

M&B Paranormal Investigations

Episode 5

The Maid, The Mother, The Crone (plus Bernard) (and Mr Baby)

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BERNARD

Previously on M&B Paranormal Investigation... so, where were we? We discovered there's a sort of rift in our house which we're calling 'the cosmic cat flap', and through this rift has fallen an entity of some sort who is currently inhabiting the bodies of seven kittens. So we're calling him Mr Baby Junior, because Mr Baby is the cat who had the kittens. And Magenta has had to put together a coven to sort all of this out, basically--

CLICK

SERAPHINA

Who are you talking to?

BERNARD

Oh! Morning Seraphina. Sorry. I was just recording.

SERAPHINA

For your little 'podcast' is it?

BERNARD

That's right. Sorry, do you mind if I finish up..?

SERAPHINA

Go ahead. Don't mind me.

BERNARD

In this episode we'll get to see how a coven deals with a significant threat to the fabric of reality. I'm very excited.

SERAPHINA

You need to get out more.

BERNARD

(sighs) Listeners, this is one third of the coven; my mother-in-law, Seraphina.

Seraphina grabs the MIC.

BERNARD (cont'd)

Careful!

SERAPHINA

(shouts) Hello. I'm Seraphina. How are you.

BERNARD

You don't have to shout. It's a fairly sensitive device--

MAGENTA

(shouts) Morning all!

BERNARD

Hello darling.

SERAPHINA

Finally dragged yourself downstairs to see your poor old mother, then. Always were a slug-a-bed.

MAGENTA

Good morning mother. Sleep well?

SERAPHINA

No, I did not.

BERNARD

(fake) Oh really what a shame.

SERAPHINA

On account of the demon in my room.

BERNARD

(fake) Oh no so sorry did we forget to tell you about the demon oh sorry about that.

MAGENTA

Most of the rooms are haunted, mother, you'll just have to put up with it.

SERAPHINA

Oh that's charming, that is. You could have at least exorcised the place before I got here!

MAGENTA

We've been rather busy, you know. It was either plumbing or exorcism, we didn't have time for both.

SERAPHINA

Pbbt! Too busy grappling U-bends, were you?

MAGENTA

Yes! I was!

BERNARD

Well, it was more *me* doing the plumbing...

MAGENTA

Bernard!

SERAPHINA

Ha! So what were YOU doing while speccy here sorted out the septic tank? Painting your nails?

BERNARD

Speccy?

MAGENTA

Starting a business, actually! Paranormal Investigations, I have told you about it. And there's a lot that goes into - (splutters) - I don't need to justify what I do, mother!

BERNARD

(mutters) Speccy Four Eyes?

SERAPHINA

I'm just saying, I never forced *my* mother to sleep in a possessed boudoir. I wouldn't have dreamed of doing such a thing! But then, we had manners in my day.

LINDSAY

Morning. Arguing already, are we? I could hear you up the stairs.

SERAPHINA

No.

BERNARD

Your grandmother just called me something I haven't heard since primary school. Good morning Lindsay. Sleep well?

LINDSAY

Not really. There's a banshee on my balcony.

MAGENTA

See, mother? You got off lightly. Now. Coffee, anyone?

EVERYONE

Oooh lovely, yes please.

SERAPHINA

And a crumpet. A hot buttered crumpet.

BEEP.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

LINDSAY

How long's it been since we were in the same room together?

MAGENTA

Not long enough.

SERAPHINA

What a horrible thing to say, Magenta.

MAGENTA

Come on, mother. You're the one who's been on a cruise for the last fifteen years.

SERAPHINA

You were all very welcome to join me in port.

MAGENTA

You never gave us your itinerary, how were we supposed to do that!

LINDSAY

Can we get through one meal without bickering? Please? Just one? Let's talk about something nice. OK?

Beat

BERNARD

I've got a new bass pre-amp!

LINDSAY

I'll start. Recently, I've been curious about our matrilineal line. Because of, y'know, the weird inherited oogle boogily powers thing. Granny, what was your mum like?

MAGENTA

Oh God, here we go. Can of worms.

SERAPHINA

My mother... was a saint.

MAGENTA

No she wasn't!

SERAPHINA

A saint!

MAGENTA

Have you lost your mind??

BERNARD

Let's talk about something else, shall we! A nice neutral topic! How IS life at sea, Seraphina? Good food, I hope? Does it ever get a little dull? What do you do all day?

MAGENTA

Gambling. That's what she does.

BERNARD

Ah yes.

SERAPHINA

(icy) Actually, Magenta, I haven't gambled onboard for YEARS. They won't let me. I was driving the cruise line to bankruptcy so we struck a deal; as long as I avoid their casino, they'll give me free board and passage. For life! Haha!

