

## Comparisons of the Death Card

A number of professional Tarot readers, and readers that have been reading for a while, will often look at the Death card and how it has been interpreted in the deck to determine if they are drawn to that specific Tarot deck or not. Some decks portray the Death card as a dark, sinister card, while other decks can draw the same meaning in a more elegant way, and still other decks draw on mythologies to tell their stories.

The Death card is usually interpreted as a transformation or rebirth of some kind, although not always (as in the Mystic Spiral card below) and this message can sometimes be more challenging to find on some Death cards than on others (the Art Nouveau Deck, the Badger's Forest Tarot Deck, and the Fairy Deck come to mind). Hopefully, this comparison of the Death card will show you how the similar message (transformation/change/rebirth) can be effectively portrayed in several different ways.



### The Art Nouveau Tarot Deck

The cards in this deck are very vibrantly illustrated and reflect a strong 1920's 1930's feel to them. In this version of the Death card, the old (as shown by the mask) is removed so the new (the younger version of the person) can be revealed. The skulls on the dress suggest that the figure might be Death herself, at the very least the skulls reinforce the concept of Death, while the vases of flowers behind the main figure represent life. The colour purple is often associated with (among other things) the transformation of the soul. For me, the interpretation of this card is one of Death as Transformation and Rebirth.



### Badger's Forest Tarot Deck

The cards in this deck use animals as the central figures through which meanings are made. The Death card shows two Buffalo, one living, one dead set against a snowy winter scene. A winter scene always reminds me of the natural life cycle with winter being the time of death. Buffaloes generally mean abundance and prosperity, although the Buffalo skull again reinforces the idea of Death. My interpretation of this card is that this Death card is illustrating how Death is part of a natural cycle of transformation.

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### **The Law of Attraction Tarot Deck**

The cards in this deck show relatively realistic images of the message the card is offering. It's not surprising that the Death card in this Deck is an illustration of a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. The background could be either sunrise (beginnings) or sunset (endings). And the flowers, to me, look like fruit blossoms, which is another image signifying transformation. My interpretation is that this Death card is definitely focused on Death as transformation.



### **Shadowsapes Tarot Deck**

This deck is a fantasy-oriented deck that uses Fairies, Dragons, and other mythical creatures to tell the stories of the card. The colours on this Death card are vibrant yellow (optimism, idealism and hope) and purple (spirituality, soul transformation) which certainly support the interpretation of Death as transformation. But it's the Phoenix that really supports this interpretation. The myth of the Phoenix (the old is destroyed by fire so the new can hatch into life) is all about transformation, releasing the old so the new can thrive.



### **Tarot of the Mystic Spiral**

This deck contains a lot of cards with really dark backgrounds with images often have a dark or sinister feel to them. This Death card is all black and white (although really more black and grey rather than black and white). The skeleton main figure is the Grim Reaper and appears to be on the move looking for souls. For me, there doesn't appear to be any feeling of transformation or rebirth in this card, just a very pointed and unedited image of endings.



### The Goddess Tarot

This deck uses Goddesses and Goddess mythology to tell the stories of the Major Arcana cards. For the Death card, the authors chose the myth of Ukemochi, the Japanese Food Goddess. After her death, various parts of Ukemochi's body transformed so that Ukemochi could provide food enough to feed all of humanity. While the other cards here are labelled 'Death', this card is labelled 'Transformation' to further emphasise this meaning.



### The Fairy Tarot

In this deck, which uses fairies as the figures around which the stories of the cards are created, the Death card is known as "Release". The card is focused on the idea of learning from the past and releasing anything from the past that no longer serves you so you can change and transform as new opportunities arise. The basic meaning of this card (transformation and change) is very strongly aligned with the meaning of the Death card in other decks, but the message is presented in an easier, gentler fashion as are the messages in the other cards in this deck.