

EIGHT OF SWORDS
by Stephen Gnojewski

Cast of Characters

CRYSTAL

LEO

Setting

A psychic's studio

Time

Now

SETTING: A psychic's studio.

AT RISE: A match is struck illuminating the performance space. CRYSTAL and LEO sit at a small, round table that is draped with a celestial cloth. Tarot cards, crystals, and candles are arranged around the table.

CRYSTAL

(Lighting a stick of incense and fanning the smoke.)

So do you see?

LEO

Not really. No.

CRYSTAL

Those sailors, that were lost at sea, lost like you...they looked to the stars and named them—Orion, Pegasus, Cassiopeia—as signs, as guideposts, to help them navigate through dark and treacherous waters. So you see, you have come here—have you not—like those sailors, seeking guidance, seeking some glimpse, perhaps, into the future, into your past, that will lead you, like those sailors, home.

LEO

Yes. Yes. I see.

CRYSTAL

Good. Now, relax. Sit back and relax and think—this is very important—think of the question that has brought you here tonight.

(CRYSTAL lights some candles.)

Close your eyes, yes, and let the world, with all its troubles...(With a gesture)...float away.

Close your eyes and think, think of the question that wakes you up in the middle of the night, the question that has led you here, to this very moment, with me.

(Silence.)

LEO

I came here to find out—

CRYSTAL

Shhh. Please. No words. Words, they are misleading. They cannot be trusted. Here, only the image can conjure up the true mystery of meaning.

(Pause.)

Now, think of the question, and all that I see—good or bad—shall be revealed to you. If you understand, say 'yes'. If not, I repeat for you.

LEO

Yes. I understand.

CRYSTAL

Good. Now, give me your hand.

(Tentatively, LEO offers CRYSTAL his hand. CRYSTAL closely studies the lines and prints on LEO'S palm.)

CRYSTAL

I see...I see your life line is very deep, very clear. You are suited for labor and athletics.

(Pause.)

You have experienced a great emotional setback, a betrayal, an injury to the heart. You are still nursing an old wound from this painful loss of trust. For the most part, you are getting on with your life, but there is still a part of you that holds out resistance to healing.

(Pause.)

I see you were adopted, for your heart line is severely broken. Growing up you were very lonely, as you felt your parents, they did not understand you.

LEO

Yes. Yes. How did you—

CRYSTAL

Please...

LEO

Sorry.

CRYSTAL

Just think.

LEO

Okay.

CRYSTAL

Silently.

(Pause.)

The curve of you head line reveals that you are a gentle and tolerant soul. You are very honest, very loyal. You have experienced great fortune and are surrounded by many jealous people.

(Pause.)

Money comes...money goes...health and happiness concern you the most.

(Pause.)

And yet, deep down, you feel trapped. Trapped by your own thoughts and perspective. Trapped into thinking that there is no way out of your present predicament. You are struggling to see, to see a situation for what it is and have been lead to believe certain things that may or may not be true.

(Pause.)

You must, and this is important, you must draw upon your intellectual and emotional self to determine the best path forward. This means releasing the bindings, the blindfold you wear to see the situation from a different, less imposing angle.

(CRYSTAL turns LEO's hand over. Pause.)

CRYSTAL

Ah, but what is this?

LEO

What?

CRYSTAL

This. This mark...on the back of your hand? Is this some sort of tattoo?

LEO

A tattoo? No.

CRYSTAL

Like a drop of water.

LEO

I do not have a tattoo.

CRYSTAL

So faint...

LEO

It's a birthmark.

CRYSTAL

So faint and yet so familiar. I have seen this before...

LEO

You have?

CRYSTAL

I have seen...

(CRYSTAL suddenly lets go of LEO's hand. She gets up and steps away from the table in shock.)

LEO

(Scared.)

What? What is it? Tell me. Please?

(Pause.)

Tell me!

CRYSTAL

(Composing herself.)

I never expected...I never saw...

LEO

What? What does it mean?

CRYSTAL

(Shaking her head.)

So much pain. So much guilt.

LEO

What did you see?

(Long pause.)

CRYSTAL

There was a girl. A young girl. And she was poor and with child. She had no money. Do you see? No family. No fortune. No future. And she was scared, all alone, and overwhelmed by her situation...

LEO

Who is this girl? What does she have to do with —

CRYSTAL

She had to...don't you see? She had to sacrifice her child. Even though she did not want to. Even though she knew it would be difficult. She had to...in the hopes that he would have a better life, a life of plenty. And how she wept—great, tears of sorrow and regret. She wept so much that her tears...

LEO

I do not —

CRYSTAL

...her tears, they stained your skin.

(Pause.)

LEO

I do not understand.

(CRYSTAL sits back down at the table and grasps LEO's hand.)

CRYSTAL

She does. Do you see? She does very much.

(LEO yanks his hand away.)

CRYSTAL

For that is the answer, is it not? To your question. To the question that has brought you here, with me.

(Trembling, LEO stands up from the table.)

CRYSTAL

Your mother. She loves you very much.

(Pause.)

LEO

I see.

END OF PLAY