

## La Cartomancie Lenormand Complète

### Avec Mlle. TaliTarot

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

The rolling dice, in whom your luck does stand,  
(With whose unhappy chance ye be so wroth)  
Ye know yourself came never in my hand.  
Lo, in this pond be fish and frogs both.  
Cast in your net; but be you leve or loath,  
Hold you content as Fortune liste assign  
[For] it is your own fishing, and not mine.

Thomas More, *Fortune Verses* (c. 1504)

### Troisième Leçon: Le Grand Tableau

Hello fellow *Cartomanciens*, and welcome to the third lesson of my Lenormand introduction course, which covers this salon-style reading of cards.

In this lesson I will introduce the *Grand Tableau*, which you may be surprised to find that you now know how to read using the skills we have covered in our previous two lessons. Whilst it will take practice, you have the essentials already in your head – now we will apply them!

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 25<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **A Cartomantic Revelation**

Before we start this week's practical lesson, I wanted to tell you something really important about cartomancy, and the history of Lenormand and Tarot. It may totally change the way you think about Tarot and is very simple:

***Originally, the cards never had meanings.***

I'll say that again, "the cards never had meanings". To historians, this is an obvious thing; however, for many of us Tarot readers it is perhaps a little hard to get our heads around, having spent our lives learning "the meanings of the cards". So, let's take another look at this revelation, and see how it affects not only the way we think about our cards, and how the Lenormand (and other cards such as Kipper, etc.) fits into the tradition, but **how we read them**.

### **A Bit More History**

Long before Lenormand and Tarot, there was a craze, (a little like the Lenormand, which is now having a second renaissance in English), for "fortune-books". These oracular books contained a variety of verses, giving both questions and answers for all likely predicaments. They were consulted by a range of means; by casting dice, by pulling threads fastened to various pages, by turning a paper wheel embedded in the book, by counting the number of letters in your name, and of course, by drawing cards.

One would then consult an appropriate portion of text, which would often lead (a bit like a contemporary "choose your own adventure" book) to branching avenues of verse and oracle, based on some further combination of your dice or decision.

These books were so popular that even the famous Thomas More and William Lilly translated one such book from the Italian, in about 1500. This was the *Libro delle Sorti* (1474) of Lorenzo Spirti.

There is a similar fortune-telling book in the library of the Royal Society in London, which Marcus visited to view last year. This is the *Triumpho di fortuna* [The Triumph of Fortune] by Sigismondo Fanti, published in Venice in 1527.

The book is full of incredible woodcut drawings, some of which I reproduce below for your private study. You may see some similarity with Tarot images.





