

Grand Tableau: Guide to the Fortune Deck

Preamble

The Fortune Deck is more than a mere fortune teller's tool. The thirty six cards reflect existence throughout all realms, repeating its pattern and rhythm from the micro- to macrocosmic scale.

Attitudes to the deck vary realm to realm from deep spiritual reverence to trivializing the cards as new-age nonsense. Yet even in the more spiritually attuned realms the deck has been marginalised, simplified, with a tendency to be interpreted only literally.

The interpretations that follow include both the higher meanings and the common interpretations (both upright and inverted), together with the variants of each card and the various courts, fraternities, cliques and other groups which gravitate around each House.

Note on the Petit Lenormand

The Petit Lenormand is a 36 card oracle deck popularised in the 19th century after the death of the cartomancer Mlle. Marie Anne Lenormand. Comparisons with Tarot and others are to be expected, however the method differs from Tarot (and also from *Everway's* Fortune Deck):

- cards are read in combinations (from pairs up to the *Grand Tableau* of all 36)
- the cards have more transparent and literal meanings compared with Tarot
- there are no reversed meanings

Everway's original Fortune Deck and this alternative need fairly unambiguous meanings for individual cards so play doesn't get bogged down, and the Lenormand deck is arguably more useful than the Tarot in this case. The Lenormand also doesn't come with the same baggage or assumptions as the Tarot. But this isn't an exercise in reading the Lenormand so much as repurposing the deck for this game — which means that some of the meanings will be faithful to the original but others will have been changed to suit the game.

Note that the Lenormand offers three degrees of freedom for generating random results:

1. Cards may be read individually, like trumps.

2. Cards have a number from 1 to 36; this means the deck can be used for random number generation.
3. Finally the cards have a suit and a number, which may make for interesting in-game conflict resolution.

The Suits

There are four suits in the deck. These themes as well as the trumps of the deck resonate through existence, and have both personal and cosmic significance.

The suits as applied to individuals indicate individual capability and general aptitude in the four elements tied to the suits. This might be called “talent” or “skill” when applied to a person.

On a cosmic level the suits indicate different states of being, the components that make up existence. Each card rests in one of four domains, which indicate the kind of influence it has — people, territory, barriers and events.

The Hearts

Hearts fall under the element of Water, and deal with emotions and relationships, with intuition and the unseen world.

Individual significance: empathy, intuition, the subconscious, relationships with others, the ability to make instinctual connections

Cosmic significance: a Heart indicates a significant character coming into view in the Tableau, for good or ill. This may be a newcomer, or it may be an existing one; they may make an ally, or an enemy.

Spades

Spades are governed by Air, indicating thought, logic, rules and laws.

Individual significance: intellect, logical process, eye for detail, reasoning, the ability to argue.

Cosmic significance: territory, domain, laws and strictures, societies and factions. A Spade indicates an ideology becoming significant. This may manifest as a social group (people), territory (location), history (past, sequence of events), or some combination of the three.

Diamonds

Diamonds fall under the element of Fire, indicating decision making, action, risk taking, change and crossing over from one state to another.

Individual significance: vigor, speed, drive, energy, confidence, risk taking, passion

Cosmic significance: the presence of a Diamond signifies a threshold between two states. These states may be physical (a physical barrier, a mutation or change), ideological (a change of allegiance), or metaphysical (a transition between worlds, or a change in understanding), or some combination of the three.

Clubs

Clubs fall under Earth, and indicate physical matter, endurance, substance, survival and resistance, integrity and bottom.

Individual significance: toughness, endurance, patience, survival instinct

Cosmic significance: the appearance of a Club indicates a trial of some kind. This may be physical, emotional or metaphysical; it may involve the person (enduring pain, hunger, fatigue), property, or social life. It may be a lack of clarity, confusion, injury or harm, pain or torture, deception or illusion.

Hierarchy of the Houses

There are three ranks within the 36 houses of the Grand Tableau. These are four Principles, twelve Courts and twenty Commoners.

The Principles

The Principles are not gods, though some who pretend to godhood claim to be their embodiments.

