

THE SEXTON
By
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CAST OF CHARACTERS OF "THE SEXTON"

WALLY BOSWELL: (30 - 50 male) The newly-hired sexton of Pioneer Cemetery. Has social anxieties. Has the gift of seeing and communicating with the dead. He's more comfortable talking to the dead than the living.

MAGGIE GREEN: (30 - 50 female) She is an Earth child. Never wears shoes. Artist, hippie, tree hugger, widow of two years. Likes hanging out at the cemetery.

KAREN PETERSON: (40 - 60 female) Local realtor and township trustee. She oversees the cemetery operation. Mean, nasty, and crude. Talks down to people and is Wally's boss.

CHARLES WORTHINGTON (GHOST): (35 - 45 male) Died in 1991, Lawyer. Contracted Aids. Very flamboyant and gay. Sarcastic and angry.

GUNNERY SARGEANT "GUNNY" J.B. EVILSIZER (GHOST): (30 - 40 male) Died In 1977, Vietnam Veteran, U.S. Marine Corp., Medal of Honor recipient. Drill Sergeant personality.

BISHOP TABITHA MOUNTAIN: (GHOST): (65 - 75 female) Died in 2010. A proud African-American Pastor of a large congregation. Quotes Bible verses and tends to judge people.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS: (35 - 55 male) Local Pastor who also serves as a township Trustee with Karen Peterson. Nice guy, but challenged with being morally sound and business greedy.

JACQUES DIESEL: (35 - 55 male) Location Manager for a large Canadian Superstore called "Super Duper". All business and willing to do whatever it takes to seal the deal.

MR. WORTHINGTON VOICE OVER: Charles Dad.

MRS. WORTHINGTON VOICE OVER: Charles Mother.

Pioneer Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in the county, and almost forgotten. In section thirteen, three bickering souls have been trapped there for years. Their refusal to look introspectively seems to be their eternal doom, until a new cemetery sexton is hired. He is a medium, and with his help, they all have a chance to move on. But time is not on their side; when the cemetery property is at risk of being sold off, it will take these three unlikely ghosts, and the sexton, to team up and save their sacred home. **STAGE NOTES:** A simple set with the CEMETERY GROUNDS on half of the stage and the CEMETERY OFFICE on the other half.

THE SEXTON

ACT I

SETTING: PRESENT TIME

We are at the Pioneer Cemetery grounds. This is the oldest and almost forgotten cemetery in the county. This small cemetery is run by the local township and overseen by an appointed trustee. A small office with a studio apartment is in the entry. Section thirteen of the cemetery is practically right outside the door of the office. This particular section of the cemetery just so happens to house three ghosts.

AT RISE:

DARKNESS. To one side of the stage we faintly see CHARLES WORTHINGTON, BISHOP TABITHA MOUNTAIN, and GUNNY SARGEANT J.B. EVILSIZER. The three are sitting quietly in cemetery.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS is center stage preaching to the audience.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

“Truly, truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Whosoever loves his life loses it, and whosoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” Rest in peace Buddy Stump.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS exits.

An OWL HOOTS off stage.

GUNNY

Blast that damn owl!

CHARLES

Oh, the screeching is enough to wake the dead.

Lights come up over the Pioneer Cemetery. The GHOSTS are sitting properly by their headstones.

BISHOP

Well, Buddy is gone and it looks like he crossed over. Who is going to take care of the cemetery now? Buddy has been the cemetery sexton for forty years.

GUNNY

I'm sure the ranks will send us some under-skilled worthless maggot that doesn't know his butt cheeks from a hedge trimmer.

CHARLES

I just hope he's somewhat good looking.

BISHOP

Please keep your unholy homosexual ways to yourself.

GUNNY

Agreed.

CHARLES

Oh, look. It looks like our "jardinier" has arrived. Escorted by that Jezebel, Karen.

KAREN PETERSON ENTERS, smoking her cigarette, and struggling to walk in the grass with her high heels and short skirt.

WALLY ENTERS behind wearing a reflective t-shirt and jeans. Unkempt but good-looking. He follows KAREN sheepishly.

KAREN

Over here is the single graves section thirteen. Most of them have nobody or were loners. I call it the loser section. (snort laugh)

The GHOSTS motion unkind gestures.

KAREN

You won't see anyone over here too much. Still we expect you to keep it maintained like the rest. Well, that's about it. We really are looking for someone who can keep the place looking good and help with burials. Any questions, Wally?

WALLY shakes his head no.

The GHOSTS LAUGH at his name.

CHARLES

Back in the seventies Wally meant "old never married" and more than likely, gay.

BISHOP

That young man isn't gay. Why do you think every guy that passes by is gay?

KAREN

Let's head over to the office. I'll show you the apartment upstairs.

KAREN and WALLY walk to the office area.

GUNNY

What a degenerate. Looks like they got one from the brig. We are doomed.

As KAREN and WALLY start to walk away,
WALLY turns suddenly back to SECTION
THIRTEEN.

WALLY

I'm sorry, I think I dropped my keys back there. I'll catch up.

WALLY walks back to where the GHOSTS are
sitting.

BISHOP

He didn't drop anything. What's he up to?

WALLY looks up at them and smiles.

WALLY

(whispering)

I can see you and hear you, so be nice. It's my first day.

The GHOSTS STAND in disbelief.

WALLY catches up with KAREN outside the EXTERIOR OFFICE.

GUNNY

Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle.

KAREN and WALLY enter the INTERIOR OFFICE , it has a desk , chair, cabinet, and a lamp. A stairway goes up to a one bedroom APARTMENT. The apartment is bare except for a cot, small table, and chair.

KAREN

Here is the office. We keep it closed most of the time. Most people know to find the sexton on the property if they need something. All the paperwork is in here. On the desk is a ledger book for sales. Just record any sales in the ledger in pencil. That way, if you make a mistake I can fix it. Buddy made mistakes all the time.

WALLY gives a thumbs up.

KAREN

Follow me upstairs.

KAREN and WALLY enter the APARTMENT.

KAREN

This is...was...Buddy's apartment. He kind of let the place go to hell, but he was getting old. You can clean it up. Don't paint the walls unless I approve the colors. I'm a realtor here in town and wall colors are my thing.

WALLY

I will ma'am.

KAREN

What? I'm not an old woman! Don't call me ma'am.

WALLY

It was out of respect.

KAREN

It's insulting around here.

KAREN walks over to him and flicks him in the forehead.

KAREN

You understand?

WALLY is shocked and rubs his forehead.

WALLY

Yes, ma (pause) Mrs. Peterson. I understand.

KAREN

Look, I believe in giving people a second chance in life, and my friend from The Shepherd House said you are perfect for the job. Just do as I explained, and mind your own business, and we will get along just fine.

KAREN exits and WALLY places his grip bag on the cot.

WALLY

(to himself)

Well, here we go. I don't have to really talk too much to anybody and I'm working outside and that's perfect. Section thirteen, huh? I'm sure this time I'll be okay. I'll just tr to avoid that section. What could go wrong?

LIGHTS OUT.

AT RISE:

A new morning at SECTION THIRTEEN and the ghosts are sitting. The BISHOP is reading her Bible. GUNNY is practicing tying knots. CHARLES is sleeping with a pink facial blind that reads: "PRINCESS."

GUNNY looks around at the grounds.

GUNNY

What kind of Mickey Mouse bullshit is this? The grass is knee-high. Where is that worthless chump? He hasn't given us any attention since he took over.

CHARLES

(with mask on)

I think we hurt his feelings. boohoo.

GUNNY

Oh please, I'm not buying into that "medium" horse manure. He didn't see or hear us. He just was talking to himself.

WALLY enters with a motorless lawn mower.
He is wearing headphones and has his head
down, avoiding any eye contact with the ghosts.

The GHOSTS stand and wave, yelling at
WALLY.

GUNNY

See, he can't hear us.

BISHOP

He's wearing headphones silly.

MAGGIE enters, skipping in to SECTION
THIRTEEN, and waves at WALLY ; he doesn't
look up to see her. She walks behind Charles,
and squats to pee behind his headstone.

CHARLES

Ohhh! Oh my God! She is peeing on my grave. This is disgusting, Oh, and a lot. Like gallons. No! No! No! Stop you, you hippie freak. Go pee on the Bishop's.

CHARLES jumps up and down.

CHARLES

(Shouting)

WALLY!

WALLY looks up and sees MAGGIE squatting behind the headstone as CHARLES is hopping up and down.

WALLY

Hey, you can't do that!

MAGGIE

I had to go.

WALLY

(shaking his head)

I can't hear you!

MAGGIE walks over to him face to face and takes off his headphones.

WALLY

Oh.

MAGGIE

I had to go. Sorry. You don't have an outhouse here.

WALLY

(smitten)

We don't have an outhouse here.

MAGGIE

That's what I said silly.

CHARLES

She peed on my plot. That's unacceptable!

WALLY

He said that's unacceptable.

MAGGIE

Who did?

All the GHOSTS stand up.

WALLY

I mean, it's unacceptable to urinate on a grave. It's disrespectful. Can you at least do it in the thicket next time?

CHARLES

He heard me! You heard me! Ha!

All the GHOSTS wave. WALLY tries not to notice.

MAGGIE

Okay. Hey, are you Buddy's replacement?

WALLY

Yes. My name is Wally.

MAGGIE

Glad to meet you. I'm Maggie. My husband is at section twenty three. He died two years ago.

WALLY

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

It's okay. It was a blessing. He was sick with cancer for a long time. I still come out here every day to talk to him.

WALLY

You talk to him? Does he talk back?

MAGGIE

No, I do all the talking. It would be weird if he talked back.

CHARLES

Weird, Wally. You're weird. She called you weird. We know you can hear us.

WALLY

You better be careful walking around without shoes on.

MAGGIE

Oh, I never wear shoes.

CHARLES

I told you she was a hippie. Look at those dirty feet. Yuck!

WALLY

Shut up!

MAGGIE

Wow! You need to work on your manners.

WALLY

No, I didn't mean you.

MAGGIE

There isn't anyone else here.

MAGGIE stomps off.

GUNNY

Well, that didn't go well.

WALLY

I wish you guys would mind your own business.

GUNNY

It is our business when you have neglected section thirteen. This area is a disgrace.

WALLY

I'm here, aren't I?

CHARLES

I expect my gardener to skillfully manicure my land at all times. No excuses. Know your place.

