

Kalila Stormfire's Economical Magick Services. The following entry is for initiated witches only. Case Forty: Desire.

FADE IN: Kalila's living room, morning.

### **KALILA**

Today's date is October 27. The moon is waning crescent, sun is in Scorpio. Client name is Hassan Rootworker. He is twenty nine years old, a Capricorn, and an introverted sensate. His patron is...well, are--the Descendents. Is that right?

### **HASSAN**

Uh, yeah. Well...that's how I refer to them, at least. The Descendents.

### **KALILA**

Good to know. Most people I know talk a lot about ancestor work, but I'm not familiar with descendent work. And you mentioned in the email that's what you wanted to talk about right? Your relationship to your patrons? Can you talk a little bit about that relationship?

### **HASSAN**

Sure. So, you are mostly right. In terms of how people think about human patrons, ancestor work is a lot more popular. Which...makes total sense. They are the shoulders we stand upon, right? And I also do work a lot with the sacred ancestors.

I grew up with what most people would call an ancestor shrine--pictures and documents of our family dating back to the 1880s. I carry dirt from our ancestral sharecropper land in this vial around my neck. My mom made sure we knew our history.

I ain't even heard about descendent work until I came to Brushland, actually. There were a few radical witches who came through town a few years ago, and they did a ritual where they called in the ancestors and the descendents. I was super intrigued, so I talked with their High Priest about it.

The Descendents are those who are *Not Yet Born*. They reach back through the divide of space and time to show us what is possible. What the future holds, or, you know, what the many possible futures could hold, so that we can...well, so we can learn how to prepare for those potential futures. And, in some cases, course-correct as needed. Which, let's be honest? We need plenty of.

### **KALILA**

How does this apply to your work now?

### **HASSAN**

That's why I'm here today, actually. I've been working as a social worker for the last three years, with Brushland Medical. I mostly deal with transplant patients. It's hard work, and really difficult, but when I started I thought it was what I was called to do. But lately, I've been feeling this...this *pull*.

### **KALILA**

What kind of pull?

### **HASSAN**

So. I took a general doula workshop a few months ago, right? I really liked it, and I went to sign up for a training program. At first, I was planning to go the death doula route--a lot of my clients are not in good shape, I'll be honest. I want to help them reach the other side, to re-enter the cycle of life and become either future Descendents or choose to become ancestors.

But I made a mistake in my application, and ended up in the birth doula training. (laughs) I didn't realize my mistake until I walked into the room...I showed up for the first day just this last week. And I was met with diagrams of uteruses and hormone cycles plastered to the walls.

Still...I stayed because I was curious. And...and, I felt--I don't...I know I was there by mistake. But I felt...I felt like I was where I was supposed to be. It felt *right*.

**KALILA**

That sounds wonderful.

**HASSAN**

Don't get me wrong, it was. It was...And yet, I'm also already doing work that feels right? I feel like I am where I need to be with Brushland Medical, helping transplant patients.

(huffs in frustration)

I don't know. I don't know how to reconcile the two. I was hoping I could get a channeling session or tarot reading or a...*something* from you to get a clearer idea of which path I'm meant to take.

**KALILA**

Huh.

**HASSAN**

What?

**KALILA**

Oh, no, I'm not laughing at you, it's just...I was in your position a while ago. I was at Brushland Medical, too, before...well. Before I started my own business.

**HASSAN**

What were you doing at Brushland Medical?

**KALILA**

I worked part time on the Witch adjunct EMT team. Long hours, seeing people at their worst moments. I'm sure the transplant ward is different from emergency, but yeah. I thought I was doing my work there too. And, you know what. I think I was.

**HASSAN**

Oh. Wow. So...you get it.

**KALILA**

I do.

**HASSAN**

So you think I should stay? Or, wait, do you think I should become a birth doula...because you changed and became a freelance healer?

**KALILA**

No. No, I don't know what you should choose. That's not up to me. I was just sharing--

**SHADOW**

This is where you need to own your projections, Kal.

**KALILA**

(long sigh) Okay. Okay, fine. (to Hassan) Sorry. Yeah. Shadow's right. I was projecting. This is your work, your session. I apologize. I'll own that.

