

AN HOUR TO KILL

by
Susan Cain McQuilkin

CAST

Darcy, late 20's

Rick, late 20's

Miss Eva, middle aged woman or man in drag
with an Eastern European accent

TIME

Present

PLACE

City street

Fortune Teller's shop

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RICK (cont'd)

"Oh, you had trouble in the past but everything will be okay from now on." They watch you and talk to you and pick up clues from the stuff you say. If you nod, they know they're on to something. Give them a strange look, they move on to a different subject.

Darcy start

DARCY

You're wrong. One time they told me I was going on a trip and The. Very. Next. Day, I won a trip to go look at a vacation time share.

RICK

Well then, forgive me, that changes everything.

DARCY

I'm serious, listen to this. Years ago my mother and her friend, Sue, went to a fortune teller. My mother was like you, she thought it was and these are her exact words, "big, fat fakers." The fortune teller told her she would not have any more children. Now, she's already got me and my sister and my brother but, guess what? Just the day before she took one of those home pregnancy tests and the results were positive. She was pregnant.

RICK

What did the fortune teller say when your mother hit her with that news?

DARCY

My mother didn't tell her because Sue was there and she didn't want Sue to know she was pregnant cause Sue is a big gossip, if you know what I mean. But, my mother thought, "fortune tellers, big fat fakers."

RICK

Didn't you just prove my point?

DARCY

No! Because the home pregnancy test was wrong! And, my mother never had any more children!!!

RICK

Did the fortune teller tell Sue to stop being such a gossip because her friends kept secrets from her?

DARCY

Wait. This one sends chills up and down my spine. My mother's cousin's friend, Ginger, went to a fortune teller and she was told that "wheels" would feature prominently in her future. Wheels, you know, that go round and round. Naturally Ginger figures, whoopie, she's going to be getting a new car but, oh my God, it's so horrible, her husband had an accident and ended up in a wheel chair!

Darcy end

Rick start

RICK

I'm sorry about your mother's cousin's friend's husband but really, it would only be meaningful if the fortune teller had told the guy how to avoid the accident.

DARCY

You can't really speak on this because you have never even tried it. And probably you are afraid to try it. So, you will never know because you refuse to face your fear.

RICK

Okay fine. I'll prove to you this whole business is a sham. It's all mind games. The weak-minded falling for the power of suggestion.

DARCY

Let's go.

RICK

Wait. How about a little wager? If you're right, I will graciously accept defeat and do... what do you want? The choice is yours.

DARCY

I don't know. Take me to the ballet this weekend?

RICK

The ballet? Women in tutus and men in leotards with codpieces? Delightful. You're on. But when I win, and I will, my choice.

DARCY

And?

RICK

You know that, "I wait two months before anything happens" rule you have?

DARCY

Yeah.

RICK

Cut it in half.

DARCY

But that would mean ...

RICK

Tonight.

Rick end

DARCY

Tonight?

MISS EVA

Ha ha. Miss Eva likes jokes. Then you write down question, what you want to know. Okay. Thirty dollars each. Who go first?

DARCY

Me.

MISS EVA

Meet me through there when ready. I wash hands first.

MISS EVA leaves. DARCY and RICK sit and write on their index cards.

DARCY looks at RICK'S card.

DARCY

(whispers)

You promised you wouldn't lie.

RICK

(whispers)

It's not a lie. My real name is Eric. Everybody calls me Rick. You just assumed my name was Richard.

DARCY

Oh. Good to know.

RICK leans over and kisses DARCY.

RICK

Sure you don't want to just save the money, concede defeat and go back to my place? A much better way to spend the hour.

DARCY gives him a smile, stands and walks to the other side of the partition.

DARCY sits at the table across from MISS EVA. She hands her the index card and thirty dollars.

MISS EVA puts the money in her drawer, reads the card and then takes DARCY'S hands in her own and looks at DARCY'S hands.

Rick has his ear against the partition.

MISS EVA

You like roses. I like roses too. They are soft, they are beautiful, they are fragrant, but they have thorns to protect themselves. This is just like you.

MISS EVA (cont'd)

You are open like the petals of the rose but sometimes you have to protect yourself when people try to take advantage of you.

DARCY is shaking her head in affirmation. RICK rolls his eyes and throws up his hands.

MISS EVA

Protect your beauty and your goodness.

DARCY

I will. I will.

MISS EVA

There is someone new in your life. I see the letter R. Be careful. I see negative energy from that direction, sad, when you are so open to life. I also see maybe ... unstable?

Rick gestures his thoughts on this.

