

La Cartomancie Lenormand Complète

Avec Mlle. TaliTarot

L'Art de Tirer les Cartes [The Method of Using the Cards]

“Donnant la maniere infallible de connaitre le passé, le present et l’avenir, tant pour soi-meme, que pour autrui, d’aprese lese plus celebres cartomanciens tells que la Mlle. Lenormand”.

[Giving the infallible way of knowing the past, present and future, both for oneself, for others, in the manner of most famous Cartomancers such as Mlle. Lenormand].

Introduction

Hello fellow *Cartomanciens*, and welcome to my Lenormand introduction course, which covers this salon-style reading of cards in six lessons. You will need a Lenormand-style deck, actually a “petit” Lenormand deck, which has 36 cards, for this course.

I particularly like using the *Blue Owl* version, although I have a soft-spot for the *Piatnik* deck from Vienna. Created in 1942, the chintzy yet stylish design of this deck of cards reflect the time period. Warner Brother movies especially spring to mind, look at the **The Ship** card and see how this conjures up an image of *Now Voyager (1942)* with Joan Crawford, where the downtrodden character Charlotte Vale escapes on a cruise-ship and returns dramatically transformed.

If you have not come across this old movie, check it out online, and see how the theme of ‘journey, transformation and rites of passage’ assists your understanding of **The Ship** card. The movie puts me in mood for reading in this style, and this is what makes the Lenormand very special - it has one voice but many different accents.

If you are looking for a contemporary deck, you can try the *Mystical Lenormand* by Urban Trosch, published by US Games Systems. An interesting blended deck is by Edmund Zebrowski, which uses Pamela Colman-Smith artwork in collage to create *Pixie’s Astounding Lenormand Deck*.

The Structure of this Course

As this is a beginner's course, we will be covering our unique ways of teaching Lenormand reading, which come from our training experience and approach to Tarot called *Tarosophy*. This is a way of modelling how experienced readers unconsciously read cards, and then we teach those patterns as essential skills through fun exercises and games. This installs the **skill** quickly, and only then we present a **method** in which that skill makes sense. We then give it an **application**, which is a practical task to practice the skill.

When these come together, students experience an "Aha!" moment that is priceless and this works very well with Tarot. It is usually the case that students try learning one card at a time, or memorise keywords, or try difficult methods out-of-order, or attempt to "just use intuition" without any basic understanding of the images – all these make learning hard work, and it is not the way we are going to do it here!

So, we will be covering six lessons, and I'd love it if we can discuss your experience of the course in our group, so I can make adjustments as we go along. This is the first time I have taught Lenormand outside my own practice, so I am happy to take your guidance.

There will be an intermediate class continuing on from this one, however that will be for Citizens and Patrons of Tarot-Town, who pay \$1/month. You can easily upgrade your membership at any time, and there is a lot more material on Citizen Streets, to which the intermediate Lenormand lessons will be added.

I also have an advanced course in preparation, which will be in a new venue for the members of all Tarosophy Tarot Associations, which will be announced on World Tarot Day, May 25th 2012. We have been preparing this venue for over six months now, and it is almost ready to go live for Tarot Professionals worldwide.

You can find links to Lenormand decks and suppliers in our cosy Tarot-Town Lenormand Salon group.

The Lessons

We will actually be covering a lot during this course, however, as Tarot, the Lenormand tradition is as rich and layered as those who read it. There are many styles and approaches, many methods and complexities – I will here take us into the bare bones of the system, to ensure that you feel comfortable performing both simple freestyle readings with the deck as well as the elegant and comprehensive *Grand Tableau* method.

The lessons are given appropriately French names:

1. Première Leçon: Signification individuelle des cartes
2. Deuxième Leçon: Signification relative des cartes
3. Troisième Leçon: Le Grand Tableau
4. Quatrième Leçon: Cherchez la Femme
5. Cinquième Leçon: Aide Memoirs
6. Sixième Leçon: Denouement, Reading En Plein Air

A Bit of History Before We Begin

“Une sibylle est bien supérieure à la raison et au bon sens” [A Sibylle is above reason and common understanding”] M. A. Lenormand.



