

The Marie Lenormand Christmas Oracle

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And, filled up of celebration,
Raptured with a great mystery,
I know for sure it is not by chance
That the prophetic words came true.
Alexander Blok, 1901.

Introduction

Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin, authors of the book, *Learning Lenormand* (Katz, Marcus; Goodwin, Tali. *Learning Lenormand: Traditional Fortune Telling for Modern Life*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2013.), tarotologists, historians and researchers of the Tarot, founding chiefs of the world's largest tarotology organization of Tarot Professionals, compare the oracle of Mademoiselle Lenormand with a *verirometer* from the fantastic trilogy of Philip Pullman's *Dark Beginnings* — a mysterious device on the dial of which were housed thirty-six symbols used for divination.

Created in the 17th century, the veritometer was able to reveal to the initiated in the hidden meaning of its signs any mystery of being. The oracle of Mademoiselle Lenormand is not fantastic, but quite real, yet it also contains thirty-six graphic symbols that reveal to the person who has learned to read them the whole world and provide them with another point of view of the circumstances of their own life as well as lives of other people.

A thirty-six-card deck, later named *The Marie Lenormand Oracle*, was created in Nuremberg (Germany) by Johann Kaspar

Hechtel (1771–1799) and first published in 1800 under the title *The Game of Hope* (*Das Spiel der Hofnung*). Each card had its own drawing, and the cards were to be laid out with a 6 x 6 square, creating a playing field on which the chips moved according to the numbers that generated by two dice. Later, in the middle of the 19th century, some card-printers came up with the idea to publish the same cards as in *The Game of Hope*, as “the Mademoiselle Lenormand fortune telling deck.” There came many variations of this deck — with or without divinatory inscriptions and miniature images of playing cards — and they all very successfully exploited the fame of the recently deceased “French Sibyl,” as the Paris fortune teller Marie Anne Adelaide Lenormand (1772–1843) was called.

Over time, this deck came to be called *The Small Lenormand* (*Le Petit Lenormand* in French) so that it would not be confused with *The Grand Deck of Mademoiselle Lenormand* (*Le Grand Jeu de M^{lle} Lenormand*), also attributed to the French Sibyl for the sake of giving it more “authority.” While there are 36 cards in *The Small Lenormand*, *The Grand Deck* has 54.

Versions of *The Small Lenormand* continue to appear in our time in different countries. Our own creation, which we called *The Marie Lenormand Christmas Oracle*, is based on Christmas greeting cards from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that still contain a bright celebratory mood. Whether this deck becomes your working tool or just a nice decoration for your collection is up to you. In any case, we hope that it will amuse you and create a festive and magical atmosphere in your home and in your soul.

Cards Meanings

Card 1. The Rider (9 of hearts)

The lively boy is pulling the reins of his steed. It seems that the horse is about to break loose and dash off somewhere far away, where the sun is shining (judging by the panama decorated with a summer flower) and dreams are being fulfilled. The everyday affairs are abandoned; on the floor is an unread book. It means nothing now to the main character of this card! He rushes to meet something new and interesting. It does not matter that the steed is just a rocking horse toy, which is unlikely to move from its place ever. The main thing is where he is now, this little rider! Fused completely with his horse, he is ready to conquer the whole world. Nothing will stop him. The Christmas tree decorated with luminous candles winks at him and approves of his far-reaching, "galloping" plans.

***Divinatory meanings:** quickness, suddenness. Rapid appearance in the life of the querent of a new person, new information, new events. Visit of an unexpected guest. Important news, usually favorable. Report on the implementation of the conceived, on the fulfillment of desires.*

According to Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin in *Learning Lenormand*, if the **Rider** card is all about you, there is an emotional imperative that you are not acting upon, where action needs to be taken. You need to express how you feel and stop dragging your heels; you can only do this by moving onward. However, it is important to keep your poise and centre or you could be easily thrown off your course. As a general interpretation, this could involve receiving a visitor who has some good news to impart.

Card 2. The Clover (6 of diamonds)

Do not we like dreaming? And is it not from childhood that we have this desire? At the time of carelessness, when everything that filled our world was friends and toys, was it not with them that we

celebrated holidays with a traditional portion of lemonade? Playful bubbles, a wish that will come true for sure...

Perhaps, from here arises our indestructible tradition to express hope for a better future over those bubbles among the closest and most devoted persons? Though the bubbles are not the same after all those years and what we drink on holidays is so far from lemonade — we keep the faith. In a better future. In Her Majesty Luck!

***Divinatory meanings:** hope, happy ending of the situation. Surprise, chance, luck, favorable coincidence, good business, profitable investments. Warmth, peace, comfort. Happiness. Lightness, surprise.*

Traditionally, the **Clover** card denotes good luck. In order to emphasize this meaning, in the *Christmas Oracle* the image of the four-leaf clover is used, finding which was always considered a great luck. The ancient Celts believed that the four-leaf clover foretells good destiny to the one who found it.

