

Tarot

by Kevin Myrick

Five cards were drawn and a smile came over his face. This was Johnny's first tarot card reading, and it reminded him a lot of Texas Hold 'Em, which he played with his friends in college. The poker table was just as stressful as this place. The only difference here is that the jackpot was his future instead of cash.

He had no idea about the first three cards - what he would call the flop - which looked dubious and full of danger. He didn't know how to describe them, except one: a man standing around what looked like stakes in the ground with one flying at him. The turn and the river looked better: the Knight of Cups and the King of Swords. Maybe he had a winning hand after all.

The woman in front of him, who looked every bit the poker player as his friends had, asked him "are you about to get married?"

Straight faced and a taken aback, he said no.

"I see. Then this must be something about your career." Johnny kept his poker face, which was getting harder for him to do considering what she said. "You love your job, don't you?"

Johnny thought that this woman had him pegged pretty good at the moment. She'd never seen him in his life before, so there was no way she could know anything about him. Johnny did love his job: an artist by nature he made pottery for a living after he spent a few years as a manager at a bank.

"You have a lot of petty arguments in your life, but they aren't that big of a deal to you, are they?"

She pointed to the first card in the flop - the man with the sticks. He

remained silent, maybe a little stunned. But who doesn't have petty arguments in their lives? Too general, Johnny thought. Lots of generalities, but poignant generalities.

Johnny found the next pieces of information, her turn and river cards, to be what forced him to rethink the whole idea of fortune telling.

The first was: "Things that you have been hoping for with your job will finally happen for you."

And: "You're about to take a short business trip, and when you get back things will be better."

She finally said "Things are going to be fine for you."

She had no way of knowing about all of his projects, all of the things he was trying to do become known in this big bad world. And she had no way of knowing about the craft show he was about to lug his pottery to for sale. But that parting shot, Things are going to be fine for you, really stuck with Johnny as he got up from the small round table. Johnny was rattled and realized that there are things in the world that are better left unexplained, unknown to science and intellectual thought. Tarot, Johnny decided, was one of those instances. He could no longer deny that there was some power and knowledge in those cards.

Madam Debra never even bothered to ask Johnny his name.

