

THE KARMA BUMS

A Full-length Play in Two Acts

by

Cindi Sansone-Braff

An aging, down-and-out, one-time-Oscar-nominated Diva inherits a New Age business from her late Wiccan aunt and proceeds to wreak havoc on the pack of metaphysical misfits who run the joint. It's the classic fish-out-of-water story, or Monster-in-the-house story with Cathy Cloony-Colucci, a larger-than-life-material girl, scheming her way through an over-the-top-spiritual world.

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Cast of Characters

<u>Cathy Cloony-Colucci:</u>	A woman in her late 40s.
<u>Destiny:</u>	A woman in her early 40s.
<u>Doc:</u>	A man in his late 40s.
<u>Bobbi:</u>	A woman in her late 20s.
<u>Dick:</u>	A man in his late 20s.
<u>Rita:</u>	An 80-years-young woman.

Casting Note

I strongly encourage diversity in casting.

Scene

The entire play takes place in The House of Karma Psychic Reading Room.

Time

The Present, Evening, April Fools' Day

THE KARMA BUMS

A Full-length, Two-Act Play

ACT I

Scene One ... April Fools' Day, Evening.

Scene Two ... Summer Solstice. Evening.

Scene Three ... A week later. Early Evening.

ACT II

Scene One ... A few days later. Evening.

Scene Two ... July 3. The middle of the
Night.

Scene Three ... A few hours later. Just before
dawn.

Scene Four ... A few hours later. Morning.

THE KARMA BUMS

ACT I

Scene 1

April Fools' Day, Evening.

SETTING:

The House of Karma is a New Age mini-mart and learning center, a phenomenal place where the here and the hereafter meet, mingle, and merge on an everyday basis. The only room we see is the Psychic Reading Room. Several doors lead to other rooms. There are two small, round tables covered with tablecloths with alchemical designs on them. Each table has a few chairs around it. Strategically placed around the room are other chairs and a loveseat. There are New Age objects and books everywhere.

AT RISE:

DESTINY, morbidly obese, wearing a tie-dyed caftan with New Age symbols on it, is sitting at a table with a tattered, Tarot deck doing a reading for BOBBI, who is wearing a sexy tea fairy outfit, complete with wings.

(Loud thunderbolt)

(Offstage DOC is playing Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, op. 13 ("Pathétique"), First Movement, Grave - Allegro di molto e con brio, on the piano. We hear this for about twenty seconds, and then the music abruptly stops.)

BOBBI

Destiny, I told Justin what you told me to tell him, "That it's all or nothing. I don't sleep with people who are sleeping with other people. I don't want drama, and I don't want disease."

DESTINY

And?

BOBBI

And he told me, "Have a good life."

DESTINY

The guy's a die-hard commitment-phobe. Y'better off without him.

(DESTINY hands BOBBI the Tarot deck.)

Shuffle the cards. Pick any ten cards and hand'em to me.

(BOBBI mixes them around, dropping a few, before slowly counting ten cards. DESTINY arranges them in a Celtic Cross Spread.)

Oh, the Fool card. This could be a cosmic joke since it *is* April 1st, so I'm just gonna ignore this one. No, wait! It could also mean y'have to be a fool to fall in love again. No, no ... I'm wrong. Y'spirit guides just told me, "Bobbi, see the Fool card as an invitation to follow your heart toward everlasting love."

(DICK YOUNG ENTERS, bare-chested, wearing spandex yoga pants. His chest and arms are covered with tattoos, some of which have sacred yoga symbols, such as Om, Mandala.)

BOBBI

All men suck.

DICK

Is this an April Fools' prank?

BOBBI

No. All men suck every day, not just today.

(DOC ENTERS, wearing a blue polo shirt and beige slacks.)

OK, maybe not all men ... Doc rocks, except when he's playing that pathetic piece on the piano all day long ... then I just want to blow my brains out, but millennial men - they all suck - all the time. You assholes tell us, "Don't call me. I'll call you. You can be my booty call, but not my girlfriend ...

BOBBI (Cont.)

my fuck buddy, but not my fiancée ... my hook-up, but don't say *couple* ... my Friend with Benefits, but not my wife."

DICK

Bobbi, STOP THROWING GRENADES AT ME! You've never let me be your booty call, hook-up, fuck buddy, or Friends with Benefits. Not even once.

BOBBI

You know the *Beauty and the Beast* fairytale, where the Beast becomes the Prince? What a crock of shit that is. In real life, the guy acts all nice and good, and then a month later, you find out he's a mad man. Wait! That would make a great reality show called *The Prince Becomes the Beast!* We follow around a group of women who meet guys on dating apps, and we watch in horror as Jekyll morphs into Hyde.

DICK

Doc, haven't you seen plenty of women go from the Beauty to the Beast in record time?

DOC

I don't know how I got in the middle of this, but no one should be asking me anything about love or relationships. My ex hates me. My kids don't talk to me, and I'm still in my first year of doing the 12-steps, so I can't date until the 5th of July, even if I wanted to.

(DOC and DICK EXIT.)

BOBBI

(Moving an urn away from her)

Lady Raven Luna's remains are creeping me out.

DESTINY

Y'touch those ashes again, and you'll live to regret it. Focus. Get a grip on your monkey mind. I told y'to have a cup of Ginseng tea before we started the reading. The guy who ghosted you -

BOBBI

- Which one? Three guys ghosted me in the last year. The first one pulled the disappearing act on me because I wouldn't sleep with him on the third date. The second one vanished

BOBBI (Cont.)

after I slept with him on the third date and the third one ...
I haven't got a clue as to why he pulled that crap on me.

DESTINY

The most recent one.

(RITA enters on a scooter. She has long, gray hair,
and is wearing ripped jeans and a novelty T-shirt
that has a picture of a bikini on the front and
back.)

BOBBI

Really? He's going to do the zombie-thing? Why do guys do
that? They ghost you and then pop up haunting you on Instagram
... liking one of your posts, or even worse; they orbit you.
They won't answer your texts, but they like your posts. He'd
better not start breadcrumbing me.

DESTINY

What?

BOBBI

Really Destiny? If you're going to do relationship readings:
LEARN THE NEW DATING BUZZWORDS!

RITA

Swiping right on a dating app is not the best way to find a
Soul Mate.

BOBBI

Who said anything about a Soul Mate? After all my dating
disasters, I've decided I don't want true love. I just want
what every millennial wants - a situationship.

RITA

I'm afraid our species is headed for extinction the way
generations X, Y, and Z can't make love last. Now, I really
need the two of you to help me set up chairs in the Seminar
Room for tomorrow's workshop on "Psychometry: Objects Have
Spirit, So Be Careful What You Touch."

(RITA, BOBBI, and DESTINY EXIT.)

(We hear a loud thunderbolt.)

(DOC has started playing
("Pathétique") again.)

(CATHY CLOONY-COLUCCI ENTERS,
talking on her cell phone. She's
dressed in a designer trench coat
and hipster fedora hat. Her hair is
hidden beneath the hat.)

CATHY

(She is walking around touching
all the New Age objects.)

No, Laci, I didn't get drenched. The House of Karma has an awning outside with pentacles, ankhs, cauldrons, and evil eyes all over it. Walking under it was like taking a Disney tour of the Haunted Mansion without having to wait on a long line. As for the inside, let me put it this way - if I were pitching a movie about this place, I'd say, think *The Amityville Horror* house meets *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. Oh, you can hear that? Sounds like the ghost of Bela Lugosi is in the drawing-room practicing "The Vampire Waltz."

(Opening a door, she lets out a scream.)

(The piano playing stops.)

No, don't call 911. I'm all right. I thought I saw a poltergeist, but it was just this hideous portrait of my late aunt wearing something she borrowed from the Wicked Witch of the West. Yes, you met her. She was at our Confirmation. You called her the Nazi in nun's clothing. Yes, her. I always knew that nervy wench was a witch long before she quit the habit, took her broom out of the closet, and hung a Wiccan awning.

(She walks over to
a plaque on the wall.)

Hold the phone! This madhouse is historic! Once upon a time, this was the Hilltop Funeral Home. If I could just sell this hellhole, I'd be on easy street, but I can't ... because ... just let me read you the legalese.

(CATHY sits down, takes her
reading glasses and the will
out of her trench coat pocket.)

My late aunt states in her will that The House of Karma is mine outright: If I reside in it and run her New Age business for the next five years; and if I allow the present

CATHY (Cont.)

occupants/employees to reside here, rent-free, during that time. Otherwise, the business and all its assets go to my aunt's long-term employee and Soul Mate, Destiny Dumbrowski. I don't know if there's any way I can get rid of *The Addams Family*. I'm just going to have to think of them as cockroaches and rodents. They don't pay rent, and they're hard to get rid of, but there are ways. Yes, I promise, extermination will be my last resort. No, I'm not starting with the violent recurring thoughts. Yes, I remember what Dr. Klemmberger used to say, right before he zapped me.

(CATHY imitates a heavy German accent.)

"Not to worry. The electrical current will burn away all of your negative energy." I am thinking positively. I positively know that if I don't get the lead in that movie, and I have to stay here and run this *Little Shop of Horrors* - within a week, I'll require the services of that psycho-electrician on a regular basis. Yes, if I get the part, I'll make sure somebody at NETFLIX reads one of your screenplays. I promise. Cross my heart and hope to die. Oh, stop the clock! According to stipulation number three, my aunt, Oh, God! You won't believe what that nut job called herself! Lady Raven Luna, more like Lady Raving Lunatic. Stop laughing and listen. Lady Raven Luna understood that it's a free-will universe, and if the present occupants should leave of their own volition, so mote it be. Eureka! I'll just make their lives - a living hell. Holy shit! The guy I've been talking to on Bumble just texted me. The plastic surgeon, he wants to meet up at Starbucks®. I know it would save me a fortune on fillers and Botox®. Wait, I hear something. It sounds like a baby elephant. Yes, it could be haunted, since it used to be a funeral parlor, but don't worry, dead people don't scare me.

(DESTINY ENTERS.)

I just wish I could say the same about the living. Talk later.

(CATHY hangs up.)

Holy Cow! Did you get your mystical muumuu from the Momma Cass Collection?

DESTINY

Holy Hipster! Did you get y'overpriced hat from the Kardashian pop-up store?

(A lightning flash, followed by thunder)

That storm's not gonna let up anytime soon.

CATHY

Do you have a satellite dish pre-set to the Weather Channel strapped under that cosmic caftan?

DESTINY

For y'edification, all psychics channel valuable information because they're highly attuned to electromagnetic fields and electrical currents.

CATHY

Dr. Klemmberger would have a field day with you.

DESTINY

Dr. Who?

CATHY

Klemmberger, the head of a psych ward that you should seriously consider checking into for a tune-up, because from where I stand, you look like you're out of your metaphysical mind.

DESTINY

Who can argue with stupid? By the way, I'm Destiny, the Resident Psychic, and my inner voice tells me that y'here for a free, five-minute psychic reading.

CATHY

A whole five minutes of your malarkey for free?

DESTINY

Siddown.

(She sets a timer, then pours Holy Water into a bowl, and then pours salt into it.)

CATHY

And I bet if I pay for another five minutes, you'll even throw in a gallon of that Holy Water because God knows, you just got it from the tap.

(DESTINY picks up the bowl and Flicks water in all four directions of the room.)

What the hell are you doing?

DESTINY

Preparing to cleanse this room of negative energy. May the blending and spreading of pure Himalayan salt and Holy Water purify and protect this sacred space. We used t'do a Native American ritual called smudging, where we'd light a bunch of White Sage and gently fan smoke around the room, but last Halloween, the fire marshal put the kibosh on that after Lady Raven Luna almost burnt down the place.

(DESTINY continues her ritual.

CATHY lights up a cigarette.

DESTINY turns toward CATHY.)

DESTINY

What in God's name are y'doing?

CATHY

(Waving her cigarette
around the room.)

Smudging for air purification.

DESTINY

This is a smoke-free zone.

