

INT. RADIO STATION - NIGHT

The answering machine kicks on.

RYDER

(answering machine)

Hello this is Dr. Malcolm Ryder, parapsychologist. I'm currently not in the studio. Please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

BEEP

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

JULIAN HOLLOWAY hums cheerfully to himself.

He does not turn his phone off, but puts it in his inner breast pocket.

He knocks on the door of the house.

There's movement inside.

The door opens.

DANIELLE stands just inside the entrance way.

DANIELLE

Hello? Are you the person interested in my wallpaper?

JULIAN

I certainly am. You're Danielle?

DANIELLE

Yes. Please come in.

Julian follows her in.

The door closes.

DANIELLE

I didn't get your name before?

JULIAN

Julian. Julian Holloway. It is a pleasure to meet you Danielle.

DANIELLE

I feel like I've heard that name before.

JULIAN

I get that all the time. Must be one of those names.

Julian takes further steps into the room.

JULIAN  
(changing subjects)

Now look at all this paisley wallpaper. You weren't kidding. And it's in every room?

DANIELLE  
Just about.

JULIAN  
And where is it you last saw The Man Who Stands In The Shade Of The Cypress Tree?

DANIELLE  
That was in one of the bedrooms. Do you want to see it?

JULIAN  
If you'd be so kind.

They go upstairs.

DANIELLE  
Can I ask what you do? The person I talked to about all this - who told me it's valuable - said a lot of weird, maybe dangerous, people might want to get ahold of it. Are you a... warlock or magician or anything like that?

JULIAN  
Oh no. You don't need to worry about me. I'm just a salesman.

They arrive at the top of the stairs. Danielle opens the bedroom door.

They walk into the room.

JULIAN  
Look at that.

DANIELLE  
I haven't been in here since... since the night he appeared.

JULIAN  
Well he's not here now.

DANIELLE

(concerned)

Is that a problem? Is it not worth anything if The Man in the Shade isn't present?

JULIAN

It's still worth something. I'd happily take it off your hands. How much are you wanting?

DANIELLE

(uncertain)

\$20,000? I don't know... is that too much. Or too little?

JULIAN

What would you do with that money, Danielle? If you don't mind me asking.

DANIELLE

Pay off my student loans. Some credit card debt.

JULIAN

So you want freedom. Money is just a means to that end. Your dream is to be free. Is that fair to say?

DANIELLE

I mean... yes. But I need money to do that. I can't just-

JULIAN

(interrupts)

But would if you could? Be free. Free from all debt. All responsibility. To live on your own terms and be beholden to no one. Is this wallpaper worth that to you?

DANIELLE

(suspicious)

I don't know what you're trying to steer me towards, but I want the money. Twenty thousand - no, twenty-five thousand.

Julian laughs.

JULIAN

Twenty five thousand dollars? You could pay your debt off, and what, go on a nice vacation? People who dream of money dream in the smallest ways possible. I'm sorry - I don't mean to insult you. But it's true. And I don't blame you for wanting money. You've been trained your whole life to perform these needless rituals with little green paper that have strange pyramids with eyes on them.

DANIELLE

(deja vue)

That's funny... someone else mentioned that to me recently too. The occult imagery on money. What does that-

JULIAN

(interrupts)

Sometimes we're given a once in a lifetime opportunity to ask for something more. Something that's value cannot be properly calculated with any material currency. I was given that opportunity once.

He shows his left hand to Danielle.

JULIAN

And I took it. Danielle, If you want \$25,000 - if you want \$50,000. I can give that to you. Today. Before I step foot outside this room. But I'm telling you, that money is just a middle man to getting something else. Something material. Something of this world. Instead, I can let you have your dreams - no middle men necessary. Whatever you want, you'll have it - for the rest of your life. Now do you want money or would you prefer to have the kind of freedom you've only dreamed about?

We don't hear her answer. The phone call ends.