

The Fantod Tarot Deck

- By Edward Gorey -



[Edited together and put into PDF format by Arcanaeum: 2003]

Before we get to the actual deck, you will want to read the following enlightening information regarding the deck. This is by a Brandi Weed, from her website which I found on the internet while researching. It will shed some light on the deck:

This deck is a bit of an oddity, as it's not really so much an actual cartomancy deck as a spoof of same.

Edward Gorey is probably known to most people for the animations on the title sequence of *Mystery!*, but he's quite an accomplished illustrator and artist in his own right, with a morbid yet strangely appealing sense of humor (one of his more famous pieces is a little alphabet called "The Gashlycrumb Tinies," about 26 children and the untimely ends they come to).

The Fantod Pack comes with a booklet by one "Madame Groeda Wyrde" (anagrams are another Gorey favorite), giving instructions for how to read with the deck. The booklet itself is quite funny, with instructions such as the following:

"Interpretation must always depend on the character and circumstances of the person consulting the pack. What might portend a wipe-out for a teenage hotdogger from Yokohama, might warn an octogenarian spinster in Minot, North Dakota, of a fall in the bathtub, though, of course, the results might come to much the same thing."

The artwork on the cards and the cover of the booklet are the classic Gorey style of finely detailed pen-and-ink work. The card backs and the booklet feature a strange little creature known as a 'Figbash'.

The 20 cards themselves feature symbols that I would consider peculiar to Gorey's artwork and style, such as The Urn, The Child (a skeleton!), The Waltzing Mouse, and an untitled card of an armless black doll. The meanings for each, as given in the booklet, are that sinister yet funny mix characteristic of Gorey, predicting such things as a forged letter, green sickness, loss of saliva(!), and other such unwholesome matters. Each card also represents a day or month which, as the booklet notes, "should prove particularly calamitous." The exception is the Black Doll which has only the particularly grim warning of "What most you fear / Is coming near".

The stock the cards are on is thick and glossy, with unrounded corners, and would shuffle nicely if you wanted to do so. They are moderately large but not unwieldy, measuring about 2-1/2 by 4-3/4 inches.

While you couldn't really do a reading with these cards (I hope!), Edward Gorey fans will probably want to grab it as soon as possible, and even serious cartomancers might be amused by the spoofery.

Note: according to the booklet in my deck, this was issued as a limited edition of 776(!), so it may not be in print anymore. The place to contact to find it, though, is the Gotham Book Mart in New York, who are the primary source of Goreyana. (Alas, they're not online!)

The History

The Awful Vista of the Year.

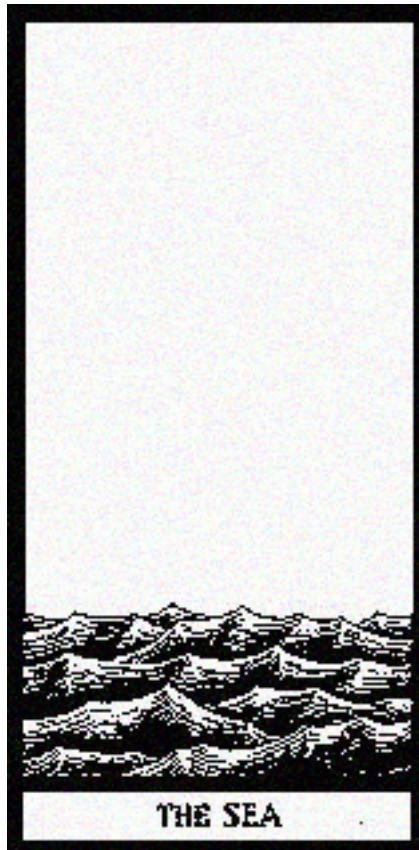
Now that you have learned of all the dreadful things that have overtaken your friends and relations during the past year as scribbled on the inside of their Chirstmas card, don't you want to know what dreadful things lie in wait for you?

To this end Madame Groeda Weyrd (a nom de gare; her true one is known to few this side of the grave) has consented to have the fantod deck printed here. Madame Weyrd, who is of mixed Finnish and Egyptian extraction has devoted her life to divination, and is the author of, among a shelf of other works, Floating Tambourines, a collection of esoteric verse, and The Future Speaks Through Entrails.