The unusual leaf will protect its owner from evil witchcraft and open the way to the world of good fairies and elves. According to a Christian legend, Eve took with her a four-leaf clover as a symbol and a piece of Paradise when she and Adam were exiled from Eden. Christians also see in the four-leaf clover a symbol of the Cross and the four Gospels.

There is another interpretation where the first leaf symbolizes hope, the second faith, the third love, and the fourth great luck. Therefore, finding a four-leaf clover is associated with obtaining the hope of success. The four-leaf clover has been long worshipped by druids. They believed that this plant symbolizes the four primary elements of nature — earth, water, air and fire. Thus, a four-leaf clover was associated with the very creation.

The postcard, which is chosen as the basis of our version of the **Clover**, depicts two children with glasses of champagne in their hands, suggesting that they are in reality adults who turn into

children every time they celebrate such fabulously magical holidays as Christmas and New Year's Eve.

In *The Game of Hope*, which is the prototype of Lenormand fortune telling cards, **Clover** was a card that the player was obliged to return to when he hit the **Stormy Cloud** (the original name of the sixth card). Therefore, there is such another symbolic meaning of the **Clover**: having encountered sharp adverse changes on your way, you must return to yourself in order to restore strength and rethink the situation. And, perhaps, the deep meaning of this card is that it shows what kind of relationship the querent has with the world around him and with himself. According to one interpretation, when the clover is on the mountain, it means knowledge of the divine essence, acquired by persistent efforts. Therefore, when the **Clover** and **Mountain** cards fall out side by side it may mean reaching spiritual peaks.

Card 3. The Ship (10 of spades)

Despite the storm and hurricane, despite the snow and rain, a brave ship sails along a route known only to her alone. Where does she sail? To her goal. What is she fighting for? For her dreams. What helps her? Her hope. For what? First of all, on her own strengths. Kind Santa Claus, packing gift bags for everyone, seems to tell us, "A little patience, and the doubts will recede. And again to take off. Everything has its time, everything has its time, and everything has its turn." So the good ship keeps wandering. She is rocked by the waves, she is sprinkled with snow. But there is no limit to her fortitude.

Divinatory meanings: *purposefulness, movement, travel, relocation, change, the beginning of a new stage in life.*

The prototype of Santa Claus is the all-Christian Saint Nicholas the Worker of Miracles, famous for his charity — he made secret gifts to poor people who had children. Saint Nicholas is considered the patron saint of seamen, travelers and children, which is reflected in the old Christmas postcard, which served as the basis for our **Ship**.

The **Ship** is one of those cards of the Lenormand oracle, for which the orientations (direction) of the depicted object matters. In this case, the direction of the ship's movement can show where the querent is being involved in — either in a literal or figurative sense. It takes a careful evaluation of the nearby cards in the layout.

In *The Game of Hope*, the **Ship** card was considered one of the most favorable: it said that success could be achieved much faster, by not relying on luck alone, but by taking action and using the ship as a means to achieve the goal.

Card 4. The House (king of hearts)

Having gladly filled the festive stockings hanging near the fireplace in another house, Santa Claus climbs onto the roof to continue his journey with a bag full of endless gifts that he has to hand out today to all those he took under his protection and surrounded with care. Generous is Santa Claus tonight and his Jovian kindness will not bypass anybody.

The newborn moon crescent, the stars, the light from the windows and the sparkling snow light up his way from house to house. It seems that there is nothing purer and calmer than this night and its magical air. A furry spruce is waving to Santa Claus. Confident that no one will be devoid his attention, he will go to the next house and leave some gifts to the next of his wards.

Divinatory meanings: *safety, confidence. Home affairs, coziness, care, comfort. Family happiness, well-being. “The home is where the heart is.”*

In *The Petit Lenormand* deck, the **House** card means everything that the hearth is associated with. The basis for this card in the *Christmas oracle* was a postcard on which Santa Claus enters a house secretly, at night, through the chimney. He leaves his gifts in stockings left on the mantelpiece. Santa Claus inherited his interest in chimneys from his predecessor St. Nicholas, who threw bags of money into poor houses through smokestacks. One day

such a bag fell into a stocking that was drying near the fireplace, which started a tradition of hanging out stockings on the mantelpiece to Santa's arrival.

The **House** card is generally favorable, but its meanings may be adversely affected by nearby cards. If asked about the relationship with another person, the **House** speaks of compatibility.

Card 5. The Tree (7 of hearts)

Spruce is a magical tree, which we associate with an exciting smell of pine needles, with garlands, new toys, hopes for the future and surprises. The angel is tired — he has been very active in preparing everything for his little wards' holiday — and decided to rest a little.

He did not notice how the slumber filled his eyes. In anticipation of the delivery of gifts could not resist taking a nap together with his loyal friend. Indeed, can there be fun when you are tired? We need to recover — and then go ahead!

