Reading the Tarot

A local mystic practices an ancient art

I took my troubles down to Madame Rue
You know the gypsy with the gold tattoo.
She looked at my palm and made a magic sign
She said "what you need is love potion number nine."

Love Potion Number Nine

Mitzi Linn doesn't fit the gypsy fortune-teller stereotype. She doesn't wear a gold earring, or a peasant blouse, or a colorful scarf — and she says she doesn't tell fortunes.

Linn reads tarot cards. Although she says reading tarot cards isn't fortune-telling, she agrees that interpreting the cards can give a tarot reader an indication of the "psychic stuff" and trends occurring in the life of her client.

"The people that come to me are interested in personal growth — where their life is going. They are seeking alternative resolutions," Linn says.

Linn always sees significance in the cards.

"The more I study and learn in my life, the more I put that understanding in the cards."

A good reader, she says, is "conscious of his or her own life experience." The reader's life experience, used as the backdrop to the interpretation of the cards, enhances the reader's ability to understand what specific patterns in the cards mean, Linn says.

The early history of the tarot is shrouded in mystery. Some authorities claim the tarot was devised in China or India and brought into Europe by Gypsies. Others believe the tarot is a compendium of the arcane wisdom of ancient Egypt.

Tarot cards and common playing-cards share a similar ancestry, but no one authority can prove conclusively which came first.

At present there are many variations on the basic Marseille deck, which is the oldest of European tarot decks.

Peralandra, 790 E 11th, stocks a wide range of tarot decks. The newest is a round deck, developed by a feminist circle, Motherpeace. There are other feminist-oriented decks, such as the Womens' Tarot.

Possibly the most well known and best-selling is the Waite-Rider deck. The Waite-Rider Tarot resulted

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Story by Cort Fernald
Photo by Erich Boekelheide

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from the collaboration of two members of the Order of the Golden Dawn in the 1920s. Many of the pictorial designs of this deck have become cliches of Tarot.

Linn uses the Thoth Tarot deck developed by Aleister Crowley. Crowley was a member of the Order of the Golden Dawn (along with William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory). Crowley, quite notorious at the time, was alleged to be "666" incarnate, a practioner of human sacrifice among other curious magical rites.

It's all in the cards. Tarot reader Mitzi Linn surveys the personality secrets she learns from a special deck.

He frequently signed himself — *"The Beast."* The Thoth Tarot deck Crowley devised is said to carry a curse.

Linn says she doesn't believe the deck is cursed. She considers that a superstition, which, if believed, will adversely affect a person. But to Linn it's more a question of each person manifesting the reality they conceive.

Crowley's tarot deck is abstract, but it doesn't go too far beyond the traditional meaning of the cards, Linn says.

Linn, who has a B.A. in liberal arts from Hanover College, has been reading Tarot for nine years, the last seven years professionally. "I met the tarot in Woodstock," Linn says with a smile. At the time she didn't have much interest in it. It wasn't until she lived in southern Oregon with a circle of feminists that she started serious study of the tarot.

The reading techniques Linn uses is designed to relax the person having the reading — the querant. She instructs the querants to close their eyes, place their feet flat on the ground, take a number of deep breaths and imagine they have a tail growing into the earth.

Linn says that this technique, called "rooting," gets querants in touch with the spirituual forces of the earth. She cannot start a reading without this technique.

Following this, she lights a pair of purple candles on a bookshelf and brings out the cards. After shuffling the over-sized cards, she divides them into three piles. Linn uses a tantalum pendulum to determine which of the three piles to read. A clockwise spin indicates the cards to be read.

Linn uses the 10-card Celtic Cross, the most common card lay-out for tarot readers. The interpretation of card placements can vary from reader to reader. Linn uses a formation with placements for the person, sub-conscious, past, choices, environment and outcome.

Linn reads the cards in a congenial manner, encouraging the querant to interrupt and make relevant connections themselves. She doesn't like to be rushed, believing the conversation between the reader and querant helps the reading.

Although traditional, Linn says tarot card symbolism is "plastic" and easily associated with what is contemporary. The tarot is thought to embody a complete symbolic system which is a key to the mysteries that hold the secret of the true nature of man, the universe and God, she says.

"How can you improve upon the truth?"

Apart from reading tarot cards, Linn practices psychic healing, and laying-on-hands.She can be contacted by calling 345-0233.

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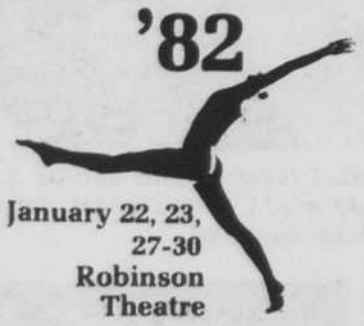

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