Her Career as one of the most celebrated trace mediums came to a close when she lost two and a third fingers as a result of a contretemps during a ectoplasmic manifestation. She had long since been persona non grata to many of the rich and famous because of her fearless predictions of disaster. She now makes her home on Staten Island (the one that's part of Tierra del Fuego) and is writing what is hoped may be the definitive treatise on the Mystic Bean. Of the Fantod Pack itself, Madame Weyrd will only say that its origin may not be divulged, but it is of incredible antiquity.

Interpretation of the card must always depend on the character and circumstances of the person consulting the deck. What might portend a wipe out for a teenage hot-dogger at Yokohama, might warn an octogenarian spinster in Minot, North Dakota, of a fall in the bathtub, though, of course, the results might come much to the same thing. The day of the week or Month of the year given for each card should prove particularly calamitous. The meanings given are selective rather than exhaustive, and hints rather than assertions. Lastly, you must rely on your own temerity and "imagination of disaster" (Henry James) to gain full meaning of the cards.

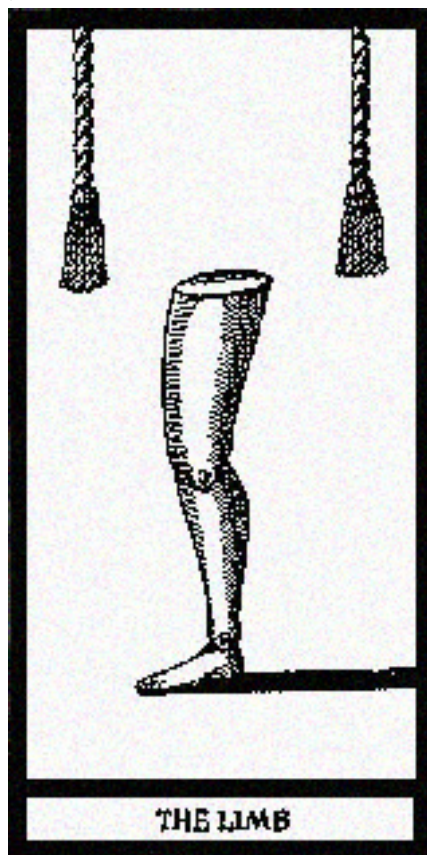
The Sea



January
wasting
loss of ears
an accident in an elevator
lurching sickness
cracks
false affection
vapors

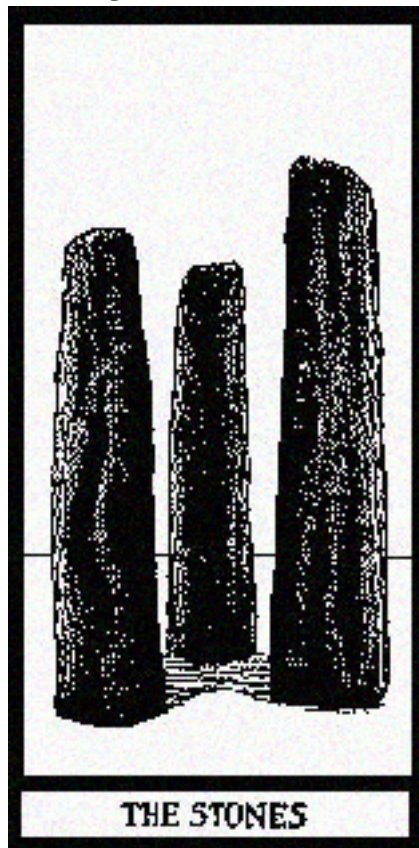
a secret enemy
misdirection
demons
estrangement
chagrin

The Limb



February
miscarriage of justice
gapes
a forged snapshot
morbid sensations
a useless sacrifice
alopecia
a generalized calamity
broken promises
ignominy
an accident in a theatre
fugues
poverty

