

Alekson

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My roommate, Aleks, burst from his room one afternoon in 1998 as I sat on the couch in the living room. "Do you feel that?" he asked.

"Feel what?"

"That evil..."

"You feel an evil presence?"

"Yeah... a demon... an evil force just descended on us."

"I don't feel anything." I looked up to see his face clenched, red with anger.

"I'm telling you, something evil is here. Someone is casting an evil spell or something..."

I sighed. "That's called your imagination, Dude."

"I can't believe you don't feel that..."

An abrupt knock on the door made Aleks freeze. His lip curled back. No doubt he would use this as evidence that he had some kind of psychic connection, despite the fact that random visitors were quite common at our apartment.

Aleks ran to the door and looked through the peephole. "Fucking bitch," he said, and threw the door open.

Our ninety-five pound little friend Allison stood in the doorway in her bright, flowery hippie dress, ornate woven purse slung over her shoulder and a latte in hand. Allison was a 20 year old single-mother of a two year old son, who I presumed was at her parents house.

Aleks and Allison had been friends for a few years. Both were into magic, and both on several occasions had told me that they shared some kind of spiritual bond. Lately, however, Allison had been getting into areas of magic of which Aleks did not approve.

"You evil fucking bitch!" Aleks shouted. "That was you just now!"

"Well nice to see you too," Allison replied. "What are you talking about?"

"You were casting spells on me from the parking lot. You were directing them straight at me! What did

you do to me? What spells did you cast on me just now?"

"I didn't do anything," she said as she pushed through the door.

"No, you're not coming in here!" He moved to block her.

"Calm down there, Buddy," she said as she slipped past him. "I'm not gonna hurt you. You don't really have the authority to kick me out anyway since your name's not on the lease."

So Aleks looked at me. "Please Dude, kick her out. You don't want this evil presence here—you don't know what kind of spells she's casting."

"Gimme a break, Dude," I replied.

"Yeah, magic doesn't work on him," Allison said. "He's immune or something."

"Yeah, I bet you've tried all kinds of sick shit on him, like you did to Josh." (Aleks was referring to an incident where Allison had gone to our friend Josh's house in the middle of the night with a can of gasoline, burned a symbol in his lawn and covered it with flower petals in an unsuccessful attempt to get him to fall in love with her. Unfortunately I never did get the whole story behind that.)

"If you were feeling any kind of evil presence it was your own," Allison said. "I've been shielding myself from you lately. You're kind of a whirlwind of psychic activity, and some of it scares me. If you felt anything it was yourself bounced back at you."

"Bullshit! After some of the twisted shit you've been doing lately, you expect me to believe that evil power was all in my mind?" He looked at me. "Kalin, I pay half the rent around here."

"Just go hide in your room, Aleks," Allison suggested. "I promise I won't do anything."

"This is my house!"

"You bring home people I don't like," I said. "...like when I'm trying to sleep. Gimme a break. It's Allison. She's harmless, Dude."

"You don't know the evil she's capable of!" Aleks paced frantically and panted as he shouted.

"Aleks, there's not a shred of me that believes any of this."

"At least you're not as crazy as this guy," Allison said, pointing toward me.

"You heard me say she was casting spells before she ever knocked!" he said.

"All you said was 'evil presence' and you talk like that all the time," I said. "She parked her car right in front of your window. You probably heard it subconsciously... or it could just be a coincidence. Either way I'm not kicking her out, Dude. Just calm down and be cool, Man. You're not gonna help the situation

with this attitude.”

For the most part Aleks was a kind and generous person, willing to jump up to help a friend, even if it meant sacrificing the better part of his day, and always seemed eager to share anything he owned with anyone who needed it. But some days he would simply go crazy like this and I kept thinking there should be some way to bring him back verbally. Unfortunately I had never found the right combination of words.

Allison laughed. “Aleks suddenly came within my shield and had to deal with his own demons that he tries to force on everyone else.”

“Get the fuck out you fucking bitch!”

“Come on Aleks, you clearly don't have proper control over your energy. Quit trying to blame it on everyone else and find your center.”

Aleks began stomping about and screaming obscenities. Allison closed her eyes and shook her head. “You're acting like such a baby right now.”

Aleks stomped off to the kitchen.