MAGENTA

What do you mean, you almost drove the cruiseline to bankruptcy?

SERAPHINA

I mean, the house always wins...
except when I'm there, and then I
always win.

MAGENTA

No you don't.

SERAPHINA

I do.

MAGENTA

You do not always win!

SERAPHINA

Yes I do.

MAGENTA

Mother! Stop rewriting history! You
win as much as any gambler, which is:
not enough!

SERAPHINA

Maybe in the old days, my dear, but
things have changed. I haven't lost a
card game in over five years.

BERNARD

Didn't you JUST say the ship's banned
you from gambling?

SERAPHINA

It has! But as soon as we dock...
cha-ching, motherfBLEEP! I'm on a
five year win streak in casinos from
here to Timbuctoo, baby!

LINDSAY

Woah. Granny, are you rich?

SERAPHINA

How else do you think I afford these
rocks? Hmm? Do you think I'm telling
fortunes for tuppence ha'penny? No
indeed.

BERNARD

That is a LOT of bling.

MAGENTA

It's costume jewellery. It's not
real.

SERAPHINA

It IS real!

MAGENTA

No it's not. I don't believe it.

SERAPHINA

Fine, don't.

MAGENTA

I won't!

SERAPHINA

Good, I don't need you to.

MAGENTA

Good, because I don't!

LINDSAY

Granny, if it IS true, how are you winning so much?

BERNARD

Yes, what changed?

SERAPHINA

Simple. A few years back, I trained myself to focus my powers in one singular direction; reading the cards. And I don't mean Tarot. I mean... cha-ching motherfBLEEP! I got the idea from that Roald Dahl story. You know the one. The Sweet Life of Henry Sugar, or whatever it's called. Do you know the one I mean? It's a short story.

BERNARD

Yes, it's a Netflix show now with that umm--

SERAPHINA

--Benedict Cumberbatch.

BERNARD

That's the one.

SERAPHINA

The one with the strange face.

BERNARD

Whatsisname directing it. Wes Anderson.

SERAPHINA

What do you think of his films? Style over substance.

BERNARD

It is a little bit, isn't it.

LINDSAY

Granny, is that a bit... immoral?

BERNARD

And possibly dangerous?

LINDSAY

Why would it be dangerous, dad?

BERNARD

Well, aren't a lot of casinos run by mobsters? I imagine they'd be rather annoyed at all the... cheating.

SERAPHINA

You're not wrong, speccy. They are VERY annoyed.

MAGENTA

Whaat?

SERAPHINA

In fact, your invitation couldn't have come at a better time, Magenta. I needed to lay low for a while until the heat died down.

BERNARD

The heat? There's heat? Do you mean to say--

MAGENTA

--we might get a bloody gangster on our doorstep looking for mother, that's what she means. (angry sigh) Brilliant.

LINDSAY

Granny, is that true?? Are mobsters after you??

BERNARD

I don't believe this! Seraphina, what have you done??

SERAPHINA

Oh stop fretting, speccy.

MAGENTA

Mum! Stop calling him speccy! He doesn't like it.

SERAPHINA

Alright, alright, I'm sorry, mea culpa. Mea culpa! But you all need to just calm down! No-one's gonna find me here. They don't even know my real name; I use a nom de plume when I'm gambling. And sometimes, I wear a wig.

MAGENTA

Oh that's alright then, I'm sure they're completely confounded by a change of hairstyle.

BERNARD

That's it! I've had it! I'm not going to take it anymore! Seraphina, I'm very unhappy you've put my family in danger by coming here. In fact... I think you should leave.

LINDSAY

Dad, you can't chuck granny out! The gangsters might find her!

BERNARD

And that's very much her fault!

LINDSAY

Dad!

SERAPHINA

Oop. Looks like your father's trying to kill me.

BERNARD

I'm not trying to kill you. But you can't stay here!

LINDSAY

Dad, no! We have to help her!

SERAPHINA

It's alright, Lindsay, granny will fend for herself... (weak cough)

BERNARD

Oh for pity's sake.

SERAPHINA

Let me just get my handbag. Where is it? My eyes are failing. Is this the door to the way out? I struggle to recall.

MAGENTA

Mother, stop. You can't just leave.

BERNARD

Magenta!

MAGENTA

Bernard, we need her to help close the catflap. And *then* she can go.

LINDSAY

So she's going to *help* us, and THEN you'll chuck her out?

SERAPHINA

It's alright, Lindsay my dear, thank you for trying. I shan't stay where I'm not wanted.

