

## The Jesus Leap

by Kalin - Monday, August 09, 2010

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I sat on the floor playing my old-school Nintendo system when my roommate, Aleks came through the front door, breathing heavily and shaking. He started pacing back and forth across the living room as he talked. "Dude," he said. "I need your help, Dude. It's Josh. He's going to do something really crazy." I heard a high whine in Aleks' voice, as though he were about to burst into tears. "He just called me, Dude. He said he's going to make a leap of faith. He's like, all sober now. He hasn't done any drugs in like two weeks and now he's going insane without them. I think he's gonna jump off a cliff, Dude. I know that sounds crazy, but I really think he's going to go jump off a cliff to prove that he loves God or something."

"What makes you say that?" I asked.

"Because that's the kind of person he is, and because he's talked about it before. He wants to do it for Jesus. Please, Dude you've gotta help me find him."

"Don't you think he was just playin with you?" I asked.

"No, Josh is crazy. Like seriously crazy."

"Well, I have a hard time accepting your definition of crazy after the time you almost burned our apartment down trying to cast a spell on your ex-girlfriend."

"No," Aleks said, his body moving randomly as though he couldn't contain his energy. "I know I've done some crazy shit, and I know you think I'm out of my mind, but Kalin, Josh is a Christian... Christian's can be *really* crazy. And he's a *real* Christian. That's rare. He's not someone who just goes to church and plays along. I mean he really believes. The only thing keeping him sane was all the acid he was doing, because it would distract him from God talking to him all the time, but now that he's been sober for two weeks all he has is his religion, and I swear he's going to hurt himself or someone else... probably himself."

But I didn't believe it. Josh seemed like a very rational and collected person. Aleks and I actually had plans to lease his house from his mom. "So God is telling Josh to go jump off a cliff."

"That's what Josh believes, yes," Aleks replied. "And I think he might go through with it."

"Okay, well I don't believe it," I said. "But I guess I've got nothing else to do. Do you wanna go over there and see him? I can head over there on my scooter, I guess or we could catch a ride with someone."

"I don't know where he is. Do you think you could just go out on your scooter and look for him?"

"Where would he be?"

"I don't have the slightest idea. I need to cast a spell and find out."

"What's that gonna do?"

"Like a locator spell. Don't worry. I don't expect you to understand. Just give me like five minutes to set up my altar then it should only be fifteen minutes to tell me where Josh is."

"Why don't you use logic?" I asked. "Try to think about his personality, where he likes to go, what he's trying to accomplish and where it would make the most sense for him to be."

"I've tried and I can't think of anywhere he might be." Aleks continued pacing, his arms pumping up and down as though anxious to punch something that didn't exist. "Josh is a very magical person too, so my spell should hone in on him."

As Aleks ran to his bedroom and closed the door, I tried to think about all the cliffs in the area. We had a few in a park across town called Whatcom Falls, but people jumped off those into the water on a daily basis. In order for it to be a leap of faith he would need to do a sideways jump to head toward the rocks and I just couldn't picture a leap of faith being that precise and calculated. Even so, I figured the cliff at Whatcom Falls was the best bet, or perhaps the one tall building downtown, though he would have needed to go into someone's office to find a good jumping window.

But the chances he was at Whatcom Falls was probably slim, and it would take me a couple hours to get there on my scooter and then explore every possible location, even if there was any truth to what Aleks was claiming, so I figured the best bet would be to stay home and wait for a call (this was before the age of cell phones) or try and catch a ride with someone. The problem was that Aleks was now locked in his bedroom casting spells when he should be calling friends and family, trying to figure out what was going through Josh's head.

I sat and thought for ten minutes or so before Aleks came back out of his bedroom. "Okay, it's done. It's all set up. I should be getting a message in a little bit if the spell worked."

"So this is where you suddenly remember something he said to you that'll give you a clue and you'll get to give credit to the spell... instead of just remembering what he said in the first place."

Aleks ignored my cynicism as he sat nervously on the couch for his vision. As the minutes passed he became more frustrated. "Why isn't this working? I should be getting a sense for him or something. These kind of spells always work. Why isn't it telling me anything?"

"Because they never work, Dude." I said. "If you really want to help Josh, try using your logic and memory instead of begging invisible spirits to do your work for you."

"You just don't get it," Aleks replied as he got up to leave. "I'm going to look for him."

"Okay," I said. "I'll wait here. Call me in a couple hours and I'll let you know if anyone calls or anything. Give me a call too if you figure out where he went and I can hop on my scooter."

