

Haréré

<Date: 5/27/29,690 Standard. Location: the East Park Housing Projects on Terra.>

Jira, a twelve-year-old yellowed-furred tigress spread a deck of fortune cards out in a long line across an old weather-beaten table. All the cards were facedown. Several of her younger friends stood about the table watching her actions and listening to her predictions.

“Okay, Misha.” Jira gestured to the line of cards. “Pull five cards out but don’t look at them. Leave them facedown on the table.”

Misha, a large ten-year-old canine, carefully slid five cards out. “Now what?”

Jira touched the backside of each card he had withdrawn. “Good selection.”

“It won’t be as good as my fortune,” said Hera, a ten-year-old lioness.

“We’ll see,” said Jira. She flipped the first of the cards over. Seeing jewels and gold displayed on the card, she said, “The wealth card.”

Misha grinned. “I’m going to be rich.”

“Like I said earlier, that all depends on what the other cards say.” Jira waved her palms over the four remaining cards. She selected the card on the opposite side from the first card she had selected. “The life card.”

Misha asked eagerly, “That’s good, isn’t it?”

“Maybe.” Jira flipped over the left of three remaining cards. “The change card.”

“Change him into something useful,” said Haréré, a nine-year-old rabbit.

“She would if she could,” said Hera.

Jira flipped over the right card. “Fame.”

“Yes.” Misha’s emotions let the word slip out.

“Quiet, please.” Jira flipped the final card over. “Glory.”

Misha looked on nervously. “Well...?”

Jira closed her eyes. “In the years to come you will leave this ghetto and find fame and fortune in a new life...”

“Yes!” Misha jumped up and down several times.

“But be careful, Misha.” Jira held her right hand up to hush him. “Your future fame may carry a dark side. Even bad guys can have lots of money and do good deeds to appear to look like they’re good and caring to the populace.”

Misha smiled. “My mama would kick my tail if I did anything to embarrass her.”

“Do mine! Do mine!” shouted Haréré.

“Quiet, Haréré!” Jira gathered the cards up in a pile and reshuffled them. “I can’t rush this.”

Haréré drew closer to the table and said in a meek voice, “Okay.”

Jira spread the cards out across the table. “Choose five wisely.”

Haréré hesitated for a moment then selected five cards.

“Let’s see what your future holds.” Jira flipped the center card over. “Life.”

“Okay...” Haréré leaned over the table.

Jira flipped the second card over. “Persistence.” She turned over another. “Strife.”

Haréré grimaced. “That’s bad.”

“Maybe not...” Jira flipped another. “Fruit of Plenty.”

“Plenty of what?” Haréré nearly toppled over onto the table as she leaned forwards over the cards.

“Geez, girl! Back up some.” Jira waved Haréré as well as the others back and away from the table.

Several more children joined the group to see what all was going on.

“Last one.” Jira turned the last card over. “Wealth.”

“I’m going to be rich!” Haréré leapt as high in the air as her rabbit’s legs would boost her.

“No! It means you’re going to have a lot of children.” Jira shook her head. “For God’s sake, you’re a silly rabbit, Haréré.” She spied Haréré’s harsh glare. “Don’t eyeball me, bunny! I’ll grind that cute powder-puff tail of yours to pulp and I’ll come nowhere close to breathing hard when I do it.”

“Haréré” is a section of text from the story *Panocide*.
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