- The principle of Fire, boundless energy and purpose (31, the Sun, ace of diamonds)
- The principle of Air, the centre of consciousness and rational thought (29, the Woman, ace of spades)
- The principle of Water, the seat of emotions and intuition (28, the Man, ace of hearts)
- The principle of Earth, time, entropy and persistence, the greater serpent (25, the Ring, ace of clubs)

The Courts

The twelve Courts form an annual cycle in elemental order of Fire/Spring, Air/Summer, Water/Autumn and Earth/Winter. The Kings occupy mutable positions, the Queens cardinal, and the Jacks are fixed.

Courts of Fire:

- The Fish (34, King of Diamonds)

- The Crossroads (22, Queen of Diamonds)
- The Scythe (10, Jack of Diamonds)

Courts of Air:

- The Lily (30, King of Spades)
- The Bouquet (9, Queen of Spades)
- The Child (13, Jack of Spades)

Courts of Water:

- The House (4, King of Hearts)
- The Stork (17, Queen of Hearts)
- The Heart (24, Jack of Hearts)

Courts of Earth:

- The Clouds (6, King of Clubs)
- The Snake (7, Queen of Clubs)
- The Whip (11, Jack of Clubs)

The Commoners

The remaining 20 houses are the “commoners”. They have no official claim to title or organisation, though some claim affiliation to one house or another.

- Common houses of Fire: Coffin, Birds, Book, Key, Clover
- Houses of Air: Ship, Garden, Anchor, Letter, Tower
- Houses of Water: Rider, Tree, Stars, Dog, Moon
- Houses of Earth: Fox, Bear, Cross, Mice, Mountain

The Cards

There are 36 distinct cards, 9 per suit using numerical values of 6-10 plus J, Q, K, A. These are presented in the usual order for modern Lenormand decks.

1. The Rider



Other names: the Knight, the Agent, the Visitor, the Harbinger

Meaning: Rebirth

The Rider is an agent of change, bringing news, new perspective, clues or resources. Their arrival on the scene signifies the beginning of a new cycle, a rearrangement of social order, a change in roles in the Tableau, and new purpose for the individual.

Reversed reading: Destruction

The Rider is the harbinger of destruction, the spearhead of an invader, the agent of evil intent. The cycle they initiate is one of suffering, evil and darkness.

Correspondence: the Nine of Hearts, Water, Intuition, Personality. Mercury/Hermes. *Everway card(s): the Phoenix*

2. Clover



Other names: the Meadow, Luck, the Diamond

Meaning: Recognising opportunity

An opportunity or opening presents itself at the hero's feet. A favourable but temporary set of circumstances, sometimes an object of value or power.

Reversed reading: Failing to see opportunity

Fixated on one course of action, failing to see a new pathway. The opportunity is missed.

Correspondence: the Six of Diamonds, Fire, Energy, Activity. *Everway card(s): Overlooking the Diamond*

3. The Ship



Other names: the Chariot, the Carriage, the Lighthouse

Meaning: Awareness

The Ship travels far and its occupants see many sights. Their experience shapes their perception of the world. Their view of reality is broad and deep.

Reversed reading: Lack of Connection

Travelling far from home, they forget their roots. They have traded intellectual expansion for connection with family and friends.

Correspondence: Ten of Spades, Air, Intelligence, Experience, Vision, Awareness. *Everway card(s): The Eagle, The Fool*

4. The House



Other names: the Castle, the Shield

Meaning: Safety

A strong foundation, people you can trust. The House is a place of safety that offers time to rest and reflect, for now.

Reversed reading: Peril

The apparent safety within becomes danger. Foundations are weak. Defences appear strong but are easily penetrated.

Correspondence: King of Hearts, Water, Emotion, Connection, Family. *Everway card(s): The Defender*

5. The Tree



Other names: Nature, the World

Meaning: Life Energy

Strength in people and family, vitality, a will to live.

Reversed reading: Poisoned Roots

A corruption that runs deep beneath foundations, back into the past. A poison that runs throughout a bloodline.

Correspondence: Seven of Hearts, Life, People, Intuition, Feeling, Emotion. *Everway card(s): Nature*

6. The Clouds



Other names: Doubt, Shadows

Meaning: Doubt

The Clouds cast doubt over everything we plan to do. Everything is destined to fail and fall away to nothing.