MISS EVA

Your question. Will you win bet? I do not know. I'm sorry, this I cannot answer. What I see? I do see you in your job. There will be forward motion there but not as quickly as you like. Be patient. I know patient is hard for you. What else. The older people in your life, your parents?

DARCY

Yes.

MISS EVA

They will have some health issues, but things will be fine. Yes, a little scare but fine.

Miss Eva End

DARCY

That's good.

MISS EVA

I see moving. Yes, moving. Something changing?

DARCY

No, no. My roommate and I, we are renewing our lease in two weeks.

MISS EVA

I see change.

DARCY

You're kidding me. Is she moving out? Is she moving in with her boyfriend?

DARCY pulls her hand away from MISS EVA and looks at her own palm.

DARCY

You know I suspected something but, how rude is that? I'll have to scramble to find another roommate. She knows I can't afford it on my own. I thought we were friends.

She thrusts her palm back to MISS EVA.

DARCY

What am I going to do?

MISS EVA

I do not know about roommate. I see change. You will know of change tonight. It will be like change is: some good, some not so good. But you, little rose, you stay focus on good. Okay? Make good day.

DARCY

Thank you. Thank you so much.

DARCY stands and as she walks to the other side of the partition pulls her cell phone out of her purse and texts.

She shoos RICK toward MISS EVA.

DARCY

(speaks while texting)

Are you moving out? When were you going to tell me? I need to hear from you.

She flops down on a seat in the waiting area stewing, phone on lap.

RICK crosses to the other side of the partition and sits across from MISS EVA. He hands her the money and the index card.

MISS EVA takes his hands in hers and looks at his card.

MISS EVA

Eric? This name does not suit you.

RICK

No? Why?

MISS EVA shrugs her shoulders. She stares at his hands, looks at his face.

She releases his hands and slides his money across the table back to him.

Darcy & Miss Eva end

Rick & Miss Eva Start

MISS EVA
No reading for you, Eric.

RICK
Excuse me.

MISS EVA
No reading.

RICK
What's that supposed to mean?

MISS EVA
Mean ... no reading.

RICK
I thought you ran a business here. I give you the money, you give me a reading.

He pushes the money back across the table.

Miss Eva pushes the money back to him.

Rick pushes the money across the table.

Miss Eva pushes it back to him.

RICK
Give me a break here, just a little reading? There's a lot riding on this.

Miss Eva crosses her arms over her chest.

RICK
(indicating Darcy)
Okay. What? Did she tell you to do this?

On the other side of the partition, Darcy's phone rings. She goes outside to take the call.

MISS EVA
She not say anything. Miss Eva say no reading.

RICK
May I ask why? Why no reading?

Miss Eva shrugs her shoulders.

MISS EVA
No reading. No reason.

RICK

Well, I think I can safely declare myself the winner. Thank you for not lying to my face and pretending you "see" something when you know and I know this whole business is just theater.

MISS EVA

I see a lot, I just not say. Think what you want.

RICK

No think. I know.

MISS EVA

So you say. Bye-bye.

Miss Eva waves bye-bye.

RICK

Bye-bye.

Rick shrugs his shoulders, pockets the money and stands.

MISS EVA

Rick.

RICK

What did you call me?

MISS EVA

Your name. Eric.

RICK

No you didn't. You called me Rick.

MISS EVA

I say Eric.

RICK

No, you said Rick. Oh, I get it. You hooked up some listening device in the waiting room. Very clever. Good one. Good for you.

He turns to leave.

Rick & Miss Eva end

MISS EVA

Goodbye Spud.

RICK

What did you say?

MISS EVA

You need hearing checked?

Rick leans across the table toward Miss Eva.

RICK

It doesn't do any good to tell a person you see wheels and not tell them how to avoid the accident. What is it you see?

MISS EVA

No wheels.

RICK

What is it?

Miss Eva looks at Rick and then at Darcy. Rick's anxiety level continues to rise toward hysteria.

RICK

Just tell me. Is it an accident? Is that it? A car accident? Do I fall down the stairs? Fall out a window? Is that what I need to watch out for?

MISS EVA

Please go.

DARCY

Rick, stop.

RICK

Violence? Is that what I need protection from? Do I get mugged? Robbed? Oh my God, do I get stabbed? Shot? Do you see me in a pool of blood? Is that it?

MISS EVA

Enough. Please. Time for you to go.

DARCY

(to Rick)

What's wrong with you?

RICK

Cancer? Do I have a brain tumor? Are the cancer cells eating away my insides as we speak? A slow painful, tragic death. No. Please, no.

Rick End

MISS EVA

(to Darcy)

Miss, please, take him.

Darcy puts her arms around Rick and escorts him out of the room.