

SCENE

*(It is a simple fortune teller's stall or shop. There is a table with chairs on either side, and some kind of furniture in which stuff could be stowed. The fortune teller's friend is on the phone with her.)*

FRIEND

No. No, I don't... *(Pause...)* Sure I have *seen* yo-- *(Pause...)* Yes, but that doesn't me-- *(Pause...)* Look, I'm just not comfortable *(Pause...)* I know it's your livelihood, but... *(Pause...)* Fine. Where's the deck? *(Pause...)* Hold on. *(Friend looks around, but can't find it.)* It's not there. *(Pause...)* No, it's not. I looked. *(Pause...)* Okay, hold on again. *(Friend looks in a new place, and finds a deck.)* Yeah, I found it... *(Looks at deck, and noticed there is something weird.)* Is this a professional deck? *(Pause...)* Your kids? You had your kids make a deck of tarot cards? How do your kids even know... *(Pause...)* You can't just make a new—

*(Friend freezes as Customer enters.)*

CUSTOMER

I'm looking for Madam Tourmalaine?

FRIEND

*(Into the phone, hushed and desperate...)*

*A customer just walked in. (Brief pause...) No. (Brief pause...) No I-- (Brief pause...) I won't-- (Brief pause...) They won't-- (Brief pause...) Fine.*

*(Hanging up, and turning to Customer...)*

Hello.

CUSTOMER

Where's Madam Tourmalaine?

FRIEND

*(In an overly dramatic voice, and regardless of friend gender...)*

*I'm Madam Tourmalaine.*

CUSTOMER

You're Madam—

FRIEND

Oh, oh! The spirits are speaking! They are speaking to me! They are saying that you don't believe that I am Madam Tourmalaine!

CUSTOMER

Well, I—

FRIEND

I am sensing that you have come here to have your fortune told!

CUSTOMER

*(Not expecting this...)*

Yes. How did you know?

FRIEND

*(Looks at Customer with a “Seriously? This is a mystery to you?” expression.)*

It's a gift. Here. Sit, sit. Take off your aura and make yourself comfortable.

*(Customer looks confused at how to do that, and hesitates. Friend makes strange aura-dispersing gestures, and guides Customer to sit. Friend sits opposite.)*

Now I must tell you something, and it is very important. Are you listening?

CUSTOMER

Yes?

FRIEND

A reading costs twenty dollars. And it must be paid in advance.

CUSTOMER

In advance? Why's that?

FRIEND

Oh! Oh! Oh oh oh! The spirits do not wish to be questioned! They want to be paid in advance!

CUSTOMER

Uh, okay. Here. *(Hands over a twenty.)*

FRIEND

*(Takes the money, and then looks again at the tarot deck, a touch of angst visible.)*

Alrighty roo, then. Er... Ahhh, the spirits are restless. Here. *(Takes cards out of box.)* Here we are. Now... uh... pick a card. Any card.

CUSTOMER

Is this really how this works?

FRIEND

This is how they tell fortunes in... India.

CUSTOMER

I didn't know Tarot cards came from India.

FRIEND

Oh yes. Now pick a card.

*(Customer picks a card.)*

And what is the card that has chosen you?

CUSTOMER

It looks like the eight of... penguins. Is that—

FRIEND

A very auspicious starting card, the eight of penguins. It indicates... great misfortune, followed by... a lot of swimming. Are you an athlete?

CUSTOMER

Well, I like to stay in shape.

FRIEND

By swimming?

CUSTOMER

Raquetball.

FRIEND

In a pool?

CUSTOMER

Nooo.

At a gym?

FRIEND

Yes, as a matter of fact—

CUSTOMER

A gym with a pool?

FRIEND

Well, no—

CUSTOMER

I sense that it is a gym that has a water fountain.

FRIEND

As a matter of fact—

CUSTOMER

And do you float off the ground when you are there?

FRIEND

No!

CUSTOMER

That explains the penguins. (*Lays some cards out on the table, and starts to turn them over.*) Alright, let's see what your future holds. Six of kittens... Four of... wontons?

FRIEND

I... think it's a boat.

CUSTOMER

Ahh, yes, four of boats. A very promising card... uh... matey. (*Continues flipping cards.*) Nine of cheese. Oh. Oh, dear. Look at that. We've flipped over... The Hermit!

FRIEND

Actually, it says Hermit Crab.

CUSTOMER

It does not.

FRIEND

It does. Look. Here.

CUSTOMER