(They struggle over the cigarette, and
CATHY takes one more drag, blows it in
DESTINY's face before putting it out.
DESTINY sits down and hands CATHY the Tarot deck.)

CATHY

Let me guess. You want to play Old Maid.

DESTINY

Y'cancer stick already cost you a minute and a half of your
five free ones. After that, it'll cost y'two dollars a
minute.

CATHY

I predict that if we run overtime, I won't pay you with
anything but Monopoly money or an expired credit card.

DESTINY

Siddown, shuddup, and shuffle. If I wasn't such a righteous
person, who honors my agreements, I'd tell y'to get the hell
outta here, but that would accrue bad Karma for me, and
frankly, y'not worth it.

CATHY

Later, I'm ratting you out to your boss.

DESTINY

Unless you can talk to the dead, y'ain't telling my boss nothin'.

CATHY

Then I'm just going to have to talk to your new boss.

DESTINY

Do what y'gotta do, but she's Lady Raven Luna's niece. *If* that aging diva should ever grace us with an appearance, I'm sure she'd back me.

CATHY

You're not a very good psychic, are you?

DESTINY

I've got three minutes to prove you wrong, sister; now shuffle and pick ten cards.

(CATHY shuffles like a professional poker player.

DESTINY arranges a Celtic Cross Spread.)

Oh, boy, y'screwed up your life big time.

CATHY

I need *you* to tell me that?

DESTINY

I see a lot of money has left y'life, but a new source of income is on the horizon. Y'gonna have to study something new ... a craft of some sort, but it will yield significant gains both personally and professionally. Oh, look at this! The hairs on my arms are standing straight up.

CATHY

It's a neat special effect, Destiny, but laser it and lose it.

(DESTINY flashes the Death Card.)

The Death card ... don't tell me ... you're dying.

DESTINY

(She goes into a trance-like state.)

We're all dying. We don't need a psychic to tell us that.

CATHY

Don't even think about spewing pea soup.

DESTINY

Y'late husband says,

(Imitating an Italian accent)

"I got you good, didn't I?"

CATHY

Guido, it's a good thing you're dead, or I'd kill you.

DESTINY

Guido says, "While I walked the earth, you lived like the Queen of Sheba from Southampton. Now that I'm dead, you can go back to being that white trash mental case from Staten Island."

CATHY

(Lighting another cigarette)

Hot damn! You really are talking to that fat jackass.

DESTINY

(Coming out of her trance, she grabs the cigarette and snuffs it out.)

The universe hears everything y'say, and what y'sayin' is bad karma.

(DESTINY gets up, sprinkles Holy Water, sits back down, and goes into a trance.)

Guido's telling me that you only married him for his money.

CATHY

Tell me something I don't already know. What did he think I married him for, his leaky gut? When I met him, he had high cholesterol, high triglycerides, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, and was high on a six martini a day diet. He claimed he was on his deathbed. Who would've thought it would take thirteen years, ten tons of lasagna, and a tanker full of gin and dry vermouth to get that Sicilian behemoth to drop dead?

DESTINY

Please, we're in the presence of spirit. Watch your words.

CATHY

You're talking about Guido's spirit? Can he really hear me?

1-1-11

DESTINY

Loud and clear.

CATHY

NOW THAT'S HILARIOUS! For the last decade, that bastard never heard a single word I said.

DESTINY

(She channels GUIDO again.)

"I still can't believe how dumb you were to sign that prenup without reading it, just because I said I was leaving *you* my fortune."

CATHY

Look, you psycho -

DESTINY

- Psychic.

(Her timer goes off.)

Times up. If y'wanna talk more to y'late husband like I said, "It's two dollars a minute."

CATHY

I didn't want to talk to that Italian meatball while he was alive, so now that he's dead like that changes anything?

RITA

(ENTERING on a scooter.

She stops dead in her tracks.)

CATHY CLOONY-COLUCCI?

CATHY

(CATHY removes her
hat and glasses.)

Ms. Dumbrowski, does the name ring any bells?

DESTINY

We *really* didn't expect you to show up here.

CATHY

Obviously, but you're a psychic. You should've known better. Now, I've already met Destiny, the Resident Psycho over here, but let me guess, you're ... maybe ... Grandmama?

RITA

I'm Rita. Your aunt, may her Wiccan soul rest in peace, always said, "My niece, the actress, she's a regular Don Rickles!" So, right *after* she died, when she told me that *you* would be our new boss, I fell to my knees in gratitude.

CATHY

Even the village idiot, gazing into a cracked crystal ball, could see ... you won't be feeling that way for long. So, Rita, what kind of witchcraft do your practice around here?

RITA

Witchcraft? Not my thing. I'm the in-house massage therapist, Reiki master, medium, astrologist, numerologist, Tarotherapist, and past life regressionist. On my Facebook profile, it says: "If it's New Age, in my old age - I do it." In this incarnation, the only thing I can't do anymore is ... die young. Oh, yeah! Would you mind signing my petition? I'm still trying to get Pluto back her planethood.

(CATHY shoos her away.)

CATHY

Destiny, for as long as I own the Bates Motel, there'll be no more free, five-minute readings. You do have some kind of hotline to hell, and perhaps if I'd gotten a gazillion dollar T-Mobile gig like the one Catherine Zeta-Jones once landed, I could afford to throw around some free minutes. But since I'm dead broke, from this day forward - we're not giving away any free, anytime minutes, to anyone.

(ENTER DOC.)

DOC

The one and only Cathy Cloony-Colucci!

CATHY

(Crossing over to DOC)

Have we met before?

DOC

No, but I'm a big fan of your work. I must have seen your last movie eight times.

RITA

Doc's our *Herbalist* -

DOC

- As well as Dr. Fix-it, Clean-it, You Name it - I do it.

CATHY

But you're not really an MD?

DOC

Once upon a time, this shell of a man was a well-respected, East End dermatologist. That is ... until two years ago, when I lost my license, after getting boozed up at a Botox® beach party in Bridgehampton, where I gave the socialites, the countesses, and the real fake housewives of Long Island an overdose of the stuff. According to the latest legal briefs, some of Hampton's finest still can't crack a smile.

CATHY

Oh, but they'll be laughing all the way to Bridgehampton National Bank when they get a load of their malpractice windfall. Just for the record, Doc. Do you talk to the dead like the rest of the Cookoonester's around here?

DOC

Truthfully, I haven't figured out how to communicate with the living yet, let alone taking on the dead.

RITA

(RITA spots a bug and catches it.)

Excuse me ... bug rescue. Be right back.

CATHY

So, Doc, of all the crazy joints, in all the towns in the world, how did you walk into mine?

DESTINY

Kismet ... I found him out back last 4th of July eating burnt veggie hotdogs out of the dumpster and washing'em down with a bottle of Jack Daniels.

DOC

But I'm happy to say that I've been taking it one day at a time ever since. When I get the urge to drink, Rita taught me how to stop, drop, and Om.

(DOC drops down into half-lotus position.)

OMmmOMmmOMmm.

CATHY

That wretched sound is enough to drive me to drink a case of Old No. 7 - all by myself.

(ENTER BOBBI and RITA. BOBBI is carrying a small broom.)

I'm beginning to see that every day in the House of Karma is "Trick or treat."

BOBBI

Rita, Mercury's not in retrograde anymore, so if the microwave is still on the fritz, I'm telling our new boss, that has-been actress -

CATHY

I don't give a damn if Saturn is in Uranus, eighty-six on the microwave, Witch Fairy.

BOBBI

Witch Fairy? Which witch is that?

CATHY

A witch who works here who wears wings -

BOBBI

- Oh, these. I forget I'm even wearing them, but, no, I'm not a Witch Fairy. There's no such thing as a Witch Fairy. Is there? And anyway, I can't be any kind of a witch. I'm a Catholic. But that doesn't stop me from being the House of Karma Tea Fairy because that's not against my religion.

CATHY

That explains the wings. What about the broom?

BOBBI

What broom?

CATHY

(Grabbing the broom)

This broom.

BOBBI

(Grabbing it back)

This is not a broom.

CATHY

(She grabs the broom and sweeps.)

It looks like a broom. It feels like a broom. It sweeps like a broom.

DESTINY

(Grabbing the broom, she returns it to BOBBI.)

Things aren't always what they appear to be.

CATHY

Still, that looks like something Red Skelton was hawking door-to-door in the 1948 classic comedy - *The Fuller Brush Man*.

BOBBI

But it's not. It's a Spirit Sweeper, and it's never supposed to touch the floor. What you just did with it was ... was ... sacrilegious.

CATHY

A Spirit Sweeper?

BOBBI

Yes! Every night before I leave, my last task on the Wiccan Work Wheel is to whisk away the spirits so that our resident readers, Destiny and Rita, can get a good night's sleep.

(BOBBI does a ritualized sweeping movement where the broom never touches the floor.)

CATHY

Doc, before I get swept away by Glinda over here, tell me, what were you saying earlier about *your* being a big fan of *mine*?

DOC

For almost three decades ... ever since I saw you starring in *The Neighborhood Lolita* ... you've had me in the palm of your hands. I really thought you deserved the Oscar for Best Actress.

RITA

I couldn't believe it when you lost out to ... uh ... what's her name?

CATHY

Who cares? She's dead now.

RITA

I really envied the way you got to make out with all my favorite stars. Especially, you know, the sexy one, who was married six times? When you and he did it, I almost fainted.

CATHY

You know we didn't actually do it?

BOBBI

Now you sound exactly like my ex. He keeps insisting how he didn't really cheat on me with my little sister because they didn't actually get to do the dirty because I caught them red-handed. So, he claimed he was only guilty of *coitus could have been*, which is only a venial sin and not *coitus continuum*, which is a carnal one; and therefore - forgivable. Do you think he made that up?

CATHY

Men have more lame excuses for not doing what they actually did.

BOBBI

It's the story of my life.

RITA

(Waving to an invisible being.)

Oh, hi, there. Longtime no see. I guess you've been on the road, Jack?

DESTINY

Geez! He's two sheets to the wind again.

RITA

More like ... dead drunk.

CATHY

I'm beginning to see ... there's a fine line between psychic and psychotic.

RITA

Oh, Cathy, how rude of us. We'd like you to meet our resident incubus, Jack Kerouac. He crashes here after he gets sloshed at the bar down the block. Gunther's Tap Room was one of his favorite haunts when he was alive, and in his afterlife, he still can't get enough of that gin joint.

CATHY

The Dharma Bums - that Jack Kerouac?

RITA

The one and only. We were once an item.

CATHY

Here, when he lived in Northport?

(ENTER DICK, carrying a yoga mat and a DVD.)

RITA

No! Back in the late fifties, in San Francisco, when we were hanging out at City Lights Bookstore with the Beat poets.

(She lets out a wolf howl.)

Once in a while, you'll still hear me howling along with Allen Ginsberg, or one night I might even wake you up with my purrs of passion when Jack stops by for a quickie. Just for the record, from the grave, Jack's much better in the sack than he ever was in the flesh. Oh, look, he's heading toward my room right now. He wants a little Yab-Yum

CATHY

What the fuck?

DICK

It's an ancient Tibetan Tantric, sacred ceremony. I'll be glad to do it with you, Cathy.

(DICK removes his compression T-Shirt.)

RITA

Don't even think about removing your spandex pants.

DICK

To do it correctly, you're supposed to be naked. That reminds me. Have any of you seen my new, totally naked Hot Yoga DVD?

(DICK goes into
Full Lotus pose.)

RITA

Bought it; saw it; loved it, dear.

CATHY

I'd definitely like to see your naked Downward Dog.

(RITA climbs into DICK's lap and sits
with her legs wrapped around him,
and her ankles are crossed behind his butt.)

RITA

I'll be Shakti to your Shiva, but they'll be no lingam inside
the yoni. When Jack and I do it, we recite *Om Mani Padme Hum*.

CATHY

I hope Tarzan comes with the house.

(DICK jumps up, knocking RITA
off him. He then goes
into a Downward Dog pose.)

RITA

No, he'd rather bed hop and couch surf than stay here with us.