Divinatory meanings: *life, health, physical condition. Bonds with the ancestors, family roots. Ability to restore strength and find internal resources to overcome the circumstances. Stability.*

The **Tree** card indicates firmness and inflexibility. The Christmas tree symbolizes immortality, rebirth, striving for perfection. A coniferous tree as a symbol of Christmas is first encountered in the Christian legend of Saint Boniface, who preached to the Gentiles in the forests of Europe. To prevent them from worshiping trees, the preacher cut down the sacred oak tree. Falling, this tree threw down all the rest trees on its way. Only a small fir did not suffer. Boniface was surprised by this miracle and called fir the tree of Christ. Over time in a number of countries fir as a Christmas tree was replaced by a more common spruce.

Card 6. The Clouds (king of clubs)

Do not we look at the sky every day? Does it not surprise us how it can change and reflect everything that happens not only up there, but also down here? There is a sweet children's game of looking at the clouds and watching how they move, what forms they take ... And even more fascinating is guessing what the clouds are trying to tell us. Perhaps, when we guess right, angels looking at us from afar and above are glad that we have "read" their message? After all, they are our protectors and caretakers ...

Divinatory meanings: *confusion, embarrassment, changeability of the situation, ambiguity, detachment, living in an ivory tower, wandering in the clouds.*

In Lenormand decks, the cloud, as a rule, has one edge depicted lighter and the other darker. If the darker edge of the cloud is located closer to the querent's card than the lighter one, this may indicate the probability of an unclear, ambivalent situation. If the lighter edge is closer, this may be an indication of the short duration of the difficulties that have arisen.

Card 7. The Snake (queen of clubs)

A snake has wrapped like a motley ribbon around the rope, along which, showing no fear of heights, a baby walks in a magician's top hat. In his left hand, he holds his magic wand. The boy believes that he can and will work miracles. He splashes confetti generously onto the cold, snow-covered city. And there is so much touching kindness in his desire to decorate everything around him with vibrant colors! Who knows, perhaps, the snake is creeping away from this imprudence of the young rope-walker. Or maybe it understands that it does not belong here, since there is no field for it in this atmosphere of kindness and innocence ...

Divinatory meanings: *intrigue, jealousy, deceit. Problems from friends. Sexual attraction, passion. Medicine, health. Wisdom.*

In the picture, serpentine (this word comes from the Latin *serpens*, meaning "snake") is intertwined with the snake. Falling in a layout, this card warns the querent about the need to be

careful. The snake is a reptile that has hidden power, acts quietly and tends to attack suddenly. The **Snake** card says that in the querent's environment there is a person who is plotting evil (usually a woman).

Card 8. The Coffin (9 of diamonds)

Our craving to be naughty ... To hide away, to make others worried. To make them search and call for us ... Do we think at this moment about the way our pranks are acting on adults? Well, of course not! After all, we want fun! And we do not want to understand the price.

Five lovely dwarves put gifts into a chest. However, they do not like this monotonous job. They'd better have some fun and entertainment! So they laugh, falling every now and then into the huge wooden structure and not realizing that the clock will soon strike marking the time to hand over the magic gifts.

Divinatory meanings: *changes, new processes, transformation. Sadness, melancholy, depression. Crisis, turning point.*

In our festive deck, the coffin was replaced with a chest where in times of yore gifts were kept until the cherished hour. When this card shows up in a layout, let us agree that if we have to meet changes, then let them be changes for the better, and if the **Coffin** card means the end of something, then let it be the end of illness, deprivation, and difficulties. This card can call you to start a new life and get rid of old attachments.

Card 9. The Bouquet (queen of spades)

Giving flowers is a science and an art. Selected and presented with love, flowers will be kept in a vase for a long time making the receiver delighted. How sweet is this young lady! How blushed are her cheeks with embarrassment! Apparently, she wants to present a bouquet to a person very dear to her heart. Cupid's bow lips, a flower coquettishly fixed in the coiffure, mannerisms, refinement, glowing eyes ... The watch is ticking,

and the time of magic has come. The girl, tremblingly squeezing the freshly cut flowers, is heading to the one she wants to wish all the best and give her attention to.

Divinatory meanings: *joy, beauty, kindness, surprise, fulfillment of desires. Attention of the loved one. Romanticism, sentimentality.*

“Either speak from heart, or do not speak at all,” calls the **Bouquet** card. The girl in the picture is holding a bouquet of alstroemerias. In the language of flowers, this means a gentle compliment to the person to receive the bouquet, “You are so sweet and lovely!” This is a simple and natural way to express your gratitude or sympathy, and the **Bouquet** card reminds you to do it. If you ask a question about a project, then the **Bouquet** may indicate a good reward after performing the work.

Card 10. The Scythe (jack of diamonds)

The man holding a scythe above his head looks formidably but at the same time somehow thoughtfully. He seems to be oppressed by some heavy thoughts. He looks not ahead, but downward — tired, sad, and apathetic. The kid, on the contrary, is sporting and rejoicing. Is it not about duality? After all, for someone, the scythe means a blow, a cut, the end, and for someone other, a joyful harvesting.

Divinatory meanings: *sharp invasion, change, incident. Injury, surgical operation. Stopping something by force, liberation. Harvesting, fertility.*

The **Scythe** is one more card of the Lenormand oracle, for which the orientation (direction) of the depicted object matters. The scythe’s point indicates what should be cut off. In addition, the **Scythe** can talk about the urgency of measures that need to be taken: if the card falls to the right of the querent card, then the measures should be taken immediately, but if it falls to the left, there is still time to think everything over again.