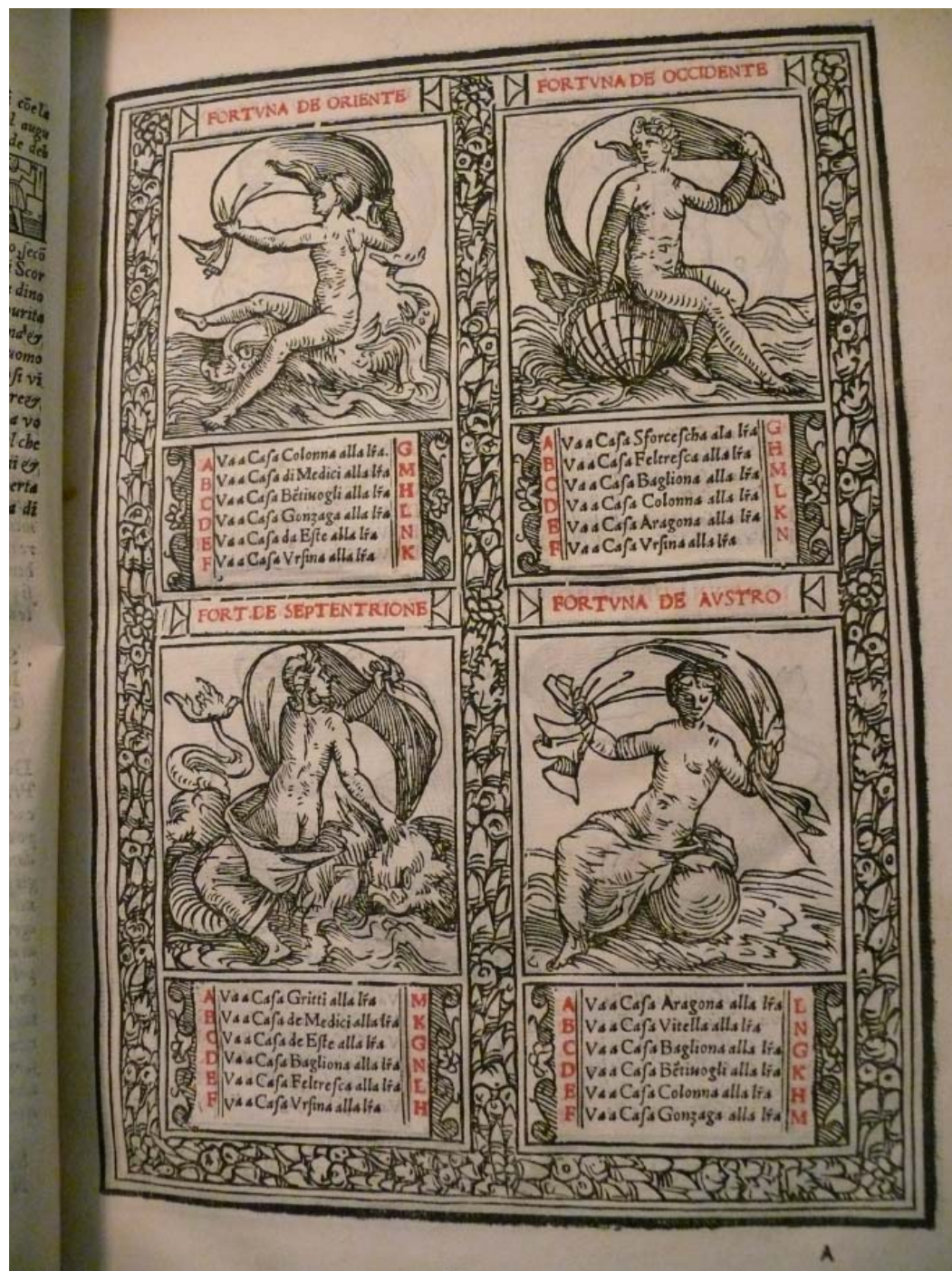
As these books became popular, they eventually started to appear in English equivalents, from the early 1700's onwards. One such original book we went to look at last year had questions such as "Whether children will be dutiful" or "whether you will die rich or poor". Other questions perhaps are more suited to the time, such as "In what kind of cattle, beasts or poultry is it best to deal?"



