



**THOUGHT CRAFT**  
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## Tell me my fortune

We never know what the future holds. To my mind that is one of the charms of life. For instance, when my husband was in the foreign service, while I loved every posting we had, I could not help looking forward to the next place we would go to, and the new experiences we were bound to have. Naturally then, I was drawn to people who knew how to read coffee cups or tea leaves, or fortune telling cards.

Mostly, they could speak only in generalisations, but very occasionally their predictions were correct. I watched them with fascination and remembered that my mother, who thought I was perfect in any case, God bless her, had also always said I was psychic.

Encouraged by this thought, I decided to go into fortune telling and bought myself a pack of Tarot cards.

My family would find me in the same position from morning till night, cross-legged on the floor, memorising the cards, shuffling them endlessly and laying them

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out in different combinations, studying books, interpreting, and occasionally, calling my children in for practice fortune-telling sessions. My daughter was especially skeptical of my gifts, and protested that I was telling her nothing new. "Muttherr, you knew that already! We live in the same house!" she would say.

I persevered though, and for a time I had some modest successes. There was so much to learn and explore that I decided to proceed from Tarot card reading to palmistry. I pored over the writings of Cheiro, Bejan

Daruwalla, and Benham.

I visited palmists to see how they worked, and paid to get my palm read, all in the name of science. I came away much poorer, but hugely flattered by all the nice things they told me about becoming rich and famous, but also, sadly, quite fat in old age.

I began to observe the hands and fingers of everyone I met, measuring them for signs of their temperament and inclinations. I even asked friends to show me their palms so I could study their lines. It was a fascinating hobby.

I set aside my palmistry when we got posted to Beijing. I had fallen in love with all things Chinese, so the I Ching became my new passion. The next few years were spent in study, in counting sticks and throwing coins. After a time, however, I found the I Ching answers too vague for my liking and realised that I got more joy from reading Lu Xun or the 'Dream of the Red Chamber'.

By the time we got to Delhi, I was ready

for new experiences again. One day, while shopping in Khan Market, I came upon a store that sold fortune-telling items. There were cards and dice, good luck lights, double happiness symbols, lucky plants, fish, and many other intriguing things connected with Feng Shui.

My husband would come home every now and then to find that the furniture had been moved around to more auspicious Feng Shui locations, paintings shifted, bathroom doors closed, plants placed in strange corners, and good luck items hanging everywhere.

I had great fun with my research on fortune telling over the years, and the knowledge I gained was rich, varied and interesting. The call of reality became too strong, however, and I returned to the basic premise of Life, which is that the universe has its own mysterious laws, and the future is unknowable. That is entirely as it should be; how else would we enjoy the novelty of each new phase!

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