The Lenormand cards are named after Mlle. Lenormand (1768 – 1843), however they actually arose after her death.

Her story is best told by Decker, Dummett and Depaulis in *A Wicked Pack of Cards* (1996) and which covers the historical references in some detail. Her work *Les souvenirs prophétiques d'une sibylle sur les causes secrètes de son arrestation* (1814) is typical of her output, being a sort of scandal-sheet of its time.

What cards she actually used as part of her involvement in the growing movement of “tireurs de cartes” (fortune-tellers of cards) is somewhat vague. There are references to “Thoth”, and “strange figures” on the cards; in her own words, she speaks about using a “blazing mirror”, the “thirty-three Greek sticks” (an opportunity for someone to do more research there!), and a variety of grimoires, wands and talismans. There is no mention of Tarot.

It is in her 1817 work, *Les Oracles Sibyllins*, where we learn more about her apparent methodology and meanings; she appears to use a piquet pack (32 cards) and derives such meanings as “the King of Spades, together with the 8 of Diamonds, means that a skilful man has made trials to stop, if it is possible, the progression of illness ...” (p. 124, *A Wicked Pack of Cards*). She also appears to refer to the “78 tharot cards”, including The *Fol*, Devil and Death.

However she worked, others followed after her death, including Mme Clément, who wrote the “Bleeding Raven”, a book on fortune-telling which was actually based on Etteilla’s earlier work and cards.

It was not until two years after her death that the “*Grand Jeu de Mlle Lenormand*” was first published, based on a 52-card pack, with astrological, mythical and symbolic layers on every card. This is the deck still published by Grimaud. This was followed by a German 55-card version, “*Wahrsage-Karten der berühmten Mlle Le Normand*” in about 1850. These were followed by many miniature decks, particularly in Germany, of 36 cards, called “*Petit Lenormand*”.

What is lesser-known, and described by Decker, Dummett and dePaulis, is that this petit Lenormand deck is actually based on a “race game” pack of cards, from around 1800, called “The Game of Hope”. This prototype was discovered by Detlef Hoffmann, and clearly shows the symbols and numbers we see in the Petit Lenormand. The game is played with all 36 cards laid out, and a dice. It is suggested in the accompanying booklet that the cards may also be used as a simple question-and-answer fortune-telling system, which is what we will do!

Across Europe there were also many types of card decks and games, including Trappola (c. 1550, see H.T. Morley’s *Old and Curious Playing Cards*, p. 64) and Tarocchi, of course. The number of cards would vary, as would designs; the Suits for example could be Acorns, Leaves, Fruit, even Bells.

Sometimes cards would have German or Latin verses upon them, which we see in some Lenormand cards, with a piece of poetry to give the card meaning. Often the cards would be fully illustrated, as we see below in the Two of Vases and Three of Vases from a deck designed by Jost Ammon (c. 1570). This deck was actually designed, like many, to be an instructive deck, here teaching the virtues of book-making over drinking. A lesson for us all.



There are also Piquet packs, with the usual three court cards of Valet, Queen and King, and even decks that were satirical of current situations; one deck in 1720 was based on the South Sea and Mississippi companies stock crash, with the verse on the Ace of Hearts saying “The Southern Mermaid I tried to catch in vain, she took the money and left me the empty book”. It seems like these cards would be just as relevant today.

A Word About Tarot and Lenormand

The Lenormand cards are not a Tarot deck. It may be a bit obvious to say, yet it is important to remember that as a tarot reader, you must change your mind about certain habits of reading and interpretation. There are two significant differences, which again may be obvious but bear discussion:

1. The Lenormand cards do not have an overarching structure/pattern.
2. The Lenormand cards are individual symbols, not metaphors or archetypes.



In the first case, we know in Tarot that we usually have a 78-card deck, and expect to find four suits, with progressive structures of Ace to Ten, and Court Cards, which is a pattern in all four suits, and so on. In the Lenormand cards we simply have a collection of thirty-six images.