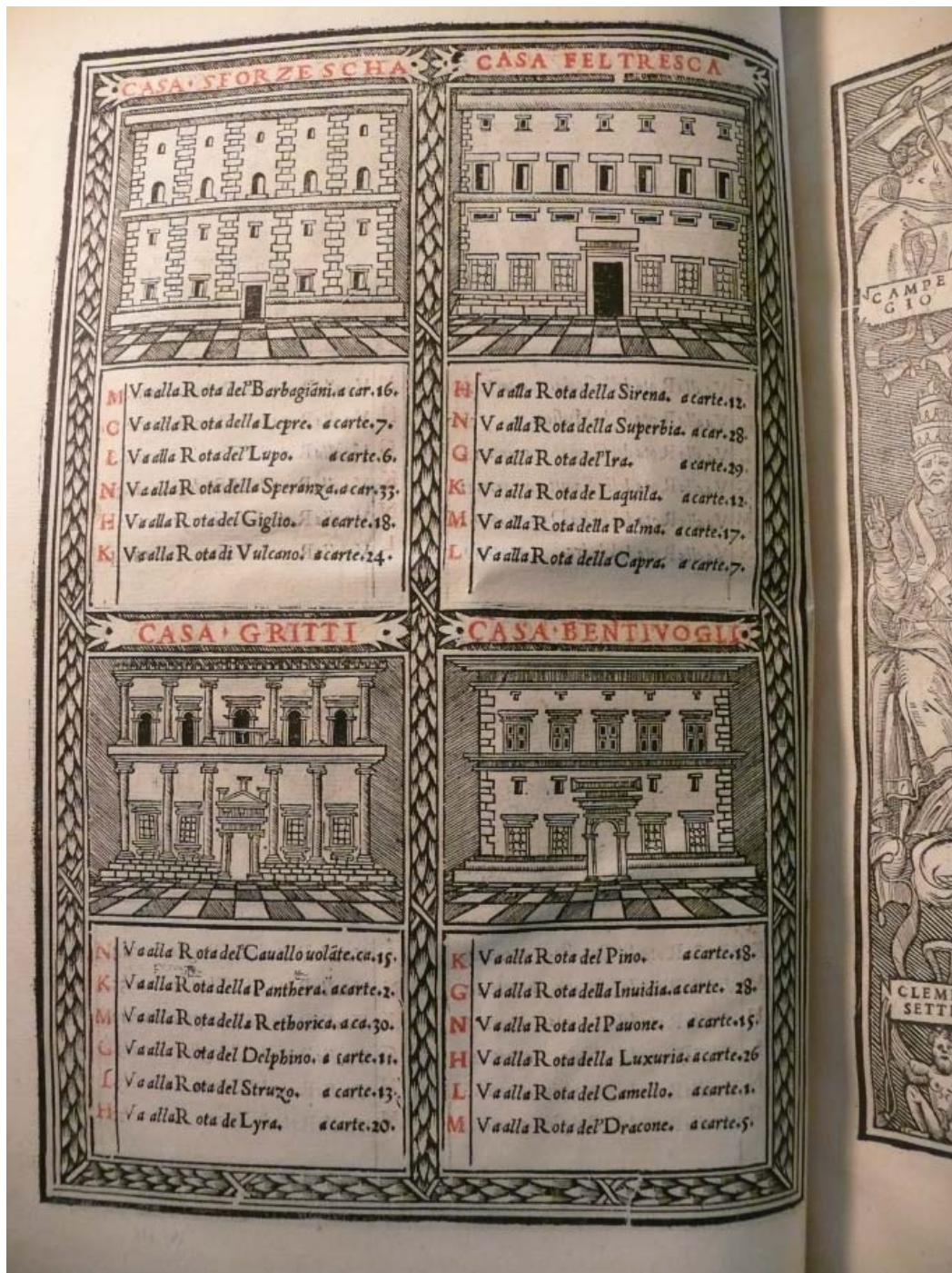
It is interesting that these books often chose the question as well as the answer, making it more of a parlour game.