WALLY

Excuse me, know my place? Okay, let's start over.

BISHOP

Yes, introductions are in order. I am Bishop Tabitha Mountain.

CHARLES

Charles Worthington, Attorney at Law.

GUNNY

Gunnery Sergeant J.B. Evilsizer, U.S. Marine Corp.

WALLY

Hello everyone. I'm Walter Boswell.

CHARLES

Boswell? What's your full name?

WALLY

(Reluctantly)

Patrin Walter Boswell.

CHARLES

Ah, you're a Romany? Or should I say Gypsy?

WALLY

It would seem. I was orphaned. I have been told they were circus people . Others say Gypsies.

RUBY

That explains a lot.

WALLY shakes his head and rubs his eyes.

BISHOP

Are you okay?

WALLY sits down on the bench.

WALLY

Yeah, I tend to get dizzy around spirits. Especially when there is more than one of you. I have to prepare myself better before I come over here.

KAREN enters.

KAREN

Hey, isn't it kind of early to be taking a break?

WALLY jumps up.

WALLY

I'm sorry. What's up?

KAREN

We have customers. Come to the office.

The GHOSTS give KAREN the raspberries and make physical gestures to harass her.

WALLY

I don't quite know the office routine.

KAREN walks up to him and flicks his forehead. The GHOSTS are shocked.

KAREN

That's how you're going to learn Willy.

WALLY

It's Wally.

KAREN

Follow me.

GUNNY

Are you going to let that witch treat you like that?

CHARLES

Oh, that bitch has to go. You just keep thinking that 80's hair is hot, honey.

BISHOP

"Stand firm in faith, act like a man, be strong." Corinthians. "Do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Galatians.

The OWL hoots. The GHOSTS yell at it to be quiet.

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

SECTION TWENTY THREE. MAGGIE is sitting and painting on a canvas that sits on an easel in the cemetery. Cut flowers are beside her. A jar of marbles and numerous trinkets cover the headstone. A full glass of red wine sits beside a half a glass.

MAGGIE

(to her husband's grave)

You know, John, the cemetery has a new sexton. His name is Wally. I'm not sure if I like the guy. He seemed nice at first, then he started shouting for no reason. Just not sure yet. He wouldn't look me in the eyes. He was distracted, as if someone or something was with him. Yet, there was something about him that was warm. I can't describe it. Maybe he just needs a friend. I hope you're not jealous. As long as he keeps your grave nice, we'll get along fine.

WALLY enters with a wheelbarrow. He is wearing his headphones. He sees MAGGIE and takes his headphones off.

WALLY

Hey, there. Is this your husband?

MAGGIE

Yes, this is John. He's not here, I just like to come and talk to him in this spot where his body lies.

WALLY looks around.

WALLY

Yeah, I think you're right. He crossed over, I'm sure.

MAGGIE looks around.

MAGGIE

Are you...never mind. Yes, he has crossed over. I can feel it.

WALLY

What did John do for a living?

MAGGIE

He did a lot of things. Most people know him as an ornithologist. He liked birds. So what's your story Wally?

WALLY

Uh, that's a loaded question. That would take up a whole lunch break.

MAGGIE walks over to her stuff and pulls out a lunch bag.

MAGGIE

Perfect.

WALLY pulls his traditional metal lunch box out of the wheelbarrow. He walks over to the painting.

WALLY

Why not? Hey, that's really good. I like the owl. He looks real.

MAGGIE

Thank you. She has a new family over in section thirteen. Shall we?

MAGGIE points to a nearby bench. They sit.

MAGGIE

Whatcha got?

WALLY

The same thing I always have ever day, turkey sandwich, chips, and an apple.

MAGGIE

You're kidding? Every day the same thing? Here, try a buffalo cauliflower sandwich.

MAGGIE practically shoves it in his face. He bites.

WALLY

A little too spicy for me. I'll stick with my boring turkey.

MAGGIE

So be it. I'm going to take a guess and say you're Catholic.

WALLY

I was. My foster parents were hardcore. I'm not anymore. I guess you could say I am Agnostic.

MAGGIE

Agnostic. So you won't make a commitment?

WALLY

I'm saying I don't know. I know there is something. A form of existence beyond our understanding. That's all I got. Heaven? I feel your husband is somewhere nice. You want to give it a name? Hey, heaven works.

MAGGIE

Heaven works for me too. It has to. I need to believe he is somewhere right now.

WALLY

Understandable. What church do you go to?

MAGGIE

You're in it. I have to be outdoors with my bare feet on the ground.

WALLY

The cemetery?

MAGGIE

No, silly. The great outdoors. The planet earth. The trees, the fungi, the grass, and the sand. It's full of energy. It clears my mind and fills my heart. It uplifts me more than any church. A good book and tree by my side, and I am enlightened.

WALLY

You're a tree hugger...and a hippie.

MAGGIE

I am a tree hugger yes, but I wish people wouldn't call me a hippie. There is more to it than that. I think there is more about you, but you aren't telling me. Here, hand me your boring lunch box.

MAGGIE grabs some of her paints and starts to paint while they talk.

WALLY looks around.

WALLY

Look, I don't want to sound like the cemetery Nazi, but you're not supposed to have all this stuff around the grave.

MAGGIE

Come on, have a heart. Can't you look the other way?

MAGGIE continues painting on WALLY'S lunch box as they talk. GUNNY walks in holding a handful of dirt. He stands motioning to WALLY to come over. WALLY ignores him.

MAGGIE

What are you looking at?

WALLY

What? Nothing.

GUNNY waves her hands. WALLY sees him and looks back at MAGGIE.

MAGGIE

See you did it again. What are looking at? This is what I'm talking about. You see somebody don't you?

WALLY

No! I just have a tic. Yeah a tic.

MAGGIE

You know there are signs all around us telling us or showing us the way every day.

WALLY

Some signs I wish would go away

GUNNY

Hey, quit playing Romeo and hear me out.

As MAGGIE paints, WALLY motions to GUNNY to leave.

WALLY motions he will come over later. WALLY composes himself. GUNNY leaves.

MAGGIE

There. What do you think?

MAGGIE turns the lunch box around to show a beautiful dragonfly.

WALLY

That's beautiful. Thank you. You are very kind. I don't usually talk to people but, well... this has been nice.

MAGGIE

Speaking of Nazis, here comes Karen. Boy, she's a piece of work. I don't know how you can take it. She's a prickly one.

WALLY

I'm trying. I really need the job.

MAGGIE

Be careful. I hear she likes to fish off the company docks.

KAREN walks up as they are sitting on the bench.

KAREN

What are you doing?

MAGGIE

He's taking a lunch break with me.

KAREN

Why?

MAGGIE

It's called a lunch break. He has rights, you know.

KAREN

You can't paint here.

MAGGIE

That's silly.

KAREN

You know, there is a point when this becomes loitering.

MAGGIE

I'm allowed to be here all I want and I am a land owner. So back off.

KAREN

Wally, you need to get back to work. Stop by my office before you leave.

KAREN exits.

WALLY

Sorry about that. She had no right.

MAGGIE

Well I didn't see you saying anything.

WALLY

I'm not good with confrontations.

MAGGIE

She's bullying you. You need to put your foot down.

WALLY

You're right. I just really want this job to work. I like it here. And (Pause) I like you.

MAGGIE

I like you, too, Wally. Thanks for sharing lunch with me.

WALLY

I enjoyed it. I got to go.

WALLY starts to leave and GUNNY steps into view.

MAGGIE

And tell whoever is there I said hello.

GUNNY

(finger waving)

The hippie sees through you son.

They walk off together.

GUNNY

Not a fan of hippies. They made my return from Nam even worse.

WALLY

How did you get over here?

GUNNY

I grabbed some of this here dirt from my land. We can travel that way, but one at a time.

WALLY

What do you want that can't wait?

GUNNY

I want you to help me figure out why I'm stuck here? The other two are no help. They are all caught up in their own messes.

WALLY

Well...I'm not sure I can help you. I'm no expert. I'll listen.

WALLY and GUNNY walk over to section thirteen. WALLY sits on the bench and pull out some rope and starts tying a knot. GUNNY joins him.

GUNNY

That's a constrictor knot. Where did you learn that, Boy Scouts?

WALLY

Parris Island.

GUNNY

What? You're a leatherneck?

WALLY

Did my four years and got out.

GUNNY

Well, thanks for your service. What did you do after you got out?

GUNNY sits down beside WALLY and pulls out a rope from his side pocket. He begins to make the same knot.

WALLY

Signed up for college on the G.I. Bill. That was disappointing. They sure didn't make it easy to get the funding or the support. I gave up after two years. Then took a wrong turn for a few years. Sobered up, and here I am.

GUNNY

You should have stayed with the Corps. I was in for ten years.

WALLY

So you joined, when?

GUNNY

December 1964. And on March 8, 1965 I was with the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade. We waded ashore at China Beach north of Da Nang. We were the first to enter the Vietnam War.

WALLY

You guys had no idea what you were in for.

GUNNY

Nope. And we were too young to know any better. We came in cocky and ready to kick some ass. We saw this as a quick trip, in and out in a few months.

WALLY

Ten years later.

GUNNY

Yeah, ten years later. Then stateside.

WALLY

You obviously loved the Corps.

GUNNY

I did. It just seemed to click with me. I loved the order and the discipline. It gave me a purpose. I was full in and I couldn't imagine ever being a civilian again.

WALLY

What happened?

