

# The Ace of Pentacles

By Samuel Aupperlee

### Characters:

Hailey: F, 18-20, any ethnicity. Hailey is an employee at a rundown retail store. Horribly awkward and over the top (think Aubrey Plaza meets Zooey Deschanel). Frequently hits reply all on emails when she should not. Describes herself as "spiritual" to everyone she meets but has done little to no research on any form of spirituality. People think she is stupid but she isn't. She believes very strongly in very little.

Thomas: M, 25-30, any ethnicity. If you asked 15-year-old Thomas to picture his life ten years from now he would not have pictured being a mediocre shift manager at a rundown retail store. If you asked Thomas at the start of the show where he would be ten years from now he would likely say: a mediocre shift manager at a rundown retail store. People think Thomas is boring but he isn't. He believes very feebly in a whole lot.

### Setting:

A break room in a rundown retail store in the middle of bumfuck Ohio. The kind of place that wears you down. Some time after 2010.

### Note:

A dash (-) indicates two words that should be slurred together or spoken very closely together.

Setting: A worn down retail store break room. If you are not Jeff Bezos or equivalent, you have been in one identical to it: somehow everything is mildly stained in some way or another and the air is dense with that microwave food stench. There is maybe a vending machine or a row of lockers for the employees.

HAILEY is on stage sitting at a table when the lights come up. Her phone is plugged into the wall and she is eating a can or bowl of microwave soup and watching a loud video on her phone.

THOMAS enters. He is carrying a microwave bowl of mac and cheese. They acknowledge each other. THOMAS moves to the microwave to start cooking his mac and cheese. We hear the beeping of the numbers.

THOMAS

Shit... how do you... Hey, uh, Hailey do you know what button to press to start this thing?

HAILEY

You have to press "time cook" and then enter the amount of time you want.

THOMAS does this, slowly.

THOMAS

Alright, then what?

HAILEY

Then... press start?

THOMAS presses start. The microwave starts. THOMAS celebrates!

THOMAS

Hey! There we go!

THOMAS waits for his food. HAILEY stares him down. It's not intense but it's definitely awkward.

THOMAS

Soooo... Hailey. Is that a new tattoo?

Beat. HAILEY goes back to watching the video on her phone.

HAILEY

My meditation guide said I needed a change.

THOMAS (cont.)

Oh! It's really nice! I like how it's all... over your face- Listen I need to talk-

HAILEY looks up, making eye contact with THOMAS.

HAILEY(intently)

Can I give you a tarot card reading?

THOMAS

Uhhh...- You know I don't really know-

The microwave beeps and, somehow, the exact same second:

HAILEY(without breaking eye contact)

Your food is done. (beat) Can I give you a tarot card reading?

THOMAS

Hey listen Hailey I don't really think now is the right time. I actually needed to come talk to you about your job-

HAILEY

PLEASE I need practice! I'm, like, really good.

THOMAS (Sighing/grunting/trying to explain himself)  
I mean I don't really believe in tarot cards- ... My mom is a catholic... I have a complicated relationship with G-

HAILEY, who has not been listening to THOMAS begins to pull the biggest fucking deck of cards you have seen out of her tiny little purse. Still ignoring THOMAS she draws the first card and interrupts him:

HAILEY

YOUR FIRST CARD! Issss the ACE OF CUPS!

HAILEY announces this triumphantly before flipping through pages in her tarot guide and landing on the correct one.

HAILEY (cont.)

Which represents... Ooh! (Reading from the book) "The starting of a new cycle or journey. Drawing this card signifies the beginning of a lo-"  
OOH A LOVE STORY! Thomas! Why didn't you tell me about this??"

THOMAS

Because those cards aren't real and my tinder match didn't reply.

HAILEY

Which tinder match?

THOMAS

My tinder match. Singular.

Beat.

HAILEY

Well I don't knowwww, I would be on the lookout! Oohhhhh!!!!

HAILEY begins tickling THOMAS  
to which he bears no  
reaction.

THOMAS

How many more cards till we're done?

HAILEY

Well the book says I can do a couple different ways so... two more  
cards this way... OR we could do this arrangement (showing THOMAS an  
image in the book) which would mean (counting under her breath)  
1,2,3,4,5-

THOMAS(quickly)

Let's do two more.