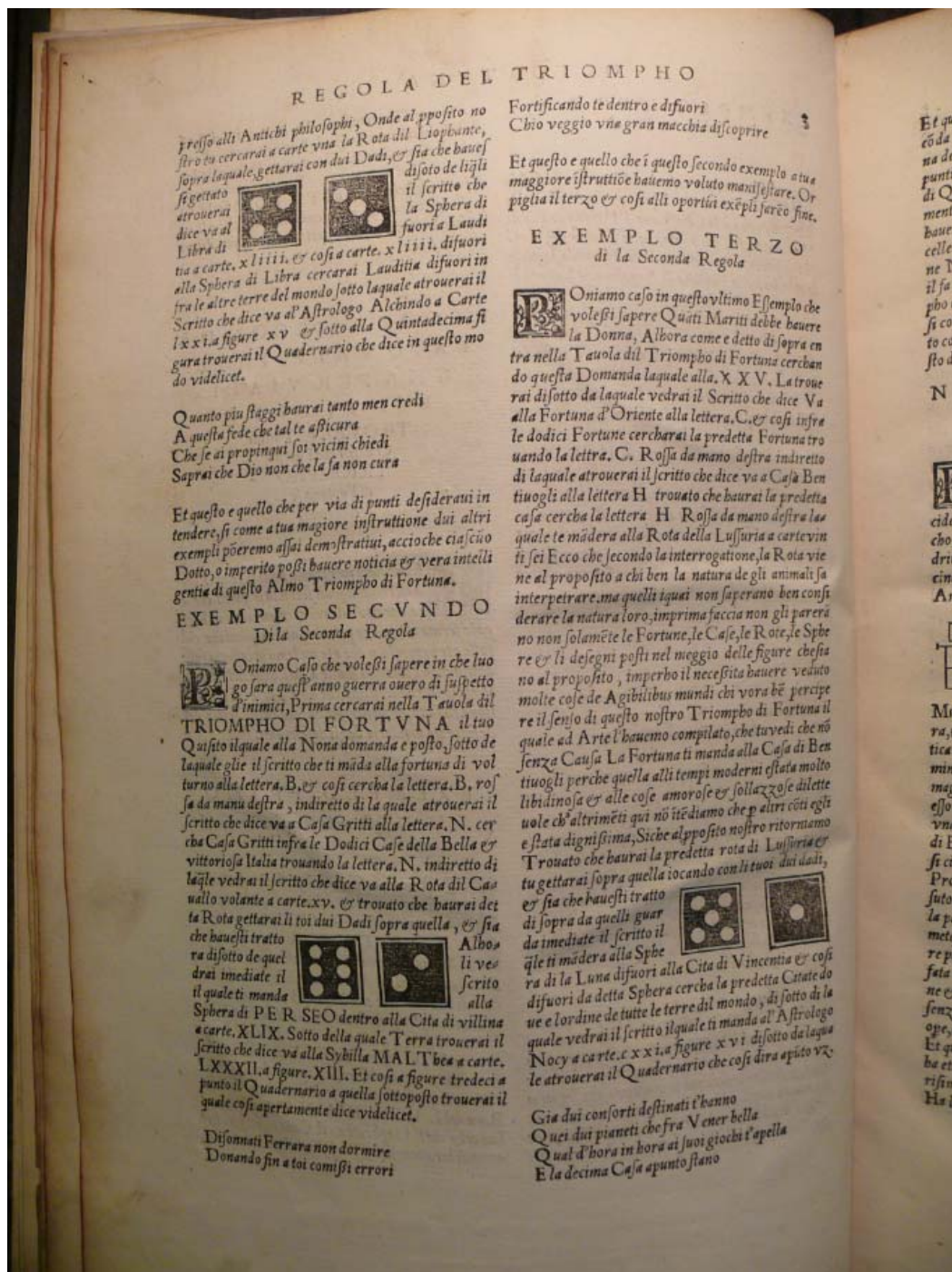






The thing is that as time went on, often these questions, verses and answers were depicted **next to** the playing cards which might have been chosen for that particular route. So it was only a matter of time for people to simplify the whole method (who wanted to buy a big book when you only needed cards?) by writing down a simplified form of the verses on a pack of cards. Also, perhaps it became even more obvious to have a small vignette on the card, to help with the interpretation!





So over time, the cards became stuck with one meaning, one image, one set of interpretations. But this was not how they started – they started as **keys** to unlock a separate book of meanings, a map of routes, and a set of oracles. So when we are reading playing cards, they have no meanings, they just point us to possible verses and meanings. When we read Tarot, they have “traditional” meanings.

**The Lenormand stands as a bridge between these two phases** – the cards only have meanings when considered with the whole tableau, and at the same time have some limited and fixed meanings, such as the cross being faith. In our Lenormand reading, then, we must recall:

***The cards are the keys, not the doors.***

For more on this subject, see:

‘Fortune-telling by the casting of dice’ by W. L. Braekman in *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 52, Iss. 1, 1980.

‘The Genesis of Tudor Interest in Italian’ by George B. Parks in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Vol. 77, No. 5 (Dec., 1962), pp. 529-535.

