

ENLIGHTENMENT

by

David Schreiber

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Cast:

Tucker Porter Male, mid-20s.

Bobby Oldani Male, mid-20s. Tucker's boyfriend.

Charles Porter..... Male, 50. Tucker's father. A member of "The Crystal Path" cult.

Rose Porter Female, 50. Tucker's mother and Charles' ex-wife.

Charles Carter Male. 40s-60s. The leader of "The Crystal Path" cult.

Time:

August 15 of this year.

Place:

A park in Los Palos, California, a small suburb in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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(Lights up on a park. There is a fountain, upstage center. Tucker enters from right carrying a roll of kite string. The string extends offstage right. Tucker is rolling up the string)

TUCKER

I've got it!

(Bobby enters from right, carry kite to which the string is attached).

Anyway, that's how I ended up playing Eleanor of Aquitaine.

BOBBY

I met Eleanor of Aquitaine once.

TUCKER

I doubt it. She lived in the 1100s.

BOBBY

Oh, Eleanor of *Aquitaine*. I, uh...

TUCKER

Very funny, Boo.

BOBBY

Uh, yeah. I did. She was a shrill, unpleasant woman.

TUCKER

No, she wasn't.

BOBBY

With really bad B.O. Of course, everyone back then had bad B.O.

TUCKER
(Laughs)

And what about her husband?

BOBBY

Which one? Louis? Cross-dresser.

TUCKER

Oh come on.

BOBBY

It's true. He used to run around in Eleanor's outfits all the time. Henry was a lot less fun.

TUCKER

Come here.

BOBBY

Wha...? Tuck, this isn't San Francisco.
(Tucker kisses Bobby)

TUCKER

I don't care.

BOBBY

This is suburban Los Palos.

TUCKER

I don't care.

BOBBY

People are staring.

TUCKER

Let them stare. I'm out here, flying a kite with the sweetest, funniest man in the world,
and I don't care what anyone else thinks.

BOBBY

Thank you.

(Tucker's cell phone rings)

TUCKER
(Looks at cell phone)

Besides, Boo, Los Palos needs a little excitement. Here, let me take that.
(Takes the kite from Bobby)

BOBBY

Anything important?

TUCKER

Eh, my Mom. Again. I should...No, I'll let it go to voicemail. Again.
(Beat)

Maybe I can leave the phone at home next week.

BOBBY

Are you excited?

TUCKER
About the trip? Yeah!

BOBBY
It's just...you've seemed a little hesitant about it or something. A couple of times.

TUCKER
No, no. I'm really looking forward to it.

BOBBY
Good. So am I.

TUCKER
It's just...

BOBBY
What? There is something.

TUCKER
Well, it's just...I've got a...history, with Vegas.

BOBBY
A history with Vegas?

TUCKER
It's nothing.

BOBBY
I don't know. It sounds intriguing. What sort of history? Let me guess: something involving gin, baccarat, and a guy named Bradley?

TUCKER
No, it's a family thing, actually.

BOBBY
You have family there?

TUCKER
Sort of...look, let's not talk about this right now, okay?

BOBBY
Sure. I'm sorry, Tuck. I didn't realize that Vegas—

TUCKER

No, no. It's okay. I'm looking forward to the trip. Really. Actually, I haven't been there since I was a teenager. It'll be interesting to see the city. And we're only there for one night, anyway. Who knows. Maybe we won't get out of the hotel room.

BOBBY

Maybe.

TUCKER

And then off to beautiful Ely, Nevada. Courtesy of...what did you call it?

BOBBY

"The Loneliest Road in the America". U.S. highway 50. You have to see it. It's amazing.

TUCKER

Sounds perfect.

(Beat)

Bobby, I am really happy that we're doing this. I've never felt like this about anyone before, and I'm glad...I love you, you know.

BOBBY

Tuck...

TUCKER

I should have said it earlier, but...

BOBBY

Thank you, Tuck. I love you, too.

TUCKER

You do?

BOBBY

Of course I do.

TUCKER

Sorry, I just thought...

BOBBY

It's okay.

TUCKER

I've never been good with relationships, but...

BOBBY

It's okay!

TUCKER

But you're different. You're someone really special. I just want you to know how much you mean to me.

BOBBY

Thanks.

TUCKER

Now, I don't want to keep you.

BOBBY

Oh, I think Professor Clarke can wait.

TUCKER

Come on. You told me what he's like if you're late.

BOBBY

Yeah, yeah.

