



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD CHICANI

"You'd make a fine nurse," said the palmist (re-enacted in this photo by a model) as she moved her green-glowing flashlight over the author's palm. A tape recorder is hidden nearby in the author's bag.

learn, she explained. This was only my eighth reincarnation.

Next, I visited a reader of the Tarot. These are ornate cards which scholars have traced back to the Middle Ages. The reader spread them dramatically on the table and announced, "You are going on a trip."

"Oh," I answered, "I just came back from one."

"Then you'll probably go away for a weekend."

"That's strange. I rarely leave the city on weekends because of the crowds."

"It could be a spiritual journey, you know, dearie," she snapped indignantly.

A Tea-Leaf Reader Is Suspicious

Then I tried a local gypsy tea-leaf reader, but she hinted sullenly I might be with the police and refused to talk to me. A friend told me afterward that tea-leaf reading and other kinds of prognostication are illegal in most states and that our city's police recently had launched a campaign to clean out the fortunetellers.

Perhaps all the "marvelous" fortunetellers have been caught, I thought. Perhaps it just was not in the stars for me to find a good one. But what about the stars? They aren't illegal. Astrologers, as well as graphologists, are listed in most phone books. A lawyer explained to me that no high

court has disproved the astrologers' basic contention that human character and actions are predetermined by the position of the stars and planets at the exact minute of birth.

I chose a famous astrologer with a large clientele of theatrical celebrities, businessmen, and government officials and had to wait five weeks for an appointment. When I finally entered his plush office, he had just finished my horoscope.

"Now, March 29," he began, addressing me by my birthday, "you have charm of manner which, with that Mars and Pluto behind you, could open any door if you just use it and don't get impatient. You're restless and you have great vitality, but you lose interest if things don't move fast enough. You are also an executive who would have to work where you'd be under direction. And, March 29, you were raised an only child."

Why that's me, I thought in amazement. He sounded as if he had known me for years.

He started quickly listing events of my past. "When you were a little girl, did your parents move? You were five, six, seven? Let me go to when you were 11 or 12. Did you feel the responsibility of school? Then you made your first break at 18. You were in love in '57 or '58. No, it was '56, '57. Then again in '59. You were only in love with love in '61."

With hypnotic intensity, dates and events poured from him in a flood of words. Once, I stopped him in confusion. He grumbled, "These are infallible rules of astrology, March 29. If it doesn't come to you, you must not take time to think back now. You'll remember later."

Another deluge of dates and suddenly he slowed down. "Before we go any further," he said, "I forgot to tell you. You should be connected with publishing. And yet, you're not a writer like most—unless you have a tape recorder."

Had the Astrologer Guessed?

I felt the hair on the back of my neck tingle and I gripped the purse containing my tiny recorder. He might have guessed I was a writer because an editor had referred me to him. But how could he know about the recorder?

The astrologer blithely followed this statement with another surprise. "Ever had any trouble with your back or knees?"

I gasped. Years ago, I had been a ballet dancer and had seriously injured both knees.

He then advised me to leave town immediately and move to the Southwest. He predicted that I would marry an advertising executive this year and that he would have blue-gray eyes and stomach trouble. He also predicted a second mar-

(Continued on page 6)