DICK

My body is a holy temple, and I seek refuge in places worthy
of receiving this sacred specimen.

CATHY

I'd love to take one of your classes.

DICK

You'd adore my *Hot Yoga Goddess Workout*. I always throw in a
couple of Tantric moves.

(DICK does a pelvic thrust.)

I'm Richard Young, but you can call me ... Dick.

CATHY

OK ... Now, let me see if I've got this right. According to my
late Auntie Lady Raving Lunatic, I get the house and its
occupants. Unfortunately, I don't get Young Dick, but Destiny
- who, for entertainment purposes only, is also known as the
Resident Psycho, and Doc-Botched-Botox and Right-on-Reiki Rita
are -

RITA

- Your new soul group, otherwise known as your star family.

CATHY

More like inpatients in my new group home. But Barbie -

BOBBI

- Bobbi ...

CATHY

... Bambi doesn't live here.

BOBBI

No, I live in Selden with my parents since I spent all my savings on my breast implants, so I can't afford to live on my own, and my parents won't let me live here because they think you're all nuts. The only reason they even let me work here is because your aunt, aka Sister Margaret Mary, used to teach at the Little Angels of Mercy School, and my mother was in one of her classes. Now, Mrs. Cloony-Colucci, I'm not just some bimbo Tea Fairy. I've been going to Suffolk Community College for the last decade, and hell yeah, I know, it's only a two-year school. How could I possibly forget that when my mommy's always saying, "Bobbi, SCCC is only accredited to give out associates degrees. No matter how many years you stay in Ding Dong School, you're not getting a doctorate." Anyway, I'm hoping to graduate this May or next December at the latest. Then I plan on transferring to Five Towns College because they have a great theatre department. I really want to be an actress, but I only want to do unscripted shows since there's no way in hell I can learn lines.

CATHY

Listen, Boobie. If you want to be an actress, go be one. Let's face it. You're not getting any younger. In Hollywood, women age in dog years. In another couple of LA minutes, you'll be way too old for reality TV.

RITA

Age is just a number, Cathy. That kind of limited thinking sabotages the Law of Attraction. Now, I'd love to sit and chat with you, but I've got to prepare for next week's seminar called *The Simpleton's Guide to Astral Projection*.

CATHY

Astral what?

RITA

Projection ... bilocation ... sometimes referred to as out-of-body experience. The whole universe is yours to explore. You can time travel, see other planets, visit with your deceased

RITA (Cont.)

loved ones, have astral sex with other willing spirit partners, which is my personal favorite, and even visit your past lives.

CATHY

Visiting past lives my ass. Everybody knows - you only live once. Pretending you've had past lives and obsessing about the afterlife is just another sign that humans can't even cope with this shitty one.

RITA

If you'll permit me to put you in a light trance, I can quickly demonstrate a past life regression on you.

(She places her hands on CATHY's forehead.)

I want you to close your eyes. Visualize the color red. Bright, delicious, hot, shimmering red ... see this red, red, red ... passionate, blinding - red.

(RITA backs away from CATHY.)

No, stop! We can't go there. Such a tragic past life! No wonder you've been sent back to earth school.

CATHY

I don't see what you're so damn freaked out about. Whose past life was it anyway - mine? And I saw a big, fat nothing.

RITA

I saw you in Salem ... the witch trials.

CATHY

Let me guess. - I wasn't the one on the stake. I was the one with the torch.

RITA

You've been brought here now to correct the grievous errors from that past life.

CATHY

I've been brought here to this dump for one reason and one reason only. I have nowhere else to go, but that's about to change. I'm up for the lead in a major motion picture.

DESTINY

Y'don't have to be psychic to see the rotten tomatoes on that wall.

CATHY

I'll be damned if I have to stay in this spook house surrounded by a pack of metaphysical misfits who know nothing about everything. It's not my fate to stick around here and be critiqued by Destiny. It's my destiny to spend the rest of my life in the company of Oscar, Emmy, and Tony!

(Her cell phone rings.)

That's my agent now ... no doubt calling with the good news. Watch out, world, Cathy Cloony-Colucci's back.

(CATHY answers her cell phone.)

What? I didn't get it? They what? Gave my part to a man? That role calls for a sexy, statuesque, forty-plus, femme fatale, perfect for me, not for some *RuPaul's Drag Race* contestant. Come on. You've got to be kidding me? Wait! It's April Fools' Day. You got me good! Really? You're not kidding? Is the whole world nuts, or is it just me?

(CATHY hangs up.)

(The KARMA BUMS are afraid to respond.)

RITA scoots around the room.

DOC stops, drops, and Oms.

DICK does the Sun Salutation.

BOBBI Spirit Sweeps.

DESTINY flicks Holy Water.)

I can't believe I've inherited a three-ringed circus, complete with It-like clowns and a freak show. I've got to grab a smoke.

(CATHY EXITS.)

RITA

Don't worry, Cathy. It's all good. Trust the universe has something better in mind for you.

CATHY

(off, screaming)

Rita, keep your Pollyanna principle to yourself. Reality check! This world sucks big time! How the hell you've lived as long as you have, and you haven't figured that out yet, beats the hell out of me!

RITA

Come on, Doc, we're on a mission. My assignment is to coax our new boss off the ledge, and your assignment is to make sure she doesn't convince me to jump first.

DOC

I'll go mix us a cocktail ... an herbal one, that is. I'll be sure to put in it a double shot of passionflower and skullcap.

RITA

For now, hold the hemlock.

DOC

That woman could push a man off the deep end.

RITA

That's precisely why I'm keeping my third eye on you. I don't want you catching feelings for a prima donna in Prada, who could drive a diehard prohibitionist to drink.

(DOC and RITA EXIT.)

DICK

Destiny, if I were you, I'd go sign myself into a homeless shelter for the night.

BOBBI

Or the doggy pound ... at least there ... no one will try to torture you.

(DICK and BOBBI EXIT.)

DESTINY

(Sitting down with her Tarot deck)

Lady Raven Luna ... Damn you! How could y'give blind allegiance to blood and name your niece, that ... that ... parasite as your first-choice successor? Now, that y'crossed over to the other side, I'm sure y'can see why that wasn't the smartest thing y'vever did in your last lifetime.

(She picks a Tarot card.)

The Devil card! Why am I not surprised? Lady Raven Luna, I evoke you to traverse time and space and help me in my quest to free this sacred space of a psychic vampire of *your* picking. From the grave, y'must right the grievous error of your wanton ways. I pray that y'give me a sign.

(CATHY slams an
offstage door
and something falls
off the wall.)

What the hell was that?

CATHY

(off)

Nothing important. Lady Raving Lunatic's portrait just fell off the wall. It's all good, as you people say. It saves me the trouble of taking it down tomorrow to trash it.

DESTINY

Message received. We must act fast before that diva has the entire House of Karma ka-chinging up negative karma. I believe y'niece, with her astronomical level of need and greed, could turn, even someone like Rita, a diehard vegan, into an ax murderer.

(DESTINY puts the Tarot deck
back in the pine box.)

(DOC has started playing ("*Pathétique*") again,
and continues until the next scene begins.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 2

SETTING: Summer Solstice, Evening.

AT RISE: RITA and CATHY are tallying receipts, and DESTINY is gazing into a crystal ball. DICK is doing some stand-up yoga poses. Occasionally, he takes his cell phone out and poses for some selfies.

BOBBI

(BOBBI, wearing wing,
ENTERS running.)

Rita! I need your help. I swiped right on some guy I saw on Tinder, and I had him meet me here. He lured me in with this really hot picture of him in an Army uniform.

RITA

I warned you - Tinderellas do not become Cinderellas.

(Looking out the door)

There's only one guy out there, and he can't be a day under 95.

BOBBI

That's him. Talk about catfishing! Look at the picture he texted me.

(Showing RITA
her cell phone)

It's in black and white, so I thought ... How cool! He's into neo-noir. But this picture -

RITA

- Has to be from World War II. I'll handle this. Give me your wings. I'll go out there and let him know ... two people can get caught in the catfish game.

(RITA puts on BOBBI's
wings and EXITS.)

BOBBI

Cathy, have you noticed how the summer solstice brings out the crazies?

CATHY

Yup! The whole place is teeming with mental cases.

BOBBI

Destiny, I'm starting to wish I could become like you. You know, switch teams, turn gay, but, nah ... on second thought ... that wouldn't work for me. I'd miss the whole penis-thing way too much!

DESTINY

(Walking past DICK)

That's what dildos and vibrators are for. Y'get the dick without having to put up with the dick.

(DESTINY EXITS.)

DICK

What?

BOBBI

(Screaming)

Mind your own business!

DICK

Bobbi, I'm an empath, and your unwarranted psychic attack just contaminated my auric field.

(DICK EXITS saying the following lines repeatedly.)

I only allow positive energy in and deflect any and all negative energy.

BOBBI

Cathy, so how'd your date go last night with the hottie plastic surgeon?

CATHY

It's hard to tell. Most men get all gaga over me -

BOBBI

- I know. I see the way Doc looks at you.

CATHY

Really? I hadn't noticed, but around Jonathan, I feel like ten miles of bad road. Like last night ... he took me to this romantic, dimly lit café in the West Village, and I started fishing for compliments, saying things like, "I was thinking I

CATHY (Cont.)

could use a little face work. What do you think?" I thought he was going to say, "Oh, no, I wouldn't change a thing on you." But he asks me if I have a lip liner, and then, right there in the restaurant, he takes my Rouge Noir-Vamp Chanel lip liner and starts marking up my entire face where he thinks I could use some work. By the time he finished, my face looked like a CSI crime scene.

(RITA ENTERS with DESTINY.)

RITA

(Gives BOBBI back her wings)

That old geezer went ballistic on me ... screaming how I ought to be ashamed of myself for luring him in with someone else's sex kitten picture. I told him, look who's talking, grandpa! And he goes, "At least I sent a picture of myself, even if it was taken at Normandy in 1944, but there's no way that hot babe in this picture was ever you!" Then that dirty old man took his walker, oxygen tank, and valise full of Viagra® -

DESTINY

- And waddled his Depends-diapered ass out to the "Senior Ride Share Van."

CATHY

(CATHY dials her cell phone)

Would the three of you get lost, please?

(BOBBI, DESTINY, and RITA EXIT.)

Laci, it's me, your rich best friend. I can't believe what a gold mine this haven for lost souls, misfits, and weirdoes is. You won't believe what kind of phony-baloney bullshit people pay for. You want a, for instance? Well, right here's a receipt for four hundred dollars from when Destiny read the ashes of some dead guy. No, you can't make this shit up. I'm telling you it's a for real thing called Abacomancy. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm still going on auditions, but it's becoming a fucking nightmare ...

(CATHY EXITS.)

(DESTINY ENTERS with a flower filled vase and a gold candle. She puts them on the table.)

(BOBBI ENTERS wearing her Tea Fairy get-up, she intently watches DESTINY.)

(DESTINY takes rocks from her pockets and begins marking out a circle around the table. She puts on some New Age music and stands in front of the table, within the confines of the rock circle. She closes her eyes and breathes deeply. She opens her arms with her palms facing outward, then She lowers her arms, opens her eyes, then raises her right arm again and points to the rock circle. She circles clockwise three times, losing her balance, and then raises her arms to the heavens.)

DESTINY

Let the manifestation ritual begin. I ask my guardian angels, my guides, and any and all gods and goddesses, and most of all, I implore the help of my lover, my friend, my mentor, and my greatest nemesis, Lady Raven Luna, to guard over me, protect me, and to be present throughout this ritual. My circle has been cast. I gather in the power of the brightest, strongest summer solstice light to help manifest my deepest desire. I ask that y'grant Cathy Cloony-Colucci her heartfelt wish to become a big star again. *An' it harm none, do what ye will.* So mote it be. I now close this sacred circle.

(She holds out her right arm
and spins around counterclockwise
three times, getting dizzy.)