TUCKER

I'll see you tonight. What do you want for dinner?

BOBBY

It's a "what Tuck wants" night.

TUCKER

Again? Where did you get this idea?

BOBBY

Just humor me.

TUCKER

Okay. Well...how about pizza.

BOBBY

Sure.

TUCKER

And beer.

BOBBY

Of course.

TUCKER

There's that movie we talked about.

BOBBY

Tuck...it's your night.

TUCKER

No, no. It's fine. It's good. Really. It sounded interesting.

BOBBY

Okay. Anything else? It is a "what Tuck wants" night.

TUCKER

Oh! Oh, my. Well, now that you mention it—

BOBBY

Who's that?

TUCKER

Who?

BOBBY

That man coming towards us, waving. The one in the robes.

TUCKER

(Looks downstage)

Oh my God.

BOBBY

What?

TUCKER

Oh, no.

(Tucker's cell phone rings)

BOBBY

What's wrong?

TUCKER

Bobby, I think you should leave. Right now.

(Tucker's cell phone rings.)

It's my Mom again. I should get this.

BOBBY

Why?

TUCKER

(Answers cell phone)

Hi, Mom...Excuse me?...Yes, I know. Yes. He's here. Yes, Dad's coming over. What?!

BOBBY

That's your father?

TUCKER

No, Mom, you don't need to...Mom?

(Hangs up cell phone)

Great. Bobby, uh...yeah, that's my father. He's different. I'll explain later.

BOBBY

Okay.

CHARLES

(Enters from left)

Tucker!

TUCKER

Hi.

CHARLES

You're here. I thought you wouldn't come.

TUCKER

It was supposed to be three hours from now!

CHARLES

Arriving early is a virtue.

BOBBY

Hello, Mr. Tucker.

CHARLES

Actually, my name is Charles. Son, who is—

TUCKER

Bobby. He's...a friend.

BOBBY

We're on a date, Charles.

TUCKER

That's right. A date. With a man.

BOBBY

Tucker and I were flying a kite.

CHARLES

Indeed. Well...may the Crystal shine upon you.

BOBBY

The Crystal?

CHARLES

The Crystal Path teaches one to rejoice in love in all its forms.

TUCKER

Excuse me? All its forms? Since when?

CHARLES

Always.

TUCKER

That's not what I remember.

BOBBY

What is this "Crystal Path"?

CHARLES

Has Tucker never told you about the Crystal Path?

TUCKER

No, I haven't. And since Bobby was just about to leave, we're not going to get the chance today.

CHARLES

That's too bad. But I'm so happy that you've found love! May the Crystal shine upon you both.

TUCKER

Don't try to recruit my boyfriend.

CHARLES

Something very important is about to happen!

BOBBY

What's going to happen?

TUCKER

Bobby—

CHARLES

I'll start at the beginning. The Crystal Path...

CHARLES & TUCKER

...is all around us.

BOBBY

I don't understand.

TUCKER

It's the cult my Dad belongs to.

CHARLES

It's not a cult! It's a spiritual journey.

TUCKER

Right. Sorry. Spiritual journey. It's also the religion I was raised in.

CHARLES

And now Master Carter has discovered the date of the Encounter. It is to be tomorrow!

BOBBY

What is The Encounter?

CHARLES

It is the time when the servants of the Crystal from beyond the stars will—

TUCKER

It's when the aliens come and beam everyone up.

BOBBY

Aliens!?!

TUCKER

Sort of like *Star Trek*.

CHARLES

Please don't mock my beliefs.

TUCKER

I'm not.

BOBBY

Tucker—

CHARLES

It's all right. It is an inevitable part of following the Crystal Path. Last month, when Sister Charles Johnson was at the airport, she—

TUCKER

Dad...please. Look, Bobby, this really isn't all that interesting.

BOBBY

I think it sounds fascinating. Extraterrestrials visiting Earth? Really?

CHARLES

Yes!

TUCKER

Charles Carter—

CHARLES

May the Crystal shine upon him.

TUCKER

—the leader of the...of the movement, has predicted the arrival of aliens on Earth for well over twenty years now.

BOBBY

Really.

CHARLES

And now Master Carter, may the Crystal shine upon him, has clarified the date for The Encounter. It is to be tomorrow.

TUCKER

Well, Carter has—

CHARLES

May the Crystal shine upon him

TUCKER

—has given a various specific dates for The Encounter at least once a year for as long as I can remember.

