

CARDS

Written by

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INT. PSYCHIC'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

It's small, warm and inviting. There are a few CANDLES burning.

SIMONE, 60s, soft and subtle, sits in the corner behind a round table covered in a black cloth. She's adorned in cloth, bangles and bobbles.

She shuffles a deck of TAROT CARDS. One slips out.

She picks it up.

It's the card of TEMPERANCE.

She smiles and shuffles it back into the deck.

The outside door opens - a TINKLE of BELLS and a loud SLAM.

SIMONE

I'm in here. Come on back.

Simone sets down deck in the middle of the table. She picks up a long match and lights a candle to her right.

A HAND comes through the curtain.

DARIA, early 40s, all business, all the time, walks in. She looks around. She's completely out of place here.

SIMONE blows out the match.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Hello.

Daria goes over to the table, sets her briefcase down. She straightens her jacket, and puts her hand on the back of the chair across from SIMONE.

She goes to pull it out, then stops.

DARIA

Simone? I spoke with you earlier today?

SIMONE

That's right. You certainly did.  
(beat)  
Please, have a seat.

DARIA

You explained a bit on the phone.  
How does this all work?

Simone motions for Daria to sit. Daria pulls the chair back. She hesitates then sits far back from the edge of the table as possible.

Simone grins.

SIMONE

Well, I shuffle the cards until  
they are ready to tell a story.  
Your story.

Daria watches as Simone picks up the cards and cuts them. She begins to shuffle.

DARIA

Yeah, but how does it work. It's  
all stuff that's made up. It's all  
random.

SIMONE

(ignores her questions)  
You tell me when.

Simone shuffles. And shuffles.

Daria looks at Simone's hands.

She shuffles once more.

Daria looks tense.

DARIA

(stiff)  
Okay.

Simone straightens the cards and begins to pick them off the top, one by one.

DARIA (CONT'D)

You won't tell me anything bad,  
right?

Simone grins.

SIMONE

I only tell you what the cards want  
to reveal. You'll see.

Simone lays out a three card spread on the table - PAST -  
PRESENT - FUTURE. She sets the other cards aside.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
We start with the simple spread,  
where I'll share information about  
your past, your present and your  
future.

Simone closes her eyes and slaps her hands together. She  
rubs them for a few seconds. She opens her eyes and stares  
at Daria.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
Ready?

Daria nods. Not very confidently.

Simone turns over the first card.

THE TWO OF CUPS

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
This is your past.

Daria looks with some reservation, but she seems pleased with  
what Simone said.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
You've had a stable and loving  
relationship. There was much  
affection and a sense of  
permanence.

Daria nods, ever so slightly. It's close.

DARIA  
How do you get that from the  
pictures? I mean, you don't know  
me.

SIMONE  
The cards represent universal human  
elements like love, honour, money,  
creativity. The cards are selected  
at random, more or less, but  
nothing happens without cause. An  
action reaction kind of thing.

Daria seems to understand, but shakes her head.

DARIA  
How are you going to tell me what I  
want to know if this is all  
"random"? I mean, it's hard to  
believe that you can tell me  
anything specific.

Simone senses a live wire with Daria. How to calm her down?

SIMONE

Well, it's like this. I shuffle the deck. Your energy with mine creates a field. The energy you use to tell me to stop, it has an effect. Much like those moments when you think of someone and they call.

DARIA

That's just coincidence.

SIMONE

Why are you here?

DARIA

I want to see if you can tell me what's going on.

SIMONE

Well, I can try. But, you have to believe that I can. Otherwise, this won't work.

DARIA

That's a bit like believing in Santa Claus. It has to be based more on a belief.

SIMONE

I can answer your questions, but let me get through your reading first. Then you can decide if you want to go on. Okay?

Daria is reluctant, but nods in agreement.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Alright. I usually don't go deep on cards. But for you...

(beat)

Hand me an object from your purse that only belongs to you. Something you carry everyday.

Daria, skeptical, reaches for her purse. She opens it and pulls out a small, and very expensive, MIRROR COMPACT. She wipes it off clean and hands it to Simone.

Simone holds it in her hand for a few seconds.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

A man gave you this. Younger gentleman, family wealth. His first name starts with L and he lives close to the river. You've been with him for about three years now.

Daria's eyes are WIDE OPEN. She's a little stunned.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Should I go on?

DARIA

Yes.

Simone places the compact on top of the first overturned card.

SIMONE

He loved you very much. Everything was good. Until...

Simone quickly turns over the second card.

THE LOVERS

SIMONE (CONT'D)

She came on the scene.

Daria just stares at the card.

Simone places the compact on top. She closes her eyes.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

He met her at the store where she works. It's a fashion... No, it's a bridal store. He was smitten with her. But, because he was married to you...

DARIA

He put us in a room together.

Simone stops for a second and removes a trickle of wax from one of the candles.

DARIA (CONT'D)

He brought me there to buy my dress. He continued to tease her and flirt with her, right in front of me. I think he wanted to hurt me. On purpose.

SIMONE

The card suggests that a decision either has been made, or will be made soon.

Daria looks mad.

DARIA

The decision was made. He slept with her. He had sex with her in my bed when I was out of town on business.

Simone picks up the compact and hands it back across the table.

SIMONE

Perhaps you need couples counselling and not a card reading. I don't know what I can do for you.

DARIA

No, I want you to continue.

Simone turns over the last card.

DEATH

Daria begins to laugh.

SIMONE

It's not as bad as you think.

She sets the compact down on top.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

This card is actually a signification of growth, a death of old ways, leading to a new life.

Daria picks up the compact and puts it back in her purse.

DARIA

You know. When he told me he slept with her I was mad. Really, really mad. I wanted to hurt him.

Simone looks at the cards again.

SIMONE

I think he did love you.

DARIA

He told me I was missing something.  
Something he'd fallen in love with.

(beat)

That she made him feel alive again.

Simone nods in agreement.

SIMONE

Sometimes we lose ourselves over  
the years. Sometimes big things  
happen to wake us up.

DARIA

Well, I got pregnant, just after  
the affair started. I think we all  
got a wake up call.

Simone understands now.

SIMONE

He doesn't know, does he?

DARIA

No, and he never will.

Simone collects her cards.

SIMONE

I'm sorry I couldn't be of more  
help tonight, to you.

Daria shakes her head.

DARIA

You've been a tremendous help.  
Thank you.

Daria picks up her suitcase and leaves Simone alone to blow  
out the candle.

FADE OUT