MODULE ONE · LESSER-KNOWN, UNIQUE & UNTOLD

Lenormand: History

Before you ever lay a single card, you deserve to know the story of the woman whose name is on the box — and the fascinating truth that she never touched the deck that carries it.

HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

Read one Part at a time. The Pause marks are good places to stop, or to listen in segments. Write in the ruled spaces at the end.

PART 1

The Woman Behind the Name

Marie Anne Lenormand (1772–1843)

- **Born:** May 27, 1772 — Alençon, Normandy, France
- **Died:** June 25, 1843 — Paris, France at age 71
- **Orphaned at age 5** — raised and educated by nuns
  - The nuns reportedly attempted to suppress her gifts
  - She was said to have predicted events within the convent walls as a child
- **Moved to Paris as a young woman** — arrived virtually unknown
- **Self-titled:** *"The Sibyl of the Faubourg Saint-Germain"*
  - "Sibyl" = ancient prophetess — a deliberate, powerful self-branding choice
- **Established her famous salon** at Rue de Tournon, Paris
  - Became one of the most visited addresses in all of Paris

- A mix of aristocrats, revolutionaries, intellectuals & the desperate

LESSER-KNOWN FACT #1

Marie Anne Lenormand was a published author of 14+ books

- Most people know her as a card reader
- She was also a prolific writer — publishing memoirs, predictions & accounts of her famous clients
- She used her pen as a second weapon, as sharp as her second sight

PART 2

The Revolutionary Reader

Her Clients During the French Revolution

- **Robespierre** — one of the architects of the Reign of Terror
  - Consulted her multiple times
  - She allegedly warned him of his fate
  - He did not heed the warning — he was executed in 1794
- **Marat** — radical revolutionary journalist
  - Also visited her salon
  - Also met a violent end
- **Saint-Just** — revolutionary leader, fell alongside Robespierre
- She was **arrested multiple times** during the Revolution
  - Her salon was considered politically dangerous
  - Reading the future was seen as a threat to revolutionary order
  - She was imprisoned — and reportedly *predicted the exact date of her release*

LESSER-KNOWN FACT #2

She was imprisoned for reading cards — and walked free anyway

- Her arrests became legendary
- Each time, her release seemed to confirm rather than diminish her reputation
- She turned persecution into publicity — a masterclass in resilience

PART 3

The Joséphine Connection

Marie Anne & Empress Joséphine Bonaparte

- **Joséphine de Beauharnais** was her most famous client
  - Later became Empress of France, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte
- Marie Anne allegedly told Joséphine:
  - She would survive great difficulty (including prison during the Revolution — true)
  - She would rise to become the most powerful woman in France — true
  - Her marriage would eventually end — true (Napoleon divorced her in 1809)
- Joséphine **consulted Marie Anne regularly** throughout her rise to power
- Some historians debate the full extent of their relationship
  - But the cultural record is consistent — the connection was real and sustained

LESSER-KNOWN FACT #3

Napoleon himself reportedly had her arrested — possibly out of fear

- Whether Napoleon feared what she might say publicly about his reign is debated
- What isn't debated: she outlived him, outlived Joséphine, and kept writing

PART 4

The Twist That Changes Everything

She Never Used the Deck That Bears Her Name

- This is perhaps the most important historical fact about Lenormand:
  - **The 36-card Lenormand deck was created AFTER her death**
  - She died in **1843**
  - The deck bearing her name was published circa **1845–1850**
  - Published by German game companies capitalizing on her famous name
- What did she actually use?
  - **Standard French playing cards** — traditional cartomancy
  - **Tarot de Marseille** — the classic European tarot
  - **Her own eclectic, intuitive methods** — she was not a system follower
- Her name was attached to the deck as a **marketing strategy**
  - She was the most famous diviner in Europe at the time of her death
  - Her name = credibility, mystique, and sales

LESSER-KNOWN FACT #4

The actual origin of the deck is a German board game

- **"Das Spiel der Hoffnung"** — *The Game of Hope*
  - Created in **1799** by German publisher **Johann Kaspar Hechtel**
  - A game board with **36 illustrated squares**
  - Players moved through the squares — similar in concept to Snakes & Ladders
  - The 36 images on that game board became the 36 Lenormand cards we use today
- The game was playful, accessible, and designed for **bourgeois parlor entertainment**
  - Not originally mystical at all
  - The images were drawn from everyday 18th-century German life
  - Ships, anchors, hearts, keys, dogs — the world people actually lived in

PART 5

Three Systems, One Name

The Lenormand Family Tree

- **Petit Lenormand** — 36 cards
  - The system we use in this workbook
  - Most widely practiced worldwide
  - Direct descendant of The Game of Hope
- **Grand Lenormand** — 54 cards
  - A larger, more complex system
  - Less commonly practiced

- Incorporates playing card suits + astrology + additional symbolism

- **Kipperkarten** — a separate but related German cartomantic system
  - Evolved alongside Lenormand
  - Uses 36 cards but with very different imagery (people & situations)
  - More literal and scenario-based than Lenormand
  - Worth knowing it exists — sometimes confused with Lenormand by beginners

> LESSER-KNOWN FACT #5
>
> ### Lenormand is NOT Tarot — and that distinction matters deeply

	LENORMAND	TAROT
Cards	36	78
Reading Style	Combinatorial storytelling	Archetypal/symbolic
Imagery	Everyday objects	Mythological/esoteric
Tone	Literal, practical, direct	Layered, intuitive, open
Focus	Events & circumstances	Energies & inner world

- Lenormand cards **must be read in combination** — one card alone is incomplete
- The system is famously **direct and blunt**
  - It will not soften a message
  - This is a feature, not a flaw

PAUSE

Audio break point for podcast/recording

MODULE ONE

Journal Prompts & Reflection

Take your time with these prompts. Let each question land before you write. There are no correct answers — only honest ones.

SIT WITH THIS · PROMPT 1

Claiming Your Sight

Marie Anne Lenormand was orphaned at five, raised in a convent where her gifts were reportedly suppressed, and yet walked into Paris and claimed her own authority as *"The Sibyl of the Faubourg Saint-Germain."* Where in your life have you quieted, softened, or hidden your own intuitive knowing to make others comfortable? What would change in this season if you trusted your sight without waiting for permission?

SIT WITH THIS · PROMPT 2

The Sacred in the Everyday

The 36 cards of the Petit Lenormand did not come from a secret temple — they began in 1799 as *The Game of Hope*, illustrated with ordinary things from daily life: a house, a key, a dog, a letter, a crossroads. Look around your actual daily life right now. What seemingly ordinary object, routine, or conversation is quietly acting as an omen or compass point that you have been walking past?

SIT WITH THIS · PROMPT 3

The Unfiltered Mirror

Powerful figures like Robespierre and Napoleon sought out Marie Anne's readings — and then imprisoned her when the truth cut too close to what they wanted to hear. Lenormand is famous for speaking plainly and refusing to soften the message. What truth in your life right now have you been hoping a softer, more ambiguous answer would let you avoid? Name it plainly on the page.

Let Your Light Shine & Keep Your Compass Cosmic