

INCARNA, YOUR TRAVEL AGENCY IN TIME

By XXX

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Characters:

DIRECTOR OF INCARNA: A well-dressed woman wearing business clothes.

MANAGER OF INCARNA: A man wearing business suit and tie.

SHARP DUDE/UNLUCKY MAN/MAN: One actor with clothes change. Typical street clothes, the sharp dude is dressed in up-to-date fashion.

OLD WOMAN/WOMAN: One actor with clothes change. Typical street clothes.

Scene: The stage has two doors, above the main door is a sign that says “INCARNA”, the other door leads to a back room. There is a desk or table, a waste basket and two chairs. On the desk we see a large, thick book and a telephone. Behind the desk is a large poster that features the slogan “INCARNA, your travel agency in time”. The poster includes pictures of an astronaut (perhaps wearing a space suit and space helmet) and famous dead people (perhaps Albert Einstein, Queen Elizabeth I, etc.) from throughout history (including ancient history, perhaps the image of a Greek or Roman statue) as well as, scattered across the poster, some important dates from history (such as 1492, 1066, etc.). There is a cash drawer or safe or some place to put money. There is a tape recorder or CD player or something that can be used to play recorded, otherworldly music, although the actual music might come from behind the stage (perhaps the otherworldly music might be “Thus Spake Zarathustra” by Richard Strauss – the part used in the movie “2001”).

The director and manager are seated at the table/desk. In front of the director is a large book. The manager is holding a notebook, is writing, and is thinking aloud, trying to invent an advertising slogan.

MANAGER: You can be what you want to be. **(Slight pause.)** No. **(Pause.)** You can be whatever you want if.... **(Slight pause.)** No. **(Pause.)** The future is yours. **(Slight pause,)** No. **(Pause.)** You can go.... **(Slight pause.)** No. No. No. **(He stops writing. Shakes pen.)** Oh, to hell with it. **(Tears page out of notebook. Crumples paper. Tosses paper into wastebasket. His pen starts again.)** We can send you in.... No. That's not it. **(Pause. Has idea. Laughs. Speaks slowly and deliberately, thinking out loud.)** We...can...send...you...where...ever...you...want...to...go!

DIRECTOR: Now wait a minute. You can't promise every possible choice. Can you just imagine the thousands of Cleopatras and Alexander The Greats we would have? On the other hand, we can always promise the future. Those slots are still available.

MANAGER: Of course we don't know much about the future. Let's be honest about it.

DIRECTOR: And that's where you come into the picture. That's why we hired you. You're a poet. You work with words.

MANAGER: **(Makes gestures of not agreeing, but is still writing.)**

DIRECTOR: OK. So you didn't make it as a poet. You failed there. But this is your big opportunity. Your job. You belong here. You can make lots of money!

MANAGER: **(Doesn't listen. Still writes for a while.)** Yes! Finally! I have it! Can I read it to you?

DIRECTOR: **(Makes herself comfortable and then makes a gesture to let the manager know that he can read it.)**

MANAGER: **(Jumps up and reads, exuberantly.)** In this life, we can be sure of only one thing. We will die, and then we will be reincarnated. Lucky for us, we now have an opportunity to move beyond chaotic, undirected reincarnation. Soul scientist Dr. I. Ramachanduran has showed us a way to control reincarnation according to the wishes of the reincarnatee. This powerful technology is now available

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through INCARNA. Using soul science, we can transport our client to any time or any place or any body in the past or in the future. Do you want to return in a hundred thousand years to explore the galaxy? Or, do you want to be a mighty ice-age hunter who single handedly brings down a mammoth? Anything is possible. We are the travel agency of your wildest dreams.

DIRECTOR: (Looks at him stupidly.) Who is this guy Ramachamadama, or whatever his name is. Should I know him?

MANAGER: You told me to use my imagination. Dr. I. Ramachanduran is my fantasy, the fruit of my talent. We want our clients to trust us, and that means we have to call on some kind of scientific authority. That would be a soul scientist, I guess. After all, we are manipulating souls here. I picked an Indian name because it seems to work, but it could have been a Russian name or....whatever. And the doctor part is important because I think we need to blend scientific credibility with oriental wisdom.

DIRECTOR: Very good! Very good! Ramachanduran is OK He doesn't cost us anything and-- Who knows?--people might believe in him. But we still have to work on his CV, on his theories. That will take some more invention. Do you have something more to add to this advertisement to round it out?