Reversed reading: Clarity

A break in the Clouds offers a ray of light, a path forward.

Correspondence: King of Clubs, Earth, Obstacles, Barriers, Obscurity. *Everway card(s): none applicable*

7. The Snake



Other names: The Serpent, The Cockatrice

Meaning: Corruption

The Snake is a tempter and corrupter, entangling and manipulating its prey.

Reversed reading: Recovery

The Snake's venom may be turned to medicine if properly drawn and handled. Thus the poison corruption is drawn from a wound and the patient heals.

Correspondence: Queen of Clubs, Earth, Corruption, Entanglement, Weight. *Everway card(s): The Cockatrice*

8. The Coffin



Other names: Death

Meaning: Change

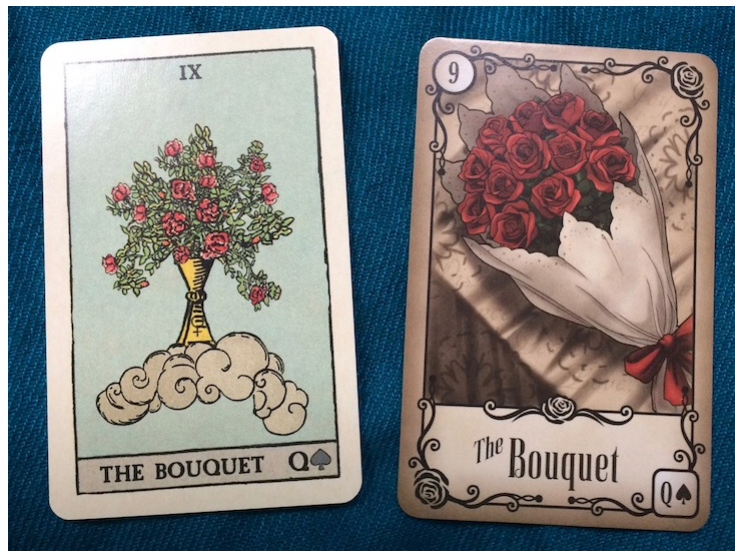
Death is a transformation, a renewal of cycles, and a necessary part of existence. In crossing over from life to death, the soul makes a transition into the next existence. Funeral trappings acknowledge this passage and the things the soul must leave behind.

Reversed reading: Void

There is nothing on the other side. Complete negation, waste of effort, total loss.

Correspondence: Nine of Diamonds, Fire, Transformation, Energy. *Everway card(s): Death, Sowing Stones*

9. The Bouquet



Other names: Flowers

Meaning: Abundance

The Bouquet is a gift and an expression of joy. The Flowers indicate great ability, capacity and skill, and the celebration of victories.

Reversed reading: Want

Failure and want; a lack of skill or resources. In a time of want everyone suffers. Everyone is deprived and jealous of the other, people become mean. Blame.

Correspondence: Queen of Spades, Intelligence, Capability.
Everway card(s): Autumn

10. The Scythe



Other names: the Sword, the Smith, War, the Peasant

Meaning: Cutting at the right time

A well-maintained blade used correctly will make a sharp and decisive cut, reaping the reward and separating the wholesome from corruption and evil influences.

Reversed reading: Effort in the wrong place

A bad decision, an irrevocable action with damaging consequences.

Correspondence: Jack of Diamonds, Energy, Speed, Decisions, Action. *Everway card(s): The Smith, War*

11. The Whip



Other names: The Owls, The Watchers

Meaning: Rumours

Rumours and gossip, passed from lips to ear again and again may be distorted some distance from their original meaning. A falsehood gains credibility, a truth is obscured.

Reversed reading: Information

Something overheard by accident may in fact be true, even if those who gossip don't fully believe it themselves. The hero overhears a clue to their advantage.

Correspondence: Seven of Diamonds, Fire, Communication.
Everway card(s): Knowledge

13. The Child



Other names: The Satyr, The Cup

Meaning: Indulgence

The Whip is a driving force that commands continued action in one direction. It is addiction and obsession, over-work, activity to the exclusion of others.

Reversed reading: Moderation

Balance is found, over-indulgence is avoided.