HAILEY

Okey doke! (flipping another card) Oh I've seen this one before! It's  
called... shit it's called the seven of- OHHH pentacles! It's called  
the seven of pentacles and it means (trying to recite from memory)  
"youuuuu are-in-a-solid-position-now-anddddd areeee looking for  
future projects??" ... But wait it's upside down so I guess the... the  
opposite of that? Like don't invest in anything new I guess?

THOMAS(who has worked here for years)

Shouldn't be a problem.

HAILEY

Ready for your (in a spooky voice) last card??!!!

THOMAS

I mean I still don't- Sure.

HAILEY(flipping the last card)

Oh. I don't know this one either. Ummmm (looking through the book  
again.) This one is called the "Ace of Pentacles" and it means  
youuuu "are going to be presented with new occupational  
opportunities. Examples include a new career, a raise orrrr a  
promotion." BUT since it's placed horizontally it ACTUALLY means

someone near you is going to be receiving those benefits and you might be able to help them- OHMYGOD.

THOMAS(shocked. The "OHMYGOD" was loud and surprising)

Goddamn! what?

HAILEY(wholeheartedly believing in the cards. Getting emotional)

THOMAS. Do you realize what this means? I III am right next to you!!! YOU'RE PROMOTING ME??!!!! (standing) OH MY GOD.

THOMAS

What? Hailey no I am not-

HAILEY(not listening to him at all)

I can't believe it! I've only been working here for a couple months!! Oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god oh my god

THOMAS

No Hailey listen you're not being promoted I don't know what to tell-

HAILEY has started chanting something that sounds like an infomercial version of Buddhist prayers. She is simultaneously doing the macarena or some other cheesy dance.

THOMAS (cont).(annoyed)

What- ... What are you doing?

HAILEY(still doing the macarena)

My meditation guide gave me this Buddhist dance. I'm cleansing the space before this big moment. It invites the good spirits IN! (counting the beats under her breath. This continues underneath THOMAS' lines) 1,2,3,4,5,6..

THOMAS(trying to get her attention)

Hailey... Hailey... Hailey!!

HAILEY is IN THE ZONE

THOMAS(frustrated, but still calm)

Listen Hailey I don't know what to tell you- you can't trust a little deck of cards to determine what's gonna happen to you. You're not promoted.

HAILEY(stopping upon hearing this news)  
Well of course not YET! (turning to THOMAS) Please can I have this promotion? Or whatever?

THOMAS(sort of shocked at the stupidity)  
Hailey. No!

HAILEY stares at him for a moment before returning to dance even more vigorously as if it will soothe her.

THOMAS (cont.)  
I mean I'm sorry but I actually came in here to talk to you about something really... really different... can you listen?... to me???

HAILEY  
Can I have it? Pleaseeeeeee?? I want it and the cards do too!

THOMAS  
Of course not! Hailey- you flipped ONE card which told you that MAYBE someone near me MIGHT have SOMETHING good happen to them. I don't understand how you can think that because I reluctantly agreed to sit here while you-

HAILEY(frustrated, interrupting, word vomit)  
WELL-ONE-TIME-I-FLIPPED-A-CARD-TELLING-ME-THAT-I-WOULD-MEET-SOMEONE-IMPORTANT-TO-ME-AND-THE-NEXT-DAY-I-FOUND-A-POTATO-CHIP-THAT-LOOKED-EXACTLY-LIKE-CAMERON-DIAZ-AND-I-LOOOVVVEEEEEDDDD-THE-BLACK-VERSION-OF-ANNIE!!! SO-HOW-YOU-GONNA-EXPLAIN-THAT-ONE-AWAY-HUHHHH????!!!

HAILEY has stopped dancing and is out of breath.

THOMAS  
Look Hailey I'm not trying to upset you or anything I just can't give you exactly what you want because of a Tarot card reading. I mean what if I gave out raises based on what my mood ring told me?



HAILEY

You're telling me you give out raises withOUT a mood ring on?

THOMAS

Of COURSE not. I only give out raises when Mercury is in retrograde.

HAILEY

Why would you give out raises then? You should-

THOMAS

I WAS BEING SARCASTIC.

Beat.

HAILEY

Sooo... a raise instead?

THOMAS

Jesus

HAILEY

Please?

THOMAS

How am I even supposed to know you didn't rig that deck to put that card there. I'm here because I need to talk to you about your job.

THOMAS pulls out a tiny sheet of crumpled up paper from his pocket.

