

CELTIC Lenormand

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SAMPLE

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INTRODUCTION

The pagan-themed Celtic Lenormand deck brings the nature-based focus of pagan beliefs to the increasingly popular Lenormand method. The 45 cards of this deck feature landscapes of Brittany, located in the North of France. This area was populated by Celts for over five hundred years, and is still considered one of the six surviving Celtic nations, bringing authenticity to this depiction. It also connects the deck with the more modern French Lenormand tradition.

The 36-card structure has been maintained in the numbering of the images. In this way, the deck can be used as a traditional Lenormand oracle. However, nine additional cards have been created for the Celtic Lenormand to expand the deck's meanings and to further develop the Goddess and God aspects of the cards. Additionally, the deck is designed to offer symbolism and interpretations based on the phases of the moon, and the Wheel of the Year.



In the 36-card form, the Celtic Lenormand can be read following any of the common Lenormand systems. Readings can incorporate the aspects of the Goddess and God, the moon phases, the elements and the Wheel of the Year interpretations, too. You can add in as many of the extra cards as you like for additional possibilities and understandings.

WHAT MAKES THIS A PAGAN-THEMED DECK?

The cards in a traditional Lenormand deck show images of specific objects, animals and people. In the Celtic Lenormand, these images are based on Celtic versions of these figures. However, the symbolism within the deck is also specifically designed to represent important aspects of the pagan path and perception of the world.

For instance, the eight sabbats or holidays that are celebrated as part of the changing of the seasons, the turning of the Wheel of the Year, are represented in these cards. So, too, are the

phases of the moon, which are often used by pagans to decide when to take an action, for example: planting or reaping, doing a ritual, or in determining the kind of energy surrounding a situation.

This deck also includes specific cards for the god and goddess; male and female aspects of the divine, as well as suggestions for deities appropriate to the other cards. These can be used in deciding on a deity to call on in a particular situation, or to add a spiritual aspect to your interpretations. This approach can be particularly useful for past life or spirit readings.

THE GOD AND GODDESS

The Celts worshipped a great number of different deities, some of which were fairly generalized across Celtic nations, others of which were specific to certain localities. The local deities were connected to natural features such as lakes, rivers, mountains and so forth. In this deck, many of the more generalized Celtic deities are represented, not

in anthropomorphic or human form, but in the form of animals and aspects of nature.

In traditional Lenormand decks, there are four “people” cards, but many other cards can also be read as people, depending on surrounding cards and the question. In Celtic Lenormand deck, there are three cards specifically for the tripartite Goddess (the three Birds cards), and two cards for the dual aspects of the God (the Tree cards). However, all the cards have deities associated with them, if you choose to use them in that way.

The cards specific to the God are the two Tree cards, representing the Oak King and the Holly King. These trees have been used in pagan tradition to represent the story of the God who grows in the summer and is cut down by winter, replaced by a successor, only to rise and grow again the following year. This is an allegorical reference to the seasons, and to the path of the sun in the sky, as the sun is often associated with the God, while the moon is more often associated with the Goddess.

The cards specific to the Goddess are the three Birds cards. Songbirds represent the Maiden aspect of the Goddess, specifically Cliodna. Chickens are the birds of Cerridwen, in her Mother aspect. Finally, Owls symbolize the Crone Goddess, in this case embodied in Blodeuwedd.

Every single card in Celtic Lenormand can be associated with a number of deities. These are listed in the card descriptions, and can be used as a focal point on your altar. They can also be used as a focus for spells around the subject reflected in the card. I have tried to identify appropriate Celtic deities, but have also included deities from other pantheons. This decision was based on my sense that many pagans are either happy to explore many perspectives, or would welcome seeing deities from the particular pantheon they may worship.

ADDITIONAL CARDS

I have already mentioned the additional cards specific to the God and Goddess. There are two Tree cards for the God; the Oak and the Holly. And there are three different Birds cards for the three aspects of the Goddess, Maiden, Mother and Crone. These cards also have other nuances of meaning, if you want to include the different variant in your readings. For example, the various Birds cards look at different aspects of communication.

Celtic Lenormand also includes an additional Snake card. This card was added because the Snake is a creature with a great many symbolic associations. In traditional Lenormand decks, the Snake is often seen in a limited and quite negative way. This deck adds a more positive approach to the Snake. So, if you see Snake in its more positive, healing and transformative aspect you may choose to work with the Shedding Snake. Whereas, if you feel it's important to have cards with a darker or more negative feel to them, you may

choose Fierce Snake. And for a good balance, you can include both in your readings.

Finally, there is an additional Cat card to go alongside the Dog card. Partly, I felt that no pagan deck would be complete without this most traditional of familiars. Additionally, the Cat represents a more independent kind of loyalty and friendship, one that thinks for itself, unfettered by cultural restraints, and yet still brings love and support in its dealings with people.

Besides these additional plant and animal cards, there are also four additional people cards, whose use deserves a more detailed examination.

The People Cards

There are four additional "people" cards in this deck, compared to a traditional 36-card Lenormand deck that contains one man, lady and child. These extra cards have been added for gender balance, and for those readers doing same-sex relationship readings. However, they can also be used to personalize the deck for yourself or your querents.

For example, if reading for someone with a son, you might prefer to use the Boy card, rather than the more traditional female Child card. Likewise, if they have a teen daughter, you might prefer to use the female Rider card rather than the male, or include both to allow for both family and external factors in the reading.