Correspondence: Jack of Clubs, Earth, Sensation. *Everway card(s): The Satyr*

12. The Birds



Other names: the Fool, the Initiate

Meaning: Freedom

The Child sees the world with fresh eyes, can travel unnoticed by elders, is free to make new insights, and is unencumbered by previous experience.

Reversed reading: Inexperience

They are unprepared for coming hardship, lacking experience and vision to plan ahead.

Correspondence: Jack of Spades, Air, Insight, Intelligence, Ideas. *Everway card(s): The Fool, Winter*

14. The Fox



Other names: The Trickster, The Coyote

Meaning: Cunning

The Fox god is devious, hiding her resources until they are needed for an attack or decisive action. What she wants she steals.

Reversed reading: Deception

Falling for a ruse, disguise or trick. Obfuscation of facts.

Correspondence: Nine of Clubs, Earth, Stealth. *Everway card(s): The Dragon, Trickery*

15. The Bear



Other names: the Warrior, the Beast, the Dragon

Meaning: Strength

The Bear is strong and able to overcome physical challenges and endure hardship.

Reversed reading: Blind Fury

Strength misplaced, not tempered by intelligence or prudence, corrupted by hunger or pain. Inability to tell friend from foe, blinded by anger leading to an exposed position or exhaustion of resources.

Correspondence: Ten of Clubs, Earth, Power, Force. *Everway card(s): The Peasant, The Dragon*

16. The Stars



Other names: The Creator, the Midwife

Meaning: Nurture

The origin of life, a new life, new connection, new dependant, new attachment. A bond is formed and life, love and friendship flows. A mentor finds their protege, a creator finds an outlet.

Reversed reading: Abandonment

The Stork flies away. Family is separated, cut off from roots. Children or parents leave the nest, or are forced out.

Correspondence: Queen of Hearts, Water, Family, Emotions.
Everway card(s): The Creator

18. The Dog



Other names: Inspiration, the Heavens, the Muse

Meaning: Creativity

Sudden ideas spring from nowhere, allowing innovation, shining a new path. Breakthroughs in art and science, poetry, technology.

Reversed reading: Lack of Imagination

Blocked, stifled, creative energies sapped, stagnation and old ideas.

Correspondence: Six of Hearts, Water, Imagination, Dreams.
Everway card(s): Inspiration

17. The Stork



Other names: The Hound, The Bodyguard

Meaning: Loyalty

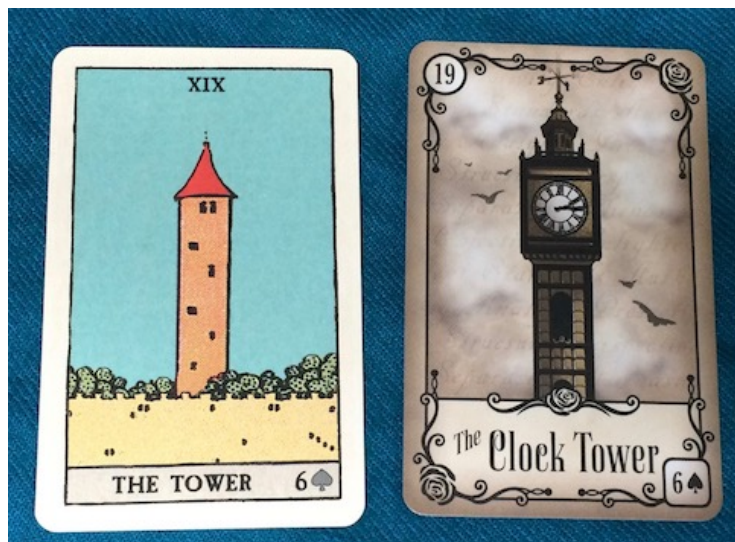
The Dog is a loyal servant, who supports its master without reservation. A close ally, a favour, a bodyguard, a family friend.

Reversed reading: Treachery

Someone close reveals different loyalties. An ally shows their true colours.

Correspondence: Ten of Hearts, Water, Friendship. *Everway card(s): The Lion, Law*

19. The Tower



Other names: The Lighthouse, The Bell-Tower, The Clock Tower

Meaning: Authority

The Tower oversees the nation, and represents the principle of law. It brings order and authority, unites the nation through government.