THOMAS (cont.)

Frankly, Hailey, this is overdue. Upper management asked me to talk to you about this (referencing paper) today. It's a record of your history at this store including all tardies, letters to upper management, and bad interactions with customers.

HAILEY

You kept track of that?

THOMAS

On February 14th you convinced a customer not to buy one of last season's sweaters because it made her look like "the grinch but after he balded and now he's using hair growth lotion on his whole body"

HAILEY

SHE TOOK THAT OUT OF CONTEXT

THOMAS

On March 7 you walked onto the sales floor wearing our entire lingerie set on top of your actual clothes and proceeded to mention to someone that, quote, (reading from the paper) "I'm ten days late which doesn't even make sense because I've been SO in synch with the moon AND my masturbation schedule lately" Oh my God you said that?

HAILEY

Well it was true.

THOMAS

Hailey it doesn't even matter. I just need you to sign this so I can send it to corporate to verify my decision to-

Like lightning, HAILEY lunges for the paper and without thinking crumples it up and shoves it in her mouth.

HAILEY(her mouth full of the paper).

Promotion or I quit.

THOMAS(shocked?angry?)

Hailey what are you-

HAILEY(still with paper in her mouth)

MY HOROSCOPE TOLD ME TO BE BOLD TODAY! PROMOTION OR I QUIT!

THOMAS

You can't possibly think I would promote you after you just did THAT!

HAILEY(swallowing the paper)

Well now the paper's gone for good! I know you probably think I'm stupid but at least I believe in something. Sue me for thinking that if I was having a shitty year maybe I could help myself out by at least being able to tell what's coming next! Sue me for trying to feel better and actually take control of my life!

THOMAS

People like you just can't make sense of the world and so you hide behind these little games! I mean, you are making life decisions off of a LITTLE deck of CARDS!!!

HAILEY

Well at least I'm not like you! I don't determine every decision I make based on some algorithm or something- you- you are like literally a robot like they could copy paste R2-3P0 or whatever into your job and I literally wouldn't notice.

Beat. HAILEY is thinking.

HAILEY (cont.) (slowly)

Just because you don't get it doesn't mean it's not true. (Beat.) Sometimes *I* actually trust myself! I mean it's not like- it's not like I believe every card I ever flip is going to come true but don't you ever wanna like... I don't know like FEEEEEL your gut?? Like listen to yourself and the things around you because sometimes your body or-or the WORLD knows things you might not even know!

You don't have to believe in your gut! You don't! But you shouldn't always try to understand it. **You don't always have to try to understand everything!**

Like at least I don't need a stupid little fucking piece of paper to say what I need to say! What do YOU believe in that's so special? **You know believing in something can sometimes just be good for you!**

THOMAS

NO! NO! HAILEY! You need to stop putting your entire trust in one stupid little pack of cards! Or-or- the stars or a fucking mood ring. I spent my entire young life believing exactly what my family told me to believe. And you know what that got me? A shitty job, at a shitty retail store, in the middle of Bumfuck Ohio. You know what I learned - you can't believe in anything! You can devote years and years to a people who believe the same thing as you and no one is ever gonna tell you that the second you slip up it's all-... (searching for the right word) pointless! Nothing really means anything!! You're lucky I'm telling you this now so you don't waste another five years of your life believing something that's never gonna happen. You're not getting a promotion; what I came in here to tell you was that you're fired ok? (beat). You're done. (beat). I'm sorry I had to tell you like this.

A long beat. HAILEY eases back into her chair. She is clearly upset. THOMAS maybe feels bad but doesn't do

anything about it. After a  
LONG moment:

HAILEY (hurt)

They were wrong?

THOMAS

I'm sorry Tarot cards aren't-

HAILEY (angry now, cutting)

Well what do you believe in!

THOMAS

I don't- (beat). I mean- do you have to believe in anything?

(beat)

Just clean out your locker by your last shift.

HAILEY, defeated and worn  
down, slowly walks back to  
the table where she slumps  
into a chair. There is a  
long beat.

After a bit she suddenly  
perks up as if she has an  
idea. Pulling the deck back  
out, HAILEY carefully and  
slowly, as if they are on  
fire, sets down three cards.

Upon the revelation of the  
third card, HAILEY looks up  
to the audience smiling about  
as widely as possible.

Beat.

HAILEY grabs her bag and  
exits quickly, smiling.

END OF SHOW