Some readers suggest any one spread can only look at one child within the family, requiring a second and third spread for other children. Other readers feel that the other children can be represented by cards with aspects like them, such as Bear for someone stocky, Stork for someone leggy, or Fox for a redhead. That can be a little tricky to figure out, though, and in our current multicultural world these attributes do not always seem to cover all the people we may encounter.

With the four extra cards in this deck it is possible, for example, to lay a Grand Tableau and look at the family as an entire system. After all, the children may well affect one another, and be influenced in slightly different

ways by the same situations and people. So, charging the extra people cards (choosing ahead of time which card you will associate with which person) is a good way to explore these family dynamics.

You can also use the extra people cards to explore same-sex relationships, or when there are a lot of people involved in a situation—for example in a larger group of friends or work colleagues.

THE SPIRITUAL TRADITION IN LENORMAND READINGS

While many people value the simplicity and directness, as well as the practicality of the Lenormand system, this approach in no way precludes the possibility of reading the cards for more spiritual purposes. In fact, there is a well-established tradition of doing so in Continental Europe and elsewhere. Doing spiritual readings does not mean that you leave practicality at the

door. It is simply another aspect of life to explore with the help of the Lenormand cards.

For each card, this book provides a description, which includes some suggestions for particular spiritual understandings of the card. However, as you use and combine the cards more, you will come up with other ways to see them and their spiritual potential in your life.

THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

Timing is often a thorny question in readings. While there are many systems for determining the timeframe in Lenormand readings, these are generally quite complicated and not particularly intuitive. If you already use one of those systems, you can continue to do so with these cards. However, eight of the cards in this deck can be used to represent the eight sabbats commonly celebrated in the pagan year. Later, in the Spreads section (*see page 182*), there are suggestions for specific ways to use these cards, both in sabbat-based spreads, and in more general spreads.

Some of the additional nine cards can also be used for pagan timings, either based on the Wheel of the Year or the moon phases. However, if you choose to just use the basic 36 cards, this option is still open to you. So, if you add the extra cards in, you can either have two cards for a single point on the Wheel, or you can decide ahead of time which one you prefer to use for timings.

DARK AND LIGHT

Traditionally, Lenormand cards are often seen as positive, negative or neutral, which can be helpful if you want to read for 'yes' or 'no' questions, or to add context to a reading. For example, a very positive card will bring a more positive light to a neutral or slightly negative card.

Beyond this, though, it can be useful to see all cards as having both positive and negative interpretations inherent in them. Psychologically, all symbols (including words) can connote more than one meaning, and can also be interpreted in nuanced ways. On a

more practical level, we can think in business terms, taking as an example the classic SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). With this approach, every strength implies an opposing threat, and every weakness suggests opportunities.

Following these ideas, we find even within traditional Lenormand meanings that a similar approach is possible. Take the card Birch rods, for example. In some decks this is titled Whips, in others it is called Broom. And if we take a look at the Celtic Lenormand image, we see how these are both potential uses to which a bundle of Birch rods can be put. Lift those rods high and bring them down on someone, they are clearly a whip. Hold them with the free tips down, and you can sweep the floor clean.

Interpretations of this card can also be both positive and negative. It can indicate a tongue-lashing, physical abuse, or a pattern of negative behavior. And what might be a solution to these situations? Performing some kind of cleansing; of your mind, behavior or life. You

may need to sweep out your own negative patterns, or brush someone out of your life if you want to break free of the pain indicated by the whips aspect of the card.

This “solution-within-the-problem” approach can be applied to many Lenormand cards. For instance, the Fox can represent someone deceitful. In this case, you may need to trust your instincts or bring particular skills into play in order to deal with the situation. Similarly, if you see someone poisonous in the Snake, you may need to take a winding route to your destination in order to avoid this person.

In the same way, there can be difficulties inherent in positive cards. The Sun can represent optimism and energy. Yet displaying these qualities might encourage others to try to divert our energy toward their projects, and our sunny nature could make it hard to say No. Still, if we are aware of these potential threats, we may be better equipped to deal with them.

Timing: soon, quickly

Person: young woman, visitor

Playing Card Association: ♠♥

Description: A woman rides calmly along a coastal path, towards the left side of the card. She wears a flowing dress, indicating her great ability to communicate, and a violet cloak, suggesting her wisdom and spiritual connect-edness. She carries a lyre, tool of her trade, for she is a bard.

Meanings: This female bard travels far and wide, bringing news to different villages, connecting them despite the distances between them, maintaining a greater sense of community. She also carries personal messages from distant lovers or separated family members and friends. As a person, this young woman is enthusiastic but calm. When the bard comes riding in you can expect news from afar. She is a welcome visitor, informative and outgoing. She quickly makes herself at home, but just as quickly, is on the move again. Her sporty physique helps her cope with the rigors of her profession, as does her ability to connect with all kinds of different people.

Spiritual Readings: This card represents the messages we may receive from earth angels—those people who enter our lives and bring lessons, hope and guidance. They may not even know the value of the information they provide us. Guidance may also come from nature so it is important to keep yourself open to messages from the world around you.

Dark and Light: We do not always want to hear the messages that are sent to us. Even when the message is positive, if it involves change, we may resist it, preferring to try to stay as we are. This card encourages us to really listen to what is going on around us.

Spell Use: Use to support an exercise regimen, to help strengthen sociability, or to call for messages from spirit.

Affirmation: Spiritual messages are on their way to me.

Deities: Epona—Celtic Horse Goddess, Rhiannon—Celtic Goddess associated with horses and songbirds, Iris—Greco-Roman Messenger Goddess