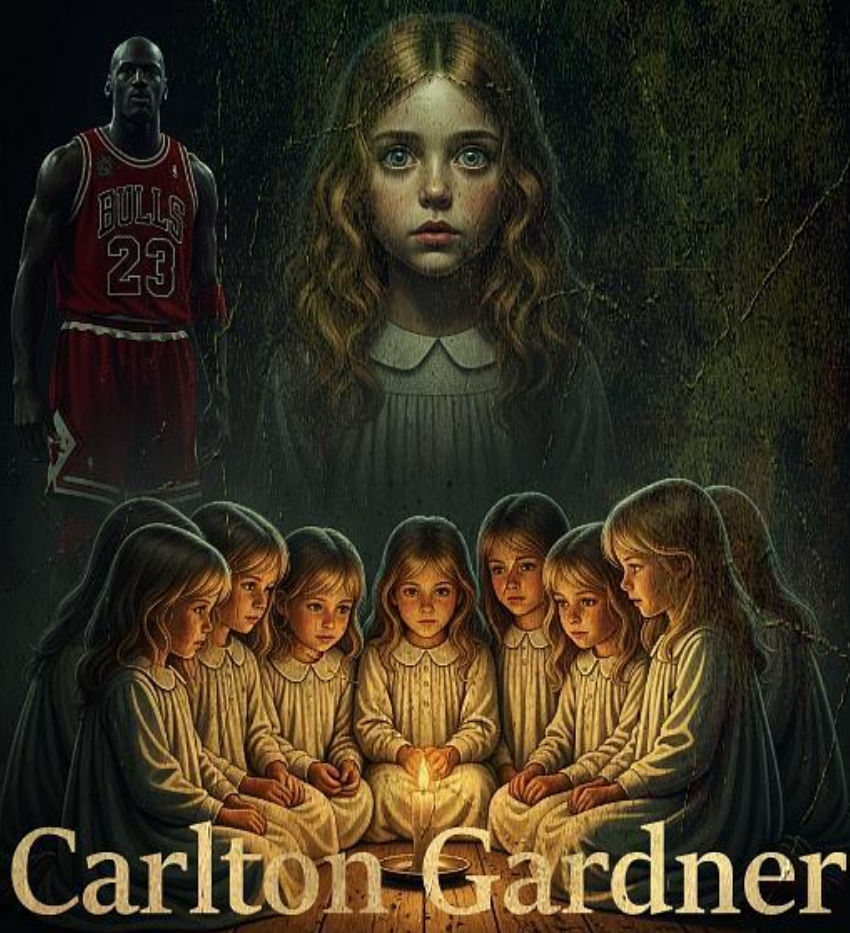


Séance With Michael Jordan



CARLTON GARDNER

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A Very Short Story

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“Life’s a dream. Realize it.
Life’s a sacrifice. Offer it.
Life’s love. Enjoy it.
Life’s a challenge. Meet it.
Life’s an adventure. Dare it.
Life’s a song. Sing it.
Life’s a sorrow. Overcome it.
Life’s a tragedy. Confront it.
Life’s an opportunity. Profit from it.
Life’s a mystery. Unfold it.
Life’s a promise. Fulfill it.
Life’s a beauty. Praise it.
Life’s a spirit. Release it.
Life’s a puzzle. Solve it.
Life’s a fright. Have fun with it.”

— Mother Teresa (modified)

The Wonder of Being Thirteen

My daughter Lindsey, for whatever reason, has always had a fascination with the occult. This includes ghosts, witches, and to a lesser extent, vampires. This fascination has been there since she was very little, and it is not because we encouraged it. In fact, we never allowed them to watch those super scary movies at our home. She is a voracious reader and loved reading everything she could find on these subjects. There was an incident where one of her friends had taken one of her books on witchcraft to the local Catholic youth meeting, and the youth minister saw the book and confiscated it. Lindsey, who was not a member of this church and not a Catholic, approached the minister to get her book back. He asked her if she knew there were death spells in the book. Surprised, she replied by asking him if he really believed in witchcraft and death spells. She was thirteen at the time. He did not return the book.

Lindsey wanted to have a séance at her thirteenth birthday sleepover and asked if I could help. I agree, as this was something we had done as kids, and I saw no harm in it. We took the seven girls to the local skating ring, which gave me time to

arrange some surprises for the séance. At the time, we lived in an interesting house that had a medieval-looking staircase that went from the basement to the second floor. To be honest, it was a little scary. The basement was one large room that had a sofa, an entertainment area, a foosball table with an overhanging light fixture, and a large freestanding cardboard Michael Jordan that was close to actual size. The garage led into this finished space, and there were two access doors. I solicited my youngest son, Mark, to help with the arrangements. We got some clear fishing line and tied it to the light fixture above the foosball table. We ran the line through one of the exits and secured it for later. Next, I got the great idea of attaching the line to the top of Michael Jordan's cardboard head and installed some grommets to lead the line out the other exit. I tested the lines and, sure enough, the light fixture and Michael Jordan definitely rocked. We were ready for the girls.