Reversed reading: Tyranny

The baleful eye surveys its domain, ruling absolutely and without mercy.

Correspondence: Six of Spades, Air, Intelligence, Principle, Rules. *Everway card(s): The King*

20. The Garden



Other names: Fertility, The Maze, The Land

Meaning: Growth

The Garden makes order out of nature, establishes territory, symbolises wealth. It is a gathering place for people as one nation, to grow and prosper.

Reversed reading: Decline

The garden is overrun, untended for years. Its people cling to past glories, but their power is waning. Stasis threatens.

Correspondence: Eight of Spades, Air, Territory, Society. *Everway card(s): Fertility*

21. The Mountain



Other names: The Gate

Meaning: An impassable obstacle

An obstacle so vast that it is impossible to see the whole; and thus the problem becomes insoluble.

Reversed reading: A path through

By understanding the scope of the problem one also understands its limitations. Lateral thinking, imagination, penetration.

Correspondence: Eight of Clubs, Earth, Mass, Immobility.

Everway card(s): Striking the Dragon's Tail

22. The Crossroads



Other names: The Path

Meaning: Pathway revealed

A way forward is revealed, a clue is presented, a mystery is uncovered, deception and subterfuge are revealed.

Reversed reading: Stasis

Indecision and lack of clarity means no one decision is taken. The old does not give way to the new. Stagnation.

Correspondence: Queen of Diamonds, Fire, Decisions. *Everway card(s): The Trickster, Death*

23. The Mice



Other names: Stain, Ruin, Disease

Meaning: Ruin

Something eating at the heart of things, threatening to sabotage or undermine efforts. An infection or corruption. Disease.

Reversed reading: Purity

Freedom from infection, detecting infection and separating oneself from the diseased party.

Correspondence: Seven of Clubs, Earth, Decay. *Everway card(s): The Unicorn*

24. The Heart



Other names: The Griffin, The Stag

Meaning: Valor

Bravery means a challenge is met and overcome (with or without cost).

Reversed reading: Cowardice

A refusal to meet an obstacle, a shying away from challenge.

Correspondence: Jack of Hearts, Water, Emotion, Courage.
Everway card(s): The Griffin

25. The Ring



Other names: Earth, Ouroboros

Meaning: Binding

Ouroboros, the serpent devouring its tail represents the unending and unbreakable cycle of Earth that traps the soul. A binding, a commitment, an obligation that cannot be avoided without consequences.

Reversed reading: Alliance

The ring symbolises unending commitment between two people, an alliance for their whole lives, mutual support in good times and bad.

Correspondence: Ace of Clubs, Earth. *Everway card(s): Law*

26. The Book



Other names: The Journal, The Scroll, The Codex

Meaning: Uncovering Mysteries

A clue is there if one takes the time to read the book. A mystery is uncovered.

Reversed reading: Impracticality

The answers in the book are vague, cryptic, or easily misinterpreted. The teachings are a fantasy and an amusement. Metaphors are misunderstood. Too much time spent reading the books and considering interpretations, and not enough action.

Correspondence: Ten of Diamonds, Fire, Action, Inspiration.
Everway card(s): The Priestess

27. The Letter



Other names: Knowledge

Meaning: Truth

A truth is revealed in new information. A clue.

Reversed reading: Irrelevance

New information is a distraction, irrelevance, or even a lie.

Correspondence: Seven of Spades, Air, Information, Truth, Communication. *Everway card(s): The Eagle, Knowledge*

28. The Gentleman



Other names: Water, The Man

Meaning: Duty

A strong sense of what is right, and the willingness to make sacrifices to achieve ends.

Reversed reading: Blind Obedience

Slave to emotions, popular opinion, inability to think critically and thus becoming the tool of others with evil intent.

Correspondence: Ace of Hearts, Water, Emotions, Intuition, Obligation. *Everway card(s): The Soldier*

29. The Lady



Other names: Air

Meaning: Wisdom

The Principle of Air is thought and learning.

Reversed reading: Isolation

Singular focus on learning and meaning to the exclusion of others.