MANAGER: Well, I was a poet once, so maybe I'd try something like this:

What is your fondest wish to be?

Death is your opportunity.

You can be what you want at last,

When we transport you to the future or the past.

DIRECTOR: Well, I can see why you didn't make it as a poet. Does it have to say transport? But it's OK, I guess. Good enough for now, anyway. People just want a simple message. **(There is a knock at the door.)**

SHARP DUDE: (Enters.) Are you the reincarnation travel agency?

DIRECTOR: (Answering very carefully.) Yes, we are, and I am the director. What would you like?

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SHARP DUDE: I dig Genghis Kahn. Oh man! He was a badass rambo, and he had an awesome harem, too. I just want out of here. I don't fit in these fucking times. Jesus, I don't even know....

MANAGER: **(Jumps into the conversation because the sharp dude can't seem to find any words.)** Self realization! You can't find yourself!

DIRECTOR: **(Ignores manager. Leafs for a while through the thick book.)** You're in luck. Genghis Kahn is still available. Of course he is famous, so he is more expensive.

SHARP DUDE: Get with it, man. How much is he?

DIRECTOR: Half a million. But for such a famous person, that's a very small amount.

SHARP DUDE: My parents have lots of dough stashed away, and they want me out of the house, real soon, so I think I can talk them out of it. I'll tell them I found an awesome place to live. **(laughs)** I won't tell them it's a yurt. So, when can I reincarnate into this cool dude?

MANAGER: After you pay us, and then after you die, of course.

SHARP DUDE: What do you mean when I die? I'm still young.

DIRECTOR: Well, even young people die. It's enough to drive fast in a car and then just close your eyes. You'll be Genghis Kahn before you know it. And if you don't want to die yet, then think of this as a long term investment. You'll get it back big time when you're Genghis Kahn. We'll draw up a contract. You will pay in full, and then you can live happily because you'll know what will happen when you die. No worries. You'll have adventure, more money than you can spend, and more women than you can count. As you said: "a rambo with a harem".

SHARP DUDE: But why not pay up later, just before I die? I might be old and rich then.

MANAGER: There are two reasons. First, we have quick turnaround in this business, and tomorrow Genghis Kahn might be sold to someone else. The second reason is because, like anyone else, you could die tomorrow by accident, or even be murdered. And if you don't have your destination reserved

and prepaid, you could even reincarnate into some dumb animal.

SHARP DUDE: Oh fuck it! I'll sleep on it. **(Leaves.)**

DIRECTOR: It's hard to make sales, but I think this one will come back. **(There is a knock on the door.)**

MANAGER: You were right. He's coming back.

OLD WOMAN: **(Peeks in the door, then slowly and hesitantly enters.)** Do you have some contact with the astral plane? I saw a program the other day on TV. It was an interview with you. **(Takes out handkerchief and wipes tears.)** My Phillip is dead.

DIRECTOR: We're sorry about that. **(Obviously she doesn't mean it.)** Which form of reincarnation did he pay for? In which time and where? Do you have a copy of his contract with us? **(She has an idea.)** Did you know that you can send him not only a message, but also money through us?

OLD WOMAN: **(Still tearful.)** What are you saying? Phillip was my dog.

MANAGER: **(Turns eyes upward.)** We don't do dogs.

OLD WOMAN: But I want to follow him. I think I'm going to die soon, and I want to be with my dog. Can you find out where he is now, where he went for reincarnation?

DIRECTOR: Well, it's not so easy. I have to get connected with the astral plane. We have our contacts there, but still it takes lots of knowhow and spiritual energy. And you will have to pay for it.

OLD WOMAN: Oh, I'll pay! I'll pay for everything. I have my life savings.

DIRECTOR: All right. If that's what you want. **(Turns to manager and says:)** Get me connected to the occult.

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MANAGER: (Turns on tape recorder. There is mysterious music.)

DIRECTOR: (Goes into a dramatic trance, makes crazy gestures, and then walks out of the room.)

OLD WOMAN: (Is frightened by all this.)

MANAGER: (Turns off music after director has left.)

OLD WOMAN: Oh my god! Where did she go? What happens now? Is it dangerous? She looked weird, like a ghost. (Shakes head.) I don't know. My Johnny told me not to come here. He is my son, you know. What should I do?

MANAGER: Just wait a minute. She'll be back. She knows what she's doing. (They wait.)