MAGENTA

Mother, stop being ridiculous.

SERAPHINA

Sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have an ungrateful child! After all I've done for you.

MAGENTA

Mother--

SERAPHINA

Three days in labour! A 5th degree tear! I could've been a dancer, but I gave up that dream to have you.

MAGENTA

You were 46 when I was born.

SERAPHINA

And what about when you lost your powers a few years back! Hmm? What about that! Who helped you get them back? That's right! Old muggins here.

BERNARD

Huh. I forgot about that.

MAGENTA

Me too. Huh.

SERAPHINA

Yes, you people only ever remember the minor mistakes over the colossal sacrifices I've made.

LINDSAY

Hang on, mum lost her powers? When was that? No-one told me about this. What happened?

BERNARD

Well, do you remember when your mother could talk to animals--

MAGENTA

It's a long story dear. We'll tell you some other time.

LINDSAY

Maybe if you let granny stay, SHE can tell me.

SERAPHINA

Nah, can't be bothered.
I didn't want to stay long anyway, I have to be in Miami in a few days. Disney have promised me a stateroom with an ocean view as long as I stay off the karaoke.
So can we please hurry up and close this stupid catflap so I can start packing. Standing around with our thumbs up our arses...

LINDSAY

Wait wait wait! This all feels very rushed. We need to think of a plan first. And I need to be trained up, and I wanted to study the family grimoires to get a sense of y'know, my role... and who I am in relation to all the women who've come before me.

MAGENTA

No, no, mother's right. The sooner we get this over with, the better.

SERAPHINA

So it's settled. Let's get to it. No time like the present!

LINDSAY

But but... I don't know what I'm doing! I'm not ready!

SERAPHINA

No better teacher than experience, my dear. Now then. Let's go straight to the source. Where exactly is this 'cosmic catflap'?

BEEP

INT. BEDROOM

BEEP

SERAPHINA

My bedroom?? The catflap's IN my bedroom?? Something could've waltzed in while I was sleeping and eaten me! Or I could've fallen in! Woken up in another dimension!

BERNARD

(mutters) Chance'd be a fine thing.

MAGENTA

Mother, if you stop ranting for one moment, I can explain.

MR BABY JUNIORS

You can't fall in to the cosmic catflap. It doesn't open that way.

SERAPHINA

Why not? Answer me! I command thee, demon!

BERNARD

Ah, don't call him that, please. His name is Mr Baby Juniors.

SERAPHINA

Oh.

MR BABY JUNIORS

Just call me Mr Baby, that's fine. In answer to your question, mother-of-Magenta, the reason you can't fall in is that the portal is much like a cat flap.

MAGENTA

Yes, we've already explained this to her so you don't need to--

MR BABY JUNIORS

(interrupts) --One of those cat-flaps with an 'in' lock and an 'out' lock. When the 'in' lock is activated, one can only move from inside to... no, hang on, I keep muddling this up. If the 'out' lock is locked, then you can only move from outside to in...or is it the other way round. What did I say the first time?

MAGENTA

Things can come here, no-one can go there, that's what he means.

MR BABY JUNIORS

Yes. My way back home is blocked.

BERNARD

Mr Baby, have you seen anything sneak through the catflap since we last spoke?

MAGENTA

Good question, Bernie.

MR BABY JUNIORS

That IS a good question. I haven't seen a thing.

MAGENTA

That's a relief!

BERNARD

Thank goodness for that.

MAGENTA

One less thing to worry about!

MR BABY JUNIORS

Because the portal is not actually IN this bedroom--

BERNARD

It's not?

MAGENTA

Oh yeah, no, true, it's not. It's *under* the bedroom. In the ancient catacombs.

BERNARD

But that's where my Youtube Studio is! Why didn't you tell me this before??

MAGENTA

I only found out myself this morning, Bernard.

LINDSAY

Ughhh! URGHH! (coughs)

BERNARD

Lindsay?

LINDSAY

Uh! Oh! Oh my God, that's so disgusting!

SERAPHINA

What's wrong with her?

LINDSAY

Oh that's rough! Why's it so savoury!

BERNARD

What are you drinking?

LINDSAY

Dunno! Dunno what it is! I just needed some Dutch courage so I grabbed a bottle and... ughh! It's like sucking on a battery made of ham.

MAGENTA

Oh I recognise that bottle! Is that one of ours?

BERNARD

It is! It's our home-made tequila! What do you think?

LINDSAY

You made this?

MAGENTA

We did! We got the worm from the garden.

LINDSAY

Gahh, it's a garden worm?? Ohh I wish I hadn't eaten it now.

