

fortune teller

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by [nowrunalong](#)

Summary

Faith meets Tara as she travels across the USA on her way to Sunnydale. Set sometime before 3x03.

The town Faith's staying in tonight is dark and mostly quiet. She'd been meandering through the alley a block over from Main Street, figuring that's where she'd find herself a fight, but there wasn't a vamp to be seen. Well, she'd tried. Points for effort and all that.

If the world doesn't want her to spend the night ridding it of the Evil Dead, she might as well find some place that looks alive, maybe grab a drink. She chucks the makeshift stake she'd made from a broken fence board at an open garbage can; it goes in, but the force of her throw tips the can backward, and it clatters noisily to the ground. She looks at it briefly, contemplating picking it back up, and then shrugs. "Five points," she declares, and turns back toward Main Street.

Her initial impression of this place had been "Boring," but something is going on at the bottom of the street—Faith can see it now. Tents and bright lights and the distinct smell of roasted corn. It's appealing. She's got a few bucks she'd nicked from a guy at a bar yesterday, so she can buy herself something nice. Like hot food. Hot, buttery food. Damn, that sounded good.

The fair is set up in a park, the grass trampled by the feet of however many visitors had passed through since it had been set up. Upon arrival, it seems as quiet as the town itself, but as Faith wanders through, she notices that everyone seems to be gathered on the far side. There's a show of some sort going on. Uninterested, Faith locates the corn tent and buys two.

An ear of corn in each hand, Faith drops down onto a bench to eat. Afterward, satisfied with her meal, she licks the butter from her fingers and drapes an arm over the back of the bench, taking in her surroundings. Most of the tents are empty except for the workers. She's pretty sure she could

win at any of those fair games, but it's no fun if you're the only one playing.

Other than the tents with the fair games and the food, one has a single table set up with a hand-painted sign announcing psychic readings for five dollars. The girl at the table, who appears to be about Faith's age, quickly averts her eyes when she notices that Faith is looking at her.

Faith doesn't do plans, so she doesn't think long and hard about where she's going to go next. This girl is probably bored out of her mind from sitting alone at a table for God knows how long. Faith doesn't believe in that psychic mumbo-jumbo, but she wipes her hands on her slacks and strides over to her with a grin.

"You still open?"

The girl looks up at her, averts her eyes, looks back, averts her eyes again. "Yeah. We, we're open until eleven." She smiles hesitantly, and Faith sits down in the chair across from her. "What, um... What kind of reading did you want? I-I can do a palm reading, or I have tarot cards..."

Faith shrugs. If any method actually worked, they'd probably all say the same thing: Girl lives fast, dies young. "The palm thing," she says, because she's supposed to say something. "Sounds nice 'n' easy."

The girl acknowledges her answer with a quick nod and then pushes the papers on the table into a pile—she'd been doing her homework while she was visitor-free. Faith catches a glimpse of the top sheet before the pile is swept away into a school bag: the name at the top is Tara... something-starting-with-M. Or possibly N. Faith didn't really get a good look, and besides, it's hard to read upside-down.

After Tara straightens up, she regards Faith with a contemplative expression before asking: "Which hand is your dominant hand?"

Faith sets her right hand on the table, instinctively curling her fingers into a fist before letting it relax against the patterned tablecloth.

"Mind if I—?"

"Yeah, it's cool." Faith offers the hand to Tara, who takes it in both of hers.

"This is your life line," Tara explains, running a finger lightly over the line that curves around Faith's thumb. It tickles a little, and she smirks.

"You have a lot of life in you. A lot of, um, a lot of energy. Vitality."

Faith tunes out the words a little as she focuses her attention on sensations rather than sound. She feels a little bit tense—vulnerable, without her hands free—and yet strangely calm.

She can't remember ever knowing touch this gentle.

Tara's saying something now about the way her fate line connects to her life one, but all of this information is stuff she already knows. Some people might think it's scary accurate, but Faith's not impressed. Or, she is, but not by Tara's words. More by her quiet presence. Normally Faith has no patience for people like her—careful, hesitant—but Slayers have good instincts, and Faith's are telling her that Tara isn't quite like anyone she's met before.

"Yeah, yeah," she says. "I got all that. What about, you know, predictions? Am I gonna meet my soulmate, have a wild time in Vegas, get married and have twelve kids? Tell me something new,

okay?”

Tara frowns down at Faith’s palm, her own hand hovering slightly above it as if to block it from Faith’s view.

“That bad, huh? I’m gonna die alone with my cats?”

“You have cats?”

“Just a bad joke, T.”

Tara clears her throat. “Right. Um.” She looks up at Faith with a concerned expression. “How did you know—”

“Saw it on your papers.”

“Oh.”

“So, tell me about my tragic little old ladyhood.”

“Um, well. Your love life hasn’t been smooth so far. Which, I’m not saying is your fault, or, or anyone’s. But sometimes, it’s hard to find someone to... to be close to, when you push them away. When you do get attached to someone, you love deeply. You make sacrifices. And that’s... I mean, I’m not sure. But your need for closeness drives you, and your natural charm attracts others. If you’re able to open up to someone, to feel safe with them... they might be worth pursuing.”

Tara lifts her hand from Faith’s and smiles hesitantly again.

“I have natural charm, huh?” Faith says, with another smirk. She pushes her shoulders back and her chest out, just a little.

Tara blushes, her hair falling over her face a little as she gives her head a tiny shake. “It’s, um. It’s in your heart line. But I, uh, believe in the science of palmistry. If it matters at all, I think it’s telling the truth.”

She looks up again and her mouth quirks into a real, crooked smile. It’s the cutest damn thing Faith has ever seen.

“I should go,” she says quickly. “This, uh. This was cool.”

She forks over her leftover change and rushes off up Main Street toward the motel she’d spotted on the way into town.

Halfway up the hill, she changes her mind.

How could she not? After talking at strangers all day, the fortune teller’s probably in dire need of a drink.

Faith turns back around.

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