

Castle
Falkenstein

THE SECOND TAROT VARIATION

AN ALTERNATIVE FORTUNE DECK FOR
CASTLE FALKENSTEIN



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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

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Grateful Appreciation is Given to the Allies of the Second Compact, who include Lady Roxanne Silver (Mistress of the Babbage Engine) and the Most Honorable Raquel Gutierrez (Marchioness of Santos)

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ABOUT FAT GOBLIN GAMES

Based in South Carolina, USA, Fat Goblin Games was founded in 2011 to create Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible products. With a focus on high quality production values and providing a creative environment for our writers, Fat Goblin Games has quickly become a recognized force in the world of third party publishers.

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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TWISTING THE FORTUNE DECK

In *Castle Falkenstein*, success or failure can all come down to a draw of the cards. Players begin each session by drawing a hand of four cards from a Fortune Deck. Over the course of the session they play their cards strategically to enhance Abilities in an attempt to accomplish heroic deeds.

In the *Second Tarot Variation*, the ordinary deck of playing cards used for the Fortune Deck is replaced with a Tarot Deck. Over the centuries the Tarot Deck has been used both for playing games and for divination and thus these colorful cards, which are rich with imagery and symbolism, can add a new twist to the Great Game. With a Tarot Deck performing Feats in *Castle Falkenstein* becomes more than just a calculation of numbers but a chance for surprises and storytelling.

The *Second 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.

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 Fortune Deck, in the *Second Tarot Variation* each suit represents a specific type of activity and the face cards have a numerical value.

MINOR ARCANA ACTIVITY TYPES

Tarot Suit	Playing Card Suit	Ability Type
Cups	Hearts	Emotional and Romantic activities
Pentacles	Diamonds	Mental and Intellectual activities
Swords	Spades	Social and Status-related activities
Wands	Clubs	Physical activities

MINOR ARCANA VALUES

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

Please note, because the Minor Arcana includes one more face card in each suit but no Jokers, when using the *Second Tarot Variation* the Fortune Deck includes four cards worth 15 points instead of just two.

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 *Second Tarot Variation* they represent unpredictability and can be used to twist a story in unusual ways or to represent the forces of luck, divine intervention, or perhaps karma. Each card in the Major Arcana is assigned a unique trait and affects the resolution of a Feat in some way.

Before play begins, Hosts intending to use the *Second Tarot Variation* must decide on three factors involved in how Players will hold and make use of Major Arcana cards. Hosts themselves will find Major Arcana cards of little use and should shuffle them back into the Fortune Deck when drawn.

First, the Host must decide if Major Arcana cards, when drawn, will be held in a Player's hand or apart from it. Keep in mind the *Second Tarot Variation* does not change the maximum number of cards a Player can possess at once. Thus, if Major Arcana cards are held in Players' hands this reduces the number of Minor Arcana cards which can also be held. This helps balance the unique and possibly game-altering qualities of the Major Arcana by reducing the number of Ability enhancing Minor Arcana cards available to play. Alternatively, the Host can rule Major Arcana cards drawn from the Fortune Deck are held in their own, unique hand. In this case, when Players draw a Major Arcana card it is set aside and another card is drawn from the Fortune Deck to help restore their hands to four cards. Using this method, Players have full access to both the plot twisting capabilities of the Major Arcana and the regular, Ability enhancing virtues of the Minor Arcana.

Next, a decision must be reached on how many Major Arcana cards can be held by each Player. If Major Arcana cards are being added to each Player's hand, it is recommended no more than one or two be allowed in a hand at a time. Any more than that could well make it impossible for a Dramatic Character to

actually accomplish a feat due a lack of playable Minor Arcana cards. On the other hand, if the Players are holding their Major Arcana cards in a separate hand, the Host may wish to allow a maximum of three or even four cards in order to give everyone the full benefit of a game where strategy and wild cards play important roles in equal measure. In either case, if a Player draws a Major Arcana card from the Fortune Deck but already possesses the maximum number allowed, the card should be shuffled back in and another drawn in its place.

Finally, the Host should come to a decision as to how many Major Arcana cards can be played during a single Feat. For most Hosts the limit will be one but some may wish to allow more than one Major Arcana card to play played on a single Feat during suitably dramatic moments.

The cards of the Major Arcana, and the effect they have on a Feat when played, are as detailed on the **Major Arcana Effects** table.

A FINAL WORD

As with any rule in *Castle Falkenstein*, the purpose of the *Second 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.

