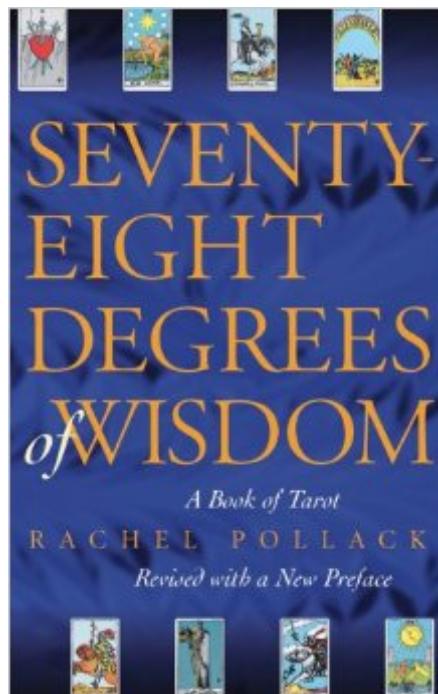


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Seventy-Eight Degrees Of Wisdom: A Book Of Tarot



Synopsis

A top tarotist's secrets to personal growth, one card at a time. The two volumes of *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom* have inspired a whole generation of tarot students. It has often been described by readers, booksellers, and teachers as the "Bible of tarot readers." It is also often cited as one of the landmark books in modern tarot, and it helped to launch the "Tarot Renaissance" of the 1980s. The two texts—one for The Major Arcana and one for The Minor Arcana—appear together in this volume, which is a reissue of the 1998 edition first published by Thorsons. *Seventy-Eight Degrees of Wisdom* draws on mythology and esoteric traditions and delves deeply into the symbolism and ideas of each card. It also gives the cards a modern psychological slant based on the pictures rather than a system of occult symbolism. This endlessly useful reference tool provides a concise history of tarot, introduces common spreads, and is a clear and readable book for both the beginning and advanced tarot student.

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Customer Reviews

This revised and slightly expanded version of two long sadly out-of-print books ("78 Degrees of Wisdom: Major Arcana" and "78 Degrees of Wisdom: Minor Arcana") is a welcome addition to any serious Tarot reader's library. Although I wouldn't normally recommend this book for the Tarot beginner, I'd recommend it highly to serious students of Tarot wanting to know more about the many different meanings of Tarot cards. Some beginners might find Pollack's usages of the definitions of cards to be more than the superficial ones. Going far beyond the "This one covers you" school,

Pollack gives many different ways to interpret the meanings of Tarot cards, both from a spiritual viewpoint ("What does this card mean to you?") and a metaphysical viewpoint ("What does this card mean to the person you're reading for?"). It also allows for meditation and self-study of Tarot cards. Although set up like a standard Tarot book, with chapters covering the Major Arcana, the Minor Arcana, and some readings, (including a sample reading or two) Pollack's definitions of the cards goes far beyond the ordinary superficial "Death means something in your life is going through a major change - you are about to stop one thing and start doing another." Each card has a picture - many from the Rider-Waite deck that most Tarot card readers start with, but some from other decks that you may not have seen. Each card has numerous definitions - and even some examples of what that card might mean when in certain placements in a Tarot card reading, both regular and reversed. I've no other books in my Tarot library that are more heavily thumbed than my old copies of the two "78 Degrees" books, and I was very glad that Pollack has found a publisher willing to not only reprint them, but allow her to revise them and include both books in one volume. Highly recommended for serious students of Tarot.

Rachel Pollack's **SEVENTY-EIGHT DEGREES OF WISDOM** is a key work described by many (including Joseph Campbell) as an important source for understanding the wisdom of the Tarot. The book appears to have been first published in the early eighties in two volumes, one dealing with the Major Arcana and the other with the minor Arcana. Since few authors examine the minor cards Pollack's book is a must for serious students. Pollack writes insightfully and intelligently, including longer passages for each of the cards of the Major Arcana. She includes reversed meanings and encourages shuffling the deck so as to ensure some cards fall upside down for a reading. She provides two examples for each card, one from A. E. Waite's deck illustrated by Pamela Coleman and the other from various other decks. Pollack notes that when she first wrote her book no one compared the different pictorial representations of various decks. She includes points of agreement and disagreement with interpretations from Waite's "The Pictorial Key to the Tarot", Aleister Crowley's "The Book of Thoth" and other works. Unlike many contemporary authors on Tarot, Pollack subscribes to the notion that one can use the Tarot not only for interpretation of current circumstances but for seeking advice. She describes how to cast the Celtic cross a descriptive tool which can be used to gain insight into a present situation. She also shares a layout she created that the reader can use to gain insight into possible courses of action regarding work situations. Of the many books I've read on Tarot so far this one is the best.

I bought this book along with others because of the great reviews I saw. However, most of the other books did not live up to the great reviews. With one exception. SEVENTY EIGHT DEGREES OF WISDOM. This book doesn't give you formulas to memorize and it moves away from tradition and dogma. Ms Pollack asks the reader to let the tarot speak it's own unique language to each individual reading, querent, student and situation. It gives the historical, mythological, spiritual, etc., meanings and attributions for each major card and also her personal insights and experience. She does the same for the minor cards, however, she doesn't go much into history and myth here but delves into her own experiences and interpretation. She also has GATE cards that allows the reader to get connected to particular cards that elucidate the intrinsic meanings of the suit. I'd love for her to do a book about meditations on the tarot. To the back of the book there is an exposition on doing divination with the cards and she gives examples of the two spreads she covers to explain them better. Her Work Cycle spread is one with promise although I was left wanting a little more. I can't seem to find a resource where one can learn more about this spread. There is one thing that I would ask every newbie to do when studying the cards. Get a resource that details occult symbols and colours. See how they fit into the particular cards and then you have a more detailed description of the cards. The meaning of some cards often don't appear in the artwork (figures etc) however the colours (red, orange, black etc) and the symbols (white rose, black staff, circle, etc) will clear up anything you have a question about. Also, see MK Greer's book: Tarot for youself and Rachael Pollack's new book: The Forest of Souls. Phoenix Sky

I own ten or more books on the Tarot and if I had purchased this one first, I would not have needed the others. This book has everything you need to know to study the Tarot for personal growth/enrichment or to teach yourself to read the cards. I disagree with the reviewer who said it was not for beginners. It is written concisely and clearly and was a huge help to me when I was a beginner. I own several of Ms. Pollack's books and she is by far one of my favorite authors on the Tarot.

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