CHARLES

That is propaganda, spread by the Ordinaries.

TUCKER

Oh come on, Dad. I remember him predicting The Encounter when I was eight, when I was nine, twice when I was ten—

CHARLES

Master Charles, may the Crystal shine upon him, has, over the years, refined the date for the Encounter, that's true.

TUCKER

Yes, he certainly does.

CHARLES

Now Tucker, I know that your mother has put a lot of energy—

TUCKER

Don't bring Mom into this.

CHARLES

But she devotes all of her time to spreading Ordinary propaganda!

TUCKER

Dad...enough. I'm not going to argue about this with you.

CHARLES

It's all right. I'm just glad you called. How long has it been? Three years?

TUCKER

Yeah, well, if I had known there was going to be an Encounter...I'm just glad you got a dispensation to leave the compound.

(To Bobby)

You know, can we meet up later?

BOBBY

Sure. Though I'd like to hear more about the Crystal Path at some point.

TUCKER

What?!

CHARLES

Oh, thank you! It so nice to meet an open-minded young man.

(Takes out a necklace with a quartz crystal hanging from the end)

BOBBY

Well, I'm doing a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology and I...what's that?

CHARLES

Put this on.

Dad...

TUCKER

Thank you!

BOBBY
(Puts on necklace)

Here's one for you, Tucker.

CHARLES

Thanks.

TUCKER
(Takes necklace, but doesn't put it on)

Please, put it on!

CHARLES

No.

TUCKER

Fascinating. It looks a lot like...I mean...it's pretty.

BOBBY
(Looking at the crystal on the necklace)

You'll need it during The Encounter, Tucker.

CHARLES

No I don't! You made me wear those crystals for years. I'm not going to wear one now.

TUCKER

Please, Tucker. It's for your own protection.

CHARLES

Mr. Charles, sir, where did you get this?

BOBBY

From Master Carter, may the Crystal shine upon him. Son, please put it on. You won't be safe, otherwise.

CHARLES

I'll be fine, Dad.

TUCKER

Come on, Tuck. It's a present from your Dad.

BOBBY

TUCKER
Bobby, please, you don't understand.

CHARLES
Tucker, please! It's very important!

BOBBY
What's so bad about putting it on?

TUCKER
All right! All right.
(Tucker puts on crystal necklace)

CHARLES
Thank you, son. And thank you, Bobby.

TUCKER
You're welcome. Now, Bobby—

BOBBY
Please tell me about this Encounter.

TUCKER
I'd really like to talk to my Dad.

CHARLES
Master Charles Carter, may the Crystal shine upon him, has stated that on August 16 of this year, the servants of the Crystal from beyond the stars will arrive here on Earth.

TUCKER
Dad...

BOBBY
Did he say where?

TUCKER
August 16?

CHARLES
Yes!

TUCKER
August 16. The anniversary of Elvis's death. Couldn't Carter—

CHARLES
May the Crystal—

TUCKER
Will you stop saying that!

CHARLES
If you want me to, you know what you need to do.
(Beat)
Have you forgotten the liturgy?

TUCKER
No.
(Beat)
May the Crystal shine upon Master Carter for the remainder of this conversation.

CHARLES
May it be son.

BOBBY
Uh...amen?

TUCKER
No, Bobby, you don't need to say "Amen" when...oh, never mind.

BOBBY
So what's going to happen tomorrow?

CHARLES
Well, first the followers of the Crystal Path will gather—

TUCKER
Enough!

CHARLES
But—

TUCKER
Dad, look...it's just that I don't want anything to do with the Crystal Path, all right?
Nothing. I called you because I wanted to talk to you. When it comes to the Crystal Path, you can do what you want, but leave me out of it. And leave my boyfriend out of it as well.

ROSE
(Enters from right)
Tucker! Keep away from him, Richard!

Mom. TUCKER
 Thank God you're safe. ROSE
 Why wouldn't he be safe? CHARLES
 Bobby, my mother. Rose. Mom, this is Bobby. TUCKER
 The Bobby? Tucker can't stop talking about you. ROSE
 Yes, well— BOBBY
 I love your last name, by the way. I'm sorry we have to meet under these circumstances, ROSE
 but I'm not going let Richard drag my son off to Nevada.
 My name is Charles, Rose. CHARLES
 I am not going to call you by your cult name. ROSE
 (Notices crystal necklace)
 Oh, God. Bobby, did you get that from Richard?
 He'll need it. CHARLES
 Mom, I'm a grown man. Dad's not going to drag me off anywhere. TUCKER
 Bobby, do you know about the Crystal Path? ROSE
 Charles here was explaining it to me. BOBBY
 Surely Tucker has given you some literature? ROSE

BOBBY

No.

