

Divinatrix

by R. A. Allen

THEIR mutual friends—a married couple who practiced matchmaking in the same way some spouses train for marathons together—set it up: happy hour cocktails at the Transit of Venus. No strings.

Career chat and degrees-of-separation games over martinis at the bar soon occasioned scrupulous soul baring and resourceful half-truths sluiced by an interesting cabernet in a back-corner booth. So far, so good....

She said, "Before I became a tax attorney, I toured in a mitt camp with a midwestern fair."

"Mitt camp'?" he said.

"Fortuneteller's tent. I was a midway psychic. You know: a carny," she said, pulling his hand across the table and turning it upward, digits splayed. "Ahh, the oval shape of your palm tells me that Water is your element. And this Girdle of Venus"—her eyebrow arched like a cat's back—"indicates emotional sophistication."

Everything in his mind emptied into the palm of his hand as her forefinger, a crimson-tipped stylus, traced the facets of his wide-open fist—life-line, heart-line...line-of-arousal.

Her flashing eyes pronounced him fit. "But palmistry," she said, "has its limits. The Tarot cards are my *métier*."

And it came to pass that she kept a deck in her nightstand drawer.

* * *

Beneath a ceiling painted midnight blue and flung with a

milky way of body glitter, she saw all, told all, revealed all. And with a crossed—heart guarantee, she ensured his true future at least until sunrise.