**HASSAN**

Ah, so that was Shadow.

**KALILA**

Yeah.

**HASSAN**

Kinda useful, pointing out truths like that.

**KALILA**

That's um...not what most people say after meeting shadow. But...I suppose she can be, yes. So. Back to you. I can do a couple things for you to get some clarity. Tarot readings are great for this kind of thing, so is channeling. I'm not familiar with the Descendents though, and with Shadow and some of my other soul issues, I'm not entirely sure how that will go.

Another option is kinda an in-between? I can do some automatic writing, or drawing, in sand. This allows me to pull the energies that are part of this question, and we can interpret the symbols together. It's a little more experimental...but I feel like that's most appropriate for this question. What do you think?

**HASSAN**

I'm okay with that. The in-between version.  
What do you need me to do?

**KALILA**

Just sit back, I need to get a few things.

KALILA stands and begins gathering materials from her altar across the room; incense, a candle, pours sand into a bowl in a bowl.

I'll cast a circle to clear the air and help focus the energy within the container. That will help me. Are you allergic or sensitive to incense?

**HASSAN**

No, that's fine.

**KALILA**

Great. Just breathe calmly and evenly for me, okay? Ground yourself.

MUSIC FADES IN: INSIDE THE PAPER CRANE BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS

KALILA lights the incense, then blows out the flame.

I am letting the incense fill the room, fill our lungs. The scent is meant to calm and center us, open us up to new possibilities and clearer visions. First, Rootwalker, you must root yourself. Align the internal child deep within the bones of your ancestors and the child that floats amongst the stars. You are present here, a child of earth. The circle is cast. We are ready to receive the message.

KALILA sits and places a bowl and a plate down in front of her.

I'm going to let my finger guide itself in the sand on the plate. I'll let you tell me what you see, and then I will interpret. Ready?

**HASSAN**

I think so.

KALILA pours the sand out onto the plate, and begins to shift it with her finger.

**KALILA**

What do you see?

**HASSAN**

I'm not sure...wait. It...kinda looks like a seagull?

**KALILA**

Hmm. Seagulls are opportunists, scavengers. They take what they want.

**HASSAN**

That doesn't sound flattering.

**KALILA**

Not necessarily. There's more to this symbol than you might think. Seagulls also live between the sea and the land. They are liminal creatures, and liminal creatures can teach us about the divide between life and death, the past and future. That means they are very present creatures, they know what needs are most important in the here and now. We can learn a lot from nature.

What about this? What does it look like to you?

**HASSAN**

That drawing? I don't know...looks a bit like...like a cross?

**KALILA**

Hmm. Could be a crossroads. Well, that's self explanatory. You *are* at a crossroads, but I feel like there's more to that. It's not a fork in the road. It's not one of two paths. People forget that crossroads often have four paths, not just two. You often approach the crossroads from one path, so technically you have four options. One is the path you came down, and the other three are new. Interesting.

**HASSAN**

So I have four choices? This is more complicated than I was expecting.

**KALILA**

Why? Did you hope there were only two options?

**HASSAN**

Kinda? I mean, it makes sense--either I stay in my current path as a social worker or I choose to be a birth doula.

**KALILA**

You haven't considered any other options?

**HASSAN**

No? I mean. I don't know...

**KALILA**

Why not?

**HASSAN**

Because...because they're not there! I don't see any other paths!

**KALILA**

All right. Well, which path do you want to go down, then?

MUSIC FADES OUT.

**HASSAN**

Both!

Silence.

**KALILA**

Both?

**HASSAN**

(surprised) Both. I want both.

**KALILA**

Huh. You want to see if that's possible.

**HASSAN**

I...I'm afraid the answer will be no.

**KALILA**

Why?

**HASSAN**

It's too much. How can I handle working where I am right now and as a birth doula? I can't walk in two opposite directions at the same time! It would be the same as standing still! Of course I have to choose one or the other. I...I don't have the time.

**KALILA**

You're making the time now though, right? You're working and doing this training?

**HASSAN**

Yeah but...(long exhale) It's hard. It's wearing me out. I'm afraid it's gonna completely burn me out if I don't cut one loose.