BOBBI

You're wishing for Cathy to become a big star? Why didn't you ask for me to become one? I mean ... um ... I'm ... I'm a good Tea Fairy and Cathy is ... well - Cathy - awful, and yet you do a manifestation ritual for her? That's not fair. Why don't you cast a spell to make something bad happen to her? Like she catches leprosy and goes off to live in a leper colony in India or China or better yet - Outer Mongolia.

DESTINY

Because I'm a good witch and good witches do no harm.

(DESTINY turns on spa music and EXITS.)

(BOBBI sits down glued to her cell phone.)

(CATHY ENTERS and kicks the stones.)

CATHY

Boobi!

(BOBBI is lost in cyber world.)

Birdbrain!

(BOBBI doesn't notice her.)

CATHY dials her cell phone.)

(BOBBI's cell phone rings.)

BOBBI

Hello.

CATHY

Next time I call your name, answer me, Barbie.

(BOBBI and CATHY hang up.)

BOBBI

If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times; my name is - Bobbi. If you *really can't* get my name right, then just call me Ms. Tea Fairy when I have my wings on, and when I'm the receptionist, sitting wingless on the front desk, Lady Raven Luna gave me the title, "Miss Information."

CATHY

OK, then, Miss Information -

BOBBI

- Wings ... I have wings on. Therefore, I am Ms. Tea Fairy right now.

CATHY

Whatever. Just shut off that shit-ass spa music. It gives me the heebie-jeebies.

BOBBI

That's impossible. Rita composed the spa music herself with the top-of-the-line, sound healing software, and she says, "It's guaranteed to bring on a state of euphoria."

(CATHY slams the music off.)

CATHY

Don't listen to anything Right-on-Reiki Rita has to say. She was a hippie who hung out with Timothy Leary, the so-called "High Priest of LSD." All that psilocybin and acid burnt out her brain waves. And blow out that damn candle. It smells like Vick's Vapor rub.

BOBBI

I don't think you want me to do that. For the spell to work, the candle needs to burn itself out.

CATHY

What spell?

BOBBI

The one Destiny cast for you. She asked the powers that be to make you a big star again.

(DOC ENTERS, but they
don't notice him.)

CATHY

In that case, the candle stays lit, but pull the plug on the diffuser. That Feng Shui fog machine makes me feel like I'm vaping catnip. I swear it's bringing on a panic attack.

BOBBI

Doc says that Aromatherapy -

CATHY

- Doc's spent most of his adult life in a blown-out booze state, so what he says ... you'd better take with a grain of salt and a margarita.

DOC

Don't forget the lime and the Parrotheads. Cathy, it does take a little getting used to the whole essential-oil thing. But I assure you that today's mixture of Bergamot, Cedarwood, Frankincense, and Lavender, which I painstakingly blended myself this morning, ensures that our state-of-the-art diffuser will put anyone in a state of calm bliss.

(CATHY breaks into a full-blown panic attack, and
BOBBI starts panicking as well.)

(DOC gives them each a House of Karma shopping bag.)

DOC

Breathe into these for a moment. That's better. Now, put the bags down and slowly breathe in through your nose for the count of 4. Now, hold your breath for the count of 7. Exhale slowly for the count of 8. This simple breathing exercise is a natural tranquilizer. Let's repeat it three more times.

CATHY

Let's not and say we did. I need a Xanax!

DOC

Holistic methods might take a little longer to work their magic, but in the long run, they work much better.

CATHY

Save the New Age propaganda for the paying customers. Now, Doc, if you know what's good for you, get the hell out of my face!

(DOC EXITS.)

(RITA ENTERS on her scooter,
carrying some sage.)

RITA

I'm -

CATHY

Don't even think about lighting that clump of crap, or I'll have to smudge you. I don't want the fire marshal up my asshole again.

(CATHY EXITS.)

(DESTINY ENTERS running.)

DESTINY

Rita! That damn DNA test you gave me for my birthday just nuked my entire world!

BOBBI

Did you find out you're part Neanderthal?

DESTINY

Y'think I'm this ape shit because I discovered my ancestors were direct descendants of Fred Flintstone? Oh, God, I can't even say it. It's too horrible. The man ... I've always ... uh, well, he's ... I can't breathe.

(BOBBI runs over with a shopping bag.)

BOBBI

Breathe into this.

(DESTINY breathes into the bag a moment.)

DESTINY

It seems the man I've always thought was my daddy ... Well, anyway, um, it turns out ... he's not my biological father. Just sayin' that aloud makes me want t'puke.

BOBBI

Who would've thought a spoonful of spit could reveal so much shit? Yas! This would make for a great reality show. We give out DNA tests to a bunch of random people, and then we sit back and watch as all these deep, dark, dirty family secrets surface.

DESTINY

Rita! I need you to drop everything right now and contact Mommy Dearest on the Other Side to find out who fathered me.

RITA

I'm not the Psychic 911.

DESTINY

Rita! Siddown, zone in, and get my mother on your psychic hotline, pronto.

BOBBI

Destiny, you're a medium. Can't you just dial up your mommy yourself?

DESTINY

I tried, but she hung up on me.

(RITA closes her eyes for a minute.)

RITA

Your mother just said, "I took that secret to the grave, and that's where it shall stay."

DESTINY

MOTHER! How the hell could y'keep a secret like that? For Christ sake, you were on y'deathbed for three decades, while I wiped y'ass, fed you, bathed you ... put up with all y'crap, and yet, y'never once thought that I had the right t'know the truth? Geez, it's bad enough I don't have a clue who my real father was, but I don't think I ever really knew who the hell my birth mother was either. Rita, tune into my grandma Mary. Can y'ask her if she knew about this?

RITA

I'm getting nothing but radio silence from the Other Side.

(DESTINY has a hissy fit.)

(CATHY ENTERS and points to DESTINY.)

CATHY

What the hell's wrong with her?

BOBBI

She's got daddy issues.

CATHY|

Destiny, deal with them on your own time!

(DESTINY walks over to the psychic table and starts playing with her Tarot deck.)

Ms. Tea Fairy, go get me a double espresso with three Splenda's®, so I can wash my Xanax down with it.

BOBBI

But —

CATHY

— But what?

(BOBBI EXITS)

(DESTINY puts the spa music back on, and CATHY shuts it off. They keep doing the on and off bit several times.)

RITA

Either shut the music off or keep it on.

DESTINY

I say the music stays. It's helping me calm down.

CATHY

(She shuts the music off.)

I say it goes.

RITA

(Taking a silk pouch from her bra, she removes a pendulum from it.)

Let's let the all-knowing pendulum decide.

(She closes her eyes.)

I imagine myself engulfed and protected by a white and golden light.

(RITA starts tapping her index finger counterclockwise, making a small three-inch circle round her thymus.)

CATHY

What is she up to now?

DESTINY

She's tapping her thymus to balance the meridian energy flow of her body.

CATHY

Oh, that clarifies everything. Is this going to take all night? I've still got a shitload of receipts to tally up.

RITA

(Holding the pendulum between her thumb and index finger, she addresses the pendulum.)

I am showing you a "yes" signal.

(RITA has the pendulum move counterclockwise.)

For a "no" response, move clockwise.

Now, my higher self wishes to know if we should leave the spa music on? Indicate "yes" or "no."

(The pendulum spins counterclockwise.)

DESTINY

Yes!

(DESTINY puts the music back on.)

CATHY

Only an idiot would make a decision based on that thing.

RITA

Really? I'll have you know that Albert Einstein was fascinated by the how and why of the pendulum.

DESTINY

And during World War II, the pendulum was used by British Intelligence t'determine Hitler's next attack.

CATHY

(Slamming the music off, she grabs the pendulum and starts spinning it wildly.)

Pendulum ... no pendulum ... clockwise ... counterclockwise ... the bottom line is this: I own this loony bin, and this is not a democracy, so what I say goes. Case closed. The music stays off.

(She throws the pendulum at RITA, and the music goes back on by all by itself.)

CATHY

Destiny, let me guess ... you've got a remote control stashed under that mystical muumuu of yours.

DESTINY

Do you really think I had anything to do with the music coming back on ALL BY ITSELF?

(DESTINY and RITA look across the room.)

CATHY

What are you two staring at?

DESTINY

Your dead aunt is standing there, and she doesn't look happy.

(DESTINY appears to take Lady Raven Luna by the hand and EXITS.)

Come on. Let's go to my room where we can get some peace and quiet.

(CATHY shuts off the music, and RITA gets on her scooter but stops.)

RITA

Oh, Cathy, before I forget. I got a call from News 12 earlier today. They want to film our annual 4th of July House of Karma Celebration. I said, "I'd have to check with my boss first."

CATHY

Wow! Just think about all the publicity. And I get to be in front of the camera again, where I belong.

(Taking a selfie)

I've really got to go on a crash diet and lose a couple of pounds before then.

RITA

That day will also mark the one-year anniversary of Doc coming to us.

CATHY

You mean it's been a whole year already since Destiny found Doc eating burnt veggie hotdogs out of the dumpster?

RITA

To celebrate his milestone, I thought we should -

CATHY

- Throw a parade?

RITA

No, nothing over-the-top like that. Maybe we could just have a low-key Sobriety Celebration for him.

CATHY

And you want to do this when News 12 is here? Forget about it!

RITA

But -

CATHY

I don't want to hear another word about Doc unless he falls off the wagon and, if that's the case, I'll fire him.

(RITA EXITS on
her scooter.)

(ENTER BOBBI with a mug and hands it to CATHY, who starts drinking the concoction, but spits it out.)

CATHY

What the hell is this?

BOBBI

It's Doc's "Oh, Happy Day" herbal tea blend made with organic chamomile, hawthorn berries, passionflower, lavender, bitter fennel seeds, and rose pedals. It's meant to calm your anxieties and bring on a mental state of peace and wellbeing.

CATHY

Who the hell asked for this?

(She takes a sip.)

It tastes like boiled socks.

(She takes another sip.)

Boiled, dirty socks.

(She takes another sip.)

With a smidgen of mothballs. I can't believe people pay for this crap! I wanted a double espresso with three Splenda's®. I thought I made myself perfectly clear.

BOBBI

I'm Ms. Tea Fairy working in a Tea Emporium. We don't serve coffee here. Where in the world was I supposed to get a double espresso?

CATHY

From the deli next door.

(CATHY goes back to her receipts.)

(DICK ENTERS and starts doing standing yoga poses.)

(BOBBI sits playing with her cell phone and lets out a loud squeal.)

CATHY

Why are you squealing like a pig in heat?

BOBBI

I'm on a dating app and this guy was all nice and polite, until he started sexting me, and ... just now ... he sent me a dick pic.

CATHY

That's disgusting.

BOBBI

He wasn't even cute or anything, but I've been trying to date outside my type, because Rita keeps saying, "How's your type worked for you so far?"

(She shows the cell phone picture to CATHY.)

CATHY

The guys got a uni-brow and a purple third eye tattooed on his forehead. Ooh, look, he's got all these multi-colored, stray hairs sprouting out of his chinny chin chin. Gross.

BOBBI

(Showing CATHY the dick pic)

You think his hair on his chin is gross? You ought to see his dick pic.

DICK

There's no way you're going to meet anyone decent on a dating app. There are 7,869,820 people living on Long Island if you count Brooklyn and Queens. Can't you just meet someone going about your life? I predict you'll find the Soul Mate you're searching for ... right in your own backyard.

BOBBI

First off, you're not psychic. Secondly, I heard you say that same lame pick-up line to at least ten women last week. I may not be the sharpest wand in the House of Karma, but even I know you're a wolf in spiritual sheep's clothing. You're nothing but a Tricky Dick ... a trickster. You know ... I think I'm going to start calling you "The Dickster."

DICK

Stay on those dating apps long enough, and I'll start looking like a saint.

(DICK EXITS.)

BOBBI

I don't know what Dick's talking about. Last week on Bumble, I met this big network executive, who produces a lot of unscripted shows. I'm not really into him, but I'm stringing him along because I have all these great ideas for reality TV that I want to pitch to him.

CATHY

How the hell do you know that he's even who he says he is?