These may be collected in several sets, for example, several of them show animals (“Mice”), several are people (“The Man”), and several are inanimate objects, (“The Key”) etc. however there is no single pattern or system underneath this collection.

In the second case, we find ourselves with an issue in some “oracle” decks. That is, there is only a single symbol on the card. In the Piatnik “Ship” (3/10 Spades) we may be able to glean some further interpretations from the steam, waves, flags, etc, but the overall symbol is merely “Ship”, which may be depicted in a totally different way in another deck, i.e. as a Clipper on the Blue Owl version.



I think this is often why European books on the Lenormand are full of keywords and combinations for the cards, which can be difficult to learn, impossible to recall and then are rigid in their set interpretations. When I looked at several books of Symbolism, the nature of a “Ship” as a symbol became far more wide-reaching and flexible.

A third issue is simply that we must forget our tarot-training in terms of some symbols; here in Lenormand-space the Tower card is nothing at all to do with the “House of God Struck by Lightning” in Tarot and all that this means.

And finally, the Lenormand cards and similar oracle or cartomantic cards are usually best read in **context** with surrounding cards, in the context of position

relative to a layout, and in combination with patterns of cards, such as in diagonal, corners, and so forth. In this sense, reading a Lenormand deck, particularly in a larger layout, is more like consulting an astrological chart than it is a Tarot spread – but we're getting ahead of ourselves now.

Learning the Lenormand Language

As the Lenormand cards have proven popular in France, Germany and across Europe, little of the material is written in English. I'll list some of the standard books and courses towards the end of this introduction course.

Luckily, we have many words that mean the same in both French and English (we'll leave German for the moment!) and some stolen words that we will be using to good effect in our classes, such as *Liaison*, a meaning of the Rider/Messenger card.

A few other terms that will help put us in the Lenormand style-space, which I would encourage you to start using, particularly in our online group:

Salon or Boudoir: not "Office" or "Reading Space"

Sitter: not "Querent"

Sibyl: not "Reader"

Tableau: not "Spread"

You may find other words come more to mind when reading Lenormand, as it has its own particular voice. I can't wait for you to discover its unique spirit as it talks to you, no matter in what accent ...

Première Leçon: Signification individuelle des cartes

[Lesson one: The individual significance of the cards]

In this lesson we are going to look at the basic meanings for the cards, despite the issues that we can learn lots more meanings, the cards (like Tarot) can be multivalent (have many meanings depending on their context), and we must never commit such keywords to fixed positions in our memory.

To avoid such bad habits, I have a special technique for you to practice this first week (*quelle surprise!*) which I developed for *78 Days Around the Tarot*. It is called the Keyword Kaleidoscope. It will avoid you getting into a trap of learning individual cards or meanings, which is the usual way of teaching. We often have to “unlearn” this when we have students here, particularly if they have been doing it for several years.

Marcus says it is the same with Kabbalah – people tend to think it easier to learn and teach one *Sephirah* at a time, when in fact they can only be understood in pairs, and in context with the whole. It is a particularly western approach to reduce and analyse to see the whole, when in fact sometimes it is far easier to step back and see the whole picture.

Firstly, I will present you, as is common, a basic list of keywords for each card.

As we progress through the course and this first exercise, you will be able to add to this list.

Table One: Essence Words

1. Rider/Messenger: Communications/Liaison
2. The Clover Leaf: Identity
3. The Ship: Adventure
4. The House: Security
5. The Tree: Longevity
6. The Clouds: Transition
7. The Snake: Stealth
8. The Coffin: Initiation
9. The Bouquet: Appreciation
10. The Scythe: Clearing
11. The Rod/Whip: Service
12. The Birds/Owls: Divination
13. The Child/Little Girl: Ingénue/innocence
14. The Fox: Cunning
15. The Bear: Headstrong
16. The Stars: Creation
17. The Stork: Deliverance
18. The Dog: Co-dependency
19. The Tower: Vision
20. The Garden: communing
21. The Mountain: Durability
22. The Ways: Choice/Decision
23. The Mice: Productivity
24. The Heart: Courage
25. The Ring: Continuity
26. The Book: Knowledge
27. The letter: Sentiment
28. The Gentleman: Analytical
29. The Lady: Intuitive
30. The Lily: Purity
31. The Sun: Will
32. The Moon: Dreams
33. The Key: Access
34. The Fish: Resources
35. The Anchor: Standstill
36. The Cross: Faith