**KALILA**

Fair. But still. Why don't we take a second to--

**SHADOW**

*Don't you want to know what is possible?*

MUSIC FADES IN: BOROUGH BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS

PAUSE.

**HASSAN**

I...I'm afraid.

**SHADOW**

We're all afraid of what is possible, Rootworker. You didn't answer my question.

**HASSAN**

Yes. Yes, I want to know if both paths can be one.

**SHADOW**

Well! That's your answer!

**HASSAN**

What?

**KALILA**

Sorry? What?



**HASSAN**

You just...well, I mean, your Shadow just--Um. I think I answered my own question?

**KALILA**

Oh! Oh, good. What was the answer?

**HASSAN**

I think...I think I'm supposed to do both. It's not a fork, like you said. It's a crossroads. Four options.

One to go back the way I came. Which, okay, isn't possible.

The second is to commit to being a social worker.

The third is to be a birth doula.

But the other one. I don't know. You see this cross you made? Yeah, I just realized that the top line is thicker than the ones on the sides and the one at the bottom. It's like it's wider. Like I should be going on a straight line...but it's going to be...bigger, somehow?

MUSIC FADES OUT.

Yeah. Yeah. I can do both. Or, at least...I have to try to do both It's going to be hard work but...I want it. I really do. I want to be more, be able to do more.

**KALILA**

That's really *forward-thinking* of you. You know. *Future* oriented.

**HASSAN**

(laughing) Yeah, yeah. Benefits of my kind of patron, I guess.

**KALILA**

Very true. I think the Descendents would be...*will be* proud of you. Well, I'm glad this helped. Did this help?

**HASSAN**

Yeah, it did. Thank you Kalila. And Shadow.

**SHADOW**

You're welcome.

**KALILA**

You're welcome. Here, I'll stop the recording and we can wrap up.

**SHADOW**

Can I do it this time?

**KALILA**

(sighs fondly) Sure.

**SHADOW**

Finally. End session.

RECORDER CLICKS OFF.

MUSIC FADES IN: MUSIC BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS

FADE IN: APHRODITE and KALILA sitting together in Kalila's apartment. KALILA has her eyes closed, already halfway in a trance. APHRODITE's voice is distant.

**APHRODITE**

Good. Stay in the depth of feeling. Now...focus on your surroundings. What is coming forward? What do you see? What do you hear?

FADE IN: A MEMORY. KALILA is walking up the steps of the Temple.

**KALILA**

Footsteps...I'm walking...up stone steps. Marble. Marble steps. The temple...

WHOOSH as the memory becomes clearer but some resonance from the trance state.

**SAMUEL**

Hey! Hey, Kal!

SAMUEL ARGENT approaches KALILA and stops.

**KALILA**

Hi Samuel.

**SAMUEL**

Funny running into you here. Come to the Temple steps often?

**KALILA**

Oh, yes. Very funny. It's not like we're both mandated to attend these Temple Service Days.

**SAMUEL**

Ah, well, better to be mandated together than not at all.

**KALILA**

Huh. Um. Yeah.

BRIEF, AWKWARD PAUSE.

**SAMUEL**

Say, want to grab some coffee later? I heard you have some ideas on the latest social media campaign. I'd love to talk about it. You're still running that, right?

**KALILA**

Yeah. I mean, I have to run everything by the High Priest, but you know how it is. It's a way to show you want to be here.

**SAMUEL**

What's with the long face? Don't you want to be here? (gasp) Don't tell me...you don't actually LIKE attending these long, annoying service days every month? Or are you secretly into scrubbing the temple floors for hours on end? Man, you'd think with all the money the Coven gets from those membership drives, we could afford some janitors.

**KALILA**

We do, actually. Have janitors.

**SAMUEL**

Huh. Guess I've never seen them. Anyway, what's got you so upset? Free labor got you down?

**KALILA**

Nothing, really. Just...tired. Had a long week.

**SAMUEL**

Gabrielle said you missed the Friday ritual. You were out sick or something?

**KALILA**

Yeah. Or something. Still recovering.

