

Cursed

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Maggie, a 19-year-old woman in her second year of college, wanted to know her future with her boyfriend. She asked me if marriage was a possibility.

Tommy, a 24-year-old bartender, wanted to know about his past lives. I told him that he once was a tomcat who was popular with the lady cats. I reminded him of time when he was a little boy who died in a car accident.

Paula, a 40-year-old woman, wanted to know why she never married and has been alone all these years.

Murray was planning a beautiful vacation with his, as he put it “exceedingly gorgeous” wife of 9 years, and he wanted to be sure nothing bad would happen. Being the kind person that I am, I searched deep within my mind to find the answers he desperately needed. I informed him that everything would be wonderful. I said it would feel as though he and his wife were young lovers again and that they would stay in bed all day, everyday.

I tell hundreds of people extravagant tales to fulfill any void they might have. Any inadequacy or insecurity I can make disappear for a short while. People come to me when uncertainty fills their life. People seek out my uplifting voice when they can't seem to find their own. This is my living; how I get by.

I live alone with my cat in a small, cozy apartment. Most days I'm home all day helping my clients. People of all ages and backgrounds come to my door as if I were their own personal god.

I have regulars; those who come every one or two weeks, depending on their measure of confidence, success and happiness. These people are my business. The rest don't need me; they're stronger and smarter than my customers and maybe even myself. These people laugh when they see advertisements for businesses like mine. They mock my customers. And they mock people like me, normal people who struggle through their lives.

People like me, we're all the same. We're on TV, we're in your newspapers, books and magazines; we're even invading your e-mail. We are here to make our customers lives better, easier, but every so often we'll let someone slip deeper into her own misfortune.

Jennifer, a woman I've never spoken with before, is my first client today. I open the door and welcome her into my enclosed, little life.

"Come right in, just have a seat anywhere you like and relax," the words flow off my tongue like petals off a flower in a summer breeze.

Jennifer slowly walks in. Her eyes search the room. My walls are a quiet, calming shade of pale yellow. The dim lights mimic the warmth of a flickering candle. New age music combined with the trickling of water from several indoor fountains completes this illusion of harmony.

This illusion is where I live. It puts my customers at ease while reflecting my own supposed inner peace. It also gives me a certain credibility I couldn't have otherwise.

The glossiness in Jennifer's eyes starts to fade, as she walks further into my living room. She is wearing faded blue jeans and a plain white tank top. She has shoulder length brown hair with greenish blue eyes; she's young and attractive.

“Thank you,” she stutters. I notice her hands shaking slightly as she bumps into the coffee table taking a seat next to my cat on the couch.

I tell her my name and we chat briefly about things that don't matter; superficial small talk to put us at ease, that's how I start every session.

“What could I help you with today?”

“You're the second psychic I've been to in the past week,” Jennifer stammers, never a good thing to start with, going to more than one psychic per week.

“I don't know if you know her, but—“

“It doesn't matter who you've seen previously,” I gently interrupt her.

“My life hasn't been going well.”

Neither has mine, I think. This is what I always think, but can never tell. Instead, I say, “Go on...”

“My psychic told me I was cursed, that someone had placed a hex on me.”

A person who sees psychics usually thinks of them as personal friends, placing ownership over them without even realizing it.

“How long have you been seeing this psychic?”

“Once every week.”

Hexes do not exist, every psychic knows this. A curse represents a feeling of hopelessness, of loss, of a spiritual void innate within each of my clients. This feeling makes you want to give up. Most people ignore it, hoping it will just go away.

“Did she happen to mention that she could remove the curse for a fee?”

The answer to this is almost always a definite yes. And that's when you know a psychic is purely out to get rich, not that I'm not doing this to make money, but I'm not making people pay for unnecessary procedures.

"Yes, she said it would be roughly \$2,500."

A very typical, almost cliché price to remove a curse.

"Jennifer whomever you've been seeing is no good. She's out to get money. She doesn't care about you. I would advise you to stop seeing her," I exert these words like a true professional.

Her eyes turn a dull green as they stare at mine, searching.

"Can you tell me about your hex?"

She speaks softly as tears fall down her flushed cheeks, "My psychic said I've been cursed in this life because of something I haven't resolved, that I've become lost, I've fallen into recklessness and disregard."

The phrase *this life* denotes that maybe a better life awaits Jennifer. This idea of reincarnation has been placed inside her head. Just another tactic that could ruin her life. I ask if she can tell me about her life as it has been in the past month.

"A huge chaotic mess."

Again, her life seems to be mirroring mine.

"Go on...tell me more..."

With words covered in tears, "All I want to know is how to get rid of this curse."

I give her a few minutes to calm down. Then I take a seat next to her on the couch, handing her a box of tissues.

Making eye contact with her, I ask, “Jennifer, would you be willing to let me read your palm?” I continue, “We’ll start with your left hand, if you don’t mind.”

Besides being a psychic, I also read palms; palmistry is what we call it.

Without hesitation or inhibition she holds out her left, overturned hand. I sense warmth and complete trust. Her hand is small, delicate like a child’s.

I explain to her while looking at her hand, “The lines on your left palm represent the underlying direction your life was intended to take.”

Cradling her palm in my hand, I touch two of my fingers to her smooth skin, I slowly trace the curving lines of her palm. I can sense her watching my every move.

I look up and smile. “You’ve been destined for happiness. Over the course of your life you’ve struggled to find fulfillment of your soul.”

She nods, smiling back at me. Her eyes look so warm and innocent. She has no idea that all I’m doing is touching her skin. She isn’t aware of the fact that I’m pacing myself, slowing down my predictions just so I can continue looking at her soft eyes.

I glance down running my finger over a line curving towards her index finger. “This line shows your life in about 10 years. It shows you finally realizing what’s been missing in your life.”

She squeezes my hand as if to thank me saying, “So, I’m not cursed then?”

I want to tell her that we are all cursed. That we have all been placed in this world with no way of knowing why; that we must all struggle through the life we have. I want to confess to her that I am a fake. That I’ve lied to her and that I know nothing. I want to let her know it really will be alright, but not in the sense that things will be beautiful and

the struggles will go away, but in the sense that I know exactly how she feels. That my life, just like hers, isn't going how I had planned. That my soul, too, is unfulfilled.