When the girls returned from skating and had had their birthday cake and drinks and Lindsey had opened the birthday presents, they retired to the basement for the séance. It was my job to explain how to communicate with the dead. They took for granted that I knew this process and they hung on my every word. I instructed them to form an unbroken circle by overlapping their hands and holding the hands of the girls on either side of them. I placed a single candle in the middle of the circle, which was the only light source in the room. I then explained that only one girl should speak during the summoning and that the others should keep their eyes open to observe anything that might happen. I emphasized that they should not interrupt the séance by shouting out if they observed something. I instructed them to wait until the summoning was over, and then they could compare what each of them observed. I know this is old hat to

most of you but they were young and had no experience. I asked who they planned on speaking with, and they all agreed it was the murdered Czarina, Anastasia. They had obviously given this some serious thought while at the skating ring. They elected a spokesperson, and as I left with my son, Mark, Lindsey and a couple of the other girls grabbed him and insisted that he stay in order to protect them. There was no getting out of it. I knew I was on my own. I had counted on Mark handling the lights over the foosball table and me, Michael Jordan. They got down to business as soon as I left.

I knew the candlelight on the floor would magnify the shadows cast by the light fixture and Michael Jordan, so I decided to barely rock things. I did not want to overplay my hand. The way I planned it was to start with the foosball lights as the first act, and the finale would be Michael Jordan. I listened through the door and heard the spokesperson saying, "Anastasia, Anastasia, we request your presence". I allowed this to continue for a time before I slowly tugged on the fishing line. It did not take long before there was a chorus of screams and confusion. I immediately ceased my tugging and waited for the uproar to stop. It took a long time. During this intermission, my older son, Parks, showed up and ask what I was doing. I explained all, and he was eager to help. I gave him responsibility for the foosball lights and I went to the other door to personally handle Michael Jordan.

After what seemed like thirty minutes, I heard them start up again. Then, after several minutes I could make out the cadence of the one girl calling for a sign from Anastasia, and I knew she was about to make an appearance. I counted to ten slowly and then indicated to Parks that he should start rocking the light fixture gently. Knowing Parks however, I figured the fixture

was swinging like it was in a hurricane. I quickly began pulling on Michael Jordan's lines. What surprised me was the absolute silence from the girls. I had been pulling Michael Jordan's line fairly hard, and unless the line to the foosball light had broken, it was swinging wildly. I decided to give Michael Jordan a really hard yank and did so.

All hell broke loose at this point. I am confident that every neighbor on our street was startled by the noise level they created. I waited about thirty seconds and then barged into the room. I turned on the overhead light and observed seven little girls mangled together on the sofa with one little redheaded boy being suffocated in the middle of the pack. I exclaimed, "What is going on in here?". In the next minute, several of the girls were getting untangled and rushed past me. I asked, "Where are they going?". Lindsey replied, "They're going home, Dad!".

Lindsey explained what had happened in the room. They had agreed that they would not panic if the lights started moving again and were ready for that. When they noticed Michael Jordan moving, however, it seemed that he was moving to block their exit from the room. As I would pull the line tight, he would tip toward the center of the doorway and would eventually make a hopping motion toward the center. They were very quiet at this point, trying not to alert Michael Jordan that they were on to him. They huddled as far away from him as possible on the sofa against the far wall. Lindsey, being the brave soul she is, whispered to the other girls that she would get her Dad, that's me. She was just slipping through the doorway, with her back against the frame furthest from Michael, when I did that final and faithful YANK. Michael Jordan actually jumped onto her. Honestly, I think that would have even scared the crap out of me. My son, Mark, who had helped set things up and who knew

what was happening, said it really was scary.

I freely acknowledge that I may have gone a bit too far on this thing as I pictured multiple lawsuits from the other parents for traumatizing these little thirteen-year-old girls. I quickly decided to come clean. I got all the girls to return to the basement, and I showed them the fishing line used to make things move. With the mystery solved, Lindsey proudly proclaimed that I was definitely the best Dad ever. I still hold that title!

Lindsey will tell you that if she runs into any of these girls, they all recount that night. I am sure they will never forget it.



About the Author

A Tribute to Lindsey

Lindsey, named for the iconic Bionic Woman, truly embodied that spirit of unstoppable energy and boundless curiosity. I could never quite predict her next move, except to know it would always be met with kindness and consideration.

Her fascination with the macabre, from ghosts to cemeteries, was a defining characteristic. She actively sought out lost graveyards on her travels, a unique passion that I believe, or perhaps hope, she's finally outgrown.

As her dad, I might have contributed to her love of all things spooky with my elaborate Halloween haunted houses. But I like to think that, in some small way, these antics helped shape the well-adjusted, confident adult she is today. Seeing her now, with her own family, brings me immense joy, and if my playful pranks had any hand in that, I couldn't be happier.

You can connect with me on:

 <https://carltongardner.com>