Card 11. The Broom/the Whip (jack of clubs)

The Snowman has cheerfully entered into his law. The heavy snow gave him birth, and now he creates beauty in his own way, swinging his broom and clearing the paths of the town. However, does his broom sweep only in a kind way? After all, clearing the snow on one side creates difficulties on another ...

Divinatory meanings: *disputes, wrangling, fury, passion. Suffering, violence. Physical activity. Trouble, disagreements. Discipline. Sexual relations.*

A broom is a household item, to which since ancient times a considerable magical power was ascribed. Symbolism and ritual use of brooms are mainly associated with the sphere of spirits and household magic. Hence, in particular, is the reason of the ban on sweeping at night.

Card 12. The Birds (7 of diamonds)

What a nice time is vacation! You can be thoughtlessly immersed in communication with pleasant people. You can wander the streets and lanes and talk, talk, talk! How significant these two are! How much they are keen on the conversation! Hugging each other, they half-whisper each other the most intimate things. However, one of them clearly has more knowledge. After all, he is the owner of the key from all the doors, who knows the answers to all questions.

Divinatory meanings: *conversations, thoughts, information, news. Conversations, meetings, exchange of opinions. Dating, friendship, contacts.*

The authors of *Learning Lenormand* say that this card is reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's movie "*Birds*," where birds sitting on telegraph wires represent a metaphor for communication. However, if we carry out a deeper analysis of this metaphor, we can conclude that birds symbolize the danger of counteracting the natural order of things, the nature itself, and the

harmful influence of technologies that drown out the inner voice of a human and prevent them from hearing their own intuition. Sometimes the **Bird** card in a layout means that rumors have begun to spread and they cannot be stopped.

Card 13. The Child (jack of spades)

Against the background of a clear blue sky, a baby is seated in a kind of cradle-swing. His appearance is so serene that no one seems to be able to disturb his peace and break his uncomplicated meal. Nature helped him settle down, kindly providing the branches of the tree to which his cradle is attached. Although the time of year is by no means warm, the baby is naked. Apparently, his internal heat is enough for warmth. Holy simplicity and innocence ...

Divinatory meanings: *childhood, pregnancy. New plans, beginnings. Clean, novelty, ease. The signifier of a child.*

The **Child** card says that it is never too late to start all over again, learn something new, take steps towards a dream that you once refused ... We must drop prejudices acquired with age and look at the world through the eyes of a child — and happiness will come in your home. (Horseshoe is a symbol of happiness and luck, the reservoir of which is its cup-shaped form.)

Card 14. The Fox (9 of clubs)

Fox the Beauty stopped for a while and became thoughtful. What's in her thoughts? Repentance for her tricks? Or maybe she is planning some new intrigues? Or is it just sadness? After all, somewhere in the distance the bells ring, people are sleigh rushing and simply walking, celebrating the vacations, bringing an atmosphere of solemnity to the forest with its inhabitants ... And only the Fox is lonely on this holiday of life. Is not it time to ponder why?

Divinatory meanings: *intrigue, manipulation, betrayal, lies, fidgeting, enterprising. The three shell game.*

The appearance of the **Fox** card is always a signal that you need to be alert and treat attentively those who surround you. However, the **Fox** is not always an unfavorable card. For example, the appearance of her next to the **Clover** speaks about the possibility of you having creative ideas that can bring good luck.

Here we must take into account that in the Lenormand system, as in many other mantic systems, there is no division only into “good” and “bad,” or “black” and “white.” We must carefully look at neighboring cards, the meaning of which can vary depending on their location. For example, the sequence of **Fox** + **Garden** means the possibility of intrigue at a party, while the sequence of **Garden** + **Fox** can indicate that the party is meticulously organized and intricately decorated.

Card 15. The Bear (10 of clubs)

The strong and kind bear cannot refuse merriment to children, even if he has to bend slightly and suffer their whims. He behaves himself with two young ladies very wisely and kindly. They are so playful! Well, how can he upset them by not taking part in their games? The girls are jumping with impatience; one of them has joyfully put her stylish hat on her brown friend's head. And so they are dancing together round after round.

***Divinatory meanings:** strength, endurance, patience, virile energy, reliability. Material well-being. Protection, custody by a powerful man.*

The **Bear** card can also say that the querent has faced a rough primitive energy and the situation requires careful consideration. As Walter Kelly said, “We met the enemy, and this enemy is ourselves.” The advice is to try to keep under control the baser instincts and dark sides of your character.

Marcus Katz and Tali Goodwin in their book suggest that the **Bear** can be symbolic of business and finance. They say, “Take for example the bear-market in share trading. This is where when the value of stocks is down, this is seen by some in finance as an

opportunity to trade in on this, by buying up the shares when they are at a low and then at a later date when the price is high to sell at a profit.”

