won't have to purchase anything additional. The LWB is actually a small, full-color booklet with key words for each card and a few simple layouts. There's not a lot of explanation of much else, which some readers might consider a good thing. I'd like to know more about the author's reasoning behind certain Minor/Major matches and her use of color and symbols, but they are nevertheless clear and consistent among the suits. This is a very easy deck to use and learn, and it's one I'd recommend for both beginners and seasoned Tarotists. Although beginners might not get to know the customary numbers for the Majors by using this deck, it really may not matter, since all the Majors are represented here in a very unique and compelling way. A bonus of this Tarot deck is that it will teach you how to read a regular playing-card deck should you ever need or want to. It's tough to come up with original approaches to Tarot, and most contemporary decks either stick with the traditional 78 cards or even add a few extra ones. This is the first time I've come across a full deck that takes a more "condensed" approach, but I must say that I'm impressed.

This is an interesting combination of tradition and novelty. In the interest of full disclosure, let me start by saying that I have about 15 tarot/oracle/lenormand decks ranging from super intuitive/no written interpretations or meanings for the deck to the more traditional Rider-Waite-Smith deck with full on book to my oldest, dearest and most oft used (round) deck, Daughter of the Moon. Because the deck I am most acquainted with and resonate with most deeply is my non-traditional DOTM deck, I am finding this deck not as intuitive for me - BUT I am excited to become more familiar with it. This deck will take a little getting used to because the artist folded major and minor arcana in to 53 cards, jacks becoming a melding of Page and Knight cards. I'm definitely needing to refer to the enclosed booklet to learn which cards represent what (which do double duty, etc.) and while I like the idea of the simplicity of the booklet, I find myself wanting a lot more info from it and while I love the unadulterated card imagery, the descriptions are so simple they could almost be written right on each card, making interpretation easier for beginners (although this would definitely mar the beauty of them). So, I've found myself referring to my RWS book in conjunction with the enclosed booklet. I find this very helpful and realize that for those already highly familiar with the RW/S system, these cards will be far easier to interpret. The artwork is earthy, colorful, bold and really beautiful. I am biased against super light, flowery, saccharine or highly airbrushed looking art. While beautiful, it just isn't for me. These really resonate with me and are far less potentially confrontational and

unconventional imagery for people than my beloved BOTM deck. This is highly advantageous when reading for a variety of people (one reason I like having multiple decks; the person receiving the reading can choose the one they are most drawn to). The cards are sturdy and not overly glossy, so fingerprints don't show as much. Edges are still shedding a bit on my reading cloth, but I assume that will dissipate with use. They have a white, rounded edge border and some of the art overlaps it so I wouldn't suggest trimming them, but the border isn't overly visually offensive on these, so it's fine. Card size is larger than regular playing cards (even though these double as playing cards) and as I have small hands, they won't be very comfortable as playing cards, but they are a good size for readings. I tend to keep my cards out on a silk velvet cloth and just cover the whole array with a silk organza scarf, for super easy selection and use, however, if you like storing your cards in their packaging then these cards are perfect for you! The box they come in is sturdy, decorative and easy to use because they included a "lifting ribbon" for easy removal of the cards. The booklet fits neatly in the box, too. Overall, I really like these unusual cards. They are a nice addition to my collection and I am already enjoying using them more than some of the others I've had for years. They are worth the extra effort for me and providing great impetus to become more familiar with traditional tarot meanings (as I gravitate towards other systems). I am strongly considering getting another deck to give as a gift not only because of all the reasons I've listed but also because of their multiple use aspect, since my friend dabbles very lightly in tarot, the playing card aspect makes them more desirable.

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