## Le Grand Tableau

We have seen that the Grand Tableau (hereafter GT) can be laid out in at least two or three different manners, so we will continue to keep things simple with the 9x4 layout. However, before we start, we will look at some simpler layouts, starting with the 3x1 three-card layout.

We also need to introduce the idea of “charged cards” now, which is to say, the cards which act as our pegs in the reading, or compass-points about which we navigate and find our bearings. These are somewhat similar to the significator in a tarot spread, but just enough different to require explanation!

A charged card is taken out of the deck by choice to relate to the question being asked. In general cases, this is the Gentleman card for a male sitter and the Lady card for a female sitter. In other specific instances, the card is chosen according to one’s correspondences and keywords. Here are some main starter cards for you to consider.

### Charged Cards (Key Cards)

Relationship	The Heart
Health	The Bear
Spiritual Life	The Coffin (sometimes used for immediate health issues)
Career	The Fox
Home/Domestic	The House
Education	The Book
Contracts	The Ring
Relocation/Travel	The Ship

The appropriate card is first taken out of the deck and “charged” (in Rune work we would call this “loading”) by concentrating on the card. There are various other actions one can take to charge the card, we do not cover them here, a moment of concentration will suffice.

The card is then placed back in the deck so we know what we are looking for when it is laid out with other cards in any form of layout. It provides a beacon for us to use in highlighting the Tableau. Consider it a lighthouse, shining brightly on the cards around it (but perhaps missing those right next to it) and less brightly on the cards far away from it.

If we are performing a quick three-card spread, we simply shuffle and go through the deck face-up, until we find the charged card. We then select the card above it and the card below it, and lay these out together for our reading.

In any case of shuffling, you may wish the sitter to shuffle, or you shuffle and allow the sitter to then split the deck into three piles (with their left hand) and then re-stack them back into one deck.

### Career Reading (Three Cards)

Let us imagine our sitter has asked about their career. We are to perform a three card spread. We have charged the **Fox** card, and then we shuffle (or allow the sitter to shuffle) and perform a three-deck split. When the cards are placed back in a single pile, we turn them face-up and work through them carefully to locate the charged Fox card.



The card immediately above it, we place down on the table, then the Fox itself, then the card immediately below it. Of course, you can select two cards above and below for a 5-card layout, 3 cards above and below for a 7 card layout, etc.



Illus 1. Career Three-Card Reading

In this example, the **Letter** is to the left and the **Little Girl** to the right of the **Fox**. Using my seed words I see this as an “innocent sentiment”. As a sentiment is a combination of beliefs and emotions, in conjunction with the young child, I read this as being completely guileless with regard to career. Unless this is a sitter who is looking for employment in child-care or other related fields (for example, entertainment) this does not bode well for current job-hunting.

The letter itself may be read literally that they **will** receive an offer however they are not to go into it wide-eyed as otherwise they will be eaten as the fox has caught the bird in the central image. This is very much a warning.

### Nine-Card Reading (Romance)

In this next reading, we look at a charged card for relationships, the **Heart**. Whilst generally in a Grand Tableau reading, we would look mainly at the placement and relationships between the Gentleman and the Lady cards for matters of romance, we can also look at the heart card to see how the emotional state of the sitter is sat within the situation.

In this nine-card reading, we have placed the heart at the centre of the cards, for the purpose of teaching – this will make sense later in this lesson. For now, just work with me “un moment” to look at this layout.



Illus 2. Heart Card (Emotional) Nine-Card Layout

Now take a look at these cards in relationship to each other. One thing that immediately strikes me is that the top three cards, bearing down on the emotional state of the heart, together show (reading right to left in this case) “a proposal of faithful reliability”. The sitters highest expectation of relationship is to be given a long-lasting statement of trust. When we look at the three cards below, we might see that they have reached a standstill in their

self-appreciation (anchor + the bouquet + coffin), the coffin doubly signifying a recent change of state (perhaps a divorce or other break-up) and also their self-initiation and image, so with the bouquet this turns the “appreciation” into a self-image and self-worth state, rather than someone else appreciating.