Aleks left and was gone the rest of the night. He called several times from different locations, each time anxious and distraught, but without any new information. Naturally, I didn't take Aleks seriously, and figured the probability was that Aleks had completely misinterpreted something Josh had said.

But around 3:00 AM, as I was about to lie down for bed, Aleks called one last time. "We found Josh," he said.

"Where was he?" I asked.

"On the railroad tracks. I'm gonna head up to the hospital to see him. I think he's in surgery right now, but I'm not sure."

"What happened?" I asked.

"I was wrong about the cliff," Aleks said. "He jumped off a bridge, not a cliff."

"Why?"

"Jesus told him he could fly."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah. See, I told you there were people crazier than me."

"I guess so. So is he gonna be okay."

"I think so. His mom said he's got a collapsed lung. He was lying on the railroad tracks for four hours before he finally crawled to the road for help."

"Oh, shit," I said, putting my head in my hands. I knew exactly what bridge he was talking about. It was less than ten blocks from Josh's house and just about the only place in the city where someone could kill themselves by jumping. It seemed so obvious now, but I realized my mind had been so clouded by my theory that Aleks had completely misread the situation, that that particular bridge hadn't occurred to me.

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The next day, Aleks came home and told me that Josh was recovering just fine. "You wanna know something funny," he said. "I knew exactly where he was gonna jump the whole time."

"No you didn't," I said. "I know it seems obvious now, after the fact, but if you knew where he was you woulda gone there."

"Well, what I mean is that Josh and I were walking across that bridge a couple weeks ago and he said to me, 'this would be a perfect place to take a leap of faith.' And he told me all about how Jesus had been talking to him and telling him he needed to do something to prove his faith. He said if he jumped, Jesus would protect him."

"See," I said. "If you had focused on your logic and memory instead of on casting spells, maybe you could have remembered what he said."

"Maybe," Aleks replied. "But you can't say what the consequences of that might have been. Josh was obviously *meant* to jump off that bridge. Maybe the spell was what caused me to forget, because it was doing what was best for Josh. He needed his leap. Spellcasting doesn't always give you what you want, but it always gives you what you need."

"You think him jumping off a bridge and getting a collapsed lung is a good thing?" I asked.

"You just don't understand the spiritual realm, Dude. You just don't get it."

"Yeah," I said. "If it involves jumping off bridges, I don't wanna get it."

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As we read the news and heard more of the story, we heard that Josh had been the 13th person to fall or jump off that bridge and the only one to survive. He had walked there immediately after calling Aleks, then closed his eyes, prayed, and leaped off the center of the bridge. Luckily there had been a tree below him that he hadn't seen, which slowed his fall.

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Several months later I was riding the bus home late one night when I noticed Josh hop on. He was frighteningly skinny and frail, in a plain white t-shirt. He recognized me immediately and sat down next to me to catch up on old times.

"I've been doing great lately," he said. "I haven't done heroin in over two years now and I haven't done any drugs other than weed in months and I'm feeling really great. I'm getting my life and priorities in order now. Gonna focus on my daughter."

"You working yet?" I asked.

"Working?" he asked.

"Like a job."

"Oh no," he replied. "I'm on disability. That covers everything I need so I don't want more than that."

"Are you looking for one?"

"Oh no. I need to focus on my daughter. She's what's really important to me."

"How often do you see her?" I asked.

"It's been about a year."

"Hmm... so she's not *that* much of a priority, huh?"

"She's down in California with her mom so I'm just working at getting myself together mentally so I can move down there. I've been reading The Bible every day and it's been helping me more than I could have imagined. It's like a whole other world has opened up to me. Ever since I made that jump, the whole world looks different now and I can feel God's love in every step I take... because Jesus is my drug now."

"So, I'm curious," I said. "What have people been saying about your leap of faith?"

"Well, a lot of people think I'm crazy, of course. A lot of people treat me different now... they like, baby me I guess... it's like everyone is real careful what they say around me. But most people think I'm nuts."

"Are you going to counseling or anything?"

"I'm doing counseling through my church. It's pretty good for me because the pastor seems to understand... I mean, sometimes God asks people to do things, and you've just gotta go do it, regardless of risks or logic or what people think or even if it's right or wrong, so I'm really happy to have that kind of support and have someone in the church who agrees I made the right choice... but it doesn't matter because I know in my heart I made the right choice."

"So you don't regret jumping?" I asked.

"Oh, no, of course not. I can't even tell you how much happier I am now. I proved my faith. God asked me to prove it and I proved it. No one can ever take that away from me. Jumping off that bridge was the best decision I ever made."