DIRECTOR: (Comes back in, wiping her hands on a paper towel. Obviously, she has been in the restroom. She is relaxed and full of energy.) So, where are we now? What's happening? (Finishes wiping hands and tosses towel into waste basket.)

MANAGER: (Trying to give the director a hint.) So how was the astral plane today?

DIRECTOR: (Suddenly remembers. Slams hand on forehead.) Oh yes! Well, you know how it is. The astral is... (pause to find words.) uh...astral. Anyway, Eloim told me that your Phillip is now a French baron who lives in the 18th century. He got upgraded from dog because his previous life was so exemplary. He didn't pee all over the house, did he?

OLD WOMAN: (Shakes head to indicate no.)

DIRECTOR: And since the baron is single, I recommend that you reincarnate as a beautiful, young baroness to chase him and marry him. You'd be a beautiful couple.

OLD WOMAN: (Very confused.) That makes no sense at all. (Short pause.) Phil was only a dog,

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after all. Why would I want to marry my dog? **(Short pause. Shakes head.)** What would my Johnny say? He's my son, you know.

MANAGER: **(Eager to explain.)** Your dog is not a dog anymore. He doesn't even pee outside now. And you will be young and beautiful. You'll get married. You will scratch your husband behind his ears and give him a nickname – Phil. That's not hard to understand, is it?

OLD WOMAN: **(Still shaking head.)** Well, I don't know. I can't believe this. All I want is my doggie. How come he's not a dog any more? Are you sure you know what you are talking about? You seemed so convincing on TV. I'm just going home to my Johnny. I'll tell him all about it.

DIRECTOR: Wait a minute. You owe me 2000. At your request, I got in touch with the astral plane. It's a dangerous procedure. You'll have to pay.

OLD WOMAN: OK. **(Takes out wallet, is unhappy, but pays.)** Well, I won't mention this to Johnny. He doesn't believe in astral planes. But if I have to pay for it, then I guess it must be true. I don't know. **(Shakes head.)** I don't know. **(Leaves.)**

DIRECTOR: **(Holds her forehead. The telephone rings.)**

MANAGER: **(Answers the phone.)** This is INCARNA, your travel agency in time. How can I help you? **(Pause)** Yes. **(Longer pause.)** The big bang? **(Pause)** Oh, the NEXT big bang, not the LAST one. **(Pause)** Well, yes, I'm sure it will be a VERY big bang. **(Pause)** How much is it? Well...er...uh.... You know that can be a very difficult transport, time-wise and space-wise. It will be expensive. How much do you have? **(Pause)** Twenty thousand? **(Pause)** Oh, that's not enough. You know that kind of work is very expensive. To get a big bang, especially a FUTURE big bang would cost at least two million. **(short pause)** Yeh! For twenty thousand you can have two choices. You can be a beggar in Calcutta or a goat herder in Somalia. **(Pause)** You too! You go to hell, too!

DIRECTOR: Don't talk to the clients like that. You know they might think it over and come back for something cheaper.

MANAGER: I know. I'm sorry, but I had a hard day. There was that kid who wanted Genghis Kahn, and then the dog woman, and now the big bang, and almost no money out of it. It drives me crazy. What's the matter with people? There should be a line of spiritual women waiting outside. Do you

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suppose they are on to us?

UNLUCKY MAN: (Walks in without knocking.) Is this INCARNA?

MANAGER: Yes.

UNLUCKY MAN: You've got to hear my story. I've been cursed since I was born. I was a sickly child. I had pimples. I was shy. I had big ears. I didn't do well in school. I had no friends, no talent. I married out of stupidity. I hate my job. In fact, I've ALWAYS hated EVERYTHING about my life. My only hope is in reincarnation. Anyway, I couldn't do worse than what I have now. Now, as I understand it, according to reincarnation theory, I should be rewarded in the next life for all I've had to suffer in this one. Is that so? I'm not sure.

DIRECTOR: We don't work according to that theory. Our soul leader, Dr. I. Ramachanduran, worked out soul techniques that he patented. All you have to do is to choose the person you want to be, either in the past or in the future, and we will get you there. Of course, to complete the process we have to be paid in full.

UNLUCKY MAN: That sounds complicated. It has something to do with science, doesn't it? How do you do it?

MANAGER: First of all, you are right. It is really complicated. And second, it is secret. But, because you are so interested, I'll tell you. It starts with soft spiritual ascents that are caught in a web on the astral plane and then sent out on a chain of followers through the tunnel to the epicenter of occult knowledge where a cosmic computer will be programmed to the chosen destination. After all, if a computer isn't programmed, you just get a random output. Right?

