

CONREADING

Written by

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INT. - ESTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

The house is nice, upper-middle class, a small picture of a soldier hangs in the corner, next to a wedding photo.

CONNOR O'NEIL (30's) a lanky grifter, with a winning smile and the confidence of a snake oil salesman sits on a large leather chair.

Across from Connor is ESTER SMITH (early 80s) a sweet old lady who sits on a flower patterned couch. She has nice pearl earrings.

LINDSEY SMITH (mid 20's) a new-age type, sits next to Ester. She wears a black sweater, funky glasses, and huge crystal earrings. Connor sits across from them.

CONNOR

Before we get to the reading,  
there's the issue of my payment.  
It's Two thousand for the hour.

Ester reaches into her purse and retrieves a checkbook.  
Lindsey puts her hand over the purse.

LINDSEY

I thought this was only a hundred  
dollars? Or at least that's what  
the prices were on Yelp.

CONNOR

That's the seminar price. Private  
meetings cost extra.

LINDSEY

For most mediums "extra" is only  
like fifty dollars.

CONNOR

Most mediums don't have successful  
book deals.

(to Ester)

*Beyond the Great Beyond* is  
available on my website for forty  
nine ninety nine. It's a Great  
stocking stuffer.

Connor winks.

LINDSEY

It's March.

Ester hands Connor the check, he snatches it greedily.

CONNOR  
Fantastic! This house is energy  
central.

LINDSEY  
I happen to be a tad psychic  
myself, and I've never felt any  
energy here.

CONNOR  
That's the difference between  
professionals and **amateurs'**.

Connor closes his eyes and makes strange humming noises.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
I'm hearing a... R name. Is there  
anyone in your family that has an R  
in their name?

ESTER  
My husband Richard... How I miss  
his touch.

CONNOR  
BINGO! That's him.

Lindsey scoffs. Connor stands up and starts walking around  
the room making random hand motions.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
I'm sensing a lot of pain, but also  
pride. Did Richard have a traumatic  
life?

ESTER  
He served two tours in Vietnam! One  
more if you count our honey moon.

CONNOR  
Wow, I am killing it today. It's  
customary to tip your medium by the  
way.

Lindsey groans. Connor winks then closes his eyes again. He  
bumps into a lamp then fixes it hastily.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Oooooohhhh.... Richard says, He  
loves you and cherishes your  
moments at the beach.

Ester looks slightly disappointed. Connor puts his hand on  
Ester's shoulder.

ESTER  
Is that all?

Connor nods. Ester looks down, then perks up.

ESTER (CONT'D)  
This calls for some tea.

Ester exits to the kitchen. Connor sits back down across from Lindsey. She opens her purse and lights a stick of sage.

CONNOR  
That smell is nauseating.

LINDSEY  
(cold)  
It's supposed to ward off **evil spirits**. I want to warn you, your aura's black.

CONNOR  
Yours is rainbow.

LINDSEY  
That's not even a real aura color.

Ester arrives with a tray of tea and biscuits. She puts it on the coffee table. Connor grabs a cookie and sips his tea.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
So does grandpa have anything to say to me?

CONNOR  
He just might.  
(closes eyes)  
Oooooohhhh... Richard says he cherishes the time you two had together.

Connor bites his cookie.

LINDSEY  
That's strange cause he died before I was born.

Connor turns bright red. He stammers a few half sentences. Lindsey holds up her phone, to Ester.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
It's weird that Grandpa mentioned the beach. That just so happens to be the only picture of him on my Facebook.

Connor tries to talk and starts choking. He gets up and slams himself into the wall. His eyes start to roll into the back of his head as he claws at his throat.

ESTER  
Lindsey call 911!

Connor falls to the ground, a loud THUD is heard as his head slams against the hardwood.

CUT TO:

**DARKNESS**

SILENCE, then a bright light fills the screen.

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Connor spits up the cookie and opens his eyes. Lindsey is performing the Heimlich. Ester is looking down at him, worried. Connor catches his breath.

CONNOR  
I'm alive! Thank god.

Lindsey rolls her eyes.

LINDSEY  
Thank me.

Next to Ester is RICHARD SMITH (40's) A macho man wearing an army uniform.

CONNOR  
Who's the army guy?

Connor points at Richard. From Ester/Lindsey POV, Connor is talking to no one. Lindsey and Ester exchange a look.

LINDSEY  
What are you talking about?

RICHARD  
Name's Richard you candy ass son of a gun. We've been "talking" all afternoon.

Connor backs against the wall, terrified. Richard marches towards him.

CONNOR  
You're not supposed to be here.

LINDSEY  
Come on dude, the jig is up, I got  
you red-handed.

RICHARD  
What's the matter? You told my  
Ester you talk to dead folks all  
the time.

CONNOR  
(stammering)  
Yeah... but they're usually dead in  
a more... abstract way--

RICHARD  
Cut the bullshit, If I still had my  
body I'd kick your ass!

As Richard yells the lights flicker. Lindsey and Ester look a  
bit rattled.

LINDSEY  
I don't know how you're messing  
with the lights but stop. Grandma  
has epilepsy.

RICHARD  
Give Ester back her money or I'll  
hop into your body and give you the  
worst hemorrhoids of your life!

CONNOR  
But I--

Richard clenches his fist, the lights go crazy.

CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Okay, I'm sorry. Please leave my  
ass alone, I don't have health  
insurance!

From Ester/Lindsey POV, Connor is screaming at no one.

ESTER  
I think that fall knocked some  
screws loose.

Connor shakily gets up. He hands Ester back her money.

CONNOR  
I'm sorry maam, I'm not a medium  
just an actor who needed to pay  
rent.

Ester looks down saddened, Lindsey angrily takes the money.

LINDSEY  
I fucking knew it!

ESTER  
Are you okay? Do you need a doctor?

LINDSEY  
Grandma, don't help the con-man.  
(to connor)  
Every minute you stay I lower your  
rating.

Connor starts to leave.

RICHARD  
Before you go I got something you  
should tell Ester.

Connor stops he turns to Ester. He's Pale as a ghost.

CONNOR  
Richard says... He'll never forget  
how that ass jiggles.

ESTER  
(warmly)  
That's my Richard.

**THE END.**