I hope you can see how we must read the cards **together** first, in batches, sets, montages, vignettes, scenarios, scenes and tableaux. It makes it much easier.

So what about the **Ways** and the **Stork** either side of the heart? Does this give the sitter something promising in their emotional life?

### **Nine-Card Reading (Travel)**

Let's change tack now and do another nine-card reading, this time for a question about travel. A sitter has come to ask us about their prospects for travel – should they look to travel or settle down, for example.

This relates to the charged card of the **Ship**. So we could first place the Ship on the table and then shuffle, cut and draw eight cards to surround it. Or perhaps we could shuffle and find the Ship and then place it on the table and surround it by the next eight cards in the deck. I have another method ... which you'll learn at the end of this lesson – for now, “un petit moment” again to look at this next layout together.





ILLUS 3. Ship Card (Travel) Nine Card Layout

Let us also add that our Sitter in this case is a young man, so we can immediately see that the Gentleman card is appearing in the layout, with the **Clouds** ahead of him, showing change and transition. Whilst he will likely seek stability, the **Tree**, on the other side of that rapid change, he will be forced to travel anyway, as the **Ship** is above him.

Why not use our *Keyword Kaleidoscope* to see what the **Snake** here might mean? So we take a look at **Snake** + **Ship** + **Clouds** as they corner the Gentleman. That's Stealth + Adventure + Transition.

Stealth + Adventure = Spying

Adventure + Transition = Exploration

Stealth + Transition = Disguise

And we can collapse our Kaleidoscope into one word, Spying + Exploration + Disguise = **Safari**. It certainly looks like the cards are suggesting a high-octane adventure type trip, where the Sitter will have to dress up for the climate or culture.

Now you do the same for the **Scythe**, **Sun** and **Messenger** in the top-right corner. They are further away from the Gentleman, but influence somewhat his activities with regard to travel, being on the shadow-side to him of the Ship.

### Nine-Card Reading (Education)

Let's take what we have learnt and practiced in these nine-card methods and now apply it to a Sitter who has come to us to ask a question about education. They wish to leave their current job, but are unsure how to go about re-training or learning, whether they should invest, do it full-time or part-time, or stick with their current career. Whilst this is related to career, it is more about education and upgrading skills, so we charge the **Book** card.



ILLUS 4. Book (Education) Nine Card Layout

In this case, let us imagine a cross first, of vertical and horizontal lines and take a reading as to what is influencing directly the Sitter's perspective on their education, and then look at the diagonal cards to see their routes of choice.

I cover this more in the intermediate and advanced courses, for now, let's use it as a way of applying our skill in two separate examples.





So here we can read the **Stork** and the **Tower** either side of the Book, indicating a *delivery of vision* – almost like getting a clear plan of the future. This shows that the Sitter already has all the information they require to make the decision, like a syllabus of life.

The **Letter** and the **Lilly** top and bottom together show a *pure invitation*, an offer that will be absolutely what the Sitter requires.

ILLUS 4a. Book Cross.

I have not done anything here other than put together my own seed words from the first lesson – we can then work further on our interpretation, perhaps by placing these phrases together to read “you will receive an offer which will meet your vision, and you are advised here to commit yourself to it absolutely cleanly, separating it out from all other concerns – it must remain yours, and doing it for your own self-worth (not for others)”.

Now let's just clarify that with the diagonals.



The **Fox** and **Coffin** seem to be the most “negative” images here, however, they are not so when taken *en masse*; the cunning of the **Fox** with the **Book** shows rapid learning to good effect, and the **Coffin** shows a transition, a new state of affairs, which will arise from the new education. Again, it suggests the Sitter clear their current job and make space for the course alone.

Similarly, the **Ring** and the **Lady** here show that the proposal will be pleasing and emotionally satisfying.

ILLUS 4b. Book Diagonal.