The Stones



March
a forged letter
paralysis
false arrest
falling sickness
evil communications
estrangement
a sudden affliction
anemia
strife
a distasteful duty
misconstruction

The Ancestor



April
hereditary weakness
thurs
loss of money
a false statement
morbid dependency
staggering sickness
champerty
megrims
paranoia
an overdose
imprisonment
instable furniture

The Waltzing Mouse



May
vertigo
loss of jewelry
a betise
morbid cravings
disorders of the large intestine
corruption
equivocal symptoms
a hazardous project
brawls
suicide
involuntary seclusion
shriveling

The Echorche



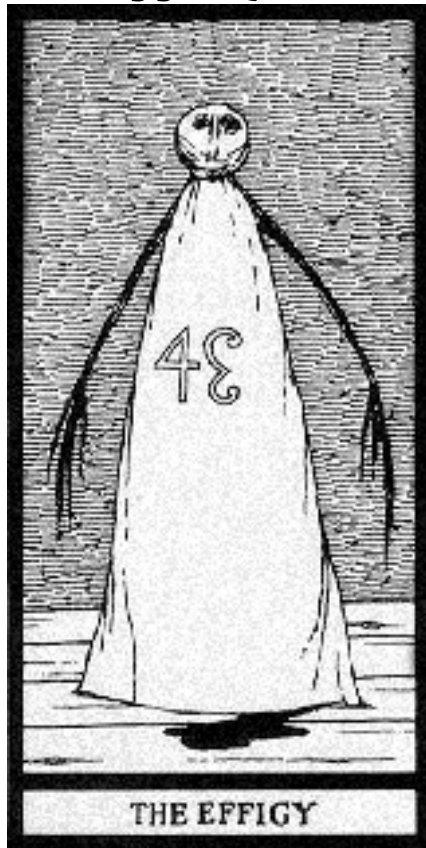
June
sexual incompetence
a forged check
obscurity
irregularities
puckers
inconstancy
an accident on a pier
morbid sensibilities
deception
a social disease
confinement
cysts

The Plant



July
tics
sexual indecision
impetigo
loss of intellect
misplaced confidence
writhing sickness
loose ends
palsy
assailed credit
dissolution
scandal
worms

The Effigy



August
a sexual problem
assailed honor
unpleasant secrets
amnesia
broken hopes
a misalliance
rashness
yaws
clouded mentality
abrasions
financial losses
an accident in a stadium

The Child



September
denigration
sexual inadequacy
sties
hallucinations
breakage
loss of youth
rust
crawling sickness
an obstacle
forced restraint
aberrations
catarrh

The Blue Dog



October

loss of one of the senses

weltschmerz

unnatural voices

disorders of the knee

diseases of the tongue

disturbances

miscarriage of a child

an accident in a garage

dementia

fraud

a quarrel

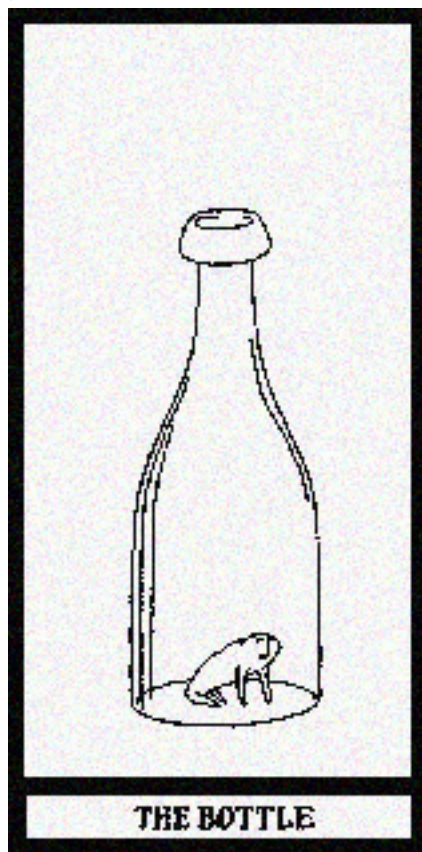
wispiness

The Feather



November
blackmail
a forged passport
hysterical pregnancy
loss of eyelashes
disorders of the small intestine
a disagreeable letter
delerium
hinderance to prospects
twitching
separation
imbroglios
a mistake

