

INT. FORTUNE TELLER PARLOR - DAY

A dark, cramped front room of an old house, heavy damask curtains, curios, and beaded table lamps. A table with a crystal ball sits at the center of the room. Incense smoke blurs the air.

SYLVIA, 26, bookish with tortoiseshell glasses and a Jackie O Bouclé jacket thrown over a T-shirt steps into the room and SNEEZES loudly.

SYLVIA  
(self-conscious)  
Uh, hello?  
(worried)  
Is anyone--?

MADAME MATRYOSHKA  
Yes, come come. Please. Please sit.

MADAME MATRYOSHKA speaks in a gravelly pan-Slavic accent, and we realize that she and her CAT are camouflaged seamlessly into her surroundings.

SYLVIA  
Oh! I didn't -- you were there the whole time!

Sylvia SNEEZES again. Madame Matryoshka slaps a box of tissues on the table.

MADAME MATRYOSHKA  
Elbow your sneeze please. Madame M is not young. Immunocompromised.

Sylvia takes a tissue and blows her nose.

SYLVIA  
I'm sorry, the incense is very strong--

MADAME MATRYOSHKA  
Must have incense. The spirits demand it. They insist.

Madame Matryoshka sets a bottle of hand sanitizer on the table.

MADAME MATRYOSHKA (CONT'D)  
For the Palm. Disinfect please.  
Because of the Covid.

Sylvia dutifully pumps some hand sanitizer onto her hands.