GUNNY

We became damn good at jungle warfare. Charlie was very good at it, too. The heat of the jungle is ungodly. Pretty soon you strip your gear off and say screw it. Travel light with your M16. Anyway, we were called out of the jungle by a new Shiney, that's what we called a new Lieutenant with no GD experience. The North Viet Cong decided to take over the city of Hue. Hell we weren't used to Urban fighting. That's a whole new ball of wax. But the big green wienie needed us there and we spent almost three months going house to house, street to street. Jesus, dead bodies everywhere, the smell of cordite, and burning houses was unavoidable. You know, the smell of houses burning and cordite is no big deal but burnt bodies? That's a smell you never forget. Burnt hot dogs. That smell gets up your nose and there is no way it's coming out. The smell is there for days. Then when it finally goes away, you break wind and there it is again. Well after that picnic, we somehow ended up with another new Shiney. He just got off the Huey. This Lieutenant looked like a baby. But all them did to us after you'd been there awhile. His name was Anderson; Lieutenant Todd Anderson. He was from Cleveland. Now you got to understand, I'm all Semper Fi. Marine through and through. The sitrep came up that we were needed South and, honestly, I was thrilled to go back to the jungle. I yelled to our platoon of forty that we were good to go and off we went. I could tell Anderson was terrified and I made suggestions to save face for him but he wouldn't have it. It didn't take long for the men to not trust this Shiney. They all looked at me with a look that said "why are following this guy Gunny?" I told them to shut the hell up and move. I think they knew I was feeling the same, but I had to do my job. So tensions are building up, and Anderson is pushing us and pushing us all to get to our destination. Then we came upon a valley. All the men stopped in their tracks and so did I. When you have been in the jungle you know when there is trouble. Your gut gets all tied up in a knot and your head rings. I suggested to Anderson we go around the valley. That is a perfect place for the Viet Cong to ambush. Matter of fact, I know in my gut, they are there right now. He refused and told me to push the platoon forward. It was a death sentence. The men were begging me to change course. I said shut up and we marched into the waddy. I remember thinking well if I were them I'd spray us right now!. Boom! The shit show began and half our men were wounded or dead. The Lieutenant who of course was behind us, hiding, said push on and shouted "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil!" I thought... you got to be kidding me? I heard the men screaming and calling out for me. I then saw Charlie peeking over a hill.

I pulled out my grenade and as I held it in my hand I stared at it. I should just end myself right now. Then from the safely hidden Lieutenant, he yelled out, "Do the right thing you moron." I pulled the pin...gave it a long stare...then tossed it behind me. I don't recall much after that. I blacked out. They said I went nuts, screaming and shooting any Charlie in the area. I guess I blew most of them away enough for them to retreat. Then I carried the men back to safety that needed fixing up. We pulled the dead together and mourned them. I woke up in a hospital with six holes in me. Apparently, twenty-three of the guys lived to tell the story. I ended up meeting LBJ and he put this shiny medal around my neck. I didn't want to be buried with this. It's like an albatross around my neck.

WALLY

Why didn't you get buried in Arlington National Cemetery?

GUNNY

I didn't deserve to be with those fine men, heroes. I bought this grave with the hopes that no one would even come back here. I deserve this ghostly nightmare. I got what I deserved.

WALLY

You did the right thing. You saved those men. Had you not stopped Anderson, you'd all be dead.

GUNNY

It went against all my nature. All my beliefs. Then they made me out as a hero and I went along with it at first. Honestly, I don't remember most of it. I blacked out. But as time went on, it started surfacing, and I'd wake up screaming with bits and pieces of it in my mind. I became a drill instructor when I came back. It worked for me. Then one day, I had a new recruit come in and his name was Anderson. It was enough to spark my brain. I woke that night remembering everything. I drank myself silly and accidentally ran into a concrete barrier. I say accidentally loosely. And here I am.

WALLY

You can't put that heavy burden on yourself. The only way you have a chance of moving on is to forgive Anderson, and forgive yourself.

GUNNY

Maybe I don't want to move on. If this is my punishment, so be it. I will walk my post.

WALLY

That's up to you, but consider seeing those men again who didn't make it that day. I bet they are there on the other side, and will greet you with open arms.

GUNNY

I'll think about it.

GUNNY sits back down beside WALLY and pulls out a rope again.

WALLY

Bet I can tie a bowline knot faster than you.

GUNNY

You're on. Say when.

They both laugh.

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

INTERIOR OFFICE. KAREN has her feet up and is talking on her cell phone. WALLY enters.

KAREN

Yeah, yeah they are none the wiser. Let's meet up tomorrow and go over the plans for the biggest real estate deal this town has ever seen. Bye.

She hangs up and sees WALLY.

KAREN

What do you want?

WALLY

You told me to stop by.

KAREN

First of all you're late, second, I want you to stay away from the flower child. She's nothing but crazy. She is strange, and honestly, who hangs out at a cemetery?

WALLY

I will agree, she seems crazy as a loon but...

KAREN

And that garbage she has all around the area. She's breaking the rules.

WALLY

It is pretty trashy but I spoke...

KAREN

Good. Let's avoid any more conversations with her while you are on the clock.

WALLY

Yes, Mrs. Peterson.

KAREN

It's Ms. Peterson.

She pushes a pen on the ground. WALLY bends over and picks it up.

WALLY

Yes, Ms. Peterson.

KAREN

(looking at his butt)

Perfect. Now tomorrow I may have a meeting here in the office with some bigwigs regarding a real estate deal. Clean it up a little and make yourself scarce. I don't want any interruptions. Capiche?

WALLY

Yes.

KAREN

Oh and can you wipe off my windshield? That owl keeps crapping on it. You have my permission to shoot it.

WALLY nods and exits the INTERIOR OFFICE. He puts his headphones back on and heads toward section thirteen.

WALLY looks up and smiles. OWL hoots.

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

SECTION THIRTEEN. WALLY is wearing his headphones and is raking around CHARLES' headstone area. CHARLES is sitting and pointing out WALLY'S mistakes.

WALLY ignores him. CHARLES waves his hands around. WALLY takes off his headphones.

CHARLES

You missed a spot. That dandelion just won't go away. You need to pluck it from the root.

WALLY looks at him for awhile and then digs and pulls it out violently and stares back at CHARLES.

CHARLES

Thank you.

WALLY continues manicuring.

CHARLES

I'm not trying to tell you how to do your job but...

WALLY puts his clippers down.

WALLY

I'm curious. Did somebody murder you?

CHARLES

(sarcastic smile)

No. I died of AIDS.

WALLY

Oh, that's awful.

CHARLES

Diagnosed in nineteen eighty five and died in nineteen ninety one. Murder would have been much easier. And in most cases you have to feel something towards someone to kill them. Good or bad. They would have feelings toward you. I died alone, rotting in a hospital, where the staff were too terrified too even come in my room.

WALLY

Oh my God. I'm sorry. You didn't have any family or friends?

CHARLES

Oh, thanks for pointing that out. NO!

CHARLES gets up and goes to the bench and sits down. WALLY looks up and shakes his head. He walks over to the bench.

WALLY

I'm sorry do you want to talk about it?

CHARLES

Why would I want to talk about it? I've only been trapped here for the last 30 years! But I have no idea because time is non-existent in this nightmare. The only people I have to talk to are a few idiots that are trapped here like me. It's an insane asylum. Oh, and being gay with this group is a never-ending torture. They all hate gay people, except for Amy who thinks she is Elvis, and that's a whole twisted odyssey by itself.

WALLY

Hate is a pretty big word.

CHARLES

Is it? (Pointing at all the ghosts) I hate, hate, hate and hate them. God that felt good.

WALLY

Alright, let's back up a bit and tell me about your folks. Where are they?

CHARLES

Section twenty three I heard.

WALLY

Oh, they're dead. Section twenty three, huh? I can't say I saw anyone in that section.

CHARLES

Great. They treated me like shit and they crossed over. Where is the justice?

WALLY

Well, in my experiences of having this ability, I have encountered other people with such abilities. One old man I knew said some folks are trapped ghosts like yourself. Others are too afraid to even wake up from the casket bed they lie in.

CHARLES

That would be them. Too afraid to face the music. Like the day I shared my story. They went into complete denial and acted like I never said anything. They changed the subject. We sat at the table. We ate lasagna and not a word was spoken. I waited to see if they would say anything. It was the most silent dinner I have ever experienced. I asked them at the door, "Did you hear what I said before dinner?" Mom smiled, and Dad looked down and slowly ...and shut the door. It was the last supper before my crucifixion .

WALLY

Are you religious?

CHARLES

Oh, hell no. Atheist. I'm a lawyer. I research everything.

WALLY

What does that mean?

CHARLES

It's all about the facts. You can't base the facts on just one book.

WALLY

True but...

CHARLES

I researched fifty scholars in the middle east during Yahshua's so called life. By the way that's his real name. The letter J wasn't invented till the 1500's. Anyway, these guys wrote the daily happenings and not one of them mention a guy performing miracles or coming back from the dead. None of them.

WALLY

The New Testament has some pretty positive messages, even if you don't think Jesus was real. The whole message of love is cool.

CHARLES

Love, ha. I don't even know what love is.

WALLY

Well, maybe that's your problem.

CHARLES

(shouting)

Well it's a little to late now isn't it!

CHARLES begins to cry.

WALLY

Maybe not. I don't know. Let me ask you this, if you are Atheist, how come you are consciously having a conversation with me?

CHARLES

Well, this is a dream. I'm just dreaming a very, very long dream.

WALLY

Wouldn't you say this is the most vivid dream you have ever had?

CHARLES

Absolutely. I usually have a random naked event happen by now or a conversation with a unicorn. Come to think of it, this is really the most boring dream I have ever had.

WALLY

Charles this isn't a dream. You are dead.

CHARLES

I guess I know that. I'm still in denial.

WALLY

Okay, well if you are an Atheist, then that means once you die there is nothing. Absolutely nothing. No afterlife. Zero . Nada.

CHARLES

Of course.

WALLY

Well, if that's true, then, how are we talking at this very moment?

CHARLES

(thinking it over)

Damn. I hate being wrong. It just pisses me off.

WALLY

So there is something. Something after.

CHARLES

Well, it's just not logical.

WALLY

Okay, well the Law of Conservation of Energy states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed; energy can only be transferred or changed from one form to another.

CHARLES

How do you know all this?

WALLY

I've had a lot of heavy conversations with dead people. It seems to me that the smarter people get, the less likely they believe that they can be wrong. You have officially proved to yourself that you are not an Atheist now, and you still won't accept it.

CHARLES

I also don't like people to rub it in.

WALLY

I'm not rubbing it in. I'm trying to tell you how wonderful it is that you have total consciousness after you die. That's pretty amazing.

CHARLES

Well waking up to this hell hole and being trapped here is horrible. I'd rather lose all consciousness and be unaware of an eternity like this. Eternity here is a nightmare. If there is an hell, this must be it.

WALLY

You, hopefully, are not stuck here. There is something that's keeping you here. Some unfinished business or realization that you haven't come to grips with yet.

CHARLES

I don't have any unfinished business!

WALLY

Okay. Well then I don't know what to tell you. I can tell you this. I've seen others figure out their issue and poof! They disappeared.

CHARLES

Poof! What you mean poof? Go where?

WALLY

That I do not know. I'll never know till I go poof! someday myself. I imagine it to be amazing.