These are not always the standard readings of the cards, but are my *essence* words for the cards, something that captures for me their essential communication - particularly in a tableau. They are also good *seed* keywords for our kaleidoscope.

Premier Exercise: KeyWord Kaleidoscope

The way in which we make meaning out of Tarot images is quite spectacular and mostly unconscious. It is sometimes intuitive, sometimes inspirational. Sometimes it is as obvious as reading a list of standard meanings as a beginner and the interpretation applies accurately to the situation.

Here I am going to give you a practice method to install the unconscious pattern into your own brain – it is like a training wheel that strengthens a particular process in your head. It is the pattern from experienced Tarot readers, only taken out of their heads, polished, and given back to you.

We will start with two cards and move to three, from which the possibilities are endless. You'll be surprised how this works for you, I hope.

I'd then like everyone as a group to share their discoveries in Tarot-Town, so we can discuss what arises for us all. Again, when we do this *en-masse*, you'll be surprised what starts to happen in the group.

Keyword Kaleidoscope

1. Shuffle your deck and take out any two cards, turning them face-up.
2. Write down their two keywords from the list above or your own books.
3. Look at both of them, and say them both out loud or clearly in your head. Move from one to another.
4. See or hear what sensation arises from merging both words.
5. Give that new sensation one word.

It is most important to come up with **one** word, although you may note down other phrases, concepts, feelings, snatches of meaning, etc. The one word is important to install and provoke the unconscious pattern into your head. You have to sort a lot of associative connections and meanings to produce the one

word, and your unconscious is geared to do this automatically, far better than you can do consciously. We trick the conscious mind to keep itself busy producing the one word whilst the unconscious does all the work – easily.

Premier Exemple

I choose two cards, Bouquet (9) and Book (26).

I look up the keywords and I get “Appreciation” and “Knowledge”.

I think about these two words and I get “**Certificate**”. I first thought about “teacher”, then “school” but then “certificate” came to mind very clearly. On further reflection, I can also picture “libraries and learning”, or the awarding of a degree and similar ideas, all about the appreciation of knowledge.

Try it with two cards. You can repeat this exercise as often as you like.



6. Now we move onto using this simple skill to combine meaning from two symbols (and you’ll realise this is what we do with a single Tarot card, which is a *metaphor*, or constellation of symbols) to do something rather special. This is a skill that multiplies in such a way you need nothing more than this in order to read a Grand Tableau of all 36 cards, as we will soon see next week.

Take three cards and lay them out in a triangle.

Repeat the exercise of combining two keywords for each of the three pairings possible. Make a note or write on a slip of paper between the cards the one word which arises out of each pairing.

Deuxième Exemple

In the example that follows I have Tree (5), Mouse (23) and Moon (32).

In my keywords, those cards are **Longevity**, **Productivity** and **Dreams**.

So I firstly consider Tree and Mouse, Longevity and Productivity.

What comes into my mind are ideas of acorns becoming oaks, small things (mice) building up over a long period of time (tree), and suddenly I get the word “**accumulation**”. I write this word down between the two cards.

I then consider Tree and Moon, Longevity and Dreams.

[Don't forget you can use your own keywords, keywords from other books, or just the images if you feel like going totally intuitive. I use this method for Tarot and Lenormand to answer that old question, “Why do the books have different meanings? What is the meaning of that card?” or to work into my mind new words and meanings that are presented by a book.]

So, Tree and Moon, Longevity and Dreams. I somehow get the image of forestry, then factories, like sawmills. I guess this is somewhat inspired by the image on the Moon card. I keep considering, and get “**foresight**”, like planning, long-term vision, that sort of thing. The song “Telegraph Road” by Dire Straits comes to mind. You can do this with songs too.