UNLUCKY MAN: Right! **(He is convinced and pleased.)** I understand. That sounds good. I like it. I might even enjoy it.

DIRECTOR: Exactly. You will enjoy the magic, and you will start your new life in grand style. You can trust me in this.

UNLUCKY MAN: (He looks happy now.) I'll leave it up to you. Choose someone really famous, tall

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and handsome. And, it's really important, with no hemorrhoids! And, from the time after TV was invented, so I would be on TV.

DIRECTOR: (Leafs through the thick book. Manager looks over her shoulder.)

MANAGER: How about Gary Cooper?

UNLUCKY MAN: I don't know him. Can I see him? **(He looks in the book.)** Yes. Yes! He looks great, and it's written here that he was an actor in Hollywood, a star. I'll take it. Gosh, he is great looking. I'll bet women were after him all the time.

DIRECTOR: Yes. Women were after him all the time. Millions and millions of women. Where ever there was a TV or movie screen. Millions of women. By the way, it just happens that this reincarnation costs a million. Can you believe it? Only one million.

UNLUCKY MAN: Oh, that doesn't matter. I inherited a house. I'll sell it. I am so happy. Now I want to see a movie with him in it so I can see what I will get. I'll be back – the minute I sell that house. **(Walks out, excited and happy.)**

MANAGER: This case looks promising.

DIRECTOR: Yes. Yes. Many cases look promising, but we can't put promises in the bank. **(Long pause with no action. Manager looks bored. Director is thinking.)** You know. **(Pause.)** We have a problem with our business concept. **(Pause.)** Our business is spiritual, gentle. It requires patience and trust. **(Pause.)** But many of our clients can't wait. They want to reincarnate right away. Others might begin to doubt us, and miss their money, and rethink what they have signed. Even worse, they might report us to the authorities, and then we'd really be in trouble. **(Pause.)** I think maybe we should expand our services. We could solve these problems if we offered assisted suicide.

MANAGER: That would be something scientific, right? Something like assisted reproduction where you put the semen and the egg together under a microscope and then you put it back in there, or whatever.... **(Pause)** I guess I don't understand how it works.

DIRECTOR: **(Enjoying the manager's confusion.)** Semen and egg? Something scientific? No.

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No. I have in mind a more old-fashioned process. **(Makes gesture of quickly drawing hand across throat to indicate murder.)**

MANAGER: **(Still confused.)** Boss. You know.... You know.... You are something else. This is not for me. I'm not up to it. My God! You mean to kill clients right here, on the spot?

DIRECTOR: Now look. Marketing has its laws. Supply and demand. Demand calls for supply, and supply creates demand. So many times our clients can't wait. Have you noticed? They are not into deferred gratification. They are sick and tired of their lives, and they want to get on to the next one, and they want it now. That's a demand, so we should create the supply.

MANAGER: How?

DIRECTOR: They will bring along a suicide letter. Of course it won't mention INCARNA. And we will discuss beforehand where to take the body. So what's the problem? How complicated can it be?

MANAGER: But how are we actually going to do it?

DIRECTOR: Well, that's up to you. This is a man's job. Study the literature. Invent something, but start right away. After all, you know that our agency has... **(Pause.)** certain economic problems. Anyway, think about it. I'm going to go astral. **(Laughs at her own joke. Takes out cigarettes and lighter. Tries lighter to see if it works, and then walks out.)**

MANAGER: **(Muttering to himself.)** Hmm... Man's job, eh? Smart woman. Perfect example. Comes up with a stupid idea, and gives it to the guy, and then walks out. **(Pause.)** But it might work. At least it's effective. Maybe it could be safe. If we put on gloves.... **(Looks into bag and takes out black leather gloves. Puts them on and looks at his hands.)** And for the instruments, I'll go for the classic ones. They are easy to get and they are proven. **(Manager leaves the room.)**

The stage is unoccupied, briefly. The outer door opens slightly, then more. A man and a woman peek in.

WOMAN: They're gone. Lets go in.

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They enter furtively, cautiously. The man leafs through the big book. The woman has a large pen hanging around her neck. She looks around the room, pointing her pen at objects. Obviously, her pen contains a hidden camera. They work quickly and keep watching the door.

MAN: Take a picture of the poster, too.

