

13: Ghoul Death.



Card 13 is the place in the Tarot where we encounter Death. Whilst it is very well known that the Death Card is representative of the death of ideas and the coming into new and different ones, the Lovecraft Tarot is quite complex in its interpretation of most of the Cards of the Tarot, and is described as follows for the point of defining its meaning. It should be pointed out that the Lovecraft Tarot defines the Cards, within itself, quite differently from all other Decks, as is the case with the previous Cards.

One of the interesting things about this particular Tarot is in how it develops. From Azathoth as the nucleus of chaos and creation, to Shub Niggurath as birth,

and Hastur as communication, the Tarot evolves. It is interesting, then, that Card 13 leads on from the previous in this aspect. “Another aspect of the supposed conflict between Spirit and Matter”, states Card 13, “is in the impermanence of Matter making it [a] flawed medium for Eternal Spirit.” The Death Card is in this Deck, slightly different as it speaks of being mainly about the physical body as a vehicle for the human soul.

“The physical body... is subject to... decay, corruption, & death. The soul... is incorruptible.” With this statement the Lovecraft Tarot is very clear that, to our religion it is seen as being fact that, although our physical body will always eventually die, the inner person within us (defined as the ‘soul’), will always continue as a form of consciousness. It is one issue with the R’Lyeh*, however, that in the literature of the Lovecraftian, it is not entirely clear where the soul continues

to after the death of the physical body that this Card hereby defines. For the sake of theory, then, the Tarot continues in the abstract belief of a passing through to some level of the Astral Plane. “These... fundamentals... are not in conflict”, the Tarot goes on to tell us, making a statement as to perception after the death of the body, and a continuation of the soul after mortal existence.

The Introductory Book continues that, “Although... material... the human body... is often portrayed as the enemy of Spirit [although] it is actually the most... proper medium for spiritual expression.” What this statement actually says in this respect is quite complicated, but it probably means that the way in which we, as people, express ourselves in spiritual terms is usually much more in the physical sense than the spiritual. It is much more common for most of us to walk down the street or to watch TV, than

to study meditation or occult visualisation (although activities such as conversation or watching TV may still take the middle ground). “If we were never confronted with our own mortality, we would [not]... make a lasting impression by our actions.” In this statement the Tarot is saying that we are so tied up with our perception as being about our physical existence, that we see our place on Earth as being the absolute end, and that our further transition to the Beyond is not normally the end of our actions, as regards our further perception. “Most ability ensures morality”, is how the Lovecraft Tarot makes this statement, although many people (including some cultists), may not want to leave this World that we currently live in, with virtue.

The Lovecraft Tarot has more to say here, and continues that “when... we bring spiritual influence into physical manifestation, the eternity of spirit

permeates the material, even if only for a short while.” Here is a statement that concerns Crowley’s ideas of ‘True Will’, and makes a statement as to the occult and our religion as part of the R’Lyeh. This is the first time that this Tarot makes any mention of the occult in the traditional sense that involves meditation and visualisation, and this idea is discussed further elsewhere in the Necronomicon Book of Shadows.

The manifestation of the dead, the Ghoul, is at home in this Tarot. In this, It is the representation of all that has died and passed into a further dimension beyond human perception. The Ghoul, in representing the dead, has its symbolism in things which are now in the past. Memories of what is no more, important parts of things that have passed, and parts of history which were important, but which have no current relevance, are symbolised here. The Ghoul is at home

with all of this and, despite Its portrayal with this Card as being something macabre, the Ghoul necessitates such an impression, and It is actually harmless; being manifest as nothing more than a subconscious part of the mind. Things that are in the past are symbolised here, and although they are no longer with us in life, they are still with us in spirit.

The concluding statement to the definition of the Ghoul in the Lovecraft Tarot is more bizarre, and reads; “the ultimate potential result [of realising mortality] is veiled in the legend of the phoenix and in... doctorines of resurrection: The physical vessel can... be reborn as an Eternal material expression of spiritual light.” This last statement makes a number of points about a number of spiritual values, both Shamanic and in mainstream religion. But maybe it would be better to leave this Card as described, than to go into the various possibilities of

trying to define this statement further?

POSITIVE READING: Moving on from the definition of Death as a part of the Tarot defined above, the definition of this Card under the heading of the Positive Reading is closer to the definition as traditional in most other Decks of the Tarot. The first part of the definition in this sense refers to “Transformation”, and is relevant to stages in our situation or lifestyle changing, and in this aspect for the better. Everything in life is subject to change, but the Death Card here represents serious lifestyle changes for the better. So often negative changes are prone to take place, but here we have cause to be optimistic. “Letting go of cumbersome tools & patterns when no longer relevant” is defined, and this further impends positive changes in our day to day lives.

“Freedom from habit, routine &

convention: innovation” is here defined; making another statement about how we live from day to day. These statements suggest that the repetition and rigmarole of everyday life is going to be subject to change. How often is it that, everyday, we find that our routine is subject to repetition? Cycles such as getting up, going to work, going to bed, seem to be something we do every day. How much are we slaves to a routine, rather than doing what we want to do? This Positive Reading says that systems of everyday repetition are likely to change, and that this is something we should be grateful for.

The Lovecraft Tarot continues that a Positive Reading represents “Traditions which serve a purpose; healthy spiritual legacies.” In this we can say that this could be the absolute opposite of Death, as traditions and such ‘spiritual legacies’ are often repetitions of festivals which

represent renewal of life.

NEGATIVE READING: Despite the definition and Positive Reading with this Card, Death has serious connotations, and the Negative Reading in this Lovecraftian system can be pessimistic. Whilst this Card can never mean actual disaster, it does make a serious statement if coming into a reading in this respect.

“Death, decay [and] corruption” would be a serious statement, but this should not be taken too seriously. ‘Death’ in the Tarot rarely means actual physical death in a material sense, and so this should not be taken too literally in this respect. “Inability to let go of outmoded patterns & beliefs; self-imposed obstacles” are defined. This is a more direct correlation to be interpreted, and makes a statement as to our own understanding of ourselves as psychological, and making statements as to how we should

understand our own frame of mind.

“Mindless repetition, redundancy; patterns of work or actions which don’t produce the desired results” are then defined. This is the opposite of what is defined in a Positive Reading. Never the less, this in a reading can be quite useful. All of these things are issues which are usually psychological. These issues can be quite easily sorted if we take time to step back and look at things with a new frame of mind. Remember that the Tarot is here to help us, and not here as impending certain doom.

The definition of the Ghoul ends by defining this Card as forecasting “Conformity & obedience to behaviour patterns suited to the needs of others.” It now begins to become clear that the HP Lovecraft Tarot takes time to remind us of how we are treated by others, often those in authority above us. The HP Lovecraft Tarot reminds us repeatedly that we are

our own person, and that we are better off without being obedient to others.

* In the history of religions who regard The Necronomicon as religious, a lot of sects have called themselves the 'R'Lyeh'. The name of our own group, being the 'Cult of R'Lyeh on Earth' is slightly different, though, as is described in the Introduction to this book.