Card 16. The Star (6 of hearts)

“If the stars are lit, does it mean that someone needs it?” In a magical New Year's time, two angels of different ages carry light, warmth and hope to human homes and hearts. A bright guiding star illuminates their way. How beautiful their faces are, how noble the manners, how tangible their unselfish desire to warm the hearts and fill them with love!

***Divinatory meanings:** harmony, hope, glory, success, dream. Tempting prospects. Romantic relationship.*

The Star of Bethlehem is a mysterious celestial phenomenon, which, according to the Gospel of Matthew, was called the “star” by the Magi. Seeing this “star” in the east and deciding that the “King of the Jews” was born, they came to Jerusalem to worship him. Not finding there what they sought, the Magi, on the advice of King Herod, went to Bethlehem of Judea, and “the star that they saw in the east went before them, finally came and stopped above the place where the Child was.” Now the star is an important attribute of the celebration of Christmas among Orthodox Christians and Catholics.

In the Christmas Oracle, of course, the Bethlehem star is placed on this card. In the common interpretation, the **Star** card talks about the clarity of the vision of the ultimate goal, to which one should strive, not allowing oneself to evade one’s destiny.

Card 17. The Stork (queen of hearts)

“Stork on the roof, happiness under the roof, peace on earth.” The great creation of Heaven is the birth of a child. Especially the long-awaited one. Especially born in this wonderful time, that is full of miracles. The old man does not believe that an imposing bird brought a gift to his house. He even brought a lantern and in

its light carefully scrutinizes whether or not the baby is a phantom. How wonderfully the baby looks! Despite such a young age, he is already interested in complicated things. Moreover, they carry him away. Perhaps this is a future inventor.

Divinatory meanings: family, support, birth of a child, addition to the family. Change of place of residence. Pleasant news.

The old postcard, which served as the basis for this card, depicts a baby brought to Saturn by a stork. We can guess what fate awaits this baby, but we suggest looking at the plot from the point of view of the coming new year: the old year is leaving, the new one came (brought by the stork) for the time span allowed to him, and the countdown with the hourglass has already begun.

Card 18. The Dog (10 of hearts)

“Give, Jim, for luck, your paw to me.” A dog is a symbol of fidelity, of service from a pure heart. It is a friend who never betrays and virtually a full-value member of the family — except that it speaks its own language. Precious are congratulations from this creature! The dog carries a gift in his jaws, a spruce branch interspersed with flowers. Pride glows in the dog's eyes. Obviously, someone important is calling it and waits ... And the animal readily follows the call.

Divinatory meanings: soul mate or friend you can trust. Loyalty, reliability. Beloved person.

A caution from the book, *Learning Lenormand*: “From a negative stance is there a certain somebody who you have welcomed into your life who may end up biting the hand that feeds them? There is a need to take charge and let others know you are top dog!”

Card 19. The Tower (6 of spades)

“I'm sitting high, looking far” — this expression can be attributed to a tower. It is high and unassailable. However, is this loneliness or independence? Perhaps, that depends. Our tower is cheerful.

Gathered on it are firefighter musicians who while in expectation of a clock ringing are amusing people in the square with their Christmas masterpieces. The atmosphere of celebration and fun prevails. People can safely celebrate Christmas — their safety is under control and protection.

Divinatory meanings: *stability, protection, security. Power, ambition. Steadiness, durability.*

The player landing on the **Tower** in *The Game of Hope* was instructed in this way: “To enjoy the pleasant vista from the Tower, one pays 2 marks.” From that we can conclude that the view from the tower was beautiful, and the meaning of the **Tower** card is that one must be prepared for what has not happened yet, having “viewed” the situation from all sides. Knowledge of the true state of things is very important for achieving material prosperity and enjoyment of life in general.

Card 20. The Garden (8 of spades)

Despite the cold, joyous are wintry entertainments! This is a great opportunity to present oneself and to watch others. It's time for flirting and making new acquaintances. Two young men are trying as they can to please the young ladies, pushing the sleigh in which they are seated. The girls are attitudinizing, obviously not wanting to show their interest in the young men immediately. However, even their playfully inclined heads tell that courtship is pleasant to them. A dog is barking cheerfully, approving the scene. All around them there, people are socializing, walking in companies and couples, exchanging sentences, retelling stories they heard from others.

Divinatory meanings: *celebration. Circle of acquaintances, social events. Communication heart to heart.*

Communication was an important part of leisure time in the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is for the sake of communication that visits, parties and promenades were organized. In winter, walking was replaced by skating on special rinks and frozen

ponds. The **Garden** card, one of the meanings of which is communicating with like-minded people and establishing contacts, perhaps with a touch of romance, is based on the postcard entitled “Skating.”

This pastime was very conducive to making acquaintances; moreover, under the guise of teaching skating, a gentleman had the opportunity to embrace a lady and hold her hand, and this did not look like “improper behavior.”