BOBBI

I Googled him. If only he were a foot taller, three decades younger, a hundred pounds lighter, and maybe if he had say ... a hundred thousand more hairs, I could really fall for him. He just produced the hit reality show *Orbiting*, about people who ghost us but still follow us on social media.

CATHY

I hate unscripted shows.

BOBBI

Not me. I'm obsessed with them.

CATHY

They just take a bunch of nobodies and try to convince you that they're somebodies. Or they take a bunch of has-beens and try to make them a happening. It's an insult to legitimate artists like myself. Most reality shows are like modern-day Freak Shows ... a throwback to Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey sideshows.

BOBBI

There's nothing freakish or bizarre about any of the reality shows I'm creating. Get a load of this one. It's called *Tinderella*. Here's my one-minute pitch: I'm sure to become America's favorite sweetheart as audiences watch me swipe my way to meeting my very own Prince Charming. It's the classic rag-to-riches story. How I go from being a Tea fairy to a *Tinderella*.

CATHY

Don't you have some real work to do?

(BOBBI EXITS)

(ENTER DOC and RITA.
RITA is dressed in a
High Priestess costume.)

RITA

I can't wait for tonight's *Exorcise Your Ex Festival*. I scheduled this life-changing event to fall on the summer

RITA (Cont.)

solstice, the Northern Hemisphere's longest day and shortest night of the entire year. Energetically, this opens up a celestial portal where the healing power of light triumphs over darkness. I've set the whole event up on the front lawn since it faces west, and we can, collectively, experience the beauty of the setting sun.

DOC

I'd love to join in the festivities.

RITA

Sorry, Doc, but it's for women only. We're all going to dance sky-clad to raise awareness about toxic relationships. After that, we'll drink some Vampire wine and share our war-of-the-roses stories around a bonfire. At the stroke of midnight, we'll have our fire ceremony and burn any clothes, wedding albums, or household items that remind us of our bad past relationships.

DOC

I should call my ex-wife. I bet she has a truckload of stuff from her life-from-hell with me that she'd just love to torch.

CATHY

Ixnay on burning the ex's crap. I'm warning you - I don't want that Barney Fife of a fire marshal fining me again.

DOC

Cathy, why don't you join them tonight? I think you're still dragging around a lot of relationship baggage of your own.

CATHY

Newsflash: It cost me a million bucks to get rid of my first husband, so I don't need to exorcise him. I need to kill him, but that bottom feeder is not worth going to jail for. As for Guido, he's already dead and buried and living in hell, so let the devil have him. But listen up, Doc-Botched-Botox! I think you'd better deal with your own inner demons and the fact that you've nuked your entire brood with your booze and bullshit.

RITA

CATHY! You need to learn how to temper your honesty with kindness.

CATHY

Sorry, Doc, but my mother was a big booze face and made my childhood a living hell, so I have very little compassion for alcoholics - rabid ones, recovering-ones, or otherwise.

DOC

I hope your mother made amends to you.

CATHY

Yes, thank you. She did. She dropped dead when I was fifteen, and my life got infinitely better.

(BOBBI ENTERS running.)

BOBBI

Rita! This is all your fault! You told me to date outside my type, so yesterday, I swiped right on this computer geek, and he's in the Tea Emporium right now. I talked to him for a whole five minutes, but I just can't do it. Not only is he not my type, but I quickly figured out that that nerd is nobody's type, nor will he ever be. So, you need to get rid of him for me, right this minute!

RITA

What am I supposed to tell him?

BOBBI

Tell him I just came down with some contagious terminal illness.

RITA

No, I'm going to tell him you're an incurable narcissist, one of the gazillion Unfixables on the planet, who only love themselves, and if he knows what's good for him - he'll run for the hills and save himself.

(We hear the roar of a crowd.

RITA walks to the window and peers out.)

You're not going to believe the hordes of women out there ... and their dancing sky-clad already ... I can't wait to scoot out and join them, but first ... let me break the sad news to that lovesick guy out there.

(RITA EXITS on her scooter.)

CATHY

(Yelling to RITA as she goes to the window.)
I hope you charged for this event. What the fuck? They're all out there ... on the front lawn ... in broad daylight ... dancing in their birthday suits ...

(ENTER DESTINY unseen by CATHY.)

CATHY

Oh, Thank God Destiny isn't out there. What a sight her butt-naked, fat ass would make.

(Still staring out the window)

Doc, what in God's name are they doing out there?

DESTINY

Ritual nudity. That's what skyclad means. And no, I don't do that, but unlike you, I don't judge those that do.

CATHY

And I was worried about the fire marshal. I'll be lucky if the vice squad doesn't arrest me. I can see *Newsday's* headlines now: Cathy Cloony-Colucci, Oscar-nominated actress, arrested for being Northport's "Metaphysical Madame."

DESTINY

Didn't you get your Oscar nomination for your performance in *The Neighborhood Lolita*?

CATHY

Yes, of course, everybody knows that.

DESTINY

And weren't you all of eighteen when you were on the silver screen - stark naked?

CATHY

But that was art. This is some sort of pagan ritual that can land us all in the slammer or burnt at the stake. I need another Xanax.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 3

SETTING: A Week Later, Early Evening

AT RISE: CATHY is on her cell phone. She keeps fiddling with the scarf around her neck.

CATHY

No, Laci, I don't think any network would buy a sitcom based on this place, so don't waste your time pitching the idea. Oh, Wow! My agent just texted me. I got a part in a movie being shot at Gold Coast Studios. No, it's not in LA. It's on Long Island, so I won't be having lunch with you anytime soon. Wrong, they've shot some really big movies there. You want a, for instance? *The Avengers*. Is that big enough for you? It grossed over 1.5 billion dollars, making it the third highest-grossing movie of all times. No, I don't have a big part. I don't know, maybe ten minutes of screen time, but it gets me back in the swing of things. Listen, Laci. I've got to go keep an eye on things. Otherwise, the inmates will be running the asylum, Dr. Caligari-style.

(She hangs up the phone,
and begins taking
care of the stack of bills
in front of her.)

(ENTER DOC and BOBBI.
BOBBI is wearing wings.)

BOBBI

My ex texted me.

DOC

Which one?

BOBBI

The one I thought was "the One" until I caught him cheating on me with my little sister. He kept texting me all day yesterday, telling me how much he misses me, how beautiful I am, how I'm the love of his life, and how he's truly sorry about everything. I figured, what do I got to lose? Let me

BOBBI (Cont.)

give him another chance. So, he takes me for sushi, and afterward home to his apartment, which is in Mastic, in the basement of his parents' house and -

CATHY

- Boobie, shut the hell up! I'm trying to sort through these bills. I know my aunt and all you *higher chakra beings* are too spiritual to worry about mundane things like this, but the Town of Huntington doesn't give a damn how *enlightened* you are. They're about to throw us out on our metaphysical rears because we're three years in arrears. Now, Miss Information -

(BOBBI points to her wings.)

Ms. Tea Fairy, after Rita's lecture lets out, I want you to push the Twin Flame Chakra Balancing Tea. It tastes like hot apple cider vinegar with a dash of quinine, and I'd like to get rid of it once and for all. As for you, Doc, when and if Rita ever finishes her Soul Mate Seminar, I want you to get in there with a tray of love potions and lotions. This crowd is love-crazed, and they'd give up their firstborn if they thought it would help them call in "The One."

DOC

I've got this covered! My Soul Mate Attractor Series features a "Stimulating Sexual Massage Lotion" that brings lovemaking to a whole new dimension. Plus ... all my romance blends are mixed with the most powerful aphrodisiac of all - my secret ingredient, which makes the House of Karma Soul Mate line of products far superior to anything else out there.

CATHY

Whatever you do, don't put that in writing. You know I have a strict "No Refunds" policy. Is Rita ever going to shut the fuck up? Doesn't she know as long as she keeps yapping, no one is buying anything?

(CATHY opens the door
to the Seminar Room.)

RITA

(off)

To sum things up ...

(CATHY shuts the door.)

CATHY

There is a God! Is it hotter than hell in here, or am I hot flashing again?

DOC

Between the packed house and the record-breaking heat, it feels like a sauna in here.

CATHY

(CATHY opens the Seminar door again.)

It's a lot cooler in that room. I'm leaving the door open, but that means we're going to have to listen to Rita's bullshit.

RITA

(off)

Soul Mates are spiritual partners who bring out the best in each other.

(DESTINY ENTERS and sits down at the reading table and looks at her cell phone.)

BOBBI

God knows that wasn't my ex and me.

RITA

(off)

Cellmates on the other hand, are karmic mates who bring out the worst in each other. These toxic relationships often end in a courtroom, jail, emergency room, or a morgue.

BOBBI

That's my ex and me, all right. Last night when his whack job baby momma-to-be reared her ugly head, it got so bad ... his mommy called 911.

RITA

(off)

When you first encounter a Soul Mate, you'll have a Recognition Factor. You'll feel like you've always known each other, or that you've met before ... somewhere ... somehow.

(DOC and CATHY lock eyes.)

RITA

(off)

Soul mates have amazing telepathy with each other. They can communicate feelings, thoughts, and ideas through seemingly unexplainable psychic means, an ESP, known as "Extra-Soul-Mate Power."

CATHY

Rita makes it sound like Soul Mates are sexy superheroes. To me, believing in Soul Mates is like believing in Santa Claus and Happily Ever After. Everybody knows relationships are transactional. What's in for me? What's in it for you?

BOBBI

That's the saddest thing I've ever heard. If I really believed that, I'd have to sign myself into a convent.

CATHY

I place value on things. If things don't do what they're supposed to - you get a refund. If things break, you replace them - usually with a newer, better model, but any living thing, you love it, and it leaves you, or, worse yet, it goes and dies on you.

DESTINY

Bobbi don't listen to Cathy. Her idea of love is t'find a man, who looks like a movie star, has billions like a Silicon Valley tycoon and is hung like a porn star.

(DESTINY almost passes out. DOC

rushes over to keep her from falling.)

Suddenly, I'm feeling really sick ... dizzy, light-headed, and nauseous

DOC

I think you'd better go to your room and rest.

CATHY

Why don't you give her some bone broth? Didn't you say that was good for what ails you?

DOC

Yes, but first, I really think she needs to go lie down.

CATHY

Destiny has a full night of readings. In the House of Karma,

CATHY (Cont.)

you don't call in sick. You call in dead.

BOBBI

And even then, Lady Raven Luna used to say, "I'd still expect you to show up for work. Dead or alive makes no difference in the House of Karma."

DESTINY

My shaman told me that I'm suffering from psychic exhaustion from continuing to channel when I'm going through my own inner turmoil. The only thing I can do is sleep it off, then go to him tomorrow for a Kambo application.

CATHY

Doc, you must have some Kambo stashed somewhere around here, right?

DOC

Sorry ... no way. You must be an experienced practitioner to own and operate that stuff. Destiny's shaman has been carefully trained in the use of the sacred venomous skin secretions from the Giant Green Monkey Tree Frog.

CATHY

Why can't you people just take normal stuff like Pepto-Bismol or Dramamine®?

DOC

When Rita finishes up, I'll send her up to your room to do some Reiki on you.

CATHY

Reiki? Really? Rita did her laying-on-hands bullshit on me the other day for three hours, and I didn't feel a damn thing. I would've been better off with one of those twenty-dollar massages you get at the airport.

(ENTER DICK with
his yoga mat.)

Dick, Destiny isn't feeling right. She thinks she's got a psychic hangover. Do you have a yoga-thingy she can do to fix her up?

DOC

Yes, one that might balance her energy. Realign her chakras.

DICK

The Warrior Pose is great for balancing the root chakra. It'll ground her to the earth, which is what she needs right now.

(DICK does the Warrior Pose.)

(DESTINY tries but loses her balance.)

Now, take a deep breath in. Now slowly breathe out.

(DESTINY falls over.)

DICK

Maybe, we should try something a little less challenging. Oh, I know - the Boat Pose.

(He drops effortlessly to the ground.)

