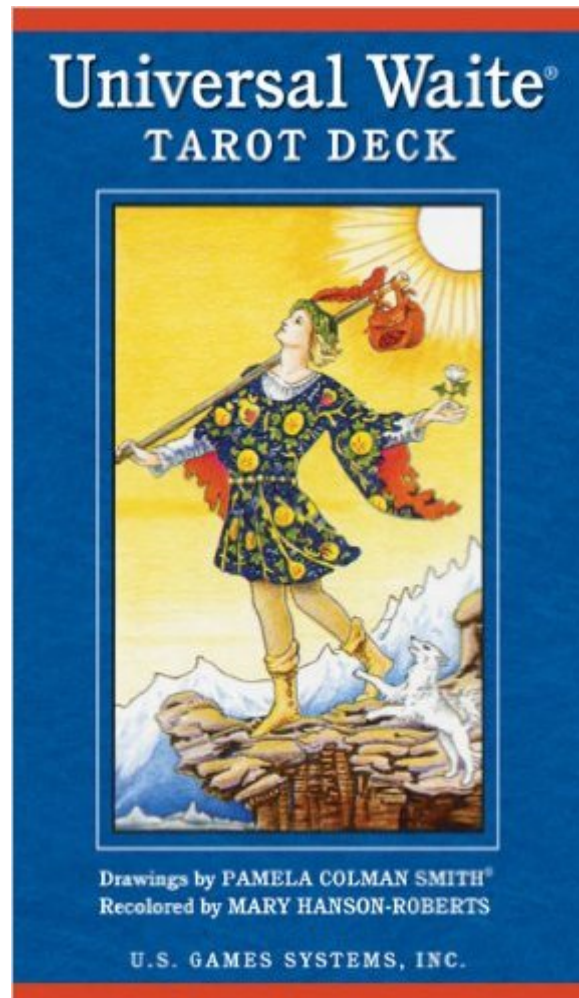


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# Universal Waite Tarot Deck



## Synopsis

The serene Universal Waite Tarot is perfect for meditation and readings. The deck is a soothing, eye-appealing complement to the traditional Rider-Waite deck. The drawings of Pamela Colman Smith have been beautifully recolored by Mary Hanson-Roberts.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (216 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I've read for nearly 30 years and I've never liked the original Rider Waite deck. To me reading them was like trying to absorb road directions from an incoherent person who was hitting you over the head with a board -- the information got lost in the unpleasantness of the experience. I did not like the way the figures were outlined in black, the colours looked too primary and unrealistic and I found the human figures devoid of personality. I find the Universal Waite deck truly beautiful. The colours are softer and more natural; the outlines are gone or considerably toned down, giving the deck a more human feel. The characters actually have expressions. For the first time I have been able to look at the cards to notice certain details, like the fact that the chained woman in The Devil has a bunch of grapes for a tail, or that the Magician is wearing a snake for a belt. Reading with this deck is a pleasure; the cards really let you in. I've heard a number of people complain that Hanson-Roberts changed details in the original deck and that that ruined it for them. I guess I see it more as, Hanson-Roberts' focus was different and it's a focus I prefer. I think she did a service to a deck that (in my experience) was becoming far less popular with new readers, due to the amazing number and variety of decks that are now available. If the original Rider Waite deck works for you,

you will probably have some difficulties with the Universal Waite. If it doesn't, but you would like to add a more traditional deck to your toolkit, the Universal Waite may be the deck you're looking for.

These cards are standard sized. They come in a simple cardboard box that has examples of the artwork on the front and back. Some people don't like that they are glossy. I love that about them. I like anything that feels as if I can clean it if I need to. They are sturdy and don't feel flimsy in my opinion as well. Shuffling them initially is a bit difficult as they are stiff. That's absolutely fine, I'd rather have stiff than something that feels like a paper towel. The artwork is bright and clear, much easier to read than other RWS decks I've seen. Overall, nothing special, just a good, reliable deck great for anyone from beginners to pros. On another note, I think needs to start looking at some more efficient packaging. Compared to the deck of cards, the shipping box was HUGE! Quit killing so many trees guys, use envelopes maybe?

As a tarot reader & instructor, I have used several decks, favoring the Rider-Waite deck for over 10 years. However, the more eye-pleasing coloring of the Universal Waite Tarot has brought out a lot of details that were much more difficult to see in the original deck. I use the deck now in my on-line and in-person tarot workshops and find that the improved clarity of the images translates into improved clarity of students' tarot readings. The rich symbolism of this deck makes it easy to interpret intuitively without prior study yet, still offers a wealth of deep, esoteric knowledge for advanced readers.

I like this deck's colours, which are generally more attractive than those of the regular Rider-Waite deck, but the changed details are too much for me. Examples -The sun card : the flag is shown as having one side orange as in the original deck and one side red as the book says the whole flag should be, the sun is missing a ray, and the sun's face are painted to look softer and feminine. The High Priestess : the garments are coloured differently (the inner white, the outer blue, and the head cover white), which is nice but the effect of the garments turning to water is lost. The Lovers card : the leafs on the tree behind the man are mostly yellow, and dont look much like flames like they should - it's an important connection between the Devil card and the Lovers card. And the list continues, e.g. it looks like the sun rises behind the emperor and the magician has a white halo. In my opinion, the details are very important and those changes modify the cards' meanings, and being used to the original details I feel uncomfortable using the deck. The colouring's advantage is to make the cards warmer and more attractive, which are pluses for new readers who are a bit afraid

of the original harsher colouring.

Mary Hanson-Robert's coloring of the famous Waite-Smith images provides a more soothing and eye-pleasing alternative to the often drab colors of the popular Rider-Waite version. Some may find these colors too soft, but I find this deck quite striking, and you don't have to give up the intuitive and easy to read images of the Waite-Smith system. Great for beginners -- skip the Rider-Waite and grab this deck when you want to learn Tarot.

The Rider-Waite was my first deck, and although I have many others, I still appreciate and use it. I was glad that a recoloration of the deck had been undertaken, and I really wanted to like it. I do, but with qualifications. First of all, my feeling is that Hanson-Roberts should have had as her motto "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Some of the original cards were just fine the way they were! The Hermit comes to mind; I found the flat, mysterious blue-gray background color of the original to be just perfect. The same is true of the original Aquarian-blue background of the Queen of Swords, and the striking yellow of The Magician. The Universal Waite versions of these cards have various shadings and nimbuses of light that diminish from the overall impact. I also find that the original Aces have more power and presence than the new versions. Perhaps the most disconcerting for me is the way that Mary Hanson-Roberts changed the details of the faces. Contrary to a previous reviewer, I think Pamela Coleman-Smith was a fine graphic artist and had the ability to communicate volumes with a simple penstroke. The new deck has hazy, washed out features (The High Priestess, in particular, reminds me of a girl I knew in high school who wore white lipstick) that seem to make the figures slightly disembodied, and not really firmly in the settings. The worst example of this is the Queen of Wands, who has quite an attractive visage in the Rider-Waite deck. This new version shows her homely and shell-shocked, with huge nostrils as the dominant feature of her face. I really do enjoy the new quality of the colors, but especially since Hanson-Roberts has her own published deck out, I wish she had contented herself with being more at the service of the original Coleman-Smith drawings, and not tinkered quite so much with them.

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