

**IN DRAGONFLY SHADE**  
**A LENORMAND ORACLE BY ALEXANDER DANILOFF**

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## WHO AND WHAT IS THE LENORMAND ORACLE?

Marie Anne Adelaide Lenormand was a famous fortune-teller in Napoleonic-era France. After her death in 1843, European games manufacturers capitalised on her fame by using her name to promote new card games such as this, the Lenormand Oracle.



The Lenormand Oracle is a set of 36 cards, each containing simple imagery, a playing card reference, the card's number, its title and sometimes a poem or aphorism.

Alexander Daniloff's latest Lenormand is an homage to the art and style of ancient Japan. Unlike a traditional Lenormand, the cards are square and presented as a diamond shape. Each card has a playing card reference and the card number, but the cards do not carry the card titles.

The title 'In Dragonfly Shade' comes from the legend that tells how the first Emperor of Japan climbed a mountain to see what he ruled over. Looking at his kingdom spread out before him, he exclaimed: "This island looks like the dragonfly that licks its tail!" Japan is sometimes called *Akitsu-shima* - Dragonfly Island.

The card backs in this Lenormand have a unique feature – together they make create a map of the islands of Japan!

There is also another mathematical puzzle hidden within the deck that dates back to a 13<sup>th</sup> century Chinese mathematician called Yang Hui. But Alexander wishes you to discover that for yourself!

The playing card references are either shown as simply the suit symbol and number or, in the case of the court cards, the image appears as a character insert (see the Lily card, above). The advantage of not having the card names means that the images remain in wholly in the Japanese theme.

There are some cards that are rendered quite differently in this deck, to remain true to the Japanese-inspired vision. For example – Coffin is an funerary urn and Cross is a parcel intricately bound in a cross shape.

At 7cm by 7cm (2.5" x 2.5"), this new deck is small. However, because the cards are laid on their diagonal, like a diamond, the working 'height' of the card is 9.9cm or 3.53".



Here we see two cards, laid in diamond formation. This adds an exciting (and wholly untraditional!) dimension to Alexander's new deck. However, should you be restricted by space, place them as squares. They can also nest together, as illustrated below.



Lenormand cards are not read with reversed meanings, so the meaning does not change if it is laid as a diamond or a square, with the image upside down or the number at the side. However, it can be useful to pay attention to what lies behind the character in a card and what lies before them as well as what lies above and what lies below. For example, are the significator cards facing each other or back to back?

## LENORMAND ORACLE CARD MEANINGS

Each card is listed in numerical order, followed by its playing card insert and then the Grand Tableau House name. A basic interpretative outline then follows to help you read the cards.

- |  |                   |                   |                                   |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>RIDER</b>      | 9 Hearts          | House of Messages *               |
| News, messenger, delivery – Who is Rider moving towards or away from?  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>CLOVER</b>     | 6 Diamonds        | House of Luck                     |
| Luck (small), opportunity, lessens adverse affects of less positive cards - What is Clover rooted in?  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>3</b>   | <b>SHIP</b>       | 10 Spades         | House of Travel                   |
| Travel, adventure, abroad, holiday. Which card is Ship moving towards or away from?  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>4</b>   | <b>HOUSE</b>      | King of Hearts    | House of Home Affairs             |
| Home, place of safety, immediate environment   |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>TREE</b>       | 7 Hearts          | House of Health                   |
| Health, growth, longevity, hereditary – Which card is the tree rooted in? Also, see 'Near and Far' p8.   |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>6</b>   | <b>CLOUDS</b>     | King of Clubs     | House of Confusion                |
| Confusion, fog, conflict and lack of clarity – Where are the Clouds being blown towards? The Clouds are darker at the bottom of the image and pink at the top. The cards next to the pink clouds will not be as badly affected by Clouds as the cards next to the dark clouds. |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>7</b>   | <b>SNAKE</b>      | Queen of Clubs    | House of Troubles                 |
| Betrayal, sudden trouble, malign intent, deceitful woman – Alexander's Snake has the reflection of a woman. What card is she looking at? What card is her tail pointing towards?   |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>8</b>   | <b>COFFIN</b>     | 9 Diamonds        | House of Endings (Slow)           |
| Natural ending, emptying, death  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>9</b>   | <b>BOUQUET</b>    | Queen of Spades   | House of Appreciation             |
| Luck (significant), gift, pleasure, delight, pretty  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>10</b>  | <b>SCYTHER</b>    | Knave of Diamonds | House of Endings (Fast)           |
| Damage, cutting down, sudden termination, surgery – Where does the tip of the Scythe point?  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>11</b>  | <b>WHIP/FLAIL</b> | Knave of Clubs    | House of Repetition or Punishment |
| Argument, anger, abuse, punishment, repeated activity such as exercise   |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>12</b>  | <b>BIRDS</b>      | 7 Diamonds        | House of Chatter                  |
| Chatter, gossip, stress, phone call, a couple  |                   |                   |                                   |
| <b>13</b>  | <b>CHILD</b>      | Knave of Spades   | House of Children                 |
| Young person, child-like, beginnings, minor – Whose attention does the Child attract?  |                   |                   |                                   |