**SAMUEL**

Well, listen, coffee on me then. Unless you're one of those girls who goes dutch. I can dig it! What do you say?

**KALILA**

I...

**SAMUEL**

There's this new nitro bistro opening right down the street.

**KALILA**

Sure. Yeah, Samuel. I think I'd love that.

MUSIC FADES OUT.

MEMORY FADES at the end of KALILA's line. KALILA and APHRODITE are back in her living room.

**KALILA**

Man. I haven't thought about that day in...a while.

**APHRODITE**

It is interesting where your memory wanders to when given a direction. I asked you to return to a time when Shadow clearly interfered with your love life. How was this little "meet cute" an example of that?

**KALILA**

(bitter) I wouldn't call it a "meet cute".

**APHRODITE**

True. It was more like a hostage situation. (sighs) Why can't that just remain in consensual fantasies? Seriously. Much more

fun. After all these millenia...cishet men as a whole still haven't learned the higher arts of romance. It's insulting, really.

**KALILA**

I think it's the whole mix of toxic masculinity, queerphobia, lack of sex education, and rape culture?

**APHRODITE**

Couldn't have said it better myself. And...you're avoiding the question.

**KALILA**

(huffs) I mean...I am aware that Shadow has interfered directly at least once. The day of the vote on Samuel's banishment. I've never been sure about any other time, though.

But...I'd be lying if I didn't suspect Shadow was a part of pushing me towards Samuel in the first place.

**APHRODITE**

Love's a tricky thing. So is memory. Remember, this was before you were separated from Shadow. She was still a part of you that day. But did you feel a moment that she was more present?

**KALILA**

It was...I mean, I think...it was when Samuel said the thing about going dutch? It was like. A challenge? Or something. I don't know.

**APHRODITE**

Shadow, is that true? Were you responding to a challenge?

**SHADOW**

That's what love is. A challenge. A fight.

**KALILA**

That's a narrow way to look at it.

**APHRODITE**

Let's look at the memory again, shall we? And this time, I want you to act out the part of yourself.

**KALILA**

What does *that* mean?

SWIFT WHOOSH BACK TO THE MEMORY.

MUSIC FADES IN: RAINDAY TEXTILE BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS.

**SAMUEL**

What I meant to say is...well, if I'm going to be forced into this service day, I'm glad you're forced into it too.

**KALILA**

I'd prefer it if it wasn't forced at all.

**SAMUEL**

Oh, so you're into consent. So am I. Say, would you consent to me taking you out to dinner after this?

**KALILA**

(uncomfortable laugh) When did this escalate to dinner?

**SAMUEL**

When I was lucky enough to meet you climbing up these steps.

**KALILA**

*Lucky*, huh?

**SAMUEL**

Serendipitous, even. So, what do you say?

**KALILA**

I'm not sure...

**SAMUEL**

Or are you still feeling too sick? I can bring you soup or something instead.

**KALILA**

No. No, you know what, I am feeling a little too sick.

**SAMUEL**

Are you sure? We can ditch Temple Service and you can hang out at my place until you, you know, feel better?

KALILA tries to start back up the Temple steps.

**KALILA**

Thanks, Samuel, but I think I need a little more time to myself.

**SAMUEL**

So you don't feel good enough to have dinner, but...you feel fine enough to show up to Temple Service Day?

**KALILA**

Actually, I don't. (laughs) I didn't feel up to it. I felt I had to. I felt I needed to show I cared. That I still cared. After being confused and hurt and in emotional turmoil and it had *nothing to do with you, Samuel Argent!*

It had to do with the fact that I went through fucking *surgery* on Friday. I was sore, I was tired...and, and lonely, and the last compassion I saw was the nurse who held my hand through the D&E. I wasn't in a place where I should have to care about ANYTHING except MYSELF!

MUSIC FADES OUT.

CUT BACK TO KALILA's APARTMENT, NIGHT.

KALILA begins to get choked up.

**KALILA**

I...I didn't know. I was...

MUSIC FADES IN: BELLE ANNETTE BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS.

**APHRODITE**

It's okay, sweetheart. Let it out. Let the truth out.