Allison turned to me. “What's his problem?”

“I don't know,” I said. “This came out of left field.”

There was a rustling in the kitchen and the clank of the silverware drawer.

“What's he doing?” Allison said with a tilt of the head.

A moment later Aleks was back in the living room with my big chef's knife in hand. This knife had originally belonged to the restaurant where I worked, but one of the cooks left it too close to the grill, melting the handle. It was still perfectly usable for me, since I hold my knives close to the blade, so I had taken it home.

Allison gave a playfully fearful gasp and a chuckle. “What're you gonna do with that?”

I rolled my eyes and sighed. “Aleks...” Before I could finish, he was already moving around the couch.

“Are you out of your mind?” said Allison just before he jumped forward to grab her by the hair, forcing her into her seat.

He put the knife to her throat. “I fucking warned you! I told you get the fuck out of my house! I'm only gonna tell you one more time! Get the fuck out!”

Allison laughed. “Oh, yeah, sure...”

Aleks curled his lips as he screamed, his voice crackling with the frantic force. “Get the fuck out! Get out

you evil fucking witch!”

Allison's expression darkened slightly. “Oh, my God, you're serious. You're serious right now...”

I froze, wanting to jump forward and push him away, but the coffee table was a big enough obstacle that Aleks would see me coming, having just enough time to make one very poor decision. I knew Aleks well enough to know that he had no intention of actually going through with something like this, but I couldn't trust his split-second reactions, so any move I made would increase Allison's chances of being cut.

“Yeah I'm fucking serious!” he screamed, bending down to blast her in the face with his breath. “Get out now! Get the fuck out!”

“Or what?” she said. “Are you gonna cut me, Aleks, because you thought I was sending you bad vibes? You gonna kill me? Give me a break.”

Aleks seemed to struggle for a moment to calm himself, the sound of his breath whistling between his teeth. “Look, just get up and leave and I'll put the knife away... no harm done, okay. I promise you, just get out and take your evil spells with you and I swear I won't hurt you.”

“Nah,” Allison replied, raising a questioning eyebrow, but otherwise remaining motionless. “I don't think so.”

Aleks paused for a quick moment before losing his composure again. The knuckles gripping her hair tightened and he pushed her further back into the seat. “You fucking crazy bitch, you don't know what I'll do!”

“Oh, yeah, I'm the crazy one here. Try looking at yourself. Besides, I know exactly what you're gonna do... probably better than you.”

Aleks screamed for another long moment, calling her names and accusing her of more witchcraft, as I sat frozen in silent terror, watching his face grow tighter and redder with every passing moment. His hand, still holding the blade cleanly against her neck, began trembling. Allison sat motionless with a simple, questioning smirk on her face, as though Aleks were playing some stupid practical joke she knew would backfire.

“Aleks!” I shouted. “Put the knife away. Take a look at yourself. Please, Man. Just look at what you're doing right now. We're all friends here, Man.”

“Why can't you tell her to get out? You better hope I don't kill her! Just tell her to get the fuck out or I swear to God--”

“Kalin isn't gonna kick me out,” Allison said. “He knows better than that--”

“Well maybe you should just--”

“No,” Allison cut me off. “If I give in to this, it's just going to teach him that using violence can help you

get what you want... I don't want to find out that Aleks learned from this experience and robbed some bank. I will not be reinforcing that kind of behavior. You're gonna need to make a choice. You can kill me and suffer the consequences or you can go hide in your room.”

“I swear to God, Aleks, you will get no help from me,” I said. “You do anything, I'm calling the cops and I'm not gonna help you in any way shape or form, lets get that clear right now.”

Aleks started screaming again, mostly babbling the same order to get out, and telling her she was an evil presence.

Allison waited patiently for him to finish, her eyes trained on his, but he just continued on and on, screaming inches from her face and stomping his feet.

I could think of nothing more to say than, “Please put the knife down!” I started shaking and began glancing around the room for a weapon. I debated telling her to leave, as I knew I could end all this with a few simple words, but as much as I wanted to, I was forced to agree with Allison that it would not be the right thing to do. Unless you support terrorism, you shouldn't reward it.