CHARLES

Imagination. What a waste.

WALLY

Well you know what Einstein said...

CHARLES

Oh goody I can't wait for this.

WALLY

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution."

CHARLES

I liked you better when I thought you were a dumb groundskeeper.

WALLY

I'm a cemetery sexton, thank you.

CHARLES

Not impressed.

CHARLES gets up and walks back to his grave.

CHARLES

Shouldn't you be getting back to my landscaping, oh cemetery sexton?

WALLY

Keep it up and I'll tell Maggie it's okay to pee on your grave again.

CHARLES

Ew, for God's sake, don't.

WALLY

Ha, you just said God. You are already changing.

CHARLES

Shut up.

WALLY exits.

CHARLES walks back towards the bench and looks outward to another area of the cemetery.

CHARLES

Sleeping? The lid on your caskets are closed tight I'm sure. Just like the door on your house. Lock the doors and close the blinds. Turn out the lights and erase your minds.

CHARLES grabs some earth and storms over to another part of the cemetery.

CHARLES

Wake up. I know you can hear me. I know you haven't crossed over.

He walks around and stomps the ground.

CHARLES

Wake the hell up! Fine, hide under your blanket of guilt while I tell you, I'M GAY! I'M GAY! Do you know what that means? Why does the first thing that comes to people's minds is the sexual acts when a person hears someone is gay? Here's a thought, how about I'm more comfortable sharing my life with a guy rather than a girl. Leave it at that. Maybe, maybe sex is not the priority, maybe I want someone to love me. To care for me, to give a damn about me. Because I certainly didn't get that from you guys after I laid my heart out. I remember you inhaling the lasagna. That was your response to my timid announcement. I guess I thought better of you. All those speeches of being kind to one another. Always be understanding. You were hypocrites. Oh, good news. I died alone. I never could get a relationship to take.

CHARLES starts to walk away.

MR. WORTHINGTON (OFF STAGE)

Son, we are sorry.

MRS. WORTHINGTON (OFF STAGE)

Charles, please, we are so sorry.

CHARLES stops in his tracks.

CHARLES

Too late.

CHARLES returns to his grave.

As CHARLES returns to SECTION THIRTEEN he sees KAREN and a well dressed JACQUES enter outside the office.

In the INTERIOR OFFICE, WALLY is sitting at the desk writing.

KAREN

Mr. Diesel I want to thank you for meeting me here. It's much more private.

JACQUES

It's perfect. Maybe I can get a tour too?

KAREN

Absolutely. Why don't we come in my office and we can get it all spread out. The paperwork that is (giggles).

KAREN and JACQUES enter the INTERIOR OFFICE.

KAREN

(to Wally)

What are you doing in here?

WALLY

I just sold a monument and...

KAREN

(nasty)

Who cares? Fill that out later? I'm having a meeting so go cut some grass or something.

WALLY

Yes, Ms. Peterson.

WALLY gets up with his head down and passes
JACQUES who puts his hand out to shake.

JACQUES

Hello, are you the sexton here?

KAREN

Oh don't shake his hand it's probably filthy.

JACQUES

I don't mind.

JACQUES shakes WALLY'S hand but WALLY
will give no eye contact.

WALLY

Yes.

JACQUES

My name is JACQUES. Glad to meet you.

KAREN

Okay, that's enough chit chat. Wally has work to do, don't you Wally?

WALLY nods and waves his hand as he exits.

JACQUES

Not much of a talker.

KAREN

He barely speaks a word. That's why I like him. I saved him from the street. I can't help myself from being a caring and loving person.

JACQUES

He doesn't know, does he?

KAREN

No.

JACQUES

You sent out all the certified mail right?

KAREN

Yes, most of them came back return to sender. And the few that were mailed back were all in agreement and signed off. So we can check that off.

JACQUES

Well , as you know, this is a big venture.

KAREN

I've always wanted to develop my own condos and I know with the economical development that lies ahead, I should have no problem filling them.

JACQUES

You stand to do well if you can successfully pass the ordinances at hand.

KAREN

I'm still a little curious how the land will be developed, as you say, with that creek cutting through most of the property?

JACQUES

We plan on moving it.

KAREN

Wow, you can do that? Move an entire creek?

JACQUES

It's actually very easy. That's the least of our worries.

JACQUES pulls out a large map.

JACQUES

We are more concerned with the Township trustees and the County Commissioners. We are on a time table here, and if this doesn't come to fruition, we will have to look down the road at Spring City. They are begging us to come there, and are offering a ten year tax credit.

KAREN

I realize that. I swear I am doing everything I can.

JACQUES

We are used to communities being resistant to the Super Duper Stores coming into town. Our marketing director has a plan in place when the time is right. This particular project is sensitive for many reasons. This isn't our first time and we will assist you.

KAREN

The land that we agreed with for my condos is my incentive to push this through.

JACQUES

Then push.

KAREN

I've got a dinner set up for you, me, and the right people later this week. That should help.

JACQUES pulls out a large stuffed envelope with a rubber band around it.

JACQUES

Here, go buy a new dress and a new car. Maybe it will help you seal this deal.

KAREN takes the envelope and peeks in. She fans herself with it.

KAREN

Oh my. You got it.

JACQUES gets up and puts his things back in his brief case.

JACQUES

(exiting)

I'll get my tour later. How many bodies are we exhuming again?

KAREN

Roughly three hundred and twenty three. Doesn't really matter.

JACQUES

We need to try. We will show diligence. The headstones are most important. If we accidentally plow up a corpse we will put it in a bag and take it to the other cemetery as we go, discreetly. Lucky for us they don't know any better.

KAREN

(laughing)

Yep, dead is dead. They won't mind.

KAREN AND JACQUES leave the INTERIOR OFFICE and exit to the EXTERIOR OFFICE.

The GHOSTS yell at them as they exit.

WALLY enters SECTION THIRTEEN with a garden edger and his lunch box and sits on the on the bench to eat.

MAGGIE enters.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, are you alone?

BISHOP

NO, he is not.

WALLY

Oh, hi. Yes, I am alone

WALLY stares at the GHOSTS who are mocking him and making funny gestures.

WALLY

Please have a seat. I'm just eating my lunch.

WALLY shows off his lunch box with the dragonfly on it.

MAGGIE

It really seems like you were with someone. It won't scare me if you were. I talk to my husband all the time.

CHARLES comes over.

CHARLES

Oh good God! The urinator is here. Why are you talking to her? She violated me. Tell her to go pee on her husband's grave. Maybe he's into that.

WALLY

I talk to myself a lot. I'm not one to socialize with people very well.

MAGGIE

I get it. You seem shy. I hope I'm not making you nervous. I just thought you'd like some company. I can go.

The BISHOP comes over.

BISHOP

Oh beware of her fruit. If that Eve pulls out an apple, son, you'd better run.

GUNNY

Euell Gibbons' daughter there, eats honey and acorns.

WALLY

No I invited you. Come eat your honey and acorns with me.

MAGGIE

How did you know what I had in my bag?

WALLY

Uh, big, big guess.

MAGGIE

You seem to be over here a lot, but honestly, it looks like you don't get much done.

The GHOSTS all shout out with agreement and laughter. WALLY stand up, and turns toward the GHOSTS.

WALLY

Now wait a minute, I would get things done here if people would leave me alone!

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. I thought...Okay either you are batshit crazy or you're a medium and there are ghosts here right now.

The GHOSTS come close to them.

WALLY gives out a big sigh. He stands up .

WALLY

I'm an orphan. My mom died during childbirth with me. My father disappeared with the next circus tour that came along. But I wasn't really an orphan. My mother actually stayed with me for the first few years of my life.

MAGGIE

But you said she died during childbirth.

WALLY

She did. But as far as I was concerned, she was alive and with me. She was there just like any other mother, but maybe she wasn't directly holding me and touching me. I assumed the other people were with her. As if they worked for her. You don't know what you don't know. A baby doesn't know what reality is . It just exists and grows. I started seeing other people come visit me at night and my mother would get in fights with them and that scared me. She finally told me I had a gift. I could see people that had died and were lost or trapped here on Earth. Then she told me she was like them. Except she could go anytime she wanted but chose to stay with me, till she felt I would be safe on my own.

MAGGIE

What about your Dad? What happened to him?

WALLY

My mother said he died too, and he came to see me, but my mother wouldn't have it. She said he gave into his shadow and was soulless. He wanted to use me . She apparently had some strong momma bear power.

MAGGIE

So you never saw him?

WALLY

After my mother crossed over, I think there was a time he might have showed up. I'm not sure. There are some dark times I either want to forget, or don't even remember.

My mom prepared me for this life. She told me I had a good heart and a strong field of consciousness.

MAGGIE

What does that mean?

WALLY

I'm aware of what's all around me.

WALLY turns around and the GHOSTS all wave at him. WALLY shakes his head.

MAGGIE

So there is someone behind me right now?

WALLY

Actually three.

MAGGIE

What are they doing?

WALLY

Being nosy right now.

MAGGIE

Who are they?

WALLY

Let's see, we have Gunnery Sergeant J.B. Evilsizer, attorney Charles Worhtington, and Bishop Tabitha Mountain.

MAGGIE

Hello every one.

WALLY

I knew you'd think I was crazy.

MAGGIE

No, I believe you. I believe you. Sit down and let's eat our lunch. If they don't mind.

WALLY

Okay everyone please go back to your spots and give us some privacy please.

The GHOSTS return to their chairs . WALLY
and MAGGIE return to the bench and begin
eating.

MAGGIE

Would you like a berry?

GUNNY begins to sing “Higher up the Berry
Tree”

GUNNY

(singing)

Higher up the berry tree the sweeter grow the berries.

All of the GHOSTS join in.

GHOSTS

(singing)

The more you hug and kiss the gal, the more she wants to marry.

WALLY is mortified. The ghosts laugh together.

KAREN pops her head out and spies out of the
OFFICE, unseen by everyone else.

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

INTERIOR OFFICE. KAREN is at the desk.
WALLY enters.

KAREN

Hey! What did I tell you about eating lunch and hanging out with the village freak.

WALLY

She's not a freak. She's a customer.

KAREN

Mind your tongue. Has she bought anything lately?

WALLY

No.

KAREN

Then she is loitering.

WALLY

People do come here to visit their families.