Try using the *Keyword Kaleidoscope* on the four corners together, or other combinations of the nine cards in this layout. You can see how powerful these simple 9x9 layouts can become with just a few simple skills and practice. We will also see how “near and far” comes into play at the end of this lesson.

So we have covered career in a three-card layout, then romped through romance, travel and education in these different nine-card layouts, let's take a final look at further layouts of 3x3 for two other perennial questions; health and spirituality.

In these two cases, I will give you a couple of pointers, then ask you to look at the readings and apply your skills and practice to interpret the layouts.

## Nine-Card Reading (Health)



ILLUS 5. Bear (Health) Nine Card Layout

### Premier Exercise: Bear Reading

What will be good for the Sitter's health according to this layout?

What tends to draw the Sitter to practices which are bad for their health?

What is the importance of the Mice + Birds + Scythe?



Look at the images of the Bear + Broom, what does this say about willpower?

## Deuxième Exercice: Coffin Reading



ILLUS 6. Coffin (Spiritual Life) Nine Card Layout

What might flowers of all kinds signify to the spiritual life?

What is the difference between a house and a garden? What does that mean?



So you do not have to keep laying out different cards or spreads, like one might have to do in a Tarot reading – the method is actually a lot simpler than shuffling and searching for charged cards, or counting piles, or anything – just lay out all the cards and read the Tableaux.

### **Troisième Exercise: Near and Far**

In this exercise, if you have completed the previous two, you may consider how the various 3x3 layouts relate to each other – where they overlap (and how you read the same cards differently in each case!) – where they are far apart. Which charged cards are near and far to each other, and how might that add another layer to your reading? Which cards that caused concern in one part of the Tableau also caused concern in another?

### **Conclusion**

It may take a while to realise just how powerful a method this is, and how you can now profoundly apply the essential skills you have already learnt to interpreting a full Tableau. In my next lesson we will deepen our reading with an introduction of the “Houses” of Lenormand.

I recommend you continue to practice with full Tableaux even if you only read part of them – do not get into a lazy learning habit of just laying out a few cards, as you will train your brain down a more limited avenue.

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 2: Poetic Liaisons**

When I've been reading older cartomantic and fortune-telling books, many of them use a particular verse-form for their oracles. This is not quite the same as used in German verses for the Lenormand cards, nor English equivalents such as those on the US Games Systems deck, whose verses were written by Stuart Kaplan himself.



The other interesting note is that these verses were often in two couplets, the first couplet applying to a man using the book, the second to a woman.

So your optional exercise is to create verses in this particular format for your 36 Lenormand cards. It is fun, helps you learn the cards and can provide an oracular game all in itself at parties, as people choose a card and you read them their verse from your own fortune-telling book.

The format of the verses is very simple, and those who have been on our other courses will know we teach a lot of poetic patterns from Haiku to Norse Sagas, so this is another to add to your repertoire!

### **Fortune-Telling Verses**

For each card write a 4-line verse composed of two rhyming couplets. The first couplet applies to a gentleman sitter, the second to a lady. The lines of both couplets should be 7 syllables. This gives a very simple beat and stress to the verse, suiting it to our salon-style delivery. As an example of the form:

It's very easy to do  
Writing this for me and you.  
The deck you can make complete  
With these rhymes so short and sweet.

And here's one from a fortune-telling book:

By this four we clearly see  
Four brats must be laid to thee.  
She who gets the same will wed,  
Two rich husbands both well-bred.

or another of the Ace of Spades, boding ill for both ladies and gentlemen:

Thou who gets this Ace of Spades  
Shalt be flouted by the Maids,

When it is a damsels lot,  
Love and honour go to pot.

So have a try, remembering in each that the first two line couplet applies to a male sitter, the second to a female sitter:

When the bear is pulled by you,  
Health and Wealth are in your view,  
When faced by a woman's whiles,  
It portends a life of smiles.

I look forward to the best (and worst!) of your Salon verses for the Lenormand.

Votre très-humble et très-obéissante servante,  
Mlle. TaliTarot