

## SCENE ONE

*A raised platform is outfitted with five meditation pillows. An alter stands behind this; we see a cross, a star of David, a gold crescent moon, a Buddha and a Genesh. Stage right there is a table set up with coffee, tea and cookies. A coat stand by the door.*

*MERRY WONG circles the platform with smoking incense. Her dance like movements are interrupted with occasional coughs, hands waving the smoke away. She returns the smoking stick to the alter before sitting cross legged on a pillow.*

MERRY            Dear One Source: please bless our circle today. Deliver us from the shallow concerns of grief, suffering and loss that we find on this material plane and catapult us into the deeply meaningful essence of spirit where we will find love, joy, and peace.

Oh! And please, please no bad checks this time.

*We hear the new group members in the hallway before they arrive , one by one, self consciously through the door, all exchanging nervous glances.*

*Merry leaps up to greet RORY, an anxious young woman in her late twenties, CARL, an elderly man, and CHERYL, a thirty something black woman who looks about suspiciously.*

MERRY            *(A little too excited.)* Come in, come in. Welcome to our circle of grief!

Please take off your coats. Help yourselves to some coffee or tea and cookies before, well, before we start all the weeping. *(laughs:)* Nothing ruins a good cookie like tears.

CHERYL           Weeping? I don't see myself doing much of that.

MERRY            *(Nods.)* Sometimes our grief is so deep, we first must peel away the layers of defenses to reach it.

CHERYL           *(Defensively:)* I'm not defensive! I just need... I don't know.. I just need to talk to someone about what happened, I--

*Merry starts circling with the cookies, no longer listening. Rory turns to leave, but Merry stops her.*

MERRY            Have a cookie.

RORY              I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry. I, I don't really have a problem.

MERRY            That's often the problem, having no problem.

RORY              It is? But... I... I don't really feel anything--

MERRY           *(Nods:)* Exactly. We hide from our grief. We keep it deep inside, buried where we don't feel it.

RORY            That's... that's it! I think...

MERRY           *(Nodding.)* Instead of feeling our feelings, we let them fester like an infected boil, one that continuously secretes sorrow, drip by drip until--

RORY            *(Alarmed.)* Yes? Until what?

MERRY           No worries! I won't let that happen to you. I'm like a miner. I get in there and dig and dig and dig, until I reach that hard nugget of grief and sorrow and reduce you to a blubbing puddle of emotions and voila! *(Triumphant.)* I have healed!

Now, I think we're just missing one person, but let's all take a place in our circle and get started while we wait. Come, come. We have no room for shyness here.

*The three people reluctantly follow Merry's lead and find a pillow to sit down on awkwardly.*

MERRY           Now, before we begin, let's take a moment to set our intention, shall we? May the great source, or God, or Jehovah or Allah or Buddha or Brahman or Mr. Dawkins lead us through our unique and inconsolable grief and to healing. Amen.

My name is Merry, with two 'r's' like the merry in Merry Go Round. Many years ago, after a regular degree in psychology, *(using fingers to draw invisible quotes psychology)* I discovered a fabulous online training course that taught me how to meet my spirit guides. *(Hands come over heart.)* It is not a coincidence--there's really no such thing as a coincidence!--that my spirit guides are very advanced, ascended masters, but well, still in training. Anyway, after my guides adjusted my lower chakras, which, ah, *(laughs nervously)* didn't really require ALL THAT much more adjusting than other people *(rolls eyes)*, they busted open my heart chakra, and filled me with a wealth of love and compassion for everyone and everything, except, well, maybe my ex alcoholic husband, but that is another story! Anyway, this white or ah, green light, depending on which book you read, eventually spiraled up to my third eye *(she points to this)* and colored the world purple, which as you know is the highest color. This gave me great insight and wisdom and allows me to share my gifts with you today.

*Merry's grand vision confuses her audience.*

MERRY           Carl, why don't you start?

CARL            Me? Well, I don't know where to start--

MERRY           Introduce yourself. Start by telling us what you're doing with the gift

of a material existence--

CARL Material existence? I'm not sure I understand?

MERRY What do you do for a living?

CARL Auto-body shops. Five of em, good ones too. That's pretty much it. I do very well, not that Maggie ever appreciated it. It never seemed enough for her. She liked to shop, that's for sure--

MERRY And Maggie is?

CARL My wife. Mags for short, rhymes with nag, I always said and if you think that's a coincidence--

MERRY Not me! Coincidences are synchronicities from the Source. (*Pleased with this bit of wisdom.*) So you're struggling with your loss--

CARL Yes, yes. I'm having trouble getting over it. I just can't believe it finally happened. That it is finally over! That she finally, finally, finally, I mean, after all this time. She did it. Mags, God rest her soul, died.

