

i. the meeting

XIV

Temperance

March 29

4:44 PM

45 East Evan Street

NY, NY

According to a random tarot card website, the temperance card is about balance, purpose, and meaning. Honestly, those are lot of things that makes Evelynn Park want to puke. She was in a taxi cab headed to the address that was given to her. She was curious about her tarot card so she did some research. With her phone illuminating her face, she scrolled throughout the article on her card. However, as much as she didn't like her card she had to agree that it was somewhat accurate. I suppose it can't be helped she thought as she turned o her phone and took a sip of her co ee.

Looking out the window of her cab Evelynn was greeted by the lovely a ernoon tra ic of New York. It was currently 3:58 PM, she suspected that she would arrive at around 4:30. A tad bit early but she could deal with it. For the majority of the time, she yawned during the taxi ride. Unfortunately, last night she didn't receive much sleep. She stayed up practicing a trick for an upcoming act that she was experimenting with. It was risky since she wasn't as experienced in stage illusions but she was trying to give it a shot. People loved those types of performances.

When she arrived, she paid the taxi driver. As she predicted she arrived at the apartment buildings at around 4:30, it was 4:34. She looked at the building, it looked very old and very worn down. You can detect faint residue of what Evelynn could only assume was blood. Looked like a struggled, knives were involved, men, most likely gang involvement, skilled. She had a quick look at the rest of the apartment building and sighed. She threw her cup of co ee away when she headed towards the entrance of the building.

Opening the door, she tried not to think too hard about everything around her. She had a habit of overanalyzing every single thing she saw, currently she's been trying to stop that. Head whipping in every direction, taking in every detail as she walked up the staircase.

When she got up she saw an older man in his forties. Based on appearance she saw that he was a strong alcohol user, occasional smoker, he isn't attached to anything, nor did he have anything to lose. Just by the way he stood can tell you as much as that. He was probably a magician, his fingers didn't indicate nimbleness, therefore he couldn't be any use with cards. He's too unstable to be able to perform any stage tricks. However, the fact that he was unstable led clues to the magic he did perform. He was a mentalist. A tricky type of magician to deal with because no one can truly understand how they function, however, she had practice with a mentalist.

"Hello, Sweetheart," he greeted her with a false smile.

"Mister," she responded with the same false smile and a nodded at him. "May I ask, are you here because of a tarot card?"

"Formal, I like it but I'm sure that'll stop soon enough," he said as he held up his tarot card as his response. "You?"

She held up her own for her response. "I wasn't expecting anyone else here."

"You and me both, kind of makes me feel less special."

She faked a chuckle, "And the door?"

"Locked."

"Of course," she sighed and leaned on the railing while he leaned on the door. She was about to speak when she was interrupted.

"Evelynn Park, I know. I've seen you perform before. Merrit McKinney."

"Pleasure." silence enveloped them as they waited for, something.

Then at a certain point, they both heard the door to the building open and voices were heard. It seemed to be two people arguing. It must be torture to associate yourself with those type of people all the time Evelyn thought as she ignored their constant chatter. However, it couldn't be ignored since they stopped once they saw McKinney and Evelynn. Why did I have to speak too soor Evelyn thought bitterly. "Oh-kay. So apparently, none of us was the only chosen one." As he spoke, the two new-comers both looked at each other in confusion trying to figure out an answer.

"Surprise, surprise," Evelynn said sarcastically. At first glance, she could already tell that they were stage illusionists.

"Let me be the first one to kick my ego to the curb," McKinney said looking anywhere else but them.

The couple started walking towards the door. "Yeah, excuse me," the man said as he walked passed them.

"The door's locked," McKinney tried to tell him.

"Is it? I'll check," he said. Evelynn looked at him amused, it was obvious he had some sort of control issue. The man tried to open the door, once he found out that he couldn't open it he examined the door some more.

Meanwhile, McKinney was talking to the woman. "You. No, hold it, don't tell me. Uh, Helen. No, no, no. Henley." he finished seeming very satisfied with himself.

The man looked back and said, "It's on your co ee cup."

The woman, who is now known as Henley, looked at her co ee cup.

"Thanks for keeping me honest," McKinney said to the man. "That wasn't mentalism, by the way. It was simply an observation. Second observation, you are beautiful."

Henley replied with a polite thank you. The man came back to the circle of the group, "That's good. That's very nice, well polished. Nice bit," he talked so fast that Evelynn barely had any time to process what he was saying. "J. Daniel Atlas, nice to meet you." He said with his hand extended to McKinney.

McKinney went in for a handshake but flipped Atlas o with a smile on his face. "Very nice. I know who you are and I just want to say that I'm not interested in you doing your mentalism thing on us. Especially when we don't know who brought us here or if it's even real."

McKinney shushed Atlas by holding up his index finger to his mouth. "Hold on, I'm sensing you... are a control freak."

Evelynn chuckled at that. "I'm sorry, have we met before?" Atlas's eyes darted from McKinney to Evelynn when he heard her.

"It doesn't take a mentalist to figure that out," Henley joined the conversation. "You are a control freak."

"Well, I take that as a compliment."

"Only he would take that as a compliment," Henley addressed Evelynn.

"Okay. Great. Good. Another compliment."

"Okay. So that's why you guys are no longer a couple," McKinney said while Evelynn nodded in agreement.

"Couple? No. No. We were never a couple," they both said at the same time, McKinney and Evelynn shared a look of disbelief.

"He used to saw me in half."

"She was a very good assistant."

"But I was too fat for Danny," as Henley said that you can hear an audible wow coming from Evelynn.

"No. I said that one time because of a trap door. They were specs."

"You built it this size," Henley said showing the width of the said trap door. "No one could fit through there."

"Rebecca fit, though," He said and an audible wow le Evelynn's mouth. Henley gave Evelynn a frustrated expression. "Rebecca fit for years."

"Do you know how hard it is to stay in those tiny little costumes?" Henley asked Atlas. Evelynn sympathized with Henley.

"Uh, no. I'm the main attraction," another wow le Evelynn's lips.

"I'm sorry, who are you?" Atlas faced Evelynn.

"Evelynn Park. Its somewhat nice to meet you." Atlas nodded his head sarcastically to her statement.

"Okay, so he never made you feel special and trust me, you deserve to be made to feel special."

"Gross, I didn't come here to watch old people flirt."

At that exact moment, all three of them looked at Evelynn. With the most comical looks on their faces, they asked, "Old!?"

Just then, Evelynn saw a guy around her age walk up the stairs. Curious, her attention shi ed to him. "No way," he said astonished.

"J. Daniel Atlas? Dude, I've seen everything you have ever done. You're like... I idolize you, seriously." Let the fanboying commence, Evelynn thought.

Atlas seems to soak up all the positive attention he was getting from the guy. "From a true fan. It's so nice to meet you."

"I'm Jack, by the way," he said as they shook hands. When they finished he scanned everyone else and stopped at Evelynn. "And you are?"

"Question," McKinney interrupted. "Did you get one of these?"

"Yeah, Death," he showed his card

"Temperance," Evelynn also showed them her card.

"The High Priestess."

"The Lover," a cough from Henley and the words 'three minutes' le her mouth.

"Hermit."

"So, what are we... Are we waiting for someone?" Jack questioned.

"Why are we just-?"

He was cut o by everyone informing him that the door was locked.

"Oh, no. Nothing's ever locked." Everyone gave each other questioning looks as Jack approached the door. He worked on the door for a minute. As he had it open, the door just swung inside and opened to the unknown.

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