Woman points pen at poster. Both continue with these actions for a short while. Manager comes in. Man and woman stop what they are doing. Manager has a noose around his neck. In one hand he has a large razor blade or knife and in the other a large syringe, perhaps filled with visible colored liquid, and a pharmacy bottle with a label that shows the skull and crossbones symbol for poison. He is visibly surprised to find someone in the office.

WOMAN: Oh, my! What have you got?

MANAGER: Who are you?

DIRECTOR: **(Enters. Looks worried.)** What do you want? **(Manager puts instruments on the table.)**

WOMAN: Who are we? We are a married couple and we are historians, specialists in ancient Egypt.

MAN: We are egyptologists, and we want to be reincarnated as Nefertiti and Akhenaten in the 14th century BC. Are they available? Have they been taken yet?

DIRECTOR: **(Looks relieved. Looks in book. Does not notice that the woman is taking pictures of the instruments.)** You are in luck! Both destinations are available, and you can have them, but of course they don't come cheap.

MAN: What are these for? **(Points to the instruments.)** I wouldn't expect to use something like this for spiritual travel.

MANAGER: Oh, don't pay any attention to these things. They are something we plan to use for a

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luxury service, but it's all new and we are still trying it out.

DIRECTOR: (Looks sternly at the manager. Goes behind man and woman and gestures to manager to indicate that he should sell the service – now.)

WOMAN: We are especially interested in any kind of luxury service. Cost doesn't concern us. Money is no problem.

DIRECTOR: Money no problem? Then we can help you. Certainly, we can help you. These instruments will help you get what you want more quickly. They will move you from this life to a better past. It's called assisted reproduction. Er...no...excuse me...assisted suicide. It's something new, just coming into fashion. Something most people haven't heard of. Of course, you have to pay beforehand. As you know, bank transfers from ancient Egypt don't function yet, and they don't take ancient Egyptian money at the currency exchange. **(Laughs at her own joke. Is in a great mood.)** Yes. You can have the luxury service. You'll write a good-by note, a suicide letter. Of course you can't mention our travel agency. We will sign the contract. You will pay us, and then you will leave by your chosen method. You will wake up in beautiful Egypt. In front of you will be the fantastic future of a royal couple, a pharaoh and his queen.

MAN: Wow! You really do offer a luxury service. You think of everything. We'll write the good-by letter now, and we'll go to the bank, and then we'll finish everything.

MANAGER: **(Gives them the notebook, but can't find a pen.)** I see that you have a pen around your neck.

WOMAN: **(Takes a different pen out of her handbag. Man looks over her shoulder. She writes. Between themselves, they discuss the text. We do not hear their conversation. Unseen by the man and woman, the manager and director give each other “high-fives”. Woman hands notebook back to the manager.)** Here. You can read this later. We'll go to the bank, but first we want to go to a restaurant. We imagine that the food in Egypt might be a bit different, so we'd like to have some steak and french fries for the last time. **(Turns toward man. He agrees.)**

MAN: And beer! A good, cold, foamy beer. **(They leave together.)**

MANAGER: **(Starts to read the letter.)**

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DIRECTOR: (Smiles. Watches couple leave, then hits the table.) We got 'em! Money no problem. Can you believe it? So how much should we hit 'em up for? Ten million? Will they go for it?

MANAGER: (Is clearly in distress. Looks at instruments. Picks up the razor blade. Cuts himself on the hand, then sticks the hand in his mouth to suck away the blood.)

DIRECTOR: (Takes the letter and reads. She grasps her chest. Looks very confused. Collapses on chair, shaking, but still holding the notebook.)

MANAGER: (Takes the letter and reads aloud.) “We are from the police and we have been following your scam for quite some time. We have documented your services, now even with deadly instruments, and we have it all on film and tape. You are doomed. Your only way out is by your own luxury reincarnation service. We recommend Nefertiti and Akhenaten.” (Manager and director look at the instruments. Both commit suicide. There is a pause. The man and woman return, cautiously. Carefully check to make sure the manager and director are dead.)

WOMAN: (Puts on managers gloves and opens the cash drawer, but finds only one bill.) Strange. I thought it would be full. They always had someone coming in.

MAN: Ah, it doesn't matter. We got rid of our competition. And we can do a lot better than they did in this business! (They walk out, shouting their new slogans.)

WOMAN: Wide selection!

MAN: Famous people!

WOMAN: Easy payments!

MAN: Gift certificates!

TOGETHER: INCARNA, your travel agency in time!

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