KALILA sobs for a few moments.

Good. This is really good work, Kalila. You let yourself feel, really *feel* that disconnect. You used the same words Shadow does.

**KALILA**

I shouldn't have had to care for anything except myself. Esp-especially after going through something like that, as much of a relief as it was. I shouldn't have had care about what other people thought, about what other people needed.

**APHRODITE**

Exactly. So what should you care about? What do you care about?

**KALILA**

I...I care about myself.

**APHRODITE**

Again.

**KALILA**

I care about myself!

**APHRODITE**

Again, Stormfire.

**KALILA**

I CARE ABOUT MYSELF!

KALILA gasps, and breathes heavily.

**APHRODITE**

Here, take a tissue. Do you remember the definition of beauty, Kalila?

**KALILA**

(sniffs) I mean...sure? You...you used to tell me beauty is self-defined.

**APHRODITE**

And now you understand what that means.

**KALILA**

Huh.



**APHRODITE**

(approving) Hmm. So. What is Shadow feeling right now?

**SHADOW**

I don't...really want to talk. Let Kalila think about this.

**APHRODITE**

Feeling a little too *seen*, are we? That's alright. I'll change the subject. So, Kalila, tell me about that first love spell. Where did you pick that up? I know *I* never taught you that.

**KALILA**

Um. It's one of the first spells I thought up. I was in middle school.

MUSIC FADES IN: A PLEASANT STRIKE BY BLUE DOT SESSIONS.

I just...I thought it was a good idea at the time. I was being bullied at the time. This girl was just...she kept picking on me. Saying I was weird. I don't remember what about me was weird. I wasn't the most popular in school, really, but I wasn't ostracized exactly either. Now I think it was being one of the few brown kids in a mostly white school, but I can't be sure. It could be the way I behaved, I could have just had friends around me that this girl knew wouldn't stand up for me. I don't know.

I just remember feeling this...indignity. Like I deserved better. Like I deserved a...a suit of armor. Of love. Cheesy, yeah, but...that's what my child self told me. I should enjoy the cheesy. It's what my child self likes.

So, anyway. I made this love spell. At first I thought it was meant for other people to love me. But...you know, now that I think about it. Maybe it was actually a self-love spell all along.

**APHRODITE**

Could be. So. Better?

**KALILA**

Yeah. Yeah, I think I've calmed down a bit.

**APHRODITE**

Good. And Shadow?

Pause.

**KALILA**

Still wanting to be quiet, I think.

**APHRODITE**

Well. I know this isn't a new trauma you've uncovered. You have long confronted the shame, enough even to help clients who've gone through the same thing. But you now have reached a new depth in understanding...understanding your pattern to put others before yourself. It's easier to handle other people's pain than face your own.

And, honey, that pain is much older than the week you started to date Samuel.

MUSIC FADES OUT.

PAUSE. KALILA inhales, exhales.

**KALILA**

Yeah. Yeah, it is.

**APHRODITE**

Be gentle with yourself tonight. Both of you. Drink some tea. You will find the right blend already in the kitchen.

(gentle teasing) You're welcome.

**KALILA**

Thank you. Aphrodite?

**APHRODITE**

Yes, sweet one?

**KALILA**

The spell. My...armor. Is that why you picked me?

**APHRODITE**

Oh, Kalila. No. That is why you picked *me*.

SWOOSH as APHRODITE LEAVES.

Kalila Stormfire's Economical Magick Services is written and produced by Lisette Alvarez. Script edited by Gabriel Urbina. Kalila and Shadow are played by Lisette Alvarez. Hassan Rootworker is played by Nic Folson. Aphrodite is played by Sena Bryer. Samuel Argent is played by Sam Raethr Nguyen.

This episode is edited by Sarah Buchynski.

I'd like to take the time to thank a few supporters with a tarot card.

Whitney Johnson  
Shelley Alvarez  
Linda Claxton

Your card is the Star. There is hope that never dies, and now is the time to embrace the beauty of that feeling. The work you do, the people you surround yourself with, the parts of the world you love shines within you and is reflected without. You, as are we all, are made of star stuff.

Thank you for listening.