The Bottle



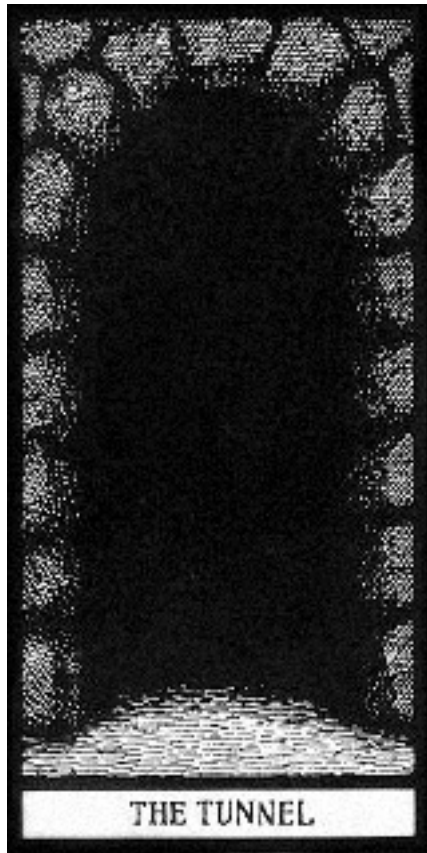
December
melancholia
itching
unfortunate publicity
a disregarded warning
irregularity
an accident on a bicycle
loss of feeling
flukes
vexation
intrigue
abandonment
frustrated hopes

The Burning Head



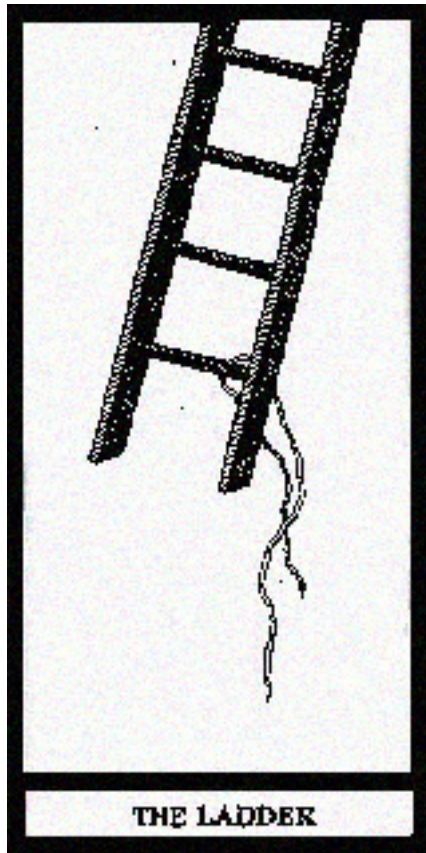
*Sunday
bafflement
loss of saliva
a forged deed
an impasse
extradition
a boating accident
chilblains
delayed desires
wandering sickness
evil companions
an impediment
despondency*

The Tunnel



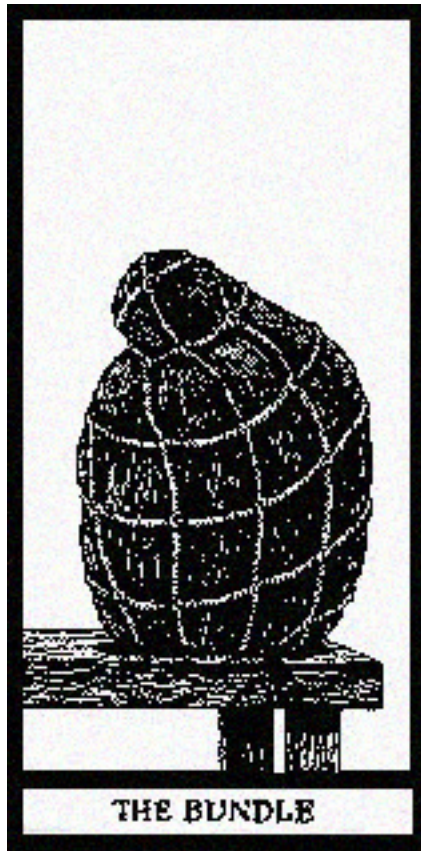
Monday
sexual disturbance
a swindle
loss of wits
diseases of the blood
angst
false trust
an irrational project
an unpleasant discovery
bad luck
an execution
boredom
panic

