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COMMUNITY PROFILE

Dealing with fate

D.W. HIRSCH | spark

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"You don't have to wear a specific robe to do your craft," says Kristina Smith. "You can do it naked if you want to."

While many activities fit that description, Smith refers here to fortunetelling.

You wouldn't know she is a psychic to look at her.

She dangles no tell-tale crystals around her bodice, and she only wears her pointed hat with her Halloween costume. She dresses rather simply in T-shirts and shorts with a cell phone clipped to her waistband.

She owns two dogs and is planning a wedding.

She first sought psychics to answer her teenage relationship questions.

College provided her not only a bachelor's degree in chemistry but also her first set of tarot cards.

After experimenting with them, she realized she could sense other's thoughts and moods, their aura.

"Some people, I swear, their aura is so loose it's just like reading a book," she says. "I've had this my whole life; I just didn't realize that other people didn't have it."

Smith hasn't told her mother of her ability because she's a strict Christian, and Smith currently practices the earth religion of Wicca. If her father were alive, she doubts he would believe her. Even her fiancée, Eric, doesn't think she's psychic.

Nonetheless, her five years of experience doing readings by phone, e-mail and in person has earned her a loyal, repeat clientele, 90 percent of whom are women, most with a specific question about relationships.

Smith suggests a reading every few months because "the cards really aren't going to tell you that much about what's going to happen tomorrow. They're not going to tell you if you're going to slip ... and break your knee."

Results are more expressive than exact. One male client was approaching medical tests including a colonoscopy and asked if he should obtain health insurance. Her reading suggested all tests would be negative, and as of a few months ago, he continued a healthy life.

The flexibility of interpretation often leads to a bad rep for psychics, to which Smith replies with a drop in her head and voice. She acknowledges that many think they're fakes.

"Really, when people start to say that, it hurts me a little bit because not all of them are fake, although there are some that are," she says. "Beware of psychics that say



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Kristina Smith maintains an altar in a spare bedroom where she performs some rituals.

bio

KRISTINA SMITH

Age: 27

Background: Psychic

Services: Tarot card readings, black-mirror scrying, astrology and more

WHAT: Psychic readings

CONTACT: 463-5523 or SummerNightFawn@aol.com

COST: Flexible, but averages about \$20-plus for half-hour service.

S P O N S O R S

you have a tainted spirit or you have problems that can't be fixed without 'X,' and 'X' requires money. They're smooth about it."

One psychic told Smith that her spirit was heavy and dirty, that a crystal called out to help her, and \$300 would purify that crystal.

Rituals performed in her Newark house are unassuming and honest. Her altar resides in an upstairs spare bedroom surrounded by personal photos, a wall calendar and smiling teddy bears.

Candles are strategically arranged facing north (earth), south (air), east (fire) and west (water).

She keeps a witch's sword for casting nearby. A brass-breasted female figure doubles as an honor to the Wiccan goddess and as a lighter for incense and candles.

She sometimes burns sage that contains the consciousness-altering ingredient THC, also found in marijuana, but she does not use drugs.

Smith's chemistry background blends rather than rends the supernatural in her because her seeing abilities are scientific to her.

"Psychics will tell you the truth, whether it's what you want to hear or not," she says.

10 QUESTIONS

Q: What's the most common question clients ask you?

A: "Is he the one for me?" I've been asked that a thousand times.

Q: Why is it that you do what you do?

A: I am very curious and I have a helping nature. I have a rising sun in Cancer, which is very nurturing and very mothering. I basically will take anything that comes as long as it's not "Do I have HIV?" or something like that. I'd have to refer that person to a doctor.

Q: Is there anything you won't predict?

A: I won't predict death. Usually I won't see it, which is good because I try to keep myself good with the goddess, so I never really have bad visions.

Q: What's your opinion of phone psychics?

A: I did work for a phone company before and they did tell me to keep the client on the phone for 20 minutes, or else we would not be employed with them for very long. That made me very nervous and caused my accuracy to go down.

Q: What do you do in your spare time?

A: It sounds really weird, but I play video games. I read, I exercise a lot, I do yoga, too.

Q: How do you expand your mind?

A: Life is all about learning. So in a nonpsychic perspective, that's why I'm going to get my doctorate in biochemistry. I love my brain to be stimulated. In a psychic perspective, the more you read, the better it is.

Q: Do psychics really use crystal balls?

A: Yes. Some of them are, of course, very big. It doesn't matter as long as it's made out of quartz, and the more [imperfections] the better because if it's completely clear, you can't really focus on anything.

Q: When you introduce yourself, how do you describe your occupation?

A: Usually I don't advertise that I'm a psychic. I go more by chemist. If I feel more comfortable, I'll say I'm into alchemy.

Q: How often are your predictions correct?

A: It's difficult to say because a lot of people won't get back to you, or a lot of people won't take the advice you give. I'd say maybe 80 percent or 90 percent. I'm not gonna say 100 percent because nobody's really god.

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