A paranormal experience?

Ghosts, haunted houses, the spirit world or the communication with the dead have fascinated humans since the beginning of their existence. Most people, whether believers or sceptics like myself, find paranormal experiences captivating; you could go on and on listening to these kinds of stories. But the debate lies on whether the allegedly paranormal events that witnesses claim to have experienced are real or not. I personally don't doubt that many of those people really believe that what they have experienced is a paranormal event –real is what you believe to be real after all.

I myself experienced an event that might be considered paranormal by some. A long time ago, my cousin died unexpectedly and her husband, who is a great ghost sceptic, couldn't find my cousin's life insurance policy. One night, my cousin appeared in my dreams. "You smell really bad," I told her. "Of course I smell bad, I'm dead," she said. "Anyway, I'm here to tell you where the document my husband is looking for is." And she told me. The following day, I told my cousin's husband that I might know where the policy was –I didn't tell him how I knew, because that would have prevented him looking for it. The thing is that we went to his home and the document was exactly where my dead cousin had told me it would be. Paranormal?

No doubt, it's very tempting to believe that I actually talked to my dead cousin, and that I have some kind of psychic abilities. That would mean that when we die, we go somewhere in the form of a spirit, which is a nice thing to think, because that means that our soul never dies. But maybe I already knew where that document was, from one of my numerous visits to my cousin's home, and my mind just reminded me where it was through one of my daily dreams. That's more likely, and it's what I am inclined to think happened.

The truth is that there has been so much fraud in the history of the paranormal that it's difficult to give any validity to the high number of paranormal claims that populate the Internet and the different media. Actually, fraud played a key role in the very foundation of spiritualism, a religious movement based on the belief that the spirits of the dead exist and have both the ability and the inclination to communicate with the living.

The first mediums known in recent history, the Fox sisters, convinced a good part of the American and European society of the 19th century that they could talk with the spirits. They made lots of public demonstrations held before paying audiences and that gave birth to spiritualism, and attracted lots of imitators who also claimed to have the ability to communicate with spirits. But surprisingly, in 1888 Margaret Fox confessed that her abilities were just a fabrication, and showed which tricks she had been using to pretend to be talking to the spirits.

Now, can I really talk with the dead? Well, if you put enough money on the table, I might say 'yes', and I might even show you how I do it.

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1- For those people who doubt the existence of the paranormal, this type of stories are...

A. very interesting.
B. not as interesting as for those people who believe in them.
C. only stories that have been made up for some reason.

2. The author of this article...

A. believes that many paranormal experiences are true.
B. enjoys listening to paranormal stories.
C. thinks people who have experienced a paranormal event are liars.

3. The writer didn't tell her cousin's husband about her dream because...

A. she didn't think she had actually talked to her dead cousin.
B. she wanted her cousin's husband to look for the document.
C. her cousin had died very unexpectedly.

4. The writer thinks...

A. she might have talked to her dead cousin.
B. when we die we enter the spirit world.
C. she knew where the document was before having her dream.

5. According to spiritualism...

A. spirits want to talk to us.
B. spirits can't communicate with us without help.
C. there is a lot of fraud in the paranormal world.

6. According to the writer, the first mediums in recent history...

A. made money with their lies.
B. just wanted to be famous.
c. couldn't always communicate with spirits.

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