

The Great Beyond

by

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FADE IN:

INT. NIGHT. GRAVE INSIGHT, A MEDIUM'S PARLOR

A DOOR OPENS and CLOSES, triggering fairy-like tree bar CHIMES. DREW steps uncertainly into a small parlor. Faint, ambient MUSIC floats like incense. A skeptic, Drew is clearly ill at ease in a space heavy with the trappings of palmistry, tarot, astrology, crystals - a curated collection of occult miscellany whereby the curious, the hopeful, even the desperate may question the fates and the future.

Subtly eccentric without being flamboyant, KAELEN parts a curtain of beads and enters the parlor. Poised, the medium glides to a stop to face Drew.

KAELEN

Ah. It's "Drew," isn't it? Step into the circle, where the veil is thin and the answers you seek await.

Drew stares at Kaelen.

DREW

Seriously?

KAELEN

Too much?

DREW

A little.

Kaelen's posture becomes slightly less formal.

KAELEN

Okay. How can I help you?

Drew shows Kaelen the screen of his iPhone.

DREW

Is this you: Grave Insight, LLC?

KAELEN

I am Kaelen Graves, yes.

DREW

That's cute. "Grave Insight."  
Like you can see beyond death.

KAELEN

I like that you made the  
connection.

DREW

Yeah. Looks like you weren't the  
only one who read *Harry Potter and  
the Marketing Master's Degree*.

KAELEN

Just keeping the romance in  
necromancy.

DREW

Wow. Wow.

Kaelen smiles serenely.

DREW (CONT'D)

So. This Venmo request.

KAELEN

Yes?

DREW

This is a real thing?

KAELEN

It is. You were given something  
rare. Something of considerable  
value.

DREW

Uh-huh. You know I wasn't there  
for *me*. Suzy? Suzy believes all  
this *Ghostbusters* afterlife  
bullshit. It was *her* séance, not  
mine. I was just there for...

KAELEN

For what?

DREW

I was just there for moral support, okay?

KAELEN

Really? Your suspicion made it quite difficult for Suzy to connect. You're very committed to your disbelief, aren't you Andrew?

DREW

Don't... Don't me call me that. Nobody calls me that.

Kaelen's gaze vaguely suggests he is tugging at a stubborn memory or perhaps he is hearing a frequency Drew cannot.

KAELEN

Except... Marjorie? Is that her name?

DREW

Shut up.

Kaelen gestures helpfully to one of two chairs at a small table. Like the rest of the room, the table is cluttered with these and other accoutrements of psychic mediumship: a crystal ball, an athame, a chart of moon phases, a white candle, a bunch of sage.

KAELEN

(kindly)

Sit down. Please. Sit.

They both sit slowly, Kaelen with confident grace; Drew with uncertainty. Kaelen waits for them to be still before asking

KAELEN

Who is Marjorie? Your aunt? No. Oh. Marjorie. That's your mother's name.

DREW

You look that up? Some kind of cemetery database?

KAELEN

Marjorie. Is that who spoke to you at Suzy's?

DREW

(chuckling)

Uh... no. That was you. You're the only who spoke to me Thursday night. I was just playin' along because Suze didn't want to, you know... It's just spooky being in a dark room with a stranger in a "trance."

Drew expresses disbelief with air quotes.

KAELEN

You were just along for the ride.

DREW

Then you start moaning all that generic crap: "She loves you very much." "She's so proud of the man you've become." And now you want to charge me for rolling your eyes back in your head and delivering messages from the great beyond? I don't think so.

KAELEN

Huh. Okay. Not specific enough for you. When your mother comes through, you want something surprising. Something accurate.

DREW

Well you're sure as hell not gonna convince me just groaning "She's in a much better place now."

KAELEN

Right. No, I see. You'd want something more precise. Less ambiguous.

DREW

Well, for starters anyway.

KAELEN

Sure. You'd want her to come  
through with a word like  
"insulin."

Kaelen might have said the word "insulin." But his voice is faintly colored with undertones of a second voice, a woman's voice.

DREW

What?

KAELEN

I said "insulin."

Now Kaelen's voice is clear and undistorted. Perhaps Drew only imagines he heard some eerie overlay of an extra female voice.

A long, steely silence elapses as Drew and Kaelen appraise each other.

DREW

Insulin.

KAELEN

She knows you hated her.