Card 21. The Mountain (8 of clubs)

A girl went to the forest for miracles — and lost her way. Or maybe it was at the behest of her evil stepmother who sent her for flowers in the winter cold, that she found herself among the endless mountains and hills? All around is only the silence and snow, where one can be stuck and not get out. However, the heart of a harsh mountain softened. It found the girl and pulled her out of the snow-white trap. The mountain turned a gray-haired old man who showed the girl the way home. He even gave her a Christmas tree and a fluffy fur coat, and did not forget to conjure some flowers into her basket. Was it perhaps Santa Claus himself who decided to start working miracles?

Divinatory meanings: *obstacles, summits that need to be “conquered.” Overcoming obstacles. “Fight and seek, find and do not give up.”*

The **Mountain** card can be called a symbol of vitality, fortitude, ability to overcome difficulties and not to break in the most severe circumstances. Since mountains are considered in some traditions “bones” of the Earth, when considering the issue of health, this card can indicate problems with the spine or the locomotor system as a whole. Answering questions about career growth and falling out next to the significator card, the **Mountain** indicates difficulties and obstacles that will have to be overcome. To find out how to do this, look at the neighboring cards.

Card 22. The Ways/the Crossroads (ace of diamonds)

Santa Claus has filled his sledge with his gifts and began to go around towns and villages, congratulating the inhabitants. But now he finds himself at a crossroads and can not decide which way to turn.

Divinatory meanings: roads. Decision, choice. Polysemy, many meanings. Exit the problem by defining a strategy.

Crossroads is a symbol of choice, but at the same time of the unity of opposites. This is a meeting place of time and space, a place magical and dangerous, where there are demons and witches. The **Ways** card can indicate the querent having encountered a problem that is essentially incapable of understanding, and at the same time, it encourages action — making a decision and finding within oneself the strength to move forward.

The name of this card is “speaking,” but for an exact interpretation, it is necessary to look at other cards.

Card 23. The Mice (7 of clubs)

Hard-working and united people are those mice! They are trying to keep together, symbolizing joint work. The father of the family fulfills an honorable mission — standing on a ruddy apple, he lights a candle on the festive tree with a splinter. The mother is obviously carrying some delicious foods for the festive table. Both are modestly but elegantly dressed. Hope shines in the eyes of the father. Who knows, maybe he made a wish that will come true as soon as the candle burns?

Divinatory meanings: anxiety, loss. Teamwork. Loot. Unpleasant details. Theft, disease.

The myth about elephants being afraid of mice is very revealing and allegorical. Analyzing the **Mice** card in the light of this allegory, we can read its message like this: often in the implementation of a grand plan, mistakes in small and seemingly insignificant details lead to failures. No wonder they say that the

devil is in the details. The **Mice** card cautions: never miss important trifles; otherwise, your job may fail. On the other hand, if the **Mice** card fell out, you have to detect whether or not you have drowned in small things, doing “mouse fuss” and missing something important. In combination with the **House** card, the **Mice** can indicate possibility of theft in the most literal sense of the word.

Card 24. The Heart (jack of hearts)

“Heart, you do not want quiescence... Thank you, Heart, that you know how to love.” Dressing up and decorating themselves with bells, a young knight rushes to the lady of his heart. After all, when can you count on favor, if not in the magical Christmas season? He holds in his hands and gently carries a gingerbread red heart as a symbol of his love. After all, he might fail to find the right words. However, in this way everything will be said ... What will be the beloved one’s answer? The boy hopes for a miracle and for the fulfillment of his most cherished desire very much.

Divinatory meanings: *love, tenderness, understanding. Harmony, rapprochement, pleasure from intimacy. Feelings, joy, happiness.*

It is another card with a “speaking” name. The heart is a symbol of what is dear to us, a symbol of harmony. If this card is among the other favorable cards, its value multiplies many times. However, if the **Heart** is surrounded by unfavorable cards, then, contrary to expectation, this card does not soften their meanings. It is they that affect the **Heart**. Then the heart of the querent absorbs the surrounding negativity, which leads to suffering and “heart wounds.”

Card 25. The Ring (ace of clubs)

“One decision of the two hearts” ... These two, a boy and a girl, are so small and cute! They are so naive and clean! Their love is tender and touching. Embracing, holding hands, they enjoy each other's company inside a circle-ring. Now everything is divided

into two parts — inside and outside the ring. And there is nothing dearer for these two than what is inside.

It is themselves and the feeling that united them. Perhaps, in each of us there lives someone like these little children, and it's time to wake them up. Recall the charm of the moment of souls merging, the joy of being surrounded by loved and loving ones. Bestow upon them the warmth of your soul, which is hidden behind the severe armor we came to wear.

Divinatory meanings: *betrothal, marriage, agreement, unity, union. Commitments, ties, bonds.*

A ring as a closed circle symbolizes integrity and unity. It has no beginning and no end; therefore, it is often associated with eternity and infinity. Its central opening is the place of passage of heavenly power, divine breath. A ring also stands for communication, union or vow.

The **Ring** card in the context of relationships speaks about the union of two hearts, matrimonial fidelity, family equilibrium, and in the context of work it indicates conclusion of contracts. On the negative side, the **Ring** can talk about a feeling of “somebody running rings around me” — about a situation from which it is impossible to get out, about a habit that there is no strength to overcome.