KAREN

Not everyday for the last two years. And if you haven't noticed, this cemetery is old as hell. Everyone goes to Greenlawn now. This is just wasted real estate. The township owns it and is forced to take care of it.

WALLY

What do you want me to do?

KAREN

If we are going to continue to care for this shit hole then we need to do so and follow the rules.

WALLY

Okay, tell me what rules are being broken. Did I do something wrong?

KAREN

Maggie's husband's grave is out of hand and you need to clean all that up. You said it yourself; it's trashy.

WALLY

I really didn't..

KAREN

Clean it up, now. Clean the entire cemetery of all the extra illegal junk.

WALLY

I'll get a box and ...

KAREN

Throw it out! Throw it out now.

WALLY just stares at her.

WALLY

I'd like to start with the Maggie's lot first, please.

KAREN

What are you just standing there for? Do it or find some work elsewhere. I don't need your crap today. Go!

KAREN flicks WALLY on the forehead.

WALLY exits upset.

LIGHTS OUT.

OWL hoots.

LIGHTS UP ON:

INTERIOR OFFICE. KAREN is sitting at the desk. She picks up a bank deposit bag and pulls out a bunch of cash. She looks around and stashes it in her purse.

MAGGIE

(entering upset)

I want to know who desecrated my husbands grave?

KAREN

Good morning to you, too.

MAGGIE

No, it's not a good morning! My husbands grave has been stripped!

KAREN

Oh, you mean the paraphernalia that isn't allowed here.

MAGGIE

What are you talking about? I've had these things around his grave for two years now. No one has said a thing, till now.

KAREN

The sign clearly says in the entry: No plants, luminary lights, rocks, windchimes, windmills, and a host of other pieces of junk on or around the graves.

MAGGIE

Junk? Listen here, you smug little weasel. I realize you don't like me and I'm good with that. But I'm getting the impression you have another motive.

KAREN

Call me all the names you want. I'm looking out for the best interest for the cemetery and our staff.

MAGGIE

Staff? You only have one...wait a minute, I see what's happening here. You don't like me talking to Wally. Having lunch with him. You know he's not your slave to treat like crap.

KAREN

I don't have the slightest idea of what you're taking about.

MAGGIE

You treated Buddy the same way and drove his ass into the ground. You like breaking souls. Breaking men. When you see him and me laughing, you can't stand it. Wally being happy is unacceptable to you.

KAREN

Oh dear, I think you're high. Have you been smoking again, which by the way is also against the rules?

MAGGIE

If I was high I wouldn't want to strangle you right now. And I want to strangle you right now.

KAREN

Oh, now you're threatening me. This is getting better and better.

MAGGIE

I want my stuff back that you picked up and put somewhere.

KAREN

I didn't pick up any of it.

MAGGIE

Come on Karen, I just want to take it all home and decompress.

KAREN

Wally did it. He asked if he could take care of it first. Told me it was trashy-looking

MAGGIE

(crying)

He wouldn't do that. He wouldn't say that.

KAREN

Oh, he did honey. He didn't have kind words about you either.

MAGGIE

What did he say?

KAREN

I shouldn't say, but he told me he thought you were a crazy-ass loon, tree hugger.

MAGGIE

Where is he now?

KAREN

I think I have him mowing my yard, or one of my properties.

MAGGIE

Do you know where he put my stuff?

KAREN

I think he threw it out. The trash truck was here about an hour ago.

MAGGIE

What is happening?

KAREN

Maggie, he's not what you think. He has a troubled past. I took him in when no one else would. He has issues. I think he'd say anything to get close to you. I'm hard on him because that's the only way to keep him focused.

MAGGIE

I feel like I'm going to throw up.

MAGGIE stands up and slumps down bumping KAREN's purse and a file. The cash falls out and the file contents are exposed.

KAREN scrambles to retrieve the cash.
MAGGIE picks up the letter.

MAGGIE

What's this? A township meeting this Tuesday regarding the sale of Pioneer Cemetery to Super Duper Stores of Canada? What the hell is this?

KAREN

Give me that!

MAGGIE

How the hell can you sell a cemetery to a big box store?

KAREN

I can't discuss it.

MAGGIE

Seriously? This is messed up. Does Wally know about this?

KAREN shrugs and grins.

MAGGIE

I am going to throw up.

MAGGIE leaves the INTERIOR OFFICE.
EXTERIOR OFFICE. She gags off the side and exits.

WALLY enters SECTION THIRTEEN, not seeing MAGGIE exit.

WALLY is raking near the BISHOP. WALLY is wearing his headphones. BISHOP is reading her Bible. WALLY comes across some envelopes. He takes his headphones off.

WALLY

Hey Bishop, how long have these been down here?

BISHOP

I'd appreciate it if you return those to their former position.

WALLY

I have orders to pick up everything. What are they?

BISHOP

Correspondence from...someone.

WALLY

It says "Momma."

BISHOP closes his Bible .

BISHOP

If you must remove them, then put them in the refuse.

WALLY

Let's see what they say first. Come sit with me.

WALLY walks over and sits on the bench.

BISHOP

That's disrespectful. What ever happened to rest in peace?

WALLY

Letters were meant to be read. And these have never been opened. "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." Luke, eight something.

BISHOP

Seventeen. Luke 8:17. I'm impressed with your biblical knowledge, but mad as hell you are proceeding while I asked you not to. By your looks, I would have guessed you hadn't read one page.

WALLY

"Judge not, and you will not be judged." I can do this all day.

BISHOP

I'm going to guess your Daddy was a preacher or you wanted to be one.

WALLY

Nope. I found myself staying at a lot of places where that was the only book in the room.

BISHOP

Thessalonians 4:11?

WALLY

(laughing)

Let's see..."mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you."

BISHOP

So, you need to get back to work and mind your own business.

WALLY

Nice try. Do you even know what these say?

BISHOP is frustrated sits on the bench.

BISHOP

My daughter, Delilah, Who I disowned, was a crackhead. She stole from her father and I and then drained the church. We had her incarcerated.

WALLY

Did that help?

BISHOP

She was out in six months and on her return, she burned the church to the ground.

WALLY

That's terrible.

BISHOP

She disappeared and left us homeless.

WALLY

Did you rebuild the church?

BISHOP

The church was rebuilt, but not with me as the Pastor. The congregation voted me out. After I built that church up from nothing. They punished me for Delilah's doings.

WALLY

It looks like maybe she felt bad and came here to say she was sorry.

BISHOP

She came three times. She said nothing. The last two times she left those envelopes. I want nothing to do with her or those letters. She robbed and destroyed everything that was sacred to me. There is nothing in those letters worth reading. If she knew I had fifty bucks in my pocket, she'd dig me up and take it. She's dead to me. Not the other way around.

WALLY

Were you ever close to her?

BISHOP

Close? We were together all the time. Her father and I did everything together. She was such a sweet little girl. So pretty and that smile would light up any room she walked in. You think you know the bible? Delilah could quote it backwards and forwards. She'd correct me more than I want to admit. Why, she'd get up on the pulpit at the age of ten and get the crowd up on their feet.

WALLY

Sounds like she was intelligent, too.

BISHOP

Smart. Lord she was the smartest kid in her class. She graduated magna cum laude from Spelman University with a degree in Economics. She could have gone anywhere in the world, but she came back home. She said the neighborhood needed her there. She started fundraisers and went to the city to convince them to fund a revitalization project.

WALLY

She sounds amazing. What on earth happened?

BISHOP

She was a victim of a hit and run. They never found the driver. Some say it was on purpose to stop her from cleaning up the block. I don't know. But the pain she endured was bad and she got addicted to OxyContin. Then the devil prowled in, roaring like a lion, and devoured her.

WALLY

Sounds like it wasn't her fault.

BISHOP

I raised her better than that. I took to her rehab more than once and she failed each time. I know she could have overcome this poison. She forgot Jesus was there for her.

WALLY

I can tell you firsthand. It is the hardest challenge some will ever face. I sat with junkies, drinkers, and hardcore users in my day.

BISHOP

You came out alright. The bible must have been your salvation.

WALLY

I was my own salvation. I got sick and tired of being drunk. I wanted to be me again. So, one day at a time, I broke away free and clear. Booze is little league to crack and opioid addiction. Delilah couldn't find her soul in what is called the shadow.

BISHOP

The shadow?

WALLY

Carl Jung psychology talks about the unknown conscious. The dark inner being in all of us, the shadow. If we don't face the darkness in ourselves and put a lid on it, it can take over. Drugs are like a catalyst sometimes. Her soul is trapped deep in the shadow. Only she can find her way out.

BISHOP

I don't believe that. Sounds like hogwash. Jesus can save anyone. She lost her faith and turned her back on him.

WALLY

I bet she didn't. Her brain was fogged up and her ears were plugged with drugs. What do you think happened to her?

BISHOP

I don't know. I didn't even recognize her when she came. She looked different. Older. I'd go underground when she came. I just couldn't deal with it.

WALLY

Let's open one up and see what it says.

BISHOP

I really wish you wouldn't.

WALLY

It's kind of faded. This is the oldest one. We will go in chronological order. The hand writing is messy. Bear with me.

BISHOP

Let's get this over with.

WALLY

"Dear Momma: I got out of rehab this week. I think this time it's for good. I'm sorry I missed your funeral. I wasn't me. I truly was out of my mind. Out of my soul. But I am here now and asking you to believe in me. I ask that you never give up on me as Luke 15:20-24. Daddy has taken me in and I promise I won't take advantage of him. I feel like I broke you two up and I'm sure you feel the same. I will make it up to you. I promise. Love, Delilah"

BISHOP

I'm sure she went back to the Devil. I'm sure of it.

WALLY

Let's find out.

BISHOP

I don't think I can bear it.

WALLY

Footprints in the sand, footprints in the sand.

BISHOP

Carry me Lord.

WALLY opens the next letter.

WALLY

Oh, the writing style is much nicer. This is much easier to read. "Dear Momma: It's been two years since I last came here. I've been clean since. I had trouble getting work so I started my own business from my home and have done quite well. I have opened a halfway house on Elm down from our old house. I'm going to make good of my education and help folks in need. I'm really trying, Momma. I love you, Delilah."

BISHOP stares ahead with no expression. She takes off her glasses and dabs her eyes with her hankie.

WALLY looks at BISHOP for a beat.

BISHOP

Read the third letter.