MAGENTA

Alright, back to business! Enough fun and games. We need to block the doorway to prevent anything else coming through.

MR BABY JUNIOR

Erm, about that...

MAGENTA

Mr Baby, do you remember you told us that hundreds of years ago, the church cut down the ancient oaks and blocked the doorways between worlds with stone.

MR BABY JUNIOR

Yes?

MAGENTA

Well! I was turning it over in my mind last night, and I realised something; the doorway that Mr Baby came through is partially blocked, which means that SOME of that stone must remain. And that's when I figured it out, y'see; the doorway is in the catacombs.

BERNARD

The oldest part of the rectory!

MR BABY

Yeah, sorry, should've mentioned before that the catflap is in the catacombs.

MAGENTA

I mean, that would've made it easier, but you've got a lot going on right now, Mr Baby, so. So anyway, this morning, before breakfast, I went down to the catacombs. Lo and behold, there are some very big cracks in the walls and floors of the ancient stone.

BERNARD

Ohhh. Cracks in the stone that blocks the portal.

MAGENTA

Mmm. The cracks allow passage from the other realm.

(MORE)

MAGENTA (cont'd)

So I thought to myself; maybe all we need to do is fill 'em with grout! Ey?

Beat

SERAPHINA

You've formed a coven... to grout your basement?

LINDSAY

Oh my God! Is this whole thing some sort of trick to get us to help you fix up this shit-hole?

MAGENTA

What? No, of course it's not! As if I'd do anything like that.

BERNARD

It's not a shit-hole, it just needs a lot of expensive work that we can't afford.

MR BABY JUNIOR

Umm, small issue with the grout solution...

MAGENTA

It can't be any old grout, either. It has to exist in two worlds at once.

SERAPHINA

Inter-dimensional grout, you mean? Yes, I've come across that before.

MR BABY JUNIOR

Yes, but the trouble with that is--

MAGENTA

--We three will need to bless the water before we mix it with the grout powder--

MR BABY JUNIORS

Yes but--

MAGENTA

--and then we just slap it on! Problem solved!

Mr Baby's voice becomes ESOTERICALLY THUNDEROUS

MR BABY JUNIOR

Excuse me! Hello! I have something to say! Can I have the floor please?

MAGENTA

Yes, alright. What is it?

MR BABY JUNIOR

You've forgotten about me. How do I get back home?

(sad music) Though I have become very fond of being a litter of kittens, and though my realm has plenty of problems - you wouldn't believe the sort of entities we gave in charge, total psychopaths--

Chorus of empathy

MR BABY JUNIORS

--but despite all of that, home is home. And it's my nephew's ascension to the fifth circle next week and I promised my sister I'd be in charge of the party games.

Beat.

MAGENTA

(sighs) Oh for God's sake.

LINDSAY

Mum...

MAGENTA

Yes, I know, you don't have to say anything. We'll help him get home.

SERAPHINA

Oh that's charming that is. Help a demon, won't help a poor old lady though, mmm.

BERNARD

So... no grouting then? What do we do instead?

SERAPHINA

Wait wait. Let's not be hasty. Are you *absolutely sure* you want to go back, Mr Baby? You could have a lot of fun here. You'll be on solids soon enough. Tuna! Don't you want to try tuna?

MR BABY JUNIOR

Funny you should say that; back home, in my original manifestation, I look a lot like a can of tuna fish. So... you know, it's not really that appealing.

LINDSAY

We need to figure out how to fully open the cat flap.

MAGENTA

And then shut it behind him. And lock it for good.

BERNARD

Gosh. Tricky.

SERAPHINA

We could demolish the rectory. Raze it to the ground. Let not one stone remain. That would open the gateway. Of course, to close it again, it would have to be rebuilt. And quickly.

BERNARD

Right, yes, and... would I be the one doing all the work? I would, wouldn't I? Just me. On my own.

MAGENTA

We can't knock the rectory down. It's our home. And Kenneth McCrag from wouldn't like it either.

BERNARD

True, Kenneth prefers conservation to construction.

MAGENTA

He does, he does, he'd be appalled. All that history, just gone.

LINDSAY

Hang on, who are we talking about? Who's Kenneth?

BERNARD

Kenneth from Great Decisions. Channel four? We used to watch it together, remember?

LINDSAY

Oh God, d'you mean that awful reality TV show?

BERNARD / MAGENTA

It's not awful! It's brilliant.

LINDSAY

Is it still being made?

BERNARD

You bet it is. It's on season 48!

MR BABY

Are we going off-topic?

LINDSAY

Why's it's still being made? It's the same thing every time.

