Excerpt from White Crow

SCENE 4

(As the lights rise, we see William seated at table across from Leonora Piper, who is dressed without any extravagant indication of her mediumship. They sit in silence until it gets awkward.)

WILLIAM

So, are you ready to begin?

LEONORA

Yes, Mr. X. I was simply waiting to hear if you had anything else to tell me about your visit,. Perhaps you are looking for the letter Y, or have a question about the letter Z?

WILLIAM

No, X marks the spot.

LEONORA

OK, then let's see what buried treasure awaits us.

(More strained silence.)

WILLIAM

Has it started?

LEONORA

No.

WILLIAM

What happens first? Will you dim the lights? Put flame to incense candles?

LEONORA

No.

WILLIAM

What about chanting and moaning? I assume you speak ancient Sanskrit, or something?

LEONORA

No.

WILLIAM

So, we just sit here with the lights on, waiting for something to happen.

LEONORA

That's pretty much how it goes.

WILLIAM

Well, I must say, that's a relief to me! A brightly lit room with no distractions. It's a nice surprise.

LEONORA

All you have to do is ask for his attention.

WILLIAM

Who or what is "he?"

LEONORA

Dr. Phinuit, my spirit guide.

WILLIAM

A doctor? So, a fellow man of science. Even more good news. (Pause.) Dr. Phinuit? Dr. Phinuit, can you hear me?

(They sit in silence.)

WILLIAM

Perhaps he is busy haunting other places?

(Leonora raises her hand, palm facing William.)

LEONORA

You have to call him.

WILLIAM

I just did…

(She wiggles her hand in front of him as if to accentuate her point.)

LEONORA

You have to call him.

(In apparent disbelief, William leans over so he can speak into her palm.)

WILLIAM

I knew it was too good to be true. OK, palm, please connect me to Dr. Phinuit. Doctor? Are you there?

(Stage goes dark with a clap.)

SCENE 5

(The theater remains dark. Dr. Phinuit speaks from offstage, so there's no chance he can be acoustically placed on stage.)

DR. PHINUIT

Hi there. Or hi here. Wherever we are, it's nice to be with you. Just the two of us.

I'm Dr. Phinuit. When I was alive, I was a French physician in Metz, which is quite beautiful if you've ever seen the postcards.

OK, I know what you're thinking. You think that I'm talking to everyone at the same time, and that all of you are hearing the same thing. But, the thing is, there's no way you'll ever know. You can compare my words, tone, timing, and still not have any proof that you're hearing the same thing as someone else, because all your evidence will come from you, not from them.

You only have your own version of what you believe is a shared experience. They're not my words, but rather your words that you attribute to me.

So, I'm not here in this room. Nor are the people who you believe are sitting around you. In fact, you're not where you think you are…never have been, never will be.

Everything that appears external to you is, well, not. It's a conjecture. A belief, or an assumption. Even a superstition.

All you have is what's playing inside of your head. It's like you're watching a movie of the world on the inside of your eyelids. But, wait a minute, motion pictures haven't been invented yet. Look at me predicting the future!

Maybe right now you're just talking to yourself.

So, sit back. There's so much for us to chat about.

(Stage goes dark with another clap.)