ROSE

I see. Well, if you want the truth about the Crystal Path, read this.
(Hands Bobby a pamphlet)

CHARLES

(Snatches pamphlet away)

Lies. Propaganda. Please forgive my ex-wife. She is consumed with loathing for the Crystal Path.

ROSE

I'm just spreading the truth about a dangerous cult.

TUCKER

Mom...

CHARLES

May the Crystal shine upon you, Rose.

ROSE

You take that back.

CHARLES

A Crystaline blessing cannot be taken back.

ROSE

You...rockface.

CHARLES

Typical of you to stoop to such ugly language.

TUCKER

Mom! Dad! Enough! Stop it.

CHARLES

Please pay no attention to her. The goals of the Crystal Path are simple: universal love and spiritual enlightenment.

ROSE

I don't need a pamphlet. Bobby, why don't you tell Richard here—

CHARLES

Charles.

—your last name. ROSE

Mom, no! Bobby— TUCKER

Oldani. BOBBY

What?!? CHARLES

Dad, it's just a coincidence. TUCKER

Oldani? *Oldani?!?* CHARLES

Yes. BOBBY

Away! Away with you! CHARLES

Dad... TUCKER

What did I say? BOBBY

We were warned! Master Charles has warned us about the evil Oldani! CHARLES

Dad, this is my boyfriend. He is not— TUCKER

May the Crystal protect us from the evil Oldani and their probing ways. CHARLES

Did I say the wrong thing? BOBBY

The "Oldani" play the role "devil" in Carter's little religion. ROSE

BOBBY

Oh really?

ROSE

They're another group of aliens. Or were they mutated humans? Carter could never make up his mind.

CHARLES

I must tell Master Charles immediately. He will know what to do!

BOBBY

Please, sir, don't go! I can explain!

CHARLES

Master Charles, may the Crystal shine upon him, warned us about your lies!

TUCKER

Dad, stop it.

CHARLES

Tucker, come to me before he eats you!

BOBBY

I'm not going to eat anyone!

CHARLES

Of course not! Tucker's Crystal will protect him! Thank Charles he put it on.

ROSE

What?!?

CHARLES

Though perhaps you should move away slowly, just in case.

ROSE

Are you wearing a crystal, Tucker?

TUCKER

Dad, if this is an Oldani, why doesn't his crystal hurt him?

BOBBY

This crystal can hurt me?

TUCKER

No, it can't.

ROSE

Of course it can. That's how they drag you into the cult. They start with a pretty necklace, then—

TUCKER

No, Bobby, it's harmless. But in Carter's religion, It's like...it's like showing a cross to a vampire. It drives them away. So if you see a man wearing a cross, he's probably not a vampire.

CHARLES

But...but...he has the name! And the interest in Master Charles!

ROSE

See what I mean?

TUCKER

Bobby is just a normal guy, Dad.

ROSE

And yet he's here? Now? A coincidence?

CHARLES

I don't know.

BOBBY

I am perfectly harmless.

TUCKER

Dad, Mom's just trying to get you riled up.

ROSE

I'm trying to respect your religion by pointing out evil wherever it might occur.

CHARLES

Thank you, Rose, for your "help". I think I'm going to go meditate. Please excuse me.

ROSE

Have fun.

CHARLES

I shall return shortly. May the Crystal shine upon you all. Especially you, Rose.
(Exits left)

ROSE

Richard—

TUCKER
Mom, we need to talk.

BOBBY
You don't like the Crystal Path?

ROSE
Like it? Ha. I was a member for ten years. Ten years of my life. Gone.

TUCKER
Mom's not a member anymore either. She and I left at the same time.

ROSE
And Tucker hasn't told you about our work?

BOBBY
No.

ROSE
I'm surprised. Tucker has been protesting with us since he was just this tall.

TUCKER
Mom...

ROSE
He was so cute at his first protest. The sign he was holding was bigger than he was.

TUCKER
I don't really do that much anymore.

ROSE
You protest with us all the time.

BOBBY
You go to protests?

TUCKER
I haven't done that in months.

ROSE
You went to the Fourth of July barbeque. It's too bad you couldn't make it, Bobby.

BOBBY
There was a barbeque?