<b>14</b>	<b>FOX</b>	9 Clubs	House of Work
Deception, clever trickster, employment/work			
<b>15</b>	<b>BEAR</b>	10 Clubs	House of Authority Figures
Strength, protection, powerful business person			
<b>16</b>	<b>STARS</b>	6 Hearts	House of Dreams/Goals
Guidance, navigation, optimism, hopes, dreams			
<b>17</b>	<b>STORK</b>	Queen of Hearts	House of Changes
Pregnancy, improvement, promotion, new home, movement, change – Which card does Stork regard?			
<b>18</b>	<b>DOG</b>	10 Hearts	House of Friends
Loyalty, friendship, advice, trustworthy, pet			
<b>19</b>	<b>TOWER</b>	6 Spades	House of Officialdom
Authority, bureaucracy, rules, seat of power, superiority			
<b>20</b>	<b>GARDEN</b>	8 Spades	House of Social Events
Social, party, public space, networking, many people			
<b>21</b>	<b>MOUNTAIN</b>	8 Clubs	House of Obstacles
Obstruction, struggle, resistance, delay – There is no path through the Mountain!			
<b>22</b>	<b>CROSSROADS</b>	Queen of Diamonds	House of Options
Options, decisions, other way, re-route			
<b>23</b>	<b>MICE</b>	7 Clubs	House of Anxiety/Losses
Losses, damage, theft, anxiety, subtraction – Mice nibble away at neighbouring cards.			
<b>24</b>	<b>HEART</b>	Knave of Hearts	House of Love
Love, happiness, romance, heart-led			
<b>25</b>	<b>RING</b>	Ace Clubs	House of Commitments
Contract, promises, engagement, stability			
<b>26</b>	<b>BOOK</b>	10 Diamonds	House of Secrets
Secrets, information, study, knowledge, diary, privacy			
<b>27</b>	<b>LETTER</b>	7 Spades	House of Letters
Written correspondence – document, text, email, tweet, social networking post			
<b>28</b>	<b>LORD</b>	Ace Hearts	House of Main Focus (if Male) or House of Significant Other
This card represents the sitter, if your sitter identifies as male and this card acts as the significator. Lord can also be the significant other or husband, brother, son, male friend etc.			
<b>29</b>	<b>LADY</b>	Ace Spades	House of Main Focus (if Female) House of Significant Other
This card usually represents the sitter, if your sitter identifies as female and this card acts as the spread's significator. The Lady can also be wife, sister, daughter, female friend etc.			

