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Prompt 10

Madame Katrina's brows were knitted in concentration, her eyes wide and thoughtful under her signature cat-eye glasses. She had on a variety of gold rings and bracelets that tinkled whenever she moved. She was in her seventies, but radiated a youthful exuberance.

Madame Katrina was the go-to fortune teller for Brooklyn borough in New York City. She usually gave consultations in her second-floor apartment in one of Brooklyn's many brownstone neighborhoods.

Today, though, she had a spread of tarot cards laid out on the gleaming steel of a hospital bedside cart. Her tarot cards were placed face down. Their backs were glittery and deep purple, with a picture of the sun and moon intertwined on them.

An anxious couple in their mid-thirties sat opposite her with hands clasped together worriedly. The wife lay down in a hospital bed and her husband rested in a chair beside her.

They were both new parents, and their newborn daughter was gravely ill in the pediatric intensive care unit. They clung to each other in trepidation as they waited to find out if their baby would make it out of the woods. The sweet smell of hazelwood incense hung cloyingly in the air and the silence in the room was deafening.

Madame Katrina looked up from her cards at the nervous husband and wife before her and smiled lightly.

“I take it this is your first time having your cards read?” she inquired.

The husband nodded in reply

“Don’t worry, you’re in good hands,” Madame Katrina assured them.

She waved an arm over the tarot cards with a flourish and hovered above the last card of the deck. She picked it up gently and flipped it around.

Madame Katrina’s face turned cold.

A sinister-looking skeleton draped in a black robe held a scythe and stared back at her from the card pinched tightly between her fingers.

The card read: “DEATH.”

Madame Katrina’s heart sank. She looked up at the couple, who gazed back with hopeful faces. She couldn’t bear to break their hearts a second time. Their feeble newborn in the incubator across the hallway had already given them enough grief to last a lifetime. She put the card back down onto the table, trying her best to conceal her dread.

“Is there anything wrong?” the husband asked apprehensively.

“No, I... I just have to pick another card,” Madame Katrina answered.

Her arm hovered over the cards once more, and she was as tense as the couple opposite her. She stopped right above the card which sat dead center, picked it up, and flipped it over. She felt a weight lift off her shoulders.

A yellow sun smiled serenely back at her. Its rays stretched throughout the card. It read: “THE SUN.”

“I have good news for you two,” Madame Katrina told the couple. “This card represents good fortune, happiness, joy, and life. I’m certain that your baby will be okay.”

Husband and wife hugged each other and wept tears of joy.

Even though she was happy for the young couple, Madame Katrina couldn’t help but feel the slightest tinge of unease. As she packed her cards up and left the room, she said a silent prayer for the infant that fought for its life across the hallway.

Good story.

Editing was pretty good. A few more things to learn.