BERNARD

No it's not!

LINDSAY

Come on dad, yes it is. It's always some delusional couple with no construction experience, who take on some absolutely massive renovation they think they can finish in 6 months. Oh and then they blow their budget in, like, the first week, then they have to bodge most of the work themselves to save money, and then they have to live in a caravan for like, two years. So stupid! And what do they have to show for it at the end of it all? A monument to their own ego and hubris.

Beat. Maybe a single cough.

LINDSAY (cont'd)

What? What is it? Why are you looking like that?

Oh my God. Are you two gonna be on Great Decisions??

BERNARD

We are! Isn't that exciting? We're going to be on the telly!

MAGENTA

Kenneth is coming back in a couple of days, actually, to film our progress.

BERNARD

Oh yes, I forgot!

LINDSAY

Oh my God! Mum, does that mean you're pregnant??

MAGENTA

What??

SERAPHINA

Good heavens.

MR BABY

Blimey. Congratulations.

MAGENTA

No, I'm not pregnant! Why on earth would you think I'm pregnant??

LINDSAY

Because that's what happens on Great Decisions. The woman always gets pregnant. It's like some kind of rule.

MAGENTA

Good God, I hope not.

BERNARD

Gosh, imagine.

MR BABY JUNIOR

I've got an idea how you could do it.

SERAPHINA

Do what? Impregnate my daughter?

MR BABY JUNIOR

No, no, the catflap!

EVERYONE

Oh yes. Sorry.

MR BABY JUNIOR

We need to wedge the catflap open in the 'in' position, just long enough for me to get through.

MAGENTA

Yes, yes! And how do we do that?

MR BABY JUNIOR

With a stick.

MAGENTA

...a stick.

BERNARD

A magic stick?

MR BABY JUNIOR

Well yes, a magic stick, obviously,
not just some random stick.

MAGENTA

Oh yes, that should do it.

LINDSAY

It will?

MAGENTA

Absolutely. Preferably from a tree
grown near the gateway.

SERAPHINA

Mmm. I believe that will work. Any
oak trees left on the property,
speccy?

BERNARD

Yes, there is! Just one, by the
stables.

MAGENTA

Lindsay, go grab a few twigs from the
oak tree by the stables.

LINDSAY

Why me?

MAGENTA

You're the fittest. And the youngest
member of the coven, so you have to
do the grunt work I'm afraid. Rules
are rules! Come on, chop chop.

LINDSAY

Ugh, fine.

SERAPHINA

Wait. Don't go yet. We should do this
properly. The moon waxes to full
tonight. At the witching hour, we
three will ask the oak for help. Then
Lindsay will climb the ancient tree
and trim a branch with a sickle of
gold.

LINDSAY

Climb the tree? Can't I just pick a twig off the ground?

SERAPHINA

Fear not. The oak will guide you to an auspicious branch.

LINDSAY

Great.

SERAPHINA

Then you shall cut it off with a sickle of gold.

MAGENTA

A sickle of gold?

SERAPHINA

Oh don't tell me you don't have a sickle of gold!

MAGENTA

Oh yeah, of course we do, it's in my platinum toolbox, next to my sapphire hammer.

BERNARD

Isn't gold quite a soft metal to be sawing branches off oak trees?

SERAPHINA

I can't believe you don't have a sickle of gold, Magenta. Call yourself a witch and you don't even have a sickle of gold!

MAGENTA

Do YOU have a sickle of gold?

SERAPHINA

I don't call myself a witch.

MAGENTA

Neither do I!

LINDSAY

Can we just skip the bickering and get to a solution?? Please??

MAGENTA

You can just use a hand saw. Mother is being ridiculous. You don't need fancy tools to get the job done.

SERAPHINA

Nope. Not true.

MAGENTA

It is!

SERAPHINA

Magenta, I know you like to reject the old ways, but pomp and ritual DOES give things a little boost. And to open a gateway between worlds, we're gonna NEED a little boost.

MAGENTA

Fine. But the fact remains, we do not have a sickle of gold.

SERAPHINA

Well, I have a steak knife made of cubic zirconia. We could use that.

BERNARD

A steak knife made of cubic zirconia?

SERAPHINA

Bought it on the cruise, 20% off, couldn't resist. Well? Shall we do it the right way, or your way?

Theme tune starts

MAGENTA

Fine, right, I can't argue anymore. Tonight, we get the branch, we prop open the catflap - Mr Baby, you'll have to tell us how to do that--

MR BABY

--Roger that--

MAGENTA

--grout the cracks, and finish this thing... in plenty of time for Kenneth's visit.

BERNARD

Hooray!

End of episode