“Okay, this has gone far enough,” Allison said. “This is pathetic. You have no intention of doing anything. You're not that stupid. I know people who would cut your throat and have no problem getting away with it. How long would you last in prison, Aleks... huh? You can't even take care of yourself in the real world. We know you won't put yourself in that situation, so you're out of your mind if you think you're gonna scare me with your little attempt at acting tough.”

Aleks shouted, trying to drown her out, bobbed his head and stomped his feet, but kept the knife against her throat. “This is my house! I have a right to peace in my house! I don't come into your home, cast spells at you and refuse to leave when I'm not welcome!”

“Aleks, please,” I said. “I invited her in. She's perfectly welcome here.”

“You're a spoiled child,” Allison said. “Desperate for any kind of control, so you throw a baby's tantrum, and no one cares. Even when you go off the deep end you still can't affect people. Think about that. All this rage and insanity and you're still a pathetic joke. You thought I'd be all teary eyed and beg for my life, but all I feel is sorry for you... truly, truly sorry for you.”

Aleks screamed incoherently for a quick moment before shouting, “What is wrong with you! All I want is for you to leave! That's all!”

“I won't reinforce childish behavior. If you want to control others, you must first learn to control yourself.” She glared up at him, focused and scolding. “It's time for you to make a decision. You wanna be a big boy... pretend to be a big man... then make a decision. Either kill me and suffer the consequences--” She laughed briefly. “--most of which you know you can't handle. Or you can put the knife down and go cry in your room and think about your decision-making strategies.” She paused for a response. “We all know what you're gonna do. Me leaving is not up for negotiation so you've got two choices.”

He shouted but she cut him off, calmly but very loudly, "Make your choice! You're just drawing out your own humiliation. The longer you stand here the more you look like an idiot. I mean, seriously, take a look at yourself right now."

He tried to shout again but she immediately cut him off. "Make your damn choice. I'm getting sick of this."

They went back and forth in a loud exchange, Aleks shouting about his personal space and Allison simply repeating, "Make your choice."

Finally Aleks simply screamed, bent down to bump foreheads with her and shouted, "Fucking bitch!" He took a step back, turned and stormed around the couch and back toward his bedroom and slammed the door.

I sat in shock, my jaw most likely agape and mouth dry, though I can't remember as my eyes were trained on Allison, expecting her to break down and whimper in terror or run to the phone and call the police as though her whole persona had been an act. Instead she simply stared into the hall for several long seconds with a curious tilt to the head. After a moment she turned back to me and chuckled. "Well... that was certainly different. I don't even know what to say to that... talk about going off the deep end..." She settled back into the couch, fixed her hair and took a sip of coffee.

Allison stuck around for an hour or two while Aleks hid in his room and we talked about a number of things, though most in some way related to the incident.

"So, you're not going to call the cops on him or anything, are you?" I asked. "I honestly think that would just make him worse."

"Yeah, I agree. That would just be vengeance, and I won't stoop to his level. Besides, I'm still more scared of cops than I am of Aleks. He couldn't sense me reading his mind earlier. He kept telling me he would never hurt me and he had no idea. It's like our souls are bonded and he recognizes it but has no clue how it works. You must have sensed something, didn't you? Couldn't you feel the psychic energy? I mean, I could almost see it... wow, that was such a trip..."

"That's just adrenaline and a bunch of emotions..." I replied. "Aleks went psycho because he believes in witches."

"You still don't believe in any of this? Even after what you just saw?"

"Uh... no... what I just saw makes me even more certain it's just imagination. If you guys have such an inside knowledge on how the universe works how come neither of you can hold a job?" But I still thought she was hiding some trauma and didn't want to push her too hard. And I wondered what our world would be like if every victim reacted like Allison. If even a small percentage of victims had her courage, society could put an end to threat-related crime. Without the victim mentality that threat-crimes rely on, they would be powerless, so I had no choice but to have deep respect for Allison for caring more about society and Aleks than for herself, even in the midst of such a situation.

So I simply said, “All this psychic power stuff... it's just your emotions running wild.”

She rolled her eyes. “Oh Kalin... you're crazy.”

A few days later Allison came back to visit, but called first so that I would have time to warn Aleks. She sat down in my hallway and wrote a phrase on my collective graffiti-board that I had taped to the wall: “Alekson: Knife touched my neck, but left a mark on yours.”

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