Card 26. The Book (10 of diamonds)

All things known and unknown. All things secret and obvious. Buried deep and lying on the surface. Simple and complex. The book is a source of all knowledge. An open book is ready for dialogue with you. It is ready and glad to answer your questions. A closed book is not so pleasant to look at. It frightens with its inaccessibility. Opening it takes determination. What if something that may be known with its help destroys your value system? Then you will have to make decisions and change something. Anyway, life will never be the same.

Divinatory meanings: projects, research, discoveries. Sacred knowledge, secrets. Analysis, unforeseen events. Education.

For this card, an old postcard was chosen, on which several books are depicted, and only one of them is open. The picture seems to show us the years passed, lived through (the closed books), and the new year (the open book, as if offering itself for us to read). As for the **Book** card, some fortune tellers take into account the direction in which the book is opened in the picture. In this direction, they believe, one can find indication on what kind of information will be disclosed.

Card 27. The Letter (7 of spades)

A young lady, having written a wish letter to Santa Claus, puts on her most beautiful outfit and fashionable boots to drop the letter into the mailbox personally. However, she does not know about some surprise. The wizard peeps through the window, as if waiting for her. Who knows, perhaps, the girl's wish will come true much sooner than she expected?

Divinatory meanings: news, communication, correspondence, documents, business papers.

“Whoever receives the **Letter** has to pay a fee of 2 marks for the bearer,” says the instructions to *The Game of Hope*, which indicates the importance of this card. “The greatest luxury is the luxury of human communication,” said Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Perhaps this also applies to communication in the epistolary genre.

A letter is the most ancient form of communication. For many centuries, written correspondence was the only way to communicate at great distances. Today, the message in the envelope, pictured on the **Letter** card, means establishing contacts between people in any written form, including e-mail, social network chat or texting by cell phone.

Card 28. The Gentleman (ace of hearts)

A young man walks pensively. Who knows what or who takes his thoughts? What does the blush on his cheeks indicates— good health or romantic thoughts?

This card is the significator of a man. It can be a father, a husband, a son, a brother, a fiancé, a lover or other significant male person. It is entered in the layout to indicate the presence of the man in the situation in question. Important information will give the neighboring cards.

The **Man** is an *oriented* card, that is, in the interpretation of a layout one must take into account the direction that its character is looking at.

Card 29. The Lady (ace of spades)

A young lady is walking along familiar neighborhoods. However, she does not forget to look back, smartening up: is there any object suitable for flirting walking nearby? This card is the woman's significator. It can be a mother, wife, daughter, sister, bride, lover or other significant female person. It is entered in the layout to indicate the presence of a woman in the situation in question. Important information is carried by neighboring cards.

In the original *Game of Hope* deck, which is the prototype of the classic *Petit Lenormand* deck, the **Man** and the **Woman** are depicted as a couple. They are facing each other; the man holds a cane, and the woman a fan. For our wintry Christmas deck a postcard was chosen, on which the woman holds a muff.

Card 30. The Lily (king of spades)

It seems that these pure white flowers are flowing from the cornucopia in the hands of the angel in an endless stream. The angel rejoices that he can fill the world with beauty of this kind. A magical smile plays on the lips; the hands are frozen in a beautiful bend. Concentrated and monotonous is his occupation. However, it seems, the angel does not get tired of it at all and is penetrated by the process deeper and deeper.

Divinatory meanings: peace, contentment, serenity. Purity, nobility, innocence. Maturity, wisdom.

Lily is a symbol of purity, grandeur and innocence. It also acts as a symbol of the three Christian virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, and represents the trinity of mind, soul and body. Accordingly, the meanings of the Lenormand **Lily** can stretch from the most sacred to the most worldly.

Card 31. The Sun (ace of diamonds)

On Christmas night, a girl is having a dream. She sees herself as an angel standing on the dais in the rays of the rising sun. She is happy and festive in her soul. With her handfuls she takes flowers from a large basket and showers them all around the world, sharing her joy and happiness. An old man, adhering to the edge of the cliff, descends, giving way for the girl to the top of glory.

Divinatory meanings: success, recognition, happiness. Glory, fame. Joy. Support, strength.

The authors of *Learning Lenormand* say, “In a professional context the **Sun** indicates advancement and recognition, although again with the **Moon** it would provide prediction of a publically recognized advancement. The **Sun** is a pat on the head, the **Moon** is a round of applause in this case.” The postcard chosen for the **Sun** card re-plays the theme of the New Year coming and the old year going.

Card 32. The Moon (8 of hearts)

Having floated a lot and seen enough of people opening their clapping bottles and blinking over playful bubbles, the angel kids decided to play a trick on the Moon and brought a bottle of champagne straight to her lips. The Moon took this indulgently and was not angry at all. However, she explained to the kids that, before anything can be done, they should think carefully about the consequences.