DREW

Lots of people hated her. She was weak. She was cruel. God, the shrieking...

KAELEN

(distantly)

What's the... was there a problem with... something about her will?

DREW

Last will and testament. She used it like a weapon. Her coffee wasn't hot enough. Or you didn't bring the mail on time. Misplace a receipt for groceries.

KAELEN  
(in Marjorie's  
voice)

You don't think I'll call Carol  
over at Legacy? Take her about  
ten minutes to write you out of  
your inheritance, young man. You  
just watch yourself.

DREW  
(a stunned whisper)

Fuck.

Ashen, Drew's eyes search the room with cornered, feral  
energy. His gaze lands on the athame, then snaps back to  
Kaelen. Kaelen glances slyly at the knife, then at Drew.

KAELEN  
A knife? That's not really your  
style, is it? That's a whole lot  
messier than an insulin overdose.

DREW  
Is this what you do? Blackmail?  
The whole Venmo thing?

KAELEN  
I don't go looking for murderers,  
if that's what you mean. But,  
yeah, lots of people have secrets.  
Or think they do.

DREW  
So what if I pay you? You coming  
back for more a month from now?

KAELEN  
Probably not. Send me the money.  
Walk away. Sooner or later, I  
stop hearing her.

DREW  
That don't make any sense. How  
does *my* money get her out of *your*  
head?

KAELEN

She's not interested in *me*. Once  
you're out of my life, I've got  
nothing to offer the woman.

Growing gradually more level-headed, Drew reconsiders the  
knife, reevaluates Kaelen.

DREW

So... if I don't pay you... you're  
stuck with her?

KAELEN

Your mother— Drew, that woman is a  
thoroughly unpleasant person, dead  
or alive. I want her out.

DREW

So you need to be useless. You  
need to convince Mom that there's  
nothing you can do for her.

KAELEN

Right

DREW

You need to convince her that  
you're done with me. That there's  
no longer any way you can help her  
make my life miserable.

KAELEN

Right. Yes.

DREW

Because if you went to the police,  
you could really make my life  
miserable. That's what you're  
thinking, isn't it?

KAELEN

Well, that's what she wants me to  
do. Yeah.

DREW

She wants a palm reader to hold a  
séance for the district attorney.



And convince them, with evidence from the afterlife, that they should dig up her body, and look for signs of an insulin overdose. What do you suppose that would look like?

KAELEN

I... I don't know. Uhm. Extra... needle... marks?

DREW

How 'bout needle marks in a haystack? Type two diabetes. Do you have any idea how many injections that woman had on a regular basis? Two a day. That's fourteen puncture marks every week. Sometimes more if she made a pig of herself and needed a jolt of Fiasp.

KAELEN

Wait. Are you—?

DREW

If you get rid of me, then you get rid of her. That's your plan. But if you *don't* get rid of me. If I come back on Tuesday for a palm reading

KAELEN

Wait. No.

DREW (CONT'D)

(speaking over  
Kaelen without  
pause)

and I come back a week later to buy a pack of tarot cards. And two weeks after that because I need some crystals or a horoscope.

KAELEN

No. That's not the way it's supposed to—

DREW (CONT'D)  
 (speaking over  
 Kaelen without  
 pause)

Meanwhile you're waiting on the  
 courts for permission to open a  
 grave. Or some lab to search for  
 insulin in a body the embalmer  
 drained of blood?

KAELEN  
 (in Marjorie's  
 voice)

No! You can't get away with what  
 you've done! The way you've  
 treated me for years! You're  
 going to prison for what you did  
 to me!

DREW  
 Or... you're *already there* for what  
 you did to others.

After a beat

DREW (CONT'D)  
 I'll see you next week, Mom. You,  
 too, Kaelen. We can "step into  
 the circle where the veil is  
 thin." Maybe on Wednesday. You  
 can take your ouija board for a  
 spin. Or, just, you know, text me  
 if you'd rather meet at the  
 precinct.

Drew leaves, serene and confident without being smug or  
 cocky. CHIMES announce his departure. Kaelen sinks back  
 into a chair, defeated.

MARJORIE  
 (reverberating  
 V.O.)

He's so smug. So stubborn. I  
 swear to god. Andrew could argue  
 with a brick wall. But don't you  
 worry. We're not finished. Not

by a long shot. I won't leave you  
until this is all over.

FADE TO BLACK