MAJOR ARCANA EFFECTS

Card Number	Card Name	Effect
0	The Fool	Something quite unexpected occurs. The Host should draw a card from the Fortune Deck and use its suit to guide them in creating a twist in the story. Swords might mean the barmaid a Dramatic Character is attempting to seduce is actually a princess in disguise while Pentacles might mean the Dramatic Character not only strikes down an interfering guard but convinces him to change vocations and later rejoin play as an ally. If another Major Arcana is drawn, the Feat simply succeeds in the most spectacular way possible.
1	The Magician	The Dramatic Character finds a perfect moment of clarity and focuses all her energy on the task at hand. She can convert the suit of one card in her hand to the suit of the Ability being used. The converted card need not be played on this Feat.
2	The High Priestess	Oh my, the Dramatic Character is looking particularly fetching today. Convert the suit of one card, chosen at random from the Dramatic Character's hand, to Swords. The converted card need not be played on this Feat.
3	The Empress	The Dramatic Character feels a rush of passion for the task at hand! When the Empress is played with a Minor Arcana card, treat that card as if it were the Queen of its suit.
4	The Emperor	True confidence allows one to control the universe instead of the reverse. The Player chooses one card, at random, from the Host's hand and discards it. The Host cannot draw back up to a full hand until a Host Character makes use of an Ability which matches the suit of the discarded card.
5	The Hierophant	It seems the Dramatic Character has come into a bit of money! When the Hierophant is played with a Pentacle on an Exchequer Feat, treat that card as if it were the King of Pentacles.
6	The Lovers	All for one and one for all! Allow the entire party exactly one minute to trade cards or exchange hands as desired. Cards representing drawn power for Sorcery may not be included in this exchange.
7	The Chariot	It isn't luck the Dramatic Character possesses but honest skill. When the Chariot is played as part of a Feat, the Player can choose to return one Minor Arcana card she just played back to her hand after the Feat is resolved.
8	Strength	Like a knight of old, the Dramatic Character steps forward in the defense of others. Increase the level of success of the Feat this card is played on (Partial to Full, for example, or Full to High) but only if the Dramatic Character is acting to defend the honor of another.
9	The Hermit	The Dramatic Character gains an intellectual insight into the problem at hand. Treat any Pentacle played with the Hermit as if it were the suit of the Ability being used. If the Ability's suit is Pentacles, treat any Pentacle played as one higher for the purposes of resolving the Feat.
10	Wheel of Fortune	There are occasions when luck is more valuable than mere skill. The Player discards all Minor Arcana cards and draws until she once again holds four cards. She must then resolve the Feat in question using her new hand.

11	Justice	The universe itself seems to be judging the Dramatic Character, perhaps based on past actions. The Player must draw a card from the Fortune Deck until a Minor Arcana card is revealed. If she draws Cups or Pentacles, she achieves a High Success on the Feat. If she draws Swords or Wands, she instead Fumbles the Feat.
12	The Hanged Man	For a brief instant, the Dramatic Character experiences a dizzying sensation as reality itself seems to twist and warp. The Player and the Host must exchange their hands. The Player then resolves the feat using her new hand.
13	Death	Success often comes at a price! The Dramatic Character automatically succeeds at the Feat. However, for the next three Feats the Dramatic Character attempts, no Major Arcana cards can be played and all Minor Arcana cards are treated as if they are the wrong suit.
14	Temperance	The intensity of the challenge grows but so, too, does the skill of the Dramatic Character. The difficulty of the Feat is increased by one step (from Good to Great, for example) but any cards not of the proper suit played to resolve the Feat have a value of 2 instead of 1.
15	The Devil	Beware the gifts of the good neighbors. A nearby Faerie (or perhaps something else unearthly!) comes to the Dramatic Character's aid... but such help often comes with a price!
16	The Tower	When accomplishing a task, be careful not to overdo it! The Dramatic Character's level of success increases by one (from Partial to Full, for example) but she injures herself in the process and suffers 1 point of damage for every card she played while resolving the Feat.
17	The Star	Wishes can come true but hopes can come crashing down. The Player should hazard a guess as to the suit of the top card of the fortune deck and then flip it over. If her guess was correct or if the card is from the Major Arcana, she gains a High Success on her Feat. If her guess is incorrect, she instead Fumbles.
18	The Moon	The Fates can be secretive and have a sly sense of humor. The Player must place a single Minor Arcana card from her hand face down in front of the Host. The Host must then guess the suit of the card. If the Host is correct, the Dramatic Character's Feat fails. If the Host is incorrect, the Dramatic Character's Feat automatically succeeds.
19	The Sun	The Dramatic Character is blessed with an abundance of prosperity. For the rest of the session she can hold a total of five cards in her hand instead of the usual four.
20	Judgement	News of the Dramatic Character's actions spreads like wildfire and not necessarily for the good. When Judgement is played with a Sword on a Connections Feat, treat that card as if it were the King of Swords. However, if the action being performed is illicit or scandalous, any Swords played for the rest of the session have a value of 1, even when played to enhance an Ability governed by Swords.
21	The World	If an individual and the world are in harmony, anything becomes possible. When the World is played to enhance an Ability in which the Dramatic Character is ranked Poor or Average, treat the Ability as if she possesses a rank of Good instead.