WALLY

Yes, Ma'am. Oh, now this is nice. It has a letter head that reads: "MOUNTAIN INVESTMENTS" at the top and ' PRESIDENT, DELILAH MOUNTAIN, MS. IN APPLIED ECONOMICS." The handwriting is beautiful. "Dear Momma: Five years has passed since our last visit. Daddy joined our dear Lord last week. He called out for you in his last hours. He still loved you. This is my fault I know, but every day I try to make it up to you. My investment company that I started in my apartment has grown to a large office in the old neighborhood. We renovated the old bank that was closed years ago with the grant money I helped find for the whole three block area. You wouldn't recognize the place. I have taken a good deal of the profits from my investments and have rebuilt the church. The congregation has returned and has forgiven me for my sins. I am now a Deacon there, and I share God's word every chance I get. I want to make you proud Momma. I love you, Delilah."

BISHOP puts his face in his hands and sobs.

WALLY

Sounds like the Mountain girl is a chip off the old block.

BISHOP

(light giggle)

She sure is.

BISHOP stands up and looks upward.

BISHOP

I will not cast another stone, dear Father in heaven. I abandoned my child and I am deeply sorry. I see my stubbornness has blinded me. She fought the good fight and won. My dear child, I forgive you and ask that you forgive me. "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see." I loved my life!

A bright light shines down on BISHOP and he smiles. He looks upward and then to WALLY.

BISHOP

Wally, you are truly an angel. Take care of my flock. It's up to you to help them find the way.

BISHOP exits with the light. WALLY watches on with a smile.

WALLY is staring upward and smiling. The GHOSTS step forward towards the bench, looking upward as well, but look shocked.

CHARLES

Are you kidding me?

GUNNY

Son, are you showing favoritism for men of the cloth? That doesn't work here!

WALLY

I didn't do anything. The Bishop did it by herself.

CHARLES

I'm having trouble believing that.

GUNNY

You're holding out on us sorcerer. I just spilled my guts out to you and here I stand.

CHARLES

Me too.

WALLY

Guys, calm down. I'm not a some wierdo spellbinding warlock. I'm just a guy who is able to see and talk to the dead.

CHARLES

You're trying to make it sound like that's okay. You are a wierdo.

WALLY

Maybe so. But I'm no sorcerer. I am a good listener. And maybe I ask the right questions. Don't you see? You all think you're so self-righteous or unworthy. I'm not a priest, but you all seemed to want to come to me for a confession and that's fine, but I'm not sure you are listening to my suggestions and you're damn sure not listening to yourselves. You need to stop acting like fools and look at yourselves from the inside. You two won't do it. The Bishop finally saw himself and realized he was wrong in his case. He forgave himself and then realized he loved his life and it's okay to be human.

GUNNY

Oh horse hockey!

CHARLES

You can't con a lawyer, sexton. I'd sue you if I could, for... emotional damage!

GUNNY

You're a fraud. We 'd like you to leave.

WALLY

Fine. I hope your grass grows knee high. It shouldn't take long you all are so full of manure. Bye!

WALLY turns quickly and enters MAGGIE.
She walks up to WALLY and slaps him on the face.

MAGGIE

Who the hell do you think you are?

The GHOSTS cheer her on.

WALLY

I'm sorry Maggie...

MAGGIE

Not only did you desecrate his grave, you didn't even give me a chance to pick it up myself.

WALLY

I would have called you but you don't believe in phones and...

MAGGIE

Stop. Now did you tell Karen that you thought I was crazy ass loon, tree hugger?

WALLY

Yes, but that's before...

MAGGIE

I trusted you. I thought you were a nice guy and fell for your performance. You and Karen are up to no good. She must have brought you in to help seal the deal.

WALLY

I don't know what you are talking about? Seal what deal?

MAGGIE

The sale of the cemetery to a Canadian firm.

WALLY

I assure you, I don't know any of this. This is all news to me.

MAGGIE

Just stop with the lies. Don't ever speak to me again.

MAGGIE exits.

WALLY

Maggie! Maggie!

He watches as MAGGIE exits and turns to SECTION THIRTEEN. The GHOSTS turn their backs to him with their arms crossed.

Wally enters into the INTERIOR OFFICE and sits at the desk with his head down.

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT TWO

LIGHTS UP ON:

SECTION TWENTY THREE . John Green's grave. MAGGIE enters with a flashlight. John's grave is decorated and lit up. More than before.

MAGGIE

What? But he threw it all away.

MAGGIE walks around the headstone smiling.

MAGGIE

John, I don't understand? Wally admitted to stripping all this off and he even admitted that he called me a crazy-ass loon. He must have kept this somewhere instead of throwing it all out. But why? I know I shouldn't be talking to you about this but I'm confused and hurt. I really liked this guy. He seemed cool and understanding but apparently it is all an act. He is some kind of partner with Karen. Or is he? God I hope I didn't fall for one of her lines of crap that she doles out on a daily basis...I bet I did. God she is so good at it. That spider weaves a sticky web. But why would Wally say I was crazy? Well, most people think I am at first. I guess compared to the clones around here I am. Okay, I should take this whole thing with a grain of salt. Wally never got a chance to explain himself. I kept cutting him off. I bet this whole thing is the work of Karen. I need to talk to him. If I am right, he probably doesn't know about Karen's plan to sell the cemetery.

MAGGIE kisses her hand and taps her hand on the headstone.

MAGGIE

Thanks John, you're always a great listener. I knew if I talked to you it would all make sense.

MAGGIE runs off and exits.

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

INTERIOR OFFICE. WALLY is at the desk. He is looking at a ledger book and using a calculator. He is wearing headphones. A desk lamp is on.

WALLY

This just isn't adding up. There is a lot of cash sales I personally made and they are not here.

WALLY writes down notes. He opens some desk drawers and pulls out a bunch of envelopes with a rubber band around them. He reads one.

WALLY

"This is to inform you that we are in the final stages of selling the property of Pioneer Cemetery to the Super Duper Stores of Canada."

WALLY jumps up and runs out of the INTERIOR OFFICE to SECTION THIRTEEN where the GHOSTS are sitting.

WALLY

Guys, guys, we have a problem.

CHARLES

We don't, you do. Please leave.

WALLY

No, no. Listen to this. "This is to inform you that we are in the final stages of selling the property of Pioneer Cemetery to the Super Duper Stores of Canada.

CHARLES

What do you mean? Build a damn store over us?

WALLY

It says they are planning on disinterring all of the bodies and moving them to Greenlawn Cemetery.

GUNNY

That's treason!

CHARLES

That would take a hell of a lot of lawyers to pull that off.

WALLY

Super Duper is a huge box store company. They pretty much do what they want. Even if it's illegal I wager.

CHARLES

I do not want anyone touching my remains and dragging me over to that shoddy side of town. This is horrible. You have to do something, Walter.

WALLY

It says there is a question and answer tomorrow night to discuss everything in detail. She has it marked that all the relatives signed off already agreeing to this action.

GUNNY

I don't believe it! Wally, I forgive you for being a jerk. Now go save the cemetery.

CHARLES

Put any paperwork you can find on my grave and I'll look at it.

WALLY

I'm going to stay up and dig a little more in the office and see if I can find something, anything.

WALLY puts his head phones back on and enters the INTERIOR OFFICE. He continues to look at the ledger and other items.

KAREN enters wearing a long rain coat and stilettos, and stumbles along outside the office .

GUNNY

Holy hell, the enemy has infiltrated the headquarters.

CHARLES

She's drunk. And look, she's wearing stilettos. She looks like a monkey on stilts.

KAREN stops and tips up a bottle of booze.

GUNNY

We need to warn him. Wally, Karen is coming!

The GHOSTS yell and shout out warnings to WALLY. He hears nothing wearing the headphones.

KAREN throws the bottle away.

KAREN

I gotta pee.

She stumbles toward the GHOSTS and heads toward CHARLES' grave.

CHARLES

Oh no, oh no, No not again. Not here. Go on the Bishop's, she's not here anymore.!

KAREN stumbles by CHARLES and the steps on Bishop's grave. Then she stumbles backward onto CHARLES' and squats.

CHARLES

Why is this happening?!

The GUNNY laughs at CHARLES.

WALLY closes the ledger book and goes to his apartment. He takes his headphones off.

GUNNY

I hope Walter locks his door at night. She's on a mission.

KAREN stands up and stumbles across to the OFFICE She enters the INTERIOR OFFICE and looks around. She turns off the desk lamp. She heads up the stairs to the APARTMENT.

INTERIOR APARTMENT. WALLY is looking at his lunch box painting. KAREN knocks on the apartment door.

WALLY

(smiles)

Hello? Come in.

KAREN

(stumbling in)

Where can a girl get a drink around here?

WALLY

(nervously)

Oh, hello Karen. I've got some orange juice.

KAREN

(hiccup)

Great. Now we just need some vodka.

WALLY

Sorry, I don't drink anymore.

KAREN

Oh come on. We are off the clock. Let's get to know each other. Relax a little. I think you are doing a good job and I just wanted to tell you in person. Maybe celebrate a little.

WALLY

I appreciate it, but I'm kind of tired.

KAREN

Oh, come on. You kind of owe me. Taking you in when no one else would. How about showing a gal a little appreciation (burps).

WALLY grabs a bottle of water and offers it to
KAREN.

WALLY

Here, maybe some water might be best.

KAREN pushes it away and it spills all over
WALLY'S shirt.

KAREN

Oopsie. You better take that shirt off and get a new one.

KAREN tries to help take his shirt off and
WALLY resists.

WALLY

(exiting)

I got it. I got it. Hold on let me go change.

While WALLY is gone, KAREN takes off her rain jacket and exposes a skimpy nightgown. She pulls out a whip and strikes a pose.

MAGGIE enters outside of the OFFICE with a folder.

GUNNY

Oh lord , I see a major conflict over the horizon.

CHARLES

Cat fight, anyone?

GUNNY

Quiet!

WALLY comes out without a shirt on and is shocked to see KAREN hardly dressed.

WALLY

What are you...

KAREN pushes him on the bed

MAGGIE comes rushing in the INTERIOR OFFICE and goes straight up into the APARTMENT. She enters, and freezes. MAGGIE is speechless.

WALLY

Maggie?

MAGGIE is crushed and exits the APARTMENT.

KAREN

Good riddance. She's not for you. Now where were we.

MAGGIE exits the INTERIOR OFFICE. The GHOSTS look on as she exits.

GUNNY

The enemy has taken the prize.

CHARLES

She's crying.