You can use my mat. Try lifting your legs up like I'm doing.

(DESTINY flounders all over the place.)

CATHY

Stop it! Obviously - this - isn't working.

DOC

(DOC and DICK help DESTINY to her feet)

Why don't we stop by the Tea Emporium, and I'll whip up a medicinal tea for you?

CATHY

But what about all the psychic readings she's scheduled to do?

DOC

Have Bobbi reschedule them.

BOBBI

I'll go do it now.

(DOC, DESTINY, and DICK EXIT.)

CATHY

You'll do nothing of the kind.

BOBBI

Huh?

CATHY

Have you even looked at Destiny's schedule? There's no way in hell we can reschedule all of those readings anytime soon. Half of these people are going to want their money back, and you know I have a strict "No Refunds" policy. Hurry, while Destiny is in the Tea Emporium, go into her room and get me one of her New Age muumuus.

BOBBI

Yeah, no! Not happening. That's a clear boundary violation. Lady Raven Luna would can someone for something like that.

CATHY

She's dead, Bozo! I'm your boss. Do what I say, or YOU'RE FIRED!

(BOBBI EXITS.)

(CATHY takes her neck scarf off
and puts it on her head,
like a gypsy headscarf
and dials her cell phone.)

OK, Barbie, just grab the first muumuu you see and hightail it out of there. I have a plan how we can pull off these readings. On your way back here, put a sign outside the Seminar Room saying that anyone schedule for a psychic reading must first go to the Tea Emporium. You'll give them a complimentary cup of tea - make it that god-awful Twin Flame crap, and then start pumping them for information. Find out if they're married, if they have kids, if they're looking for love, etc. Then text me what you know and send them in. Whatever you do, don't let Rita or Doc know what we're up to.

(BOBBI ENTERS on the phone, with the muumuu.)

BOBBI

Is it all right if I hang up now?

CATHY

No, we should stand face-to-face FaceTiming from now until

fucking doomsday.

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(Hanging up the cell phone, CATHY takes the belt off her dress, grabs the muumuu and puts it on right over her clothes. She puts her belt around her waist.)

BOBBI

I don't feel right about any of this. It doesn't seem karmically correct.

CATHY

It's not your job to question orders. It is your job to follow them.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT I)

Act II

ACT II

SCENE 1

SETTING: A few days later. Evening.

AT RISE: RITA is all alone in the
Psychic Reading Room,
sitting on the floor in
lotus position, OM chanting
using a Tibetan Singing
Bowl.

DESTINY

(Rushing in)

RITA! You won't believe this, but there's more deadly fallout from that goddamn DNA test. And all this time, silly me, I thought I was an only child ... but no! I have two half-siblings, who grew up just a few blocks away from me, and their dad, who is ... also now my biological dad ... and this is such a fucking cliché ... turned out to be our merry mailman.

BOBBI

(Rushing in)

RITA!

RITA

Now what?

BOBBI

Why is the computer nerd, who I told you to get rid of, sitting in the Tea Emporium sipping Twin Flame tea?

RITA

Don't worry! He's not here to see you.

BOBBI

Oh, really? Then what the hell is he doing in the House of Karma? Everybody knows that guys don't come in here to drink the over-priced herbal tea. They come in here to gawk at me!

(DESTINY sits and plays
with her Tarot Deck.)

RITA

Bobbi, get over yourself. Randolph's here to see me

BOBBI

Yeah, right. Do you think I just fell off a Kombucha truck? He's stalking me, and I'm calling the police.

(BOBBI starts dialing
her cell phone.)

(RITA tries to take
it from her.)

I met him online. Ninety percent of the guys on there are certifiable, and I'm not taking any chances.

RITA

He's harmless.

(BOBBI and RITA have a
cell phone tug-of-war.)

BOBBI

How do you know?

RITA

I'm psychic.

BOBBI

And he's psycho, and I'm not taking any chances.

RITA

I know for a fact that he isn't stalking you because he's stalking me. No, not stalking me, talking with me. We're friends.

BOBBI

What?

RITA

Well ... actually, we're more than friends. We're lovers.

BOBBI

Yeah, like I'd ever believe that. You're old enough to be his... his ... great-grandmother.

RITA

I know. It's crazy, but Soul Mates aren't always the stuff of fairytales. They don't necessarily come in an easy package.

(CATHY ENTERS with a
battery-powered handheld fan.)

BOBBI

The whole thing's grossing me out.

CATHY

What's grossing you out?

BOBBI

Rita and her boy toy.

RITA

He's not my boy toy. He's my Soul Mate. Maybe my Twin Flame.

CATHY

Who are you two talking about?

BOBBI

That nerdy guy, who I said, "Is not now, nor will he ever be anybody's type."

CATHY

You mean that twelve-year-old sitting in the Tea Emporium guzzling down that god-awful Twin Flame tea?

RITA

He's not twelve. He may be twenty-two in earth years, but he's a very old soul. I would venture to say he's a ten-thousand-year-old being.

CATHY

We've got ourselves a regular *Harold and Maude* situation going down in The House of Karma.

BOBBI

I hated that movie, and besides, didn't Maude end up killing herself? Reality check, Rita! When there's such a big age difference, there's bound to be a built-in expiration date.

RITA

Not all relationships are meant to last forever. With this one, I'm just going to have to do what Doc does. Take it one day at a time. And, believe me, I will end it before it sours, spoils, or rots.

(DICK ENTERS.)

DICK

It's ninety-nine degrees out! Perfect weather for Hot Yoga!

CATHY

Shut the fuck up, Dick! The heat and humidity are killing me.

DICK

You really need to practice some mind over matter.

CATHY

Yeah, you tell that to me when you're in the middle of the longest heatwave in Long Island's history, and you're going through menopause.

DICK

(DICK takes CATHY's fan
and passes it to RITA.)

Those hot flashes have supplied you with the perfect temperature to practice Hot Yoga. I'll show you a great asana that can really ease some of the discomfort you're experiencing. Come on. Do it with me. Take your right arm and raise it up and bend over to the right side. Hold for two breaths. Good. Now bend your torso forward and tuck your chest into the knees. Hold.

CATHY

This isn't helping. Oh shit, I just pulled my hamstring.

DICK

OK, let's walk it out.

CATHY

(Grabbing her fan
back from RITA.)

No, you go take a hike, and I'm going to sit here on my ass and chill out.

DICK

(EXITING)

I believe your negative mindset caused you to have an adverse reaction to something that should have left you in a state of calm bliss.

(DESTINY ENTERS.)

DESTINY

WHAT THE HELL DID YOU TWO MORONS DO WHILE I WAS SICK? My client, Eleanor, just told me how much she really enjoyed her reading from Cathy, the new psychic.

BOBBI

I won't say Cathy made me do it, but she's my boss, so what choice did I have but to follow orders?

RITA

Bobbi, if you go along with wrongdoing or turn a blind eye to it, then you're just as responsible for any bad consequences that ensue. And Cathy, you're certainly old enough to know better than to knowingly deceive people. Both of you are going to suffer the karmic consequences of your greedy actions.

DESTINY

According to Wiccan morality, specifically, The Law of Threefold Return: Whatever you do, good or bad, returns to you in triple force.

BOBBI

Oh, shit! We're in for a double triple whammy!

DESTINY

I'll call all those clients tomorrow and schedule "On the House" readings for them.

CATHY

That's insane. I gave them all really good readings. No, really! I told that whack job client of yours, the one who wears a hundred bobby pins lined up with military precision along the front of her hair, "You don't need a psychic. You need a psychiatrist and plenty of Prozac." Then I told Paula, the poster child for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, "You don't need a psychic. You need a sidekick - you know a

CATHY (Cont.)

boyfriend." But the seriously best reading I gave was to that really low IQ individual; you know, the one with the boyfriend with the psychedelic swastika tattooed on his neck. I told that pathetic little halfwit, "You don't need a psychic. You're with a total psychopath, so you need a Pit Bull, an order of protection, and a loaded pistol."

DESTINY

(About to blow a gasket)

Rita, we really have to do something about this.

RITA

We'll give each of the injured parties a free reading like you said. We'll say ... we had a buy-one-get-one-free promotion that we forgot to tell them about. As for Cathy and Bobbi, we'll just sit back and watch Karma do her thing.

BOBBI

(Grabbing a shopping bag
and breathing into it)

I'm going to have a complete meltdown waiting for my three karmic strikes to hit.

CATHY

Get a grip on it, Boobi. This is all a bunch of bullshit.

(CATHY'S cell phone rings.)

Hello. What? How could they just cut my part? I thought the aging prostitute was a pivotal character in the story. The whole reason the wife murdered her husband. Not anymore, huh? When did they decide this? Just now? YOU'RE SORRY, MY ASS!

(Hanging up.)

BOBBI

Karmic strike - One.

CATHY

Coincidence.

DESTINY

There are no coincidences.

RITA

Just Karma and her sister, Synchronicity, working hand in hand.

BOBBI

Oh, my, God. I just remembered! Cathy made me fake the past life regressions. I didn't say anything bad. I... I... just told all the women ... um ... they had been ... Cleopatra, and I told all the men ... they were ... Alexander Hamilton. Do you think I screwed up my karma for many lifetimes to come?

CATHY

You're all nuts.

(CATHY starts looking at her cell phone.)

BOBBI

I'm a really good person, Destiny, dumber than a donkey sometimes, but good. Isn't there something I can do to stop my three karmic strikes?

DESTINY

Y'can start by makin' amends for your abominable actions. So, tomorrow mornin' instead of me callin' the clients, you do it. Then, in the afternoon, y'can do three good deeds for three souls in need. And finally, tomorrow evenin', I'll perform a three-part karmic cleansin' ritual using special bath salts that Doc will infuse with sacred scents.

CATHY

I can't believe this.

(CATHY slams down her cell phone.)

Jonathan just broke up with me in a text message: "Sorry, but I'm just not feeling it."

DESTINY

Karmic strike two.

BOBBI

(Panicking)

Rita, I'm scared. Can you ask the karma police if they can just put my bad deeds on hold for twenty-four hours until I do my three-part karmic cleanse?

RITA

That can't be done. There's no denying that this is a dark day for the House of Karma.

(Suddenly, the lights go out, and the set is in BLACKOUT.)

DESTINY

What's happening?

(They all turn on their
cell phone flashlights.)

BOBBI

(Looks at her cell phone)

There's a blackout in nine States, including New York, Maine,
New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut,
New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

DESTINY

Karmic strike three. Your bad just screwed up the entire
Northeast.

CATHY

I hope to God it really fucks up the movie shoot at Gold Coast
Studios.

DESTINY

Because of *your* bad karma, the entire population of
northeastern America might die of heatstroke tonight, and all
y'thinkin' about is some shitty movie ... you got axed from.

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

Scene 2

SETTING: July 3, The middle of the night

AT RISE: We hear ("*Pathétique*").
CATHY is in the Psychic Reading Room, sitting on the loveseat. She's armed with a flashlight, barefooted, braless, and wearing a short, sleeveless, sheer summer nightgown. There are several lit candles, a basin with water and washcloths, a pitcher of herbal-iced tea, and a few glasses. She is reading a woman's magazine by aiming her flashlight at it.
 ("*Pathétique*") stops.

DOC ENTERS, barechested, barefooted, wearing lightweight pajama bottoms and carrying a battery-operated lamp and a journal.

CATHY

You scared the shit out of me! I thought everyone around here was sleeping.

DOC

Who could sleep with this heat?

CATHY

Not me. I figured it would be cooler down here, but I figured wrong! Is it any better outside?

DOC

It's infinitely cooler, but there's an army of mosquitoes and a battalion of gnats out there.

(DOC starts
to EXIT.)

CATHY

Don't even think about banging out that sorry-ass excuse of a tune on the piano again.

DOC

Not a fan of Beethoven's ("*Pathétique*")?

CATHY

Apparently not.

DOC

I never used to like it much either, but my younger brother was obsessed with it. James learned to play the entire sonata by heart by the time he was ten.

CATHY

What's your brother, the pessimistic prodigy, doing now?