The Ladder



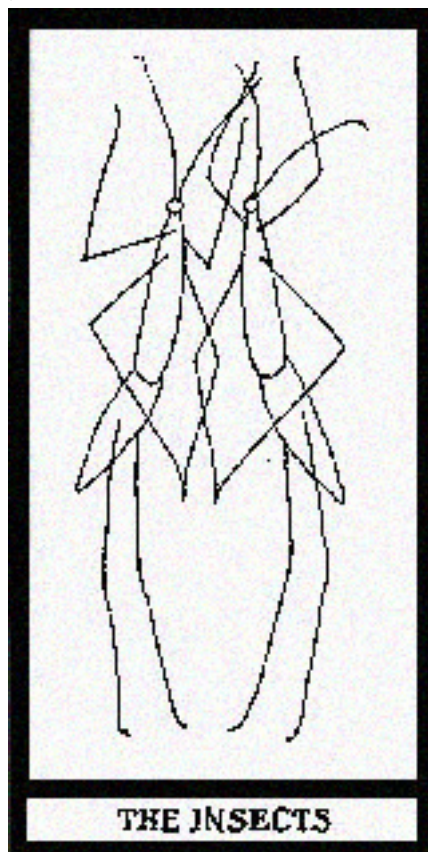
*Tuesday
slander
reversals
creeping sickness
a forged will
insomnia
loss of hair
detention
theft
cafard
jealousy
an accident in a restaurant
inanition*

The Bundle



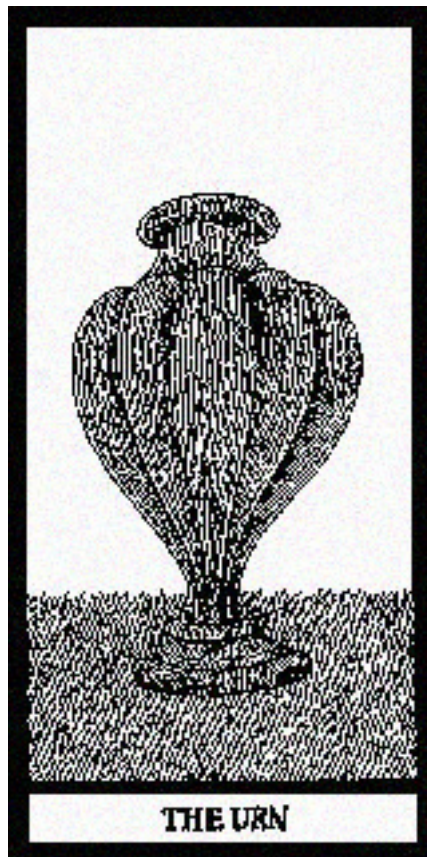
Wednesday
a tedious illness
inadequate drainage
a broken engagement
a train accident
malaise
false friends
hangnails
misconduct
aphasia
regrets
disappointment
fluctuation

The Insects



*Thursday
folie a deux
green sickness
senseless talk
loss of vitality
an accident in a field
false hopes
spasms
a refusal
insincere love
blisters
disagreeable news
threats*

The Urn



Friday
a sexual dilemma
a forged invitation
harmful rays
alginuresis
a broken heart
mumbling sickness
broken communications
injustice
interference
miscalculation
low fever
scales

The Yellow Bird



Saturday
true love thrown away
pigue
foot trouble
mania
barratry
an accident on a ladder
insicretion
bone disease
thwarted ambitions
poison
an unforeseen catatrophe
complications

THE BLACK DOLL



"What you fear is coming near!"

Final Note: the archive I created this from included this picture, which I found amusing, considering the its use of 'the black doll' as a toy. – Arcanaeum