<b>30</b>	<b>LILY</b>	King of Spades	House of Family
		Peace, purity, older generation, libido, family	
<b>31</b>	<b>SUN</b>	Ace Diamonds	House of Success
		Success, illumination, glory, positive outcome	
<b>32</b>	<b>MOON</b>	8 Hearts	House of Reputation
		Reflected glory, perception by others, creativity, emotions, intuition	
<b>33</b>	<b>KEY</b>	8 Diamonds	House of Answers
		Solution, answer, understanding, locking/unlocking	
<b>34</b>	<b>FISH</b>	King of Diamonds	House of Money
		business events, money, assets, enterprise	
<b>35</b>	<b>ANCHOR</b>	9 Spades	House of Stability
		Security, endurance, imited movement, holding fast	
<b>36</b>	<b>CROSS</b>	6 Clubs	House of Burdens
		Suffering, religion, burden, sacrifice	

## HOW TO READ THE LENORMAND ORACLE - BASICS

This leaflet will merely provide you with the first steps on your Lenormand journey – there are many wonderful resources which are available in many languages that will help you develop your skills and provide nuanced and useful readings. Some Lenormand resources are suggested on p9.

Lenormand readings are usually **Strings**, **Grids** or a **Grand Tableau**. They mostly interpreted in pairs.

### Significators

Significators are important beginning points in Lenormand readings. The card that represents the sitter, if they identify as male, is card 28 Lord. If your sitter identifies as female, the 29 Lady card can be chosen. Your sitter's partner or significant other is represented by the other significator card.

You can, of course, allow a significator to arise randomly from any part of the deck. You may also wish to choose an appropriate significator depending upon the topic of the reading. For example: a reading concerning money may lead you to select Fish as the significator. A reading about a friend may lead you to select Dog etc.

### Card Order

The order of the two cards makes a difference to how you interpret them. For example:



Clover + Coffin  
Coffin + Clover

Luck (Clover) runs out (Coffin).  
An ending (Coffin) proves lucky (Clover).

## Mirroring

You can read one card and pair it with any card which lies in a mirrored position. For example, in the 3-card string outlined below, Scythe mirrors Dog. This is very useful in spreads of five or more cards.

## Corners

If you are performing a 3 x 3 card grid or a Grand Tableau, you can also read the corner cards of your spread as pairs. These can be interpreted as the 'boundaries' or 'limitations' of the spread.

## Cross

In a grid spread or a Grand Tableau, the cards that lie either side of the central significator card and directly above and below, form a cross. These can be read together in pairs too. Since these cards are in direct contact with the significator, they are very close or very strongly felt.

## Knighting

If you are familiar with the game of chess, you will know how the Knight chess piece moves – two to the side and one up or down, or one to the side and two up or down. These can be read in pairs.

As you can see, the possibilities for multiple pairing explains why Lenormand cards do not have positional values in a reading in the same way as Tarot cards do.

## READING IN STRINGS

Unlike Tarot readings which can often be a single card, Lenormand readings are divined in 'strings' of two or more cards and read in pairs. Using a string of up to seven cards will provide a very detailed answer to a question.

Strings are read from left to right, with the first card regarded as the main topic under consideration and the other cards affecting it. Here is an example:



### **Dog + Anchor + Scythe**

A friend's (Dog) security (Anchor) has come to an abrupt end (Scythe). The main topic is Dog. The other cards refer to Dog.

Lenormand cards can be taken very literally and Dog CAN mean a dog or Rider could refer to equestrian sports or someone one horseback!

## READING A 3 x 3 BOX GRID (9-CARD SPREAD)

For readings of more than seven cards, use a grid format. The most common box format for Lenormand readings is the 3 x 3 grid for nine cards.

Here is an example of a 9-card grid:

Cross	Bouquet	Tower
Dog	Scythe	Key
Sun	Moon	Star

Scythe is the central card and is a randomly chosen significator – so the spread wants to talk about swift endings.

The first card laid is Cross, then Bouquet, Tower and Dog. The spread ends with Star.

Do not be daunted by the number of cards – start with Cross, Bouquet and Tower and interpret as a string of three cards, reading in pairs. Then move onto the middle line and then the bottom line. Then do the same with the cards that make up the three columns. It is common to interpret the columns as Past, Present, Future. The three rows are often read as Aspirations/Hopes (top line), Present Situation (middle line), Unconscious influences (bottom line), but other options for the rows and columns are available – find a set that works for you.