DOC

God only knows. For the answer to that mind-boggling question for the ages, you'd best consult someone like Rita. She seems to have some strong convictions about what to expect in the afterlife. As for me, I haven't got a clue.

CATHY

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

(A long pause)

You want to talk about it?

(DOC shakes his head, "No.")

(CATHY points to his journal.)

What's that?

DOC

My memoir. I'm taking an online course, "Write Your Life." Not that I think anyone will ever read it, but it has been rather therapeutic. I'm sure your life would make a much better memoir than mine.

CATHY

Who wants to read about an aging actress who was all of eighteen when she got discovered by an old, horn-dog movie director while she was homeless and living in Grand Central Station? He thinks she's perfect to play a seductive teenager. No acting experience necessary. She takes the

CATHY (Cont.)

part, thinking that she'll be able to rent a room in the East Village and ends up with an Academy-award nomination for Best Actress. She then goes on to make a whole lot of bad movies, rotten life choices, and risky investments and winds up homeless once again before becoming the warden of a New Age Insane Asylum.

DOC

According to my memoir professor, people relate more to our downward spirals, catastrophes, and failures than to our successes.

CATHY

Well, then, the story of my shit-ass life should make the NY Times bestseller list. Life ... I'm so over it.

DOC

I've felt that way for decades. Every thinking person has contemplated suicide at one time or another.

CATHY

No, I've never thought of killing myself! Not for one minute. I just think life sucks, and then you die. But what's the rush?

DOC

(Picking up
his memoir)

I wrote something earlier tonight about my brother's untimely death. I've been pussyfooting around that part of my life, avoiding it like the plague, but there's nothing like a total blackout, a starry, starry night, and a weeklong heatwave to wrangle the truth out of you. I'll read it to you if you'd like.

(CATHY nods, "Yes.")

Let me warn you, it's hardly a bedtime story unless you're a fan of horror movies, nightmares, and sleep terrors.

(DOC begins reading from his memoir.)

"My younger brother, James, had just turned thirteen and was out of his Beethoven phase and heavy into Bon Jovi. As for me, I was seventeen and stupid. On a cold, rainy, October afternoon, the two of us were cruising along the sinuous

DOC (Cont.)

Southern State Parkway with the windows of my Chevy Cavalier wide open. My brother was blasting his new *Slippery When Wet* cassette tape and rocking out in the passenger seat, singing on the top of his lungs, "I'm wanted dead or alive." When the winding, narrow road curved westward, I was stricken blind by the blazing, autumnal, setting sun. I screamed at James to buckle his seatbelt and shut the hell up. A split second later, this dangerous stretch of parkway, known as "Bloody Alley," turned slick from all the wet, falling leaves, and my sedan skid out of control. The next thing I remember was the sound of screams and sirens, and later, deafening silence as the firefighters freed my brother's lifeless body from the wreckage. The universe's rash decision to take my brother, a boy with a most promising future, and spare the likes of an asshole like me was a cosmic clusterfuck of astronomical proportions; although my AA sponsor, Rita, swears the universe makes no mistakes, but I'm still not buying that one. For three solid decades after that fatal crash, I had no use for God, nor could I bear to listen to music. Miraculously last summer, just as 4th of July fireworks illuminated the Northport night sky, I stumbled upon the House of Karma and found sobriety. Here, in this house of second chances, I started playing the piano for the very first time in what seemed like an eternity. On more than one occasion, I've felt as if James were sitting beside me, comforting me, and guiding my hands in a concerted effort to get me to master ("*Pathétique*"), that deeply tragic piece that was so much a part of his brief, but incredible existence. By the Grace of God, for the first time in a very, very long time, I'm seeing little glimpses of light at the end of a long and convoluted tunnel."

(CATHY hugs DOC.)

CATHY

Oh, no, not another hot flash. "I'm melting ..."

DOC

(Taking a washcloth
from the basin.)

Sit down, put your feet up, and let me cool you off with my rose-petal-raw-apple-cider-vinegar-laced concoction.

(He gently places the
cloth on her forehead.)

CATHY

That feels decadent and delicious.

DOC

Close your eyes and enjoy.

(He slowly moves the cool cloth
down her bare arms and legs, stopping
now and again, to dip it in the basin,
squeeze it out and begin again.

He finishes by anointing her feet.)

I trust you're feeling some relief.

(He gets up and pours a
glass of Herbal-iced tea
and hands it to her.)

CATHY

You know I hate anything organic, herbal, or infused.

DOC

Try it. These herbs have an amazing ability to cool the body
- hibiscus, lemon balm, and peppermint. And besides, that's
the end of the ice cubes, so enjoy them while they last.

CATHY

(Takes a sip)

It's not so bad. Oh, God, this has been one hell of a fucked-
up day.

DOC

I heard ... via the grapevine ... that your part in the
movie's been cut.

CATHY

I've always believed my calling was in front of the camera,
but now I'm starting to think ... I'm too old a cow for cattle
calls.

DOC

I have complete confidence that you'll find the perfect venue
for your immense talents.

CATHY

Since you already know about Karmic Strike One, I'm sure
someone blabbed to you about Karmic Strike Two as well?

DOC

Bad news, the flu, and gossip about you travel at the speed of light around here. Jonathan Lipshitz, M.D., F.A.C.S. was a fool to let you go.

CATHY

I'm never dating a plastic surgeon again. Doc, you were a dermatologist. When you date women, do you go around telling them they need Botox® and Juvéderm®?

DOC

I don't date, but if I did, I wouldn't do that.

CATHY

I know you wouldn't because you're a nice guy, but Dr. Lipshitz, not so much. On our first date, with a mouth full of mackerel, he blurted out, "Your skin is blotchy. Have you ever considered laser resurfacing?" Then on our second date, he took me out sailing on his Leopard 58 Catamaran, and I thought I looked really hot in my red, white, and blue thong bikini, and his only comment was, "If you're going to wear that G-string, get some liposuction on your buttocks." I should have known better than to get naked in front of him on our third date because that's when he said, "Your boobs are starting to sag, and the right one is a bit bigger than the left one. A breast lift and some silicone in that smaller boob would work wonders." Why didn't I break up with him right then and there? What the hell's the matter with me?

DOC

Nothing. There's absolutely nothing wrong with you, but Lipshitz sounds like a dipshit.

(CATHY starts looking at herself
in her cell phone camera and snaps a selfie.
She studies the picture.)

CATHY

My eyes could use a lift, couldn't they?

DOC

(Looks at the selfie, then deeply into her eyes.)

Your eyes are beautiful. Really. Perfect just the way they are.

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CATHY

You're just saying that because I'm your boss, but just say, you didn't know me, and I came into your office for a consultation. What would you say to me about my eyes ... cosmetically?

DOC

I might say ...

(Looking at her intently)

... Start using a Retinal eye cream, but I certainly wouldn't advise you to do anything drastic.

CATHY

And my chin area? It's getting jowly. Damn gravity. What would you have suggested I do about that?

DOC

I might have recommended a neck cream to tighten and firm that area a bit, and now, since I know Rita, I'd tell you to sign up for her Yoga-Facial-Face-lift class.

CATHY

My boobs? Do they look saggy to you, lopsided, and mismatched?

DOC

No, they're glorious. Two of God's wonders of the world.

CATHY

(Seductively moving her hands down her body)

My stomach? Waist? Hips?

DOC

You have some dangerous and deadly curves there.

CATHY

My derriere?

DOC

Venus de Milo...

(We hear fireworks
going off in
the distance.

They head to the window.)

Wow, fireworks over Northport Harbor, in the middle of the night! How fun is that!

CATHY

(Pointing)

Did you see that one with all the smiley faces in it?

(Noticing her hands)

I've got to remember to put sunscreen on my hands. Oh my God. No wonder Dr. Nip/Tuck dumped me. Look at all these age spots. When did I turn into my grandmother?

DOC

Grab one of my lotions off the shelf.

CATHY

Which one?

DOC

Just follow your gut and pick one.

(CATHY picks a lotion,
hands it to DOC, and
plops back down
on the loveseat.)

DOC

Ah, you picked the *Soul Mate Elixir*. Good choice. It's from my new *Beyond Bewitching* product line.

(DOC joins her on the loveseat.)

CATHY

Did you add your special ingredient?

DOC

Yes, of course! Otherwise, how would it work its magic? Now, close your eyes. Relax.

(He begins sensuously
massaging her hands.)

CATHY

The scent is -

DOC

- Intoxicating. Did you know that hands have minor chakras of their own outside of our seven major energy centers?

CATHY

Hell, no!

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DOC

The palm chakras are channels through which we give and receive the energy of love. That's why a mother instinctively pats her child on the head to show approval, or why couples madly in love walk hand in hand.

CATHY

Suddenly, I'm feeling sleepy.
(She lies down, placing her head in DOC's lap.)

DOC

That's because you're feeling safe and peaceful.

CATHY

Or ... maybe ... because it's ...the middle of the night.

(DOC shuts off their lights,
leaving the candles lit.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

Scene 3

SETTING: A few hours later. Just before dawn.

AT RISE: RITA ENTERS with a candle.
She doesn't notice CATHY and DOC.

RITA

(RITA lies down on the floor.)

I know you love this, Jack, just lying on the floor, looking up at the ceiling and pondering what God was thinking when he made life so full of endless sadness and eternal madness. You were always so serious, knocking all of us for running around seeking fun and goofing off. While we were all rolling around the floor laughing at the bi-polar universe, you were trying to make sense out of it all, writing great, long, meandering, complex, beautiful sentences about New York and how holy it was and how empty-headed California was and how we should just hitch a ride back to Long Island and buy a good home, with good food, and have good times, but we wouldn't go all middle class and suburban about it, because we'd just make sure each day was a great historic one. Now, Jack, we've had quite a lovely evening, but there's something I need to tell you. As much as I love the astral sex, we can't keep meeting like this. I told you about my new Soul Mate, Randolph, and I told him about you, and he was jealous. He thinks me making love to you on the astral plane is cheating, and I've long contended that cheating is not what you think it is, but what your partner thinks it is; so, I'm going to have to end these nightly rendezvous. Oh, you give it six months, do you? Jack, you always said -

JACK (RECORDED VOICE)

(off)

- It all ends in tears anyway.

(CATHY abruptly wakes up.)

CATHY

WHAT???

(DOC bolts up just as RITA sits up.)

RITA

Oh, I didn't know you two were in here.

CATHY

Doc, did you say, "It all ends in tears anyway?"

RITA

You heard that? No, that was Jack. He always says, "When it comes to relationships, no matter what, good ... bad, it all ends in tears anyway."

DOC

Well, Ms. Cloony-Colucci, I guess our surprise slumber party is over.

CATHY

Join me for a selfie. I'll be our little party favor.

DOC

(Staring at the photo)

In the language of photographs, I'd say we look like a Shakespearean sonnet.

CATHY

Which one?

DOC

Eighteen, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

CATHY

I've messaged you the picture. Now, I'm Googling the sonnet. OK. You two are about to witness a live, Shakespearean performance by the one and only Cathy Cloony-Colucci, an Oscar-nominated actress, as she recites one of "The Bard's" most beloved sonnets.

(RITA and DOC applaud.)

(CATHY is reading from her cell phone, and from the way she recites this sonnet, we can tell she's studied and performed Shakespeare.)

CATHY

"Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

DOC

Wait ... wait ... wait! I want to video this. OK. Take one!

CATHY

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

(They give her a standing ovation.)

(CATHY bows, then grabs DOC's cell phone
and plays the video for a few seconds.)

Oh, God, I look awful. Doc, you have to swear to me on the sacredness of your secret ingredient ... this video is for your eyes only. I don't want to see this Tweeted, Instagrammed, Facebooked, Youtubed, Linkined, or in any other way, shape, or form on the Web. Do I make myself clear? Mark my words! If I ever see this anywhere, other than on your cell phone, I will seek you out and torture you. Rita, you know Doc better than anyone. What punishment would fit the crime?