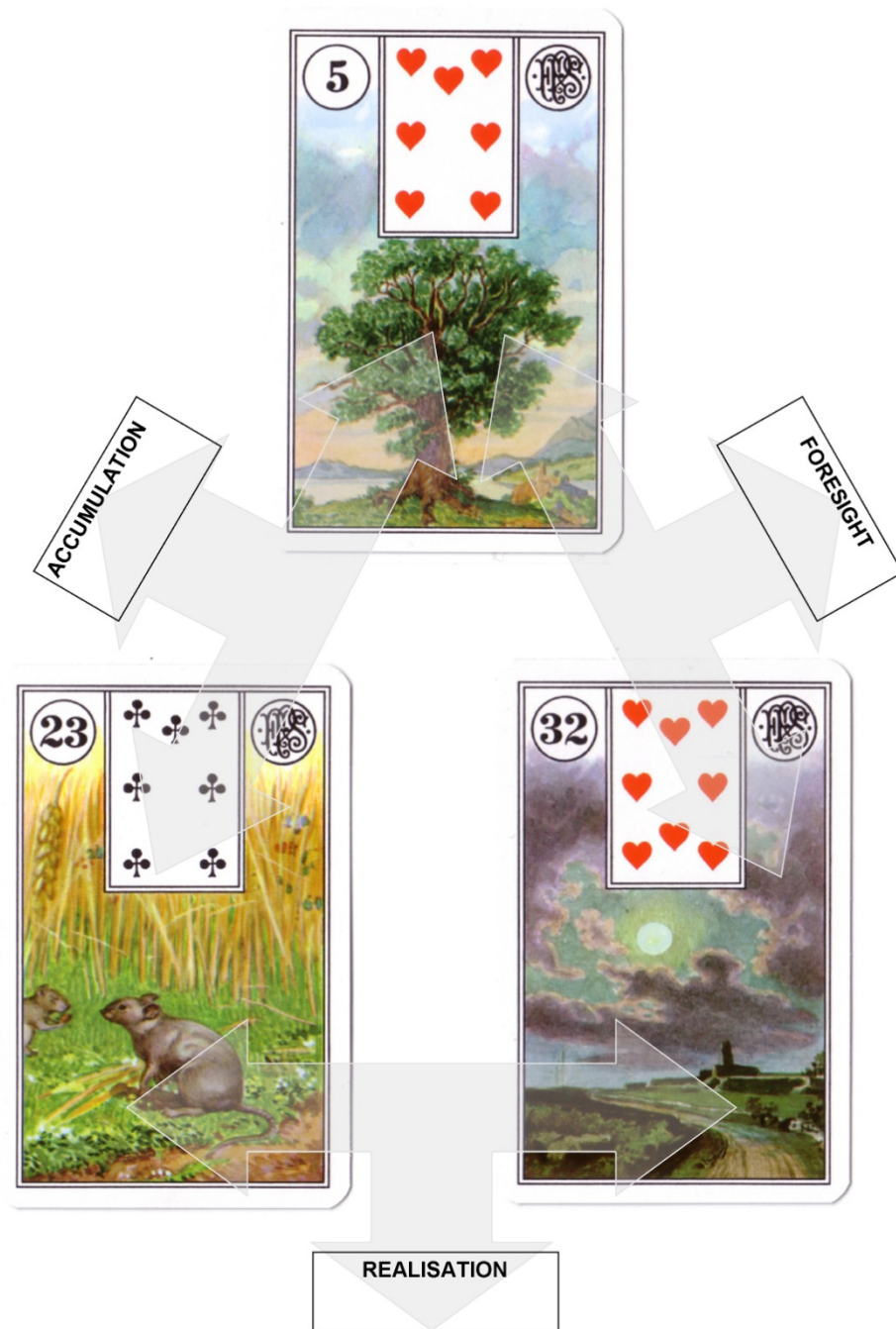
I write this word down between those two cards. You can sketch them out in your journal when you do this exercise, or do it on a really big piece of paper.