Here are some examples of the mirror, corner, cross and knighting cards mentioned earlier, as they arise in this 3 x 3 spread.

Mirrored cards – Dog mirrors Key, Cross mirrors Star, Tower also mirrors Star etc.

The corner cards are Cross and Tower, Sun and Star.

The cross cards are Bouquet and Key, Dog and Moon

The Knighting cards: Cross is knighted by Key and Moon. For Bouquet the knighting cards are Sun and Star etc.

The largest spread that you can perform with the Lenormand Oracle is The Grand Tableau.

## READING THE GRAND TABLEAU - BASICS

In this spread, the cards are shuffled and laid out in four rows of eight cards (4 x 8), beginning with the top left card as the first card laid down. The last four cards in your hand are laid in a separate row, beneath the final row of eight cards. All 36 cards are now used. Remember, if you are short on space for this spread, you CAN lay these cards as squares, rather than on the diagonal.

This is a very in-depth reading, but all the techniques outlined above can be used in the Grand Tableau.

To begin, find your sitter's significator (**Lord or Lady**) and the card for their significant other. Also consider the card that best represents the sitter's topic for the spread (for a health issue, this could be Tree) or perhaps the card representing the Significant Other.

Work your way methodically (in pairs) through the cross cards, the corner cards, the knighting cards, mirroring cards, 3 x 3 grids etc. Make sense of the cards in the context of your sitter's question.

## **Near or Far**

In the Grand Tableau especially, cards that are close to the significator (ie touching) are regarded as near. Their effects will be strong on your sitter or happening soon. Cards that are far away from the significator are further away in time or weaker in their effects. Tree, for example, can represent ill health if very close to the significator, but its effects are much weaker if far away from the significator card.

## **Houses**

Although all our cards are placed randomly in the rows of the Tableau, we can regard each space that they occupy as a 'House'.

For example, the first card in our Grand Tableau may be Anchor, but the HOUSE belongs to 1 The Rider. Mice may be the second card in our Tableau, but it is in the HOUSE of 2 Clover ... the last card in the Tableau falls on the House of the Cross. Interpret the card in relation to the House, just as you would if they were before you as a pair of cards.

If you look at the list of keywords provided earlier in this leaflet, you will see suggestions for each House. You can then interpret important cards in the Tableau with regard to the House that they are on.

Pay attention to the cards which land on the tricky Houses (eg House of Scythe) and which Houses the tricky cards (eg Coffin) land on. Also, see where the lucky cards land and which cards are on the lucky Houses.

The final four cards which do not lie on the four main rows are not part of the Grand Tableau reading. BUT, you can, of course, read them as a small spread in itself. These cards are not active in the Tableau.

**There is so much more to learn about reading the Grand Tableau, so please make use of the many wonderful online and published resources to continue your learning journey.**

## ABOUT ALEXANDER DANILOFF AND HIS WORK

If you are new to Alexander Daniloff's work, please visit his website at:

<http://www.daniloff-art.it>

There you will be able to explore all his Tarot and Oracle imagery as well as his commissioned artworks.

**Facebook:** @TarotByAlexanderDaniloff/

**Instagram:** @alexanderdaniloff

## LENORMAND RESOURCES

### Books

Andy Borovshengra: [Lenormand Thirty Six Cards: An Introduction To The Petit Lenormand](#) (Createspace Independent Publishing)

Rana George: [The Essential Lenormand](#) (Llewellyn)  
[www.ranageorge.com](http://www.ranageorge.com)

Anthony Louis: [Lenormand Symbols](#) (e-book)

Caitlín Matthews: [The Complete Lenormand Oracle Handbook](#) (Destiny Books)  
<http://www.hallowquest.org.uk>

Bjorn Meuris: [The Petit Lenormand Encyclopedia](#) Vol 1 and Vol 2

### Videos

Donnaleigh de la Rose: Youtube: [Tarot Tribe Beyond Worlds](#)  
[www.donnaleigh.com](http://www.donnaleigh.com)

Toni Puhle: Youtube: [The Card Geek](#)