WALLY jumps up from his bed.

WALLY

Get out. This is unprofessional.

KAREN

Wow, you're standing up for yourself (growls) , I like it.

WALLY

Get out Karen. Go sleep it off.

KAREN

Don't talk to me like that.

KAREN tries to flick WALLY on the forehead but WALLY grabs her hand and stops her.

WALLY

This is my place and I'm telling you to get out.

KAREN

Well I run this place and you're fired. How about that.

WALLY

Fine. I won't work for a crooked thief.

KAREN

I'm leaving, but when I return you'd better be out! You are a pathetic loser. Go sleep in the streets where you belong.

KAREN stumbles out of the APARTMENT and walks over to the desk.

She turns the light on and opens the ledger. She looks around and takes it with her. She exits the INTERIOR OFFICE to the EXTERIOR.

CHARLES

And here comes number two.

KAREN burps and exits.

CHARLES

Stay classy, girl.

GUNNY

That girl should be court-martialed.

WALLY grabs the few things he has and stuffs them in a duffle bag. He exits the APARTMENT and the INTERIOR OFFICE and walks over to section thirteen.

WALLY

Well, she fired me. I tried to stand up to her and here I am with bag in hand. I'm no good to you now, guys.

ELVIS

You aren't giving up are you?

WALLY

I have no choice.

CHARLES

Didn't you find anything else? I'm still looking these papers over you left with me.

WALLY

I did but I need the ledger. I wrote a few notes but that isn't enough. I'm sorry guys, big corporation prevails again

GUNNY

Marine! Leave no man behind!

WALLY

I'm sorry, I was over my head. I'm going to find a motel or something and then start looking for a new job. I'm sorry. Hey Charles, before I forget, there is some flowers growing in your parents grave. You might want to check it out. Bye.

WALLY picks up his duffle bag and leaves. The GHOSTS look on as he exits.

CHARLES

I don't care!

CHARLES crosses his arms pouts and paces.

CHARLES

Damn it!

CHARLES grabs some Earth and walks over to CENTER STAGE.

CHARLES

Mom, Dad? I have something I want to say. I forgive you. Even though you slammed the door on me, I forgive you. Your minds were never good at looking outside the box. Ironically, you can't find your way out of a box now. It's too bad you feel such shame now but for me it's nice to know that you see the light. I hope someday you can peek out and take a look around. Maybe we can start all over again. Wally is here now, too. He's a good listener. He's really got me thinking. And I know he has the others in section thirteen thinking, too. Okay, well nice talking to you. I feel better now.

CHARLES turns to walk back.

MR. & MRS WORHTINGTON (OFF STAGE)

We love you, son.

CHARLES

(smiling)

I love you too.

A light over his head increases. He throws his head back as the light gets brighter.

CHARLES

Not yet. I have something to fix first.

ACT THREE

LIGHTS OUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS enters and then enters INTERIOR OFFICE as the GHOSTS sadly look on. KAREN and JACQUES DIESEL enter with ledgers and brief cases. The GHOSTS hiss and moan as they walk and ENTER the INTERIOR OFFICE.

MAGGIE enters with a sad face and then enters the INTERIOR OFFICE.

CHARLES

You call this a forum? Maggie against the township and the corporate. This will be short. Where the hell are the other families?

GUNNY

I think the witch made sure nobody showed up for this.

CHARLES

I really thought Walter would have helped us.

WALLY enters wearing a dress shirt, slacks, and a tie.

WALLY

What's with the sad faces?

The GHOSTS jump up excited and cheer.

WALLY

I laid there in bed thinking, why should I roll over when messing with that devil would be so much fun.

CHARLES

Where on Earth did you find those clothes?

WALLY

Salvation Army is an amazing place. I got all this for fifteen bucks.

CHARLES

You paid that much?

GUNNY

I'm proud of you Marine.

WALLY

Now you all know I hate talking to the living, especially standing up in front of people.

CHARLES

You'll need a legal partner.

GUNNY

I'm not missing this battle, no way!

CHARLES

We all can't go. We tried to leave all at once before and we all ended back here.

GUNNY

What if we went together? I mean arm in arm together. We used to do this in the service to build trust. Everyone always said it gave off an energy. Let's try to grab a little Earth and then go arm in arm over there.

The GHOSTS grab some Earth and with some hesitation grab arms. GUNNY nods and CHARLES nods back.

GUNNY

Okay small steps. More like a shuffle.

The GHOSTS in a wonky way shuffle and then walk in slow motion.

GUNNY

Marine, you lead the way.

WALLY

(smiling)

I wish you guys could see yourselves. I'm feeling fatigued already. Let's do this and quick.

They all enter the interior of the office.

KAREN is flirting poorly with JACQUES DIESEL. Trustee REVEREND STEVE ADAMS is going over some papers.

WALLY enters and sits down. The GHOSTS stay close behind standing and looking awkward. MAGGIE is a few chairs away.

KAREN

What are you doing here all dolled up? I fired you.

WALLY

This is a public hearing right? I have every right to be here.

KAREN

Fine. It doesn't matter. This is a done deal and you would have been let go anyway.

GHOSTS

Hiss. Boo.

KAREN

Let's get this thing started.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Fine. I've looked over the paper work. The survey or report is in. Environmental report and the sewage report is good. Certified mail has been sent out and the six month deadline is today for disputes. We have sixteen people who responded and signed off saying the relocation of this cemetery to Greenlawn Cemetery was approved. Because the cemetery is so old we didn't expect even the sixteen.

MAGGIE

I have a dispute.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Who are you?

MAGGIE

I am Margaret Green. My husband John Green is buried here in section twenty three. I buried him here two years ago and I'll be damned if you are going to move him.

KAREN

Well we never heard from you.

MAGGIE

I never received a certified letter or anything.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS picks up a pile of papers and pulls one out.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Here is a letter with your signature approving the relocation.

MAGGIE

Let me see that. That's not my signature. This is a forgery.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Ma'am even if that isn't your signature, we would have to have more than just one complaint.

KAREN gives a big smile. MAGGIE sits and pouts.

KAREN

Can we proceed now that the hillbilly has spoken? I do want to say that this is a wonderful day today for our town. I'm so glad not only to represent our township but be a big part of this real-estate transaction. My office, at "Karen's Condos and More" has worked diligently to see this monumental deal come to fruition. Not only will there be a Super Duper Store but a brand new condominium complex on the East side. See me after the meeting for early discounts. Many thanks to our French Canadian investors.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Thank you KAREN for your...words. Now, we need to approve the budgetary books and ledgers so we can close all business with Pioneer Cemetery. Karen, since you are also the financial secretary for the township and the cemetery, I'm sure everything is in order.

KAREN looks at WALLY with evil eyes.

KAREN

Yes, I signed off on it already. The books finish off with a zero balance and all assets have been transferred to the township trust fund.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Before we proceed any further we will open the floor for any discussions or concerns.

CHARLES

Stand up, this is it.

WALLY

(softly and sheepishly)

I uh, have some...

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Sir, please address the council and state your name.

KAREN

Yeah, speak up, we can't hear you. You're mumbling.

GUNNY

I'd like to smack that woman right in the mouth.

CHARLES

After I poke her in the eyes.

WALLY

Will you all shut up!

KAREN

How dare you address the trustees in such manner. Sit down.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Let the man speak. If he can.

CHARLES

Come on Wally you can do this.

WALLY

I...I..have some..

CHARLES

(frustrated)

Oh good lord.

CHARLES jumps toward WALLY, entering his body. WALLY's mannerisms change to CHARLES immediately. CHARLES "lip syncs" while WALLY speaks.

WALLY/CHARLES

(speaking like Charles)

My name is Walter Boswell. I have some questions regarding the books.

The TRUSTEES and Maggie are shocked at the transition.

WALLY/CHARLES

(speaking like Charles)

As a previous employee I feel it is my duty to point out some discrepancies in the books maintained by the financial secretary with the cheap earrings and the turkey neck.

KAREN

Who do you think you are talking to?

WALLY walks up to her and flicks her on the forehead.

WALLY/CHARLES

(speaking like Charles)

Honey I'm talking to you. Am I the only one here who thinks this is a conflict of interest? There are rules and laws that I am sure are in place, even in this podunk town. For instance, why is the trustee with the rayon skirt, who is a realtor as well, the realtor on this transaction? Conflict! And may I add she is building condos on this deal as well. Really? Really?

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

In Karen's defense, she is the only realtor in the township.

WALLY/CHARLES

(speaking like Charles)

Get someone else! There has to be someone in a thirty mile radius. And why is she profiting on this deal? She is making twenty percent?

JACQUES DIESEL

(in French)

En fait trente .

WALLY/CHARLES

(speaking like Charles)

Thirty percent?

JACQUES DIESEL

Parlez Vous Francais?

WALLY

(speaking like Charles)

Oui, je parle francaise. Et je trouve que toute cette entreprise a les mains sales. C'est une cupidite' immoral et pure. Vous devriez avoir honte de vous-memes d'avoir profan'e ces familles. Que dirait ta mere?

GUNNY

Go Charles, go.

JACQUES DIESEL

(crying)

Ma mere? Ma Mere.

GUNNY

Up your Frenchy!

GUNNY pulls on CHARLES and jumps into WALLY. WALLY stands up straight and is now GUNNY.

WALLY/GUNNY

(speaking like Gunny)

I have seen many a court martial that smelled of cow dung in my day. But today, I smell deception, misconception, subreption, and pure corruption that reeks of raw manure. It is paramount that we maintain a judicial system that extracts breaches of misconduct.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

This isn't a court martial.

WALLY runs up to the REVEREND STEVE ADAMS and gets in his face.

WALLY/GUNNY

(speaking like Gunny)

I don't remember yielding the floor. When this meeting is over I want ten push-ups.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

What?

WALLY/GUNNY

(speaking like Gunny)

You heard me. But now I want twenty.

KAREN

Who do you think you are bossing us around?

WALLY/GUNNY

(speaking like Gunny)

Shut your mouth and sit down. Now! I'm not finished.

KAREN sits down and crosses her arms.

KAREN

Oh my God you are a schizophrenic!

WALLY stops and closes his eyes.

