

LEVEL 1 - 2 OF 8 STORIES

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Writer Turns To Psychics For Answers

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BODY:

Would that I could tell the future. Can I look forward to fame, fortune or floozies? Or would it be better to do a quick name change, stiff my creditors and hop a slow boat to Yokohama?

If I knew the answers to these and other pressing questions, life would be so simple. If fortune awaits, I could adopt a cavalier attitude to employers and stop slinking away when it's my turn to buy a round. On the other hand, if some dreadful disease lurks around the corner, I'll stop doing cheerless things that are supposed to be good for me like saying no to hot fudge sundaes or watching "MacNeil Lehrer NewsHour."

In search of answers I decided to check with some psychics. After all, plenty of otherwise sane people believe in the Cubs every year, so why not believe that some people can tune into the ebb and flow of life's events?

The key was to find someone who could tune into more of my life than my wallet. But unsure of whom to choose, I decided to get a sampling of my fortunes from a smattering of seers.

I chose a tarot card reader, a palmist, a tea leaf reader, a voice analyst and an astrologer. They appealed to my mainstream sensibilities. I definitely didn't want to visit any psychics who used chicken entrails or made me chant mantras. And there was no way I was going to hug my inner child.

I looked for answers in four areas: Is being a writer the best use of my talents? (I asked this despite the less-than-nurturing divinations of certain pea-brained colleagues.) Am I going to stay healthy? Will I travel to exotic far-away places? And will there be joy in my romantic life?

My search for my future got off to an inauspicious start. The first two psychics I chose from the Psychics' listing in the Yellow Pages had disconnected phones. Obviously their clairvoyance into their business futures had been faulty. But my third call connected and my quest for psychic insight into my future begun. Tarot Cards

The atmospherics of Gunn Hollingsworth's home were just right. There were plenty of black cats wandering around and numerous psychic-looking symbols hanging on the wall.

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The reading began with me shuffling the 72-card deck. Gunn laid out the top 27 cards in three rows of nine cards. My initial pleasure that the array in front of me did not include either the Death card or the Fool card faded as Gunn told me that almost none of the other major cards dealing with my future had come up. Instead, my life amounted to a series of so-called minor cards with unenchanting names like the Two of Coins and the Six of Rods.

Gunn pulled me out of my feelings of inadequacy, however, by explaining that my minor-league spread didn't necessarily mean a minor-league life.

He said that he had plenty of information to deduce my future. After all, the multitude of images crammed onto every card had meanings, the card's position on the table had meanings, and the very absence of some cards had meanings as well.

He told me that he saw no disaster looming for me. So far so good. He added that I was feeling socially retarded and not spending money fast enough. The first came as news to me, the second left me puzzled, since I couldn't imagine being any further in debt than I already am.

He told me that I was very cerebral and had "good solid talent." I decided that Gunn was a pretty smart guy.

On my four specific questions, he said: I should stop doing the kind of writing I was doing and become a novelist. I had no looming health problems and I had a bright future traveling as long as I "saw myself not as a Chicagoan, but as a citizen of the world."

Romantically, Gunn pulled no punches. The only way to make my present relationship better was to end it. In fact I should end it even if I didn't want to make it better.

Bottom line on what I should do with my life: Dump my girlfriend, cancel my health insurance, stop writing for competitively priced newspapers, flee Chicago and devote my life to dreaming up fictional characters while roaming the world spending money freely. Palm Reading

I liked Lenny the Palmist immediately. Plain-spoken and down-to-earth, Lenny seemed like not only the kind of guy you'd find yourself sitting next to on a cross-country bus ride, but also the kind of guy you wouldn't mind sitting next to the whole time.

Lenny took my sweaty palm into his gnarled hands and pronounced, "I like this hand."

From there Lenny enthusiastically plunged into the wrinkles and creases of my right hand. I had a good long life line, that was matched by the strength of my brain line. However, Lenny paused and said, "Oh my, you have so much more potential than you're using."

I decided that like Gunn Hollingsworth, Lenny was a smart guy too.

He cautioned me that a little crinkle by my thumb indicated that if I decided to change my career, I'd have to be careful because I could "get a wild idea and go ziggy, zag off into the blue."

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Over by my pinkie, Lenny found a wrinkle that not only showed I'd had a romance six years ago that had left me hurt but that I didn't like to address my inner-emotions.

That could have been true, but I wasn't willing to discuss it.

On my present romance, he strongly advised me to stay with my girlfriend, "otherwise I'd be lost." Further in the future, Lenny predicted that I'd get married when I was 38, but that "I'd have to be pushed."

Perhaps detecting a lack of muscle tone, he told me my health would be OK, but that I needed to work out. A rash of little lines by my wrist led Lenny to predict frequent travel ahead.

He also told me stories about people whose futures he'd read by rubbing objects they brought to him. One involving a woman who brought him a used condom was pretty gross.

