

# A Lesson From the Lesser Key

By: Juma Salazar

My name is Jeremy Schwartz. I am 18 years old and I am writing this from a jail cell. I will not pretend that what I did was right, but I did what had to be done.

The story that I am about to tell you took place exactly one year ago today: October 31st, Halloween night. My friends and I did something that changed everything.

It all started when me, Adam Howerback and Patrick Casey went down into a basement with a ouija board. Now I know what you're thinking: "A ouija board can't hurt anyone, it's just a toy." That's what I thought at first. Boy was I proven wrong.

The three of us descended down the stairs of Patrick's basement. Patrick was carrying the ouija board box. Adam and I were carrying white candles; 3 for each person.

Once we got to the middle of the basement, in front of the couch, Patrick took the ouija board and planchette out of the box. He put the board on the floor with the planchette on top. Adam and I placed the 6 candles on the floor in a circle around the board.

"I don't think we should be doing this," Adam said, trembling.

"Do you really believe that this is real?" asked Patrick. "It's just a stupid toy."

"Everyone shut up!" I shouted. "We need to ask questions for this to work."

We all put our hands on the planchette on the ouija board. We moved the lens around the board then stopped.

"Is anyone here in this basement with us?" I asked. The planchette moved and stopped over the word Yes.

Then, I heard something. They were footsteps.

I turned to the others.

“Did you guys hear that?” I asked

“No, what was it?” asked Adam.

“There were footsteps. They came from over there, behind the couch.”

“I didn’t hear anything,” said Patrick.

“I couldn’t have been the only one to hear that. It was too loud for you not to hear,” I said.

“It was probably your imagination,” Patrick commented.

“I know what I heard. I’m not crazy.”

“Whatever. Let’s ask another question,” Patrick said.

“What is your name?” asked Adam. A cold rush of wind blew out the candle and the planchette slid across the letters and spelled out a name: Valac.

“Hold up, let me look up that name real quick,” said Patrick.

He got up and went up to a desk in another corner of the basement with a computer on it. Patrick started typing.

“Valac is a demon,” Patrick said.

“A demon?” asked Adam. There was panic in his voice.

“Yeah, it says here that according to *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, he is said to be a president of Hell.”

Right after Patrick stopped talking, we heard 3 knocks on the wall.

“Valac? Was that you?” Patrick questioned.

The lens moved over the word Yes.

“Can you give us another sign?” I asked.

Suddenly, the lights went out.

“Oh now we’re talking,” Patrick declared.

The lights turned back on.

“I think we should stop. I don’t wanna be messing with a demon,” said Adam.

“No, we should keep going,” said Patrick. “I want to know more.”

Patrick walked back to us and sat back down. He put his hand back on the planchette.

“How old are you, Valac?” asked Patrick. Our hands moved as the planchette slid to the far left of the board. Suddenly, it started sliding across the numbers in a figure 8 very quickly.

Soon, my arm started to ache.

Once the planchette stopped, All the candles burned out.

I asked another question.

“Where in this basement are you right now?” The lens moved over the letters and spelled a response: Behind.

“Behind.” I repeated. “Behind where?”

The lens moved again and spelled out the word Patrick.

“No way,” Patrick said. “You guys are messing with me.” His voice trembled.

“I swear that wasn’t me,” said Adam. “Was it you Jeremy?”

“No, it wasn’t me,” I said.

All of a sudden,

“What’s happening?” Patrick asked.

“I don’t know,” I said. “But I don’t like this.”

“Hey if you’re really here behind me, can you prove it? Maybe touch me?”  
asked Patrick.

Suddenly, Patrick gasped.

“What? What is it?” asked Adam.

“My back. It burns,” responded Patrick. He could barely get the words out.

“Turn around. Let us see,” I said.

Patrick turned his back on us and listed up his shirt.

What we saw chilled us right to our very souls.

There were 3 red scratch marks on Patrick’s back. They were deep scratches too, deep enough to draw blood.

“Dude you’re bleeding!” exclaimed Adam.

“Yeah, we need to get you to the hospital,” I said.

“Patrick doesn’t need a hospital,” Patrick said. Only it wasn’t Patrick. The voice that came out of Patrick’s body was something inhuman. It was raspy and it sounded like Patrick’s vocal chords had been destroyed. “Patrick isn’t even here.”

“Who are you? Are you Valac?” I demanded.

“I am Valac the defiler, the profane, the marquis of snakes,” the inhuman voice said.

“What do you want with Patrick?”

“His soul.”

“Well you can’t have it!” declared Adam.

“I’m taking him to Hell!” Valac roared.

The now possessed Patrick quickly turned around. His eyes had rolled back into head, only leaving the whites visible.

Just then, Patrick’s computer got hurled across the room, smashing against the wall.

“Jesus,” Adam said.

“Jesus isn’t here,” Valac said. He let out a terrible cackle.

Patrick started to cry, but they weren't regular tears. They were tears of blood.

I tried to wipe the blood away with my hands, but it kept coming.

"Stop this right now!" Yelled Adam.

Valac just started laughing again.

All of a sudden, Adam went flying across the room, hitting the wall. He died instantly on impact.

"Valac, I command you to get out of Patrick!" I commanded.

"I will be with Patrick until his body rots," proclaimed Valac.

All of a sudden, a glimpse of Patrick shone through the mask of Valac. His eyes rolled back into place.

"Jeremy, stomach hurts," Patrick croaked. "Lift, shirt."

I lifted up his shirt and I kid you not, honest to god, I saw a circle protruding up from under his skin. As I looked closer, I realized that it wasn't just any circle. It was ouroboros: a snake eating its own tail.

"Please, get him out," Patrick told me.

I didn't know it at the time, but that was the last time I would hear Patrick's voice.

"Patrick is gone. Only I remain. Have been here from the beginning and will be here until the end. I am the first and the last," Valac proclaimed.

"Why are you doing this?" I asked.

"You summoned me. You opened the gate. Patrick's fate is your fault."

Then it clicked. I sure as hell didn't want to do it but I had no choice. This demon wasn't leaving my friend anytime soon, so I had to take drastic measures.

I wrapped my hands around Patrick's neck.

“I’m sorry,” I said. Tears started forming in my eyes.

I tightened my grip and Patrick started to gasp. Valac let out a terrible noise that sounded akin to a dying hyena. I pushed against Patrick’s neck harder and harder until the noise stopped and Patrick lay still. Everything was quiet now. There was no sign of Valac anywhere. By some miracle he didn’t move into me. I couldn’t tell you why.

I heard the front door open.

I knew there was no way out of this. I knew that I would be charged with the murder of my best friends, and I was. I tried to tell my lawyer about the possession. He agreed to use that as a defense but I knew that deep down he didn’t believe me. I’ve now accepted that there are lots of other people who don’t believe me either. Of course there comes a time when some people will write letters to me telling me about what they’ve experienced. Although it’s just a select few. One year after the incident I still think about it. I wish we never touched that board. Patrick and Adam would still be alive if we didn’t touch it.

Now I don’t care about whether or not you believe me, but I just wanted to share the truth of what happened that night. I wanted to share how my life got changed by what I thought was a silly little board game. And most of all, I wanted to share the lesson I learned: don’t dabble with what you don’t understand.