Finally I have my third pair, Mice and Moon; Productivity and Dreams.

I mull over these two words (although I quite like “Mice and Moon”, perhaps it is made of cheese after all!) and get ideas arise like “following a calling”, when you work productively because you are working on making your own dream real ... then the word “**realisation**” comes to me, really clearly, so I write that one down.

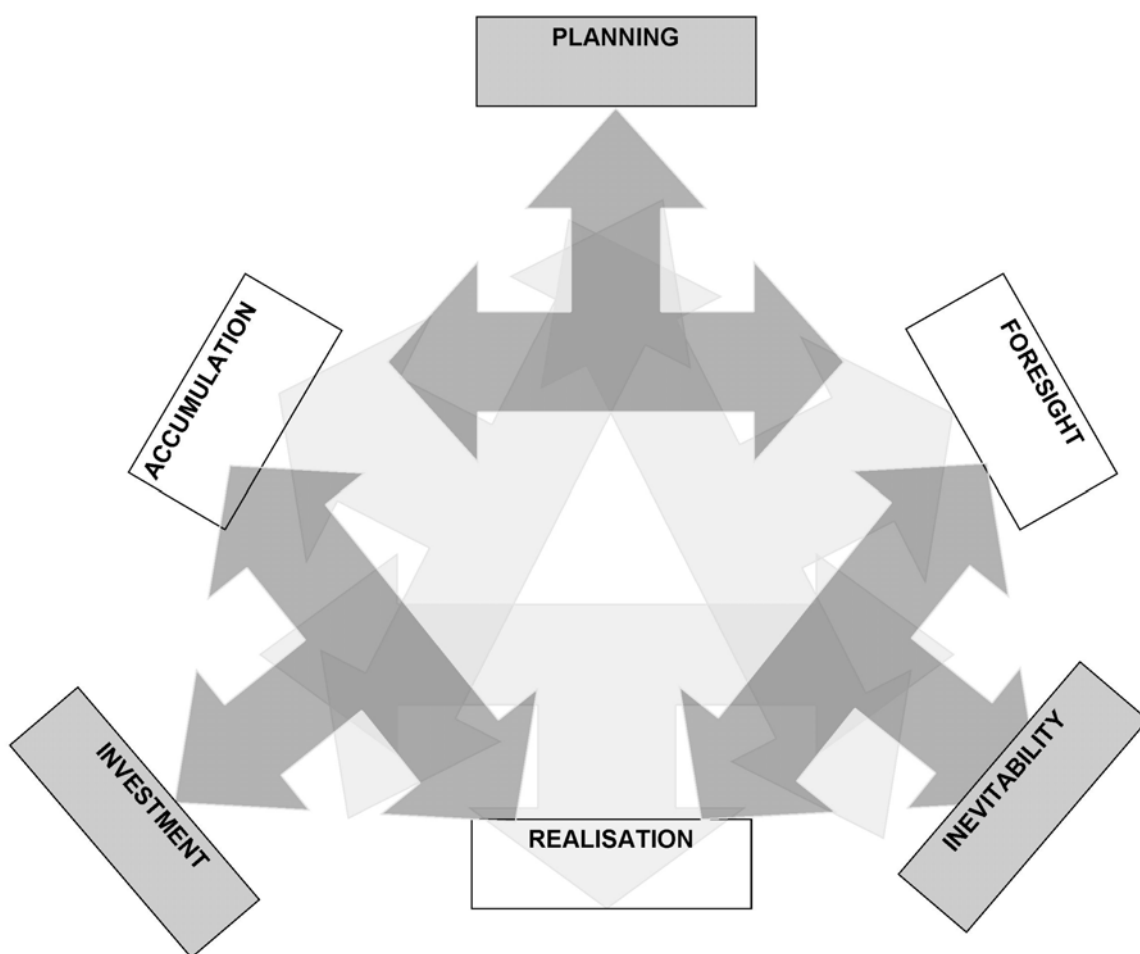
I now have three new words; accumulation, foresight and realisation.