***Divinatory meanings:** care, attention, custody. Mother's love. Creativity. Deep ancestral connections and roots. Emotions, feelings.*

The Moon is the most important heavenly light after the Sun. The symbolism of the Moon is very complex. The power of this satellite was marked long ago by Cicero, who pointed out that “every month the Moon passes the trajectory that takes the Sun a year to complete.” In the Lenormand deck, in addition to the already mentioned meanings, the **Moon** is the card of recognition and appreciation. It can point to the tense state of a person who worries about what others think or say about him or her. Asking the question of the time limits, the **Moon** card can indicate an interval of twenty-eight days.

Card 33. The Key (8 of diamonds)

At any time of the year and in any weather, the magic key will open and/or close any door. What secrets are hidden behind it, who knows? The bell will ring, the gate will open and ... The fairy tale begins!

***Divinatory meanings:** questions answered, signs and omens. Opportunities that contribute to the resolution of the situation. The mystery of life.*

Depicted on the card is a bouquet of holly, from which a key hangs. Holly is another Christmas symbol. This plant has the ability to remain green and beautiful even in winter, when nature is deprived of most of its colors. The Romans loved this plant, considering it a creation of Saturn.

During exuberant celebrations of the Saturnalia (the prototype of the Christian Carnival), the townsfolk gave each other holly wreaths and decorated with them their houses. Centuries later, while the bulk of the Romans continued to celebrate the Saturnalia, early Christians began to celebrate Christmas secretly. To avoid persecution, they, like everyone else, decorated their houses with holly wreaths.

When Christianity prevailed, holly became a recognized symbol of Christmas. According to one legend, it was from this plant that the “crown of thorns” of Christ was made (see Matthew 27:29), and the holly berries, originally white, reddened from the blood of the Savior.

The key hanging on the Christmas bouquet symbolizes the extraordinary secrets that will open to the fortune teller on Christmas, as Christmas fortune telling, as you know, is the most magical of all.

Card 34. The Fishes (king of diamonds)

Christmas night is when all dreams come true. A little girl woke up early in the morning after the Christmas night and ran to see if her wish had been fulfilled — whether there were fishes in the aquarium, empty even last night. Seeing the goldfishes in the water, she froze with admiration and happiness. The dog, girl's faithful friend, looks at the fishes and the host with equal enthusiasm, rejoicing with all its good heart for her. The desire was fulfilled, and in reward for the faith and patience someone put a bouquet for the girl next to the aquarium.

Divinatory meanings: *successful realization, prosperity, luck, catch, trophy, reward.*

Fishes inhabiting the aquatic environment are perceived in deep psychology as a symbol of the unconscious, and therefore the personification of the “living” content of the depths of the individual's subconsciousness. Therefore, the **Fishes** card can indicate hidden desires and unspoken secret feelings.

If the **Fishes** fall out below the significator card, this can mean that a person understands their deep emotions. In the material sense, the **Fishes** card symbolizes finance and luck, as well as all the resources that can be involved to “feed people,” just as Jesus has fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes.

Card 35. The Anchor (9 of spades)

Anchor is a symbol of firmness, solidity, steadfastness. Under any circumstances, in any situation, whatever has found its place in life cannot be moved. To this fidelity we sing glory! The anchor is wrapped in flowers in gratitude for the fact that we can always rely on it.

Divinatory meanings: *courage, perseverance, determination. Stability, quiet pier.*

Returning to *The Game of Hope* as the prototype of *The Petit Lenormand* fortune telling cards, it must be noted that the **Anchor** is the most important card. To get unto it is the ultimate goal of the game, so the **Anchor** is the “card of hope,” giving the name to the whole game. In the interpretation of a layout, the meaning of the **Anchor**, like all other Lenormand cards, depends on its environment. Therefore, it can mean stability during a storm and a saving anchor, and it can also mean stagnation and standstill, not allowing one to make a move.

Card 36. The Cross (6 of clubs)

The girl is thoughtful, but without any sadness. Something bright and clear emanates from this girl — trust. Trust to the world around her and to the forces that gave her life and protect her. Her way may be full of thorns, but she will pass it safely — sometimes being sad, sometimes joyful, and sometimes not even giving a thought. One thing will remain with her forever — her faith.

Divinatory meanings: *suffering, anxiety. Tests. Redemption. Fate. Service.*

In *The Game of Hope*, if you skip the **Anchor** card you get on the **Cross** card so the game is not over for you. Therefore, the **Cross** card, symbolizing the irrevocable end to hopes, calls for the preservation of faith on the threshold of difficult times — it calls to “bear your cross and believe.”

Cards Backside

The first Christmas wreath was made by the Lutheran theologian Johann Hinrich Wichern for his young pupils in Hamburg. Children waited for the holiday with such impatience that they kept asking if Christmas had already come. It was then that a symbol for Advent (the period of fasting, waiting and preparation for the Nativity of Christ) was born, a Christmas wreath.

Christmas wreath can be without candles, and it can be placed not only on a horizontal surface, but also on a door.

When the card is lying backside up, it is called “closed.” Therefore, considering the backside a closed door, we placed on it a wreath, an invariable attribute of Christmas.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We wish everyone undershoot to the **Cross** card and soft landing on the **Anchor** card!