MERRY And what was her means of transitioning?

CARL Pardon?

MERRY How did she die?

CARL The big C. For five long years. My life has been nothing but doctors and hospitals and chemo and radiation and surgeries and pain meds, but now it's over. She finally managed to... well, I still can't believe it. She died, she really died.

*Merry slides the Kleenex box to him and grabs her heart, overwhelmed with emotion. Carl looks at the box as if he doesn't know what to do with it.*

CARL And you see, Cindy, my neighbor, she's been helping me all this time. She's a widow too, a young one. You don't look at her and think widow, that's for sure! She always said it was going to happen, and we waited and waited and not that we, you know, were wanting her to die. I mean Mags and I were married for thirty-five years and that says it all right there. Sure we had problems, even big problems. I mean Mags wasn't the easiest person in the world to get along with. Even Cindy who is such a sweetheart, a doll really, a living, breathing doll and--

MERRY Wait. (*She holds up her hand and closes her eyes.*) I'm sensing something from the Source. A sense of the issue at the heart of your struggle...

Quiet.

It's gone. (*Mystified.*) Hopefully, it will come back. Let's move on to the next person. Cheryl.

CHERYL I don't know. My problem isn't, well, it isn't ah, normal problem. It's not a white person's kind of problem, a Maggie vs Cindy kind of confusion.

MERRY OOO. Wait one moment. Here it is again. Carl's issue.

Quiet.

No. It's gone. (*Sigh.*) It's so close; I can feel it. Well, let's just continue. It's bound to come back. So you were saying you don't have a white person's problem, which makes sense, because you're not white, are you? Not that the Source sees color, except for purple, the highest chakra, where the Source emanates from! The Source is very evolved in that way, in loving people of all colors. It reminds me of, well, I know this sounds funny, but the Source is like Sesame Street in that way, a rainbow of happy colors... Where were we again?

CHERYL I'm thinking this group might not be right for me. I'm sorry, but--

MERRY Nonsense. You haven't even started. Just let the group work its magic. Try it.

CHERYL (*Pauses, sighs.*) Okay. My name is Cheryl. I'm a doctor. I work at Martin Luther King hospital down town.

MERRY Wonderful! Another healer in our midst. And who have you lost, Cheryl?

CHERYL My birth mom.

MERRY You were chosen! (*Hands to heart.*)

CHERYL Yes. My real parents, well, they were great. We're all black, you see--

MERRY You're all black! (*Nods.*) As you should be.

CHERYL My dad's a school teacher and my mom owns a dry cleaning business--

MERRY Probably not in my neighborhood. (*Rolls eyes.*) The Koreans do not allow blacks... (*Notices Cheryl's shocked stare.*) Well, never mind that.

CHERYL Yes, but that's just it. I tried to contact my birth mother over the years. I wanted to meet her somethin' fierce since I was very young. As a kid, I'd even send her things through the social worker. Like my third grade chess championship win, or when I skipped two grades in

math, when I got a full scholarship. I guess I wanted to impress her, you know?

MERRY We are all reaching for the sunshine!

CHERYL (*Confused:*) The point is she never wanted to meet me and well, I always wondered why. So, not too long ago I hired a private detective. He found out she was this rich, white woman who was dying. I had to meet her, you know, before she passed. I just had too. She needed hospice care at this point. I applied for the job as caretaker, even though, like I say, I am a physician. I made sure I was the only applicant, which was not easy, let me tell you. I had to pay off three Latino women, and two Filipinos ladies--

MERRY Latinos and Filipinos are the best caretakers. Wide open heart chakras! (*Returns to earth:*) So you got the job? You became the caretaker for your birth mother as she was transitioning? Well! This is a powerful karmic story!

CHERYL But that's just it. It wasn't. I was too late. She never knew who I was! She only lasted two days after I arrived, and she was on a lot of medication at that point. I wanted to ask her, to talk with her. I have a million questions.

RORY You didn't get a chance to ask her anything?

CARL Wow. That's rough.

MERRY What questions? Maybe I can help? I am very psychic.

CHERYL Like who my father was? I mean, he had to be black, right?

MERRY Okay. (*Pause.*) I'm getting... If she was rich and he was black, I'm sensing maybe he was the gardener?

CHERYL The gardener? (*Under her breath:*) The source might be colorblind, but Asians sure don't have that problem.

MERRY No, that can't be right. If he was a gardener, he would be Latino. Humm... Well, never mind. Maybe it will come to me later. Was there another question?