Bottom line on what I should do with my life: Stay with my girlfriend, keep writing but charge fees more commensurate with my many talents, join a health club, keep my passport renewed, and when I turn 38, be careful about who's standing behind me.

Tea Leaf Reading

The idea of getting my fortune read while enjoying exotic beverages was appealing. But finding a tea leaf reader was hard until Gunn Hollingsworth recommended one to me - his brother Rex.

I sat at Rex Hollingsworth's table in front of an array of imported Chinese teas. My first job was to choose my tea. Rex encouraged me to sniff each of the over 20 teas displayed. Some smelled like, well, tea, but others smelled like loamy soil. I decided that since I wasn't a plant, I'd choose teas that seemed like they'd taste good when brewed.

I also had to choose my cup. Both selections had great psychic significance to Rex. In all I drank three teas from three different cups. The teas were pretty good, although the China White tea had long furry leaves that floated on top and stuck to the back of my throat if I got one mixed in with a sip.

As I finished each cup, I turned it upside down on a saucer, spun it three times and then Rex would peer into the soggy tea leaves left in the bottom.

He determined that I had been my parent's parent in previous lives and that we would continue this arrangement into the future. I decided that this meant I should be extra nice to them. He also said I had a strong female side which meant that I had plenty of good ideas. But that my female side was well-balanced with my male side, which is the side that acts on the good ideas thought up by the female side.

I liked the fact that he found I had a male side, so that I didn't have to make plans for a sex-change operation.

Rex said that while I was smart, I tended to over-intellectualize and that I felt something was missing from my career.

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During his reading of my second cup, Rex pursued a tangent about finding prosperity that would have put most motivational speakers to shame. He implored me "to stop inhibiting my gift of prosperity and remember that prosperity consciousness breeds wealth."

My final cup of tea leaves looked like a lump in the bottom of the cup. But Rex saw it as the "fortress of my future." Deep within was the revelation that I would soon write a great book.

Splendid, I thought. But what topic?

Rex looked some more and determined that I would write a great book about psychics and "the new age," the present period of time that many people feel is a turning point for mankind.

Bottom line on what I should do with my life: I didn't get a good sense about my romance, health, or travels, but I did get the good idea that I need to think a lot about the future while figuring out ways to get rich. I can also look forward to Father's and Mother's Day cards from my parents - in the next life.

Voice Analysis

Joe Who is a voice analyst who said he has been able to "read" people his whole life. He's able to work over the phone which meant getting a read on my future with him was mighty convenient.

Joe, who does a psychic show on WLUP-AM (1000), started our conversation by telling me he had predicted that Morton Downey would have a television show six months before he actually did.

This gave me pause, because I knew one thing about my future: I didn't want to end up like Morton Downey.

Joe redeemed himself by telling me that my voice was reminiscent of Larry Lujak's. I'd always been a fan of Uncle Lar, so my mood brightened.

Joe then proceeded to charge ahead with his analysis. He told me: I was a likable regular guy who had a cutting edge wit. I liked to burn the candle at both ends and was easily bored. My eating habits stunk and that I needed more broccoli in my diet.

He was very direct in addressing my four key questions: I should quit writing for newspapers and write for glossy magazines. Stress would harm my health. I would soon be going to England. (A direct hit, since I have tickets to London in November.) And I would be in a good relationship for the next two years. (Joe missed on one key detail. He said that I was "a tush man." Never. I look at a woman's mind first. Really.)

Bottom line on what I should do with my life: Find outlets for my work that are printed with ink that doesn't rub off, keep admiring my girlfriend's mind while boning up on broccoli recipes, and relax by taking long vacations to merry old England.

Astrology

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Sonja Foxe began our session by telling about her past successes as a seer. "I predicted the dates my parents were going to die," she said with a smile, adding, "They died right on the dime."

Using my birth place, date, and time. She worked up my astrological charts as it related to the heavens and planets.

My Mars turned out to be in a retrograde position, which meant that I was "monkish and turning my romantic energies inward." Not surprisingly Venus was nowhere to be found.

I also had strong showings of Uranus, "the planet of chaos," and Neptune, "the planet of confusion." However, these planets sounded more unsettling than they were. Sonja decided they implied I was due for some travel and that despite Mars hovering about, I was in for some entertaining romance. Better yet, the Moon was in my second house which meant that I would shortly become "very popular."

However, when it came to my health, Mars raised it's ugly head again and indicated I had to beware of skin and teeth troubles.

Bottom line on what I should do with my life: Get an agent to help me deal with great popularity, eat less chocolate and floss more often, keep that passport renewed, and get out of my monastery-like apartment more with my girlfriend. Overall, my visits to the psychics were fun. They shared a lot of common-sense philosophy with me and made me aware of the many different possibilities about what could happen in my life. Now if I could only figure out which ones are going to come true . . .

GRAPHIC: Tarot card reader and all-around psychic Gunn Hollingsworth told our writer that his minor-league spread didn't necessarily portend a minor-league life.; SEE Related Stories

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