

INK & EMBER

MAGAZINE



Fall 2025 Vol. 4

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by Kate Kinney

“You can leave,” Porn Lawyer says, “or you can wind up on the front page of The Daily News.” He temples his hands in front of his chin, and taps his fingertips together twice, like a full stop on a typewriter, back when you put two spaces after a period.

“I can help you with the leaving. It’s not free, but you’ve got straight teeth, nice posture, you’re well-spoken. Once you start looking, you’ll be surprised where you can find money. Are your parents still alive? Does your mom have a house? She can refinance. Does your father have a retirement account? A pension?”

I’ve nicknamed him Porn Lawyer because of how he resembles an adult film actor from the 1970s with his fluffy moustache and wide-lapeled tan suit, white button-down with no tie—top two buttons undone, black chest hair tempting up and over the shirt. He sits with his legs splayed open and he looks like he might add something like, “and, you know, we have other payment options,” flicking his eyes crotchways.

“I’m sorry,” I say. “I should have told you what I can’t do, instead of asking what I can do.”

“Okay.” He leans back in his office chair, moving his hands behind his head. His shirt tugs up from his pants, exposing a sliver of belly.

“So tell me.”

“I can’t give up my daughter. I need enough money to avoid the end-of-month panic. I can’t put my parents in a bad spot.”

“Uh-huh, uh-huh. I hear you.” His phone pings and he sits up, moving his fingers efficiently over the screen. “Some of these things are impossible to control. Do you have evidence, anything concrete?” With a little swish, he sends off a text.

No emergency room visits. No 911 calls. No photos of the welts behind my knees. The fingertip shaped bruises on my arm: transient, temporary. The bashed-in drywall, the shattered window, the dryer door shuttered off its hinges: all undocumented, all repaired. Hands around my neck that left me with a weird click for a week when I swallowed—tempered, transitional. Maybe something could have been done after the lethal cocktail that ended my cat’s life. There’d been a chance. When Dan went out front to pay the bill, I could have told the vet how he’d thrown Dracula against the living room wall. Drax was elderly, ridden with cancer, which is probably why he’d bitten Úna, who had grabbed his fur. But then Dan was back next to me in the exam room, holding my hand, looking sad.

“What if I don’t have any evidence?”

“Have you told any friends? Family?”

I shake my head no.

“No police interaction?”

I laugh. “Half his cousins are cops.”

Porn Lawyer nods. “Then it’ll be your word against his. More challenging, more expensive—a higher retainer, of course, but not impossible.”

More expensive. Not impossible. It’s taken three months of skimming the top off grocery money to afford this consultation.

I impale my palms with my nails. The fluorescent lights flicker and buzz. I try to pull out a comforting memory, conjure a warm feeling. Which is how I land on the idea. It’s brilliant. The only way to clean this whole mess up.

“What about a do-over?” I ask.

Porn Lawyer straightens in his chair. He looks at me, fully and directly. “Well,” he finally says. “I’m not sure what you mean.”

Manifesting, I close my eyes. A rip in the time-space continuum. Something I can totally control.

The Quarterly Org

ORGANIZATIONS TO DONATE TO

For this issue, our charity of choice is the **Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF)**. The PCRF's Organizational Mission is "to provide medical and humanitarian relief collectively and individually to children throughout the Levant, regardless of their nationality or religion."

Key Notes on the PCRF:

- 501(c)(3) organization*
- Donations are tax-deductible*
- PCRF's impact also includes establishing two pediatric cancer departments in Palestine*

"Palestine Children's Relief Fund, founded in 1991 by concerned humanitarians in the USA, provides free medical care to thousands of injured and ill children yearly who lack local access to care within the local health care system. Over the years, we've sent over 2,000 affected children abroad for free medical care, sent thousands of international doctors and nurses to provide tens of thousands of children free medical care in local hospitals, and provided tens of thousands of children humanitarian aid and support they otherwise would not get."



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