[Don't forget too, these are my words, you'll find your own unique voice. I like to teach in a "clean language" fashion so you can use your own words, ideas, and voice, draw on your own experience, and just plug those into these teaching methods to discover your own style].



7. We now come to the trick, and it really is magic. We can now “kaleidoscope” the words together, both backwards and forwards (remember the last time you held a kaleidoscope tube to your eye and turned the thing one way and another?) to come up with more meanings.

Simply now take the new words and write them on a new triangle, and repeat the process.



So I take Accumulation and Realisation, and out of that I get the idea of “Investment” (“savings” also came to mind, but investment seemed a stronger idea). I mix Realisation and Foresight, and get the sense of “Inevitability” – someone who can realise their plans makes them inevitable. Finally I mix Accumulation and Foresight and out pops “Planning”.

I now have three new words that have *kaleidoscoped* out of the others. You can keep repeating this as much as you like.

7a. Optional Exercise: You can also collapse the three words inwards, to see if you can come up with one word that arises out of all three. You can do this with the first three actual keywords that we gave the cards, or the next layer of three words that you generate, or any combination. This is what goes on unconsciously in the mind of very experienced readers. You'll also recognise it as a fractal if you have ever seen those types of diagrams – it's a range of meanings approaching a never-ending vanishing point of "what the card actually means".

8. We can now, or at any level out, turn this into a more useful exercise by simply making a sentence or story using the three new words. So if I were to take my three new words; investment, inevitability and planning, I might say:

With the right planning and investment, the outcome is inevitable.

And that is the reading of the Tree, Mouse and Moon ... Superb! Bon!

Interestingly enough, my collapsed word for all three was "**reward**". So if these three cards were drawn for a business venture, given that advice above – get investment and plan, don't rush into it, and long-term success is inevitable – the *reward* of the venture would likely be considerable and assured.

Conclusion

Try it and see what happens for you. Practice with as many variations of three cards together, or go back to practising with just two for a while until you get the hang of it and then return to the kaleidoscope. By the way, if you are ever thinking of designing a Tarot deck, or want to work in a new book of meanings into your own readings, the kaleidoscope will work wonders to put all that apparently different information together, leading to unique insights. In effect you are also short-cutting years of actual readings by this method. I like it when we can get a head-start on our readings before we even begin!

Feel free to share in Tarot-Town or ask questions. Like any practice method, it's a lot easier to do than explain, you'll soon see how easy it is, and how it starts to do strange things inside your head when you next read the cards, whether Lenormand or Tarot.

Optional Exercise

Exercer 1: Rapproché et à distance

Each lesson I'll provide an optional exercise game to bridge between the present lesson and the next one following. This first week we're going to play a game of "near and far", or "hot and cold". This will make sense next week and give you a good habit in reading Lenormand, where combination and context is so very important to interpretation.

It's a simple game and based on the Japanese language, where the distance of an object changes the words you use to speak about it. I think this is unique in Japanese and it is very useful to learning the language of the Lenormand.

So, imagine a bear. Imagine you are looking at it on a screen, or far-away, separated by something. What comes to mind? Its movements, perhaps, the way it shambles? So write down below "Shambling" or "Strolling".

Now imagine the bear in the room with you, or very close-up! What comes to mind? Other than "Run!" perhaps "Strength", or "Power" or "Fear". So write that in the other box below. Now repeat the exercise with the following:

| OBJECT | FAR | NEAR |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| | | |
| BEAR | Slow Movement, Strolling | Roar, Power, Fear |
| TREE | | |
| MOON | | |
| GARDEN | | |
| MOUNTAINS | | |
| HEART | | |
| GENTLEMAN | | |

You can of course do this over the week if you have time with all the other cards.

I look forward to sharing with you next week the *Grand Tableau*, so we can really get to grips with the so-called “hardest part” of Lenormand and see if we can make it easy and fun to discover its depths.

Votre très-humble et très-obéissante servante,

Mlle. TaliTarot