RITA

I discovered, while doing Reiki on him, that he's way over-the-top ticklish.

CATHY

Torture by tickling! I love it!

(Tickling DOC.)

(RITA grabs DOC's cell phone and videotapes.)

CATHY (Cont.)

If my video ever makes it to *Page Six*, I will tickle you until you break down and reveal what your secret ingredient is, and then I will post it everywhere.

(Imitating a German accent,
she continues tickling him.)

Doc, what is your secret ingredient?

DOC

OK! Stop! I get it!

(He grabs his cell phone from RITA.)

This video is for my eyes only.

(Much to DOC's relief,
CATHY stops tickling him.)

CATHY

I'm not talking about the video Rita just took of you. I'm talking: MY VIDEO.

(She starts tickling him again.)

Repeat after me: I will not post Cathy Cloony-Colucci's Shakespearean sonnet video anywhere.

DOC

I will not post Cathy Cloony-Colucci's Shakespearean sonnet video anywhere.

CATHY

(Stops tickling him.)

As for the tickle-torture video, you can post that everywhere. I'm sure it'll go viral.

DOC

Now, if you'll excuse me, Ladies, I really could use a cold shower.

(DOC EXITS.)

CATHY

Happy Independence Day, Doc!

(CATHY joins RITA, who
is ceiling gazing again.)

The world certainly looks different from this angle.

RITA

From here, there's nowhere to go but up.

CATHY

Rita, you've managed to defy time. Can you teach me how to do that?

RITA

Go to spirit, Cathy. Spirit ages much better than flesh.

CATHY

That's it?

RITA

And ... sleep with a pure silk pillowcase, never stop having sex, and stay so damn busy that you don't have time to age. Oh, and no matter what, stay positive

CATHY

Oh, that's easy for you, say, Little Miss Sunshine!

RITA

Yeah, that's me, all right. The proverbial "glass half-full" poster child. An old lady off her rocker, seeing the world through psychedelic rose-colored glasses. Sorry to burst your bubble, Cathy, but I am not, nor was I ever, Little Miss Sunshine! From the moment I fell to earth, my life has been shrouded in darkness. April 7th, 1940, on the afternoon I was born, for a solid seven minutes, daylight virtually disappeared, as the moon blocked out the center of the sun, leaving only a ring of fire. My evangelical Christian mother saw this rare celestial occurrence as an apocalyptic prophecy. Paralyzed by fear and post-partum depression, she suckled me to the sound of wartime radio, convinced the end was near. By the time I could walk, the whole world was at war, as madmen and their hordes of worshippers terrorized the earth. For my mother, Armageddon hit on April 1st, 1945, the date painstakingly hand-carved into my father's simple, gray headstone, along with the epitaph: Perished in Okinawa. Six days later, on my fifth birthday, my mother slit her wrists and bled to death in our clawfoot bathtub. Fearing that I might have inherited my mother's propensity for madness, none of my relatives cared to take me in, and I was shipped off to St. Joseph's Catholic Orphanage in Burlington, Vermont. For the slightest infraction, dropping a pencil, not knowing what 8 times 11 was, misspelling a word, The Sisters of Providence would make me kneel for hours with my arms straight out, sometimes balancing textbooks on my palms, and if I dared to

RITA (Cont.)

lower them; I got whacked in the back of the head so hard I thought my brain would fall out. Heaven forbid one of the Brides of Jesus took a liking to you. In the middle-of-the-night, shedding her habit, she'd slither into your pitch-black room, cover your mouth with her hand that smelled like cigarettes and sex, then slowly coil her other arm around your chest, and drag you corpse-like down the long, dark hallway, a virtual chamber of Horrors with the larger-than-life statues of the Blessed Mother, Jesus, and St. Joseph, draped in immaculate white sheets, that swayed, ever so slightly, when you bumped past them on your way to the Biblical, bed-of-iniquity. Thank God, I had the courage to run away from that New England hellhole when I was fourteen. Broke, terrified, and all alone, I learned to navigate my way through a less-than-welcoming world. Cathy, there has never been a nanosecond in my life that I didn't know that evil exists ... that it wears many uniforms, hides behind clever costumes and dubious disguises. Sadly, I can't always control the darkness that consumes my soul, but I am ever vigilant with my words and deeds ... always cognizant of keeping my inner darkness to myself, never letting those tormenting thoughts taint the light of day.

(CATHY grabs RITA's
hand and holds it.)

Look, the sun is coming up! Now, there will be no more talk of the evil that finds us. With the dawning of a new day, let us get up and seek all things ... good.

(CATHY and RITA rise and EXIT walking hand in
hand.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 4

SETTING: A few hours later. Morning.

AT RISE: CATHY is talking on the cell phone with LACI.

CATHY

It's the hottest day of the year, and Bobbi and I caused a blackout in the entire northeast. It's a long story. Laci, did you get the photo I messaged you earlier? Yeah, the selfie I took of Doc and me. Look at it again. In the language of photographs, what would you say we look like? What the hell does that mean - we look like two Long Islanders? Doc analyzed the picture and said we looked like a Shakespearean sonnet. No, he's not the man of my dreams, but he's not the stuff of nightmares either. Last night, he was ever so sweet, massaging my hands with his *Soul Mate Elixir*. (Pause) What the fuck? You think he went all Love Potion No. 9 on me? Come to think about it; he does call his new product line *Beyond Bewitching*. Hmmm. Anyway, I've got to run. News 12 is coming today, and I have to get my hair and makeup done. I just hope the electricity comes back on, and we get some air conditioning around here, or halfway through the day, I'm going to start hot flashing and looking and smelling like wet dog.

(CATHY hangs up.)

(DESTINY ENTERS.)

DESTINY

My love radar is spinning off the charts today. I don't know what happened between you and Doc last night, but I'm warning you: Do not toy with Doc's emotions. You've only seen him strong and sober, but less than a year ago, that man was a shell of himself.

CATHY

Your love radar is way off course. Just because you're psychic doesn't mean you know everything.

(CATHY EXITS just as DOC ENTERS.
She gives him the cold shoulder.)

DOC

What's up with Cathy?

DESTINY

Your guess is as good as mine.

DOC

Are you sure you didn't say something to her?

(RITA ENTERS)

DESTINY

I might have mentioned how I don't want her breaking your heart.

DOC

You didn't?

DESTINY

Y'might think y'doing a good job of hiding y'feelings for *Ms. Mein Fuehrer*, but y'not.

DOC

Let's say you're right, and I'm not saying that you are, but regardless of what I feel or don't feel, Cathy has no feelings for me - whatsoever.

RITA

That may or may not be true. Cathy's a splintered being. It's damn near impossible to tell what the hell she truly feels.

DESTINY

Just remember. In the dictionary, next to the word narcissist, there's a picture of Cathy Cloony-Colucci.

(DICK ENTERS.)

DICK

If the power stays off, I think we should offer a "Naked Hot Yoga Class" out on the front lawn.

(BOBBI, wingless, ENTERS running.)

BOBBI

(Screaming)

Cathy, where's Cathy? *CATHY!*

(CATHY ENTERS.)

BOBBI

You won't believe what just happened!

CATHY

Let me guess. You broke up with the network executive.

BOBBI

Since when did you become psychic?

CATHY

You do realize that if you're not with Mr. Hot-Shot-Unscripted Shows anymore, then all *your* reality show pitches are as good as dead?

BOBBI

Wrong! I didn't want to just pull the disappearing act on him since his hit show is called *Ghosting*, so I asked him to meet me here today before work. And, we were in the parking lot, sitting in his Tesla talking, and I told him that I didn't think we were a match made in heaven, and all he said was, "I gotta pee." So, I told him he could use the House of Karma bathroom, even though the sign says, "For Paying Patrons Only." And he comes in and starts scoping out the joint, stopping in the Tea Emporium, and sampling Doc's line of *Beyond Bewitching* Soul Mate Lotions and Potions. And then he asked me all these questions about you, and he keeps saying, "This place is freaking awesome." And then, out of the blue, I had this brainstorm to pitch a reality show called *The Karma Bums*. I don't even remember what the hell I said, but he loved it. He asked me to discuss it with you and to call him first thing tomorrow. Can you believe I got us a reality show and ... to get it, I didn't even have to give the guy a blowjob?

RITA

Cathy hates reality shows.

CATHY

Not so fast. Who would be the star?

BOBBI

You, but it's an ensemble show, so we all get to do our thing.

(DOC ENTERS.)

CATHY

Goodbye, sorrow. Hello, happiness. Cathy Cloony-Colucci's back! Doc, you were so right last night about me finding a venue for my talents. Bobbi pitched a reality show - set in the House of Karma.

DOC

And you're on board with this?

RITA

It appears that Cathy only hates reality shows that she's not starring in.

BOBBI

And, Cathy, he has a really great showrunner in mind, Max Krammer. He did the *Dating App Disaster Show*.

(Showing CATHY her cell phone.)

Here's a picture of him.

CATHY

He's cute in a money and power kind of way. You think he's single?

(BOBBI and CATHY start EXITING arm in arm.)

You know, Bobbi, I can teach you a lot about men. Tip Number One: Take all and give nothing.

DICK

(Chasing after
BOBBI and CATHY)

There's a big part in the show for me, right, Bobbi?

BOBBI

No, but I think I can get you a show of your own called "The Dickster." After watching a few episodes, everyone out there in TV land will discover how deep down inside, you're shallow.

(CATHY and BOBBI continue walking.)

I hope they give me a showmance. I just love it when you're watching a reality show, and you don't know if the romance is real or staged.

(The electricity comes back on.)

The power's back!

CATHY

Let there be light and blow dryers and air conditioning and ice cubes!

(BOBBI, CATHY,
and DICK EXIT.)

DESTINY

Does this mean *The Devil Wears Prada* is sticking around?

RITA

Looks that way.

DESTINY

We've tried everything New Age t'get rid of her. It's time t'turn to an ancient ritual. I'm callin' an exorcist.

(DESTINY EXITS.)

RITA

(Walks over the Tarot deck, pulling two cards.)

The Hanged Man and the Tower. Cathy's presence sure has turned our world upside down and overthrown our way of life, hasn't it, Doc?

(RITA notices that
DOC looks devastated.)

Cheer up! If Cathy stumbled upon her new career in her own backyard, maybe she'll see that she doesn't have to go to Oz to find true love. Now, I'd better get out there and make sure our boss doesn't ambush News 12 the moment they land.

DOC

I'll join you shortly.

(RITA EXITS.)

(DOC plays CATHY's Shakespearean
video on his cell phone.)

CATHY (RECORDED VOICE)

(off)

If my video ever makes it to *Page Six*, I will tickle you until you break down and reveal what your secret ingredient is, and then, I will post it everywhere. Doc, what is your secret ingredient?

DOC

(Writing in his journal)

The answer is - love.

(He puts the journal down,
and stops, drops, and oms.

We watch DOC for what appears
to be an eternal, meditative moment.)

CATHY

(off screaming)

DOC!

(CATHY ENTERS. She sees DOC
is deep in meditation, and
quietly watches him,
before tiptoeing out to EXIT.)

JACK (RECORDED VOICE)

(off)

It all ends in tears anyway.

CATHY

(off yelling)

Keep it up, Jack, and I'll start charging you rent! And don't
think I won't chase down your heirs to get a nice chunk of the
royalties those deadbeats are raking in.

(CATHY ENTERS, chasing after
the invisible JACK. She whispers.)

What do you think you're doing, Jack?

(DOC is startled
by the commotion.)

(She mimes yanking
the invisible JACK
out of the room, and
then EXITS with JACK in tow.)

CATHY

(off yelling)

There's no way in hell I'm letting a free-loading hooligan
like you hang around the House of Karma ... haunting Doc.
He's got enough demons boogieing about his head ... without a
booze face, Beat Generation, boogeyman like you getting him
all jacked up!

2-4-79

(Doc gets up and walks off stage. A moment later we hear him playing ("*Pathétique*"), as the lights slowly fade to BLACKOUT.)

CATHY

Hit the road, Jack!

CURTAIN.