WALLY

(with confidence)

It's okay. I got this. Ladies and gentlemen, let me start by saying that when these three hundred and twenty three souls were laid to rest, regardless of time itself, their loving families paid the trustees for a portion of land to bury their loved one. They actually own that land. No matter how little it may be. And I can guarantee you that if they were alive today, and you asked them if it was okay to dig up their moms, and dads, and babies, and so forth, I'm sure they would tell you to go to hell. But, because they are dead as well and cannot speak for themselves, I will speak on their behalf. Because the graves are over one hundred and fifty years old, you will not find a solid casket. You will be lucky to find bones.

Your excavators, who I saw are waiting down the street, will rip the earth open with a backhoe in hopes of maybe getting a few parts of a human to legally claim it's the person in the grave. All in the name of progress. All in the name of greed. Many of the headstones say RIP. Do you know what that means? It means Rest In Peace. I'm surprised at you reverend. Of all the people here, you should know better.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

We plan to have a special memorial service and rededication after this transaction is complete.

WALLY

A transaction. Is that what it is? Good word, because I know that soft money is getting passed around to make this happen. That's why I was fired; because I figured it out. I pray, Reverend, you don't have dirty hands, too.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

My hands are clean of any accusations and I am all ears if you can prove anything of the sort.

WALLY

I'm glad to hear that. If you take a look at the financial book on pages forty-six and fifty - one , you will see that they don't add up. There are several transactions that were paid in cash and fall short of being recorded.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Karen, will you give me the ledger?

KAREN slides the book over and stays stony faced.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

I'm going to need a few minutes. You all take a break and I'll take a look.

KAREN

(belching)

Good I need a cigarette. I got damn heartburn from the freak show performance.

KAREN exits the interior office. The GHOSTS HISS at her as she passes.

GUNNY

You're doing great, son.

CHARLES

Way to stick it to that hag.

WALLY

Great job guys, but stay the hell out of my body. That's messed up.

WALLY is drained and exits the INTERIOR OFFICE and the GHOST shuffle outside as well staying together awkwardly and not speaking.

MAGGIE sees WALLY exit and follows him to the EXTERIOR OFFICE.

MAGGIE

Wally? Can we talk?

WALLY

Maggie? Sure.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. I thought you were in all this with Karen. That speech you gave was ...well, really bizarre at first, but then after you got your composure you really hit it out of the park. It was beautiful.

WALLY

Thanks. I'm sorry too. I have to tell you. I don't feel like we have enough to win this.

The Owl hoots and they look upward. The GHOSTS yell at the bird.

MAGGIE

Well I'm sure if she cheated the books, Reverend Adams will find it.

WALLY

He should. It's pretty obvious. I just don't trust her. She's sneaky as hell.

MAGGIE

I trust you will figure it out. I'm going back in. And don't worry about the owl being a bad omen.

MAGGIE heads to the INTERIOR OFFICE and the OWL makes more hooting sounds. The GHOSTS yell again.

WALLY

(to the heavens)

I could use some help down here. This is draining me too.

The OWL hoots again. This time WALLY reacts to owl poop hitting him in his hair. The GHOSTS react with giggles. WALLY reaches his hand to his hair

WALLY

(to the heavens)

Yuck, thanks a lot.

WALLY pulls out a hanky and wipes his hair. He heads back into the INTERIOR OFFICE. The GHOSTS follow shuffling in.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS walks in and sits down, as does KAREN and JACQUES DIESEL. KAREN seems assured of herself.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

It looks like everyone is back and I have had some time to look at the pages that you pointed out. I have looked them over and over and everything makes sense.

WALLY

That can't be! May I look?

KAREN is smiling and full of confidence. WALLY looks the pages over and over.

WALLY

I don't understand? They somehow have been altered.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

I'm sorry but I don't see any discrepancies.

WALLY looks at KAREN and she gives him a smug insulting look.

WALLY
(to Karen)

Saved your ass, huh?

KAREN

I did nothing of the sort. The books are always balanced. You're just a disgruntled ex-employee. Go back to your cardboard home with those other dirty hobos.

WALLY rubs his head confused and jolts when his fingers touch more owl poop. He looks at his fingers and smiles. KAREN laughs at WALLY.

KAREN
(laughing)

Look the fool has bird poop in his hair.

WALLY feels his hair and looks at his fingers.

WALLY
(Looking upward to the heavens)

Holy crap! Maggie! Would you come up here with me please.

MAGGIE steps up beside WALLY.

WALLY
Maggie Johnson, what did your husband do for a living?

MAGGIE
He was many things. Most knew him as an ornithologist.

KAREN
Who cares? Can we vote and sign the paperwork? This has gone on long enough. He's just delaying the inevitable.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Yes, Mr. Boswell, what are you getting at?

WALLY

Maggie, what is an ornithologist? What do they do?

MAGGIE

It's the scientific study of birds.

WALLY

Did he teach you a lot about such bird studies?

MAGGIE

Well yes. I know quite a great deal about birds. Why?

WALLY

There is a bird family that has made their home at Pioneer Cemetery. Do you know the species?

MAGGIE realizes what WALLY is getting at.

MAGGIE

(smiling)

Holy crap! The Barn Owl.

KAREN

So what! I've seen those Barn Owls out there. I've been wanting to shoot them. They are a menace.

WALLY

What's so special about the Barn Owl Maggie?

MAGGIE

They are an endangered and protected species. They are especially protected against disturbance when nesting.

WALLY

And are they nesting at Pioneer Cemetery?

MAGGIE

Yes they are. And they have little baby chicks right now.

KAREN

Wait, what?

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

I've seen them here too. It never dawned on me that they were endangered. Mr. Diesel, your people should have caught this. Mr. Boswell is right, I've read where another project was shut down because of the Barn Owl. We can't bulldoze the cemetery as long as they are living here. This sale of Pioneer Cemetery is not going to happen. This meeting is over.

JACQUES DIESEL head goes down. He takes the papers and tears them up and exits.

KAREN

Wait what did you do? Come back. This is outrageous! No, No, No!

The GHOSTS cheer! MAGGIE hugs WALLY.
KAREN grabs her chest and collapses.
REVEREND STEVE ADAMS checks on her.

WALLY and MAGGIE leave the interior office and the GHOSTS shuffle behind still attached to one another.

Once outside the GHOSTS get in line and do the bunny hop back to section thirteen.

The OWL hoots overhead.

GUNNY

I love that bird!

CHARLES

Let's go check on the babies!

WALLY grabs his hair and looks at his hand.

MAGGIE

I'm so glad that owl crapped on your head.

WALLY

You were right about asking the universe for help and not always seeing the answer.

MAGGIE

The universe always helps people with a pure heart. Thank you for saving the cemetery.
What now?

WALLY

I guess I'll be moving along.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS comes out of the
office.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Hey Wally. I think Karen collapsed from all the stress.

WALLY

Is she okay?

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

I don't know. I got a friend taking her to the E.R. to look her over.

WALLY

Oh gosh I didn't mean for that to happen.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

I know you didn't. You're right, I think we got caught up in the tax money it would have brought us. Maybe we can talk them into that piece of land south of town.

WALLY

Well I hope that works out.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Speaking of work, I was hoping you could take your old job back. You can run the place. Karen doesn't need to supervise this if we have the right person. We'll give you a raise too. What do you say?

WALLY

Well...

MAGGIE

Please Wally.

WALLY

Okay.

The GHOSTS cheer! MAGGIE gives WALLY a hug! REVEREND STEVE ADAMS shakes WALLY'S hand

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

Great. Here are the keys. She's all yours. I'm going to check on KAREN. God bless.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS exits.

MAGGIE

You kind of jumped. Are the ghosts cheering?

WALLY

Yes, they are.

MAGGIE

Nice shirt and tie. Did you get it at the Salvation Army?

WALLY

Matter of fact I did. Don't make fun of it. I like it.

MAGGIE

It was my husbands, favorite too.

WALLY

What?

MAGGIE

I donated it to Salvation Army.

WALLY

Awkward.

GUNNY Walks to his chair and sits with his head hung low. CHARLES walks over to him and puts his hand on GUNNY'S shoulder.

CHARLES

Hey, I must tell you , I went over to see my parents grave and well we came to terms.

GUNNY

Good for you.

CHARLES

Gunny, Wally was right. We need to come to terms with what is holding us here.

GUNNY

Well ,you are still here.

CHARLES

I had an important appointment with some friends. Some good friends.

WALLY walks up to GUNNY.

WALLY

Gunny, you just helped save a cemetery and a family of owls. You made some friends too. It's time you forgive yourself. Your men have. It's time to let go.

GUNNY stands up and CHARLES stands as well, They hug. GUNNY breaks down.

GUNNY

I forgot how to cry. It's been so long.

WALLY salutes.

WALLY

Gunnery Sargent J.B. Evilsizer, as acting officer of the Pioneer Cemetery, I relieve you of your watch. You no longer must bear the pain and suffering of the past. Your new assignment awaits you. Gods speed.

GUNNY salutes WALLY. A light comes down on GUNNY and one on CHARLES.

A spotlight opposite stage for REVEREND STEVE ADAMS. KAREN lays on the floor beside him as if in a casket with her arms crossed.

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS

“Truly, truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”

REVEREND STEVE ADAMS exits. KAREN stays on the stage motionless and dead.

A light comes from the background and the BISHOP walks in with a white choir gown on and a tambourine.

BISHOP

Wally, my good shepherd, how is my flock?

The GHOSTS greet BISHOP with hugs and cheers. He then walks over to WALLY.

The GHOSTS put on their own white choir gowns.

WALLY

Did they kick you out?

BISHOP

(laughing)

Nope. I told them I'd watch over them. I wanted to personally escort them. Hey, how'd you like that bird crap hitting you in the head? That was my idea.

WALLY

That was you?

BISHOP

Well that owl was practically shouting out the answer to you and you weren't listening. So I whispered in her ear.

WALLY

Thank God.

BISHOP

You know it. Good job, Wally. Thank you from all of us. Looks like you have other souls to help.

MAGGIE

Wow. I can see them.

The GHOSTS all sit up and the BISHOP begins shaking his tambourine up-tempo and leads them in an acapella classic gospel song. A song the BISHOP can sing and get the audience to clap along to. The CAST joins in too.

As they sing they go to the audience to clap in time with them. WALLY and MAGGIE join in. As the song ends the GHOSTS exit as they sing the last verse. WALLY and MAGGIE walk in tempo and exit. KAREN sits up.

The stage is dead quiet. KAREN just looks around disgusted. The Owl hoots.

KAREN

(shouting upward)

Oh, shut up!

BLACKOUT.