Correspondence: Ace of Spades, Thought, Learning. *Everway card(s): The Hermit*

30. The Lilies



Meaning: Maturity

The Lily stands for age and experience, and also contingency, planning several moves in advance. Sophistication of thought and taste.

Reversed reading: Inflexibility

Age may mean becoming set in one's ways, and unable to think of alternative strategies.

Correspondence: King of Spades, Air, Thought, Experience.

Everway card(s): Winter

31. The Sun



Other names: Fire

Meaning: Energy

Boundless energy comes from the Sun, source of all life, the Principle of Fire.

Reversed reading: Exhaustion

Cut off from energy, great plans fail. Weakness and failure.

Correspondence: Ace of Diamonds, Fire, Energy, the Origin.

Everway card(s): Summer

32. The Moon



Other names: The Shadows, Dream

Meaning: Superstition

Those without understanding fear the Moon and what goes on at moonlight. Unnecessary fear, supernatural fright, lack of comprehension, fearing shadows.

Reversed reading: Initiation

Images hold a truth and that truth sets the heart free. Understanding brings curiosity, which vanishes fear. Initiation into a secret truth that is frightening to outsiders.

Correspondence: Eight of hearts, Water, Intuition, Dreams, Fear. *Everway card(s): Fearing Shadows*

33. The Key



Other names: The Smith

Meaning: Productivity

Once found, the Key will unlock many things: doorways, mysteries, barriers, chests. Overcoming an obstacle and turning it to good use, making something of value.

Reversed reading: Evil Effort

Doors should sometimes remain closed and locked; what they contain is evil and damaging, and once opened they cannot be closed again. An irreversible and detrimental change.

Correspondence: Eight of Diamonds, Fire, Threshold, Unlocking. *Everway card(s): The Smith*

34. The Fish



Other names: Leviathan

Meaning: Past Life

The Leviathan swims deep, deeper than any human can travel, to the bottom where the remnants of past civilisations lies forgotten. Former life and existence. The eternal soul.

Reversed reading: Shallowness

The Fish stays near the surface, only concerned with this existence and the material gain it can achieve in one lifetime.

Correspondence: King of Diamonds, Fire, transition between lives. *Everway card(s): The Fish*

35. The Anchor



Other names: Armour, the Stronghold

Meaning: Stability

The anchor reduces interference, provides a stable platform, gives time to think. A strong and secure position.

Reversed reading: Protective measures become dangerous

Inflexibility, false assumptions about security, or even security measures being turned to the advantage of one's enemy.

Correspondence: Nine of Spades, Intelligence, Foresight, Strategy. *Everway card(s): Drowning in Armour*

36. The Cross



Other names: Faith, The Bishop

Meaning: Needless Suffering

Dogma demands inexplicable, often harmful or cruel acts of the faithful. Mistakes through misinterpretation, human pride, or failure to think clearly.

Reversed reading: Faith Rewarded

Faith may be blind but it may reward in unexpected ways, through people, the land, unexpected beauty or inspiration.

Correspondence: Six of Clubs, Earth, the body, suffering. *Everway card(s): Sowing Stones*

Fortune Deck short draw rules

A “short draw” is used most of the time for task checks. Draw one card and apply its meaning (upright or reversed) to the outcome.

Fortune Deck card meanings are usually one of the following:

- A comment on the character's ability or behavior (e.g. “valor”, “unnecessary fear”)
- A comment on the consequence of the action (e.g. “evil effort”)
- A change in circumstance (e.g. “Ruin”)

When the draw is applied it's usually the GM who interprets the outcome — but there's no reason why another player shouldn't do this instead. This will make the game more collaborative.

Most player characters have a “significator”. It’s up to the group what it means when a player’s significator is drawn, but here are some suggestions:

1. The scene switches to that character.
2. If the character is present, they immediately take an action and draw a second card to resolve it
3. Tie the situation or location to the character — perhaps there’s a clue to their back-story, or there’s evidence that they or their family have passed through before, etc.

Afterword: Featured Decks

The two decks used in the photographs are *Pixie’s Astounding Lenormand* by Edmund Zebrowski which uses illustrations by Pamela Coleman Smith, and the *Under the Roses Lenormand* by Kendra Hurteau and Katrina Hill. Both are published by US Games (in 2015 and 2014 respectively).

