

# **BETTER LIVING THROUGH REINCARNATION**

**TEN-MINUTE PLAY**

**By Molly Campbell**

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**BETTER LIVING THROUGH REINCARNATION**

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**SYNOPSIS:** A comedy set in a classroom in Heaven. Two angels, Gabe and Joan, give a workshop on the Reincarnation Program. The tone is that of a television infomercial. Gabe and Joan joke between themselves as they tell the audience about all the necessary steps and requirements to reincarnate and earn those precious wings.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(1 MAN, 1 WOMAN)*

GABE (m).....An instructor. *(54 Lines)*  
JOAN (f) .....His assistant. *(54 Lines)*

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**AT RISE:**

*A classroom in Heaven. There is an overhead projector with the phrase "Better Living Through Reincarnation" shown onto a screen. There should be a bell and a table with a stack of papers and some non-functional parachute bags. During the play, Gabe and Joan will address the audience as though they are students. The tone is that of a television infomercial. Gabe and Joan enter.*

**GABE:** *(To audience.)* Good afternoon. I trust that everyone is here that's supposed to be here. This is "Better Living Through Reincarnation." If you were expecting something different, right now would be a good time to make a break for it. *(Forced laugh.)* Just kidding, folks. I hope everyone here is as excited about Reincarnation as I am. My name is Gabe Anderson. Over the next seven weeks, I'll be here to talk to you about, yes, "Better Living Through Reincarnation." Helping me today is my lovely wife, Joan.

**JOAN:** That's your ex-wife, Gabe.

**GABE:** That's right. The whole till death do us part thing. And seeing that we're in Heaven, we have definitely parted. But that doesn't stop us from spending eternity together, right Joan?

**JOAN:** Certainly, Gabe. *(To audience.)* Soul mates. You can't live with them, you can't live without them. How many of you are taking this class with a loved one?

**GABE:** That's one of the most fascinating things about reincarnation. In 99.7 percent of documented cases, soul mates end up finding each other again in their next lives.

**JOAN:** I call it good karma, Gabe.

**GABE:** Good karma. I believe that's what brought us all here. Let's take a look at the course syllabus and see what our karma has in store. *(He advances the overhead to show the seven-week class schedule.)*

**JOAN:** Oh, my, Gabe. It looks like we're going to have a busy seven weeks.

**GABE:** Yes we are, Joan. As you can see, today is a general Reincarnation Overview.

**JOAN:** That sounds like Reincarnation 101 to me.

**GABE:** After that, we'll look at Reincarnation: A Historical Perspective; Reincarnation: A Multicultural Approach; Free Will: A Terrible Thing To Waste - and speaking of free will, did anybody here come up from the Exchange lines? (*Scans audience.*) No?

**JOAN:** No little Hell-spawn this time? Well, that's a first.

**GABE:** Let's be careful, Joan. Remember, they're not Hell-spawn. They're people just like us. We prefer to call them "sinfully challenged."

**JOAN:** Sinfully Challenged. That's right. There's just been so many of them up here ever since they approved that Fair Trade Agreement.

**GABE:** Don't forget, we're allowed to visit down there, too.

**JOAN:** Really, Gabe, you make it sound like some Garden of Eden.

**GABE:** I prefer to think of it as a nice vacation spot, like south Florida.

**JOAN:** Try southern California. Fires everywhere.

**GABE:** Okay, southern California. My point was that if anyone's here from the Exchange lines, they'll need to pay extra attention to the Free Will section. (*Beat.*) For our final class, we'll discuss Reincarnation: Getting The Most Out of Your New Life. After that we'll have a Final Exam, and then, in week seven, all of you will be certified and eligible to participate in the program.

**JOAN:** That's so exciting, Gabe. There's nothing more beautiful than a second chance.

*Gabe advances the overhead to "Second Chance."*

**GABE:** A second chance. Or a third or fourth. That's what this is all about.

**JOAN:** I think I'm almost jealous, Gabe. You know what I miss? Chocolate. It's been so long. We're in Heaven. You'd think you could get some decent chocolate.

**GABE:** Sorry. It's technically a sin. All that stuff about it being better than sex.

**JOAN:** Don't remind me. I was married to you for sixteen years.

*They both force a laugh.*

**GABE:** Seriously, folks, marriage is something you can look forward to again.

**JOAN:** I wonder how many of our students marked a good marriage as a priority on their enrollment forms?

**GABE:** Well, Joan, let's take a look. (*Grabs stack of papers.*) Ah. Here's one.

**JOAN:** What's it say, Gabe?

**GABE:** On a scale of one to five, when asked if they wanted a better marriage in the next life, this student marked five, the highest possible rating.

**JOAN:** That's wonderful. What else does it say? Did they answer the question about material wealth?

**GABE:** Yes, Joan, they did. And I'm glad you asked. This student marked that as least important.

**JOAN:** I'm not surprised. Like you're always telling me, you can't take it with you.

**GABE:** (*Simultaneous with "you can't."*) You can't take it with you. And that brings us to our next topic.

**JOAN:** What's that, Gabe?

*He advances the overhead. Screen now reads "You Can't Take It With You."*

**GABE:** You can't take it with you.

**JOAN:** Naturally. Anyone who bought a thirty-thousand dollar Lexus already knows that.

**GABE:** Don't remind me. Actually I'm going to talk about taking it with you the other way.

**JOAN:** You mean when you reincarnate? Now, I've heard that you can actually take your memories of Heaven and all your past lives with you. Is that true?

**GABE:** Unfortunately that's just a Heaven myth. Your memory is erased when you're reborn. You know, that Free Will thing.

**JOAN:** But you get them back when you return to the Hereafter. That's the good news.

**GABE:** Absolutely.

**JOAN:** How about picking who you'll be in your next life? Is that just another rumor, too?

**GABE:** Yes, Joan, I'm afraid it is. *(He advances the overhead to "Your New Life.")* Your new identity is selected entirely at random. Oh, just in case you're wondering, you will be a human being. No worrying about going back as a horse or rat.

**JOAN:** Oh, thank goodness. That takes a load off knowing I won't end up as a dung beetle.

**GABE:** Well, that's how things are done out here.

**JOAN:** Out here? Do you mean there's another reincarnation program?

**GABE:** Yes, and I'm glad you asked. Holy Law 812.42 requires that we disclose any other available reincarnation programs. That means I have to inform our students about the program that Kali runs out east.

**JOAN:** Kali? You mean the Hindu mother goddess? The all-creating and all-consuming source of life?

**GABE:** She runs a tight ship, and hand selects each new life. I don't know how she does it. Must be the extra arms.

**JOAN:** I see. So, if you enrolled in Kali's program, then you could pick your new identity?

**GABE:** I'm afraid not. Kali hand matches each soul to a new identity. And she has been known to send people back as bugs and spiders from time to time. Karmic justice, if you will.

**JOAN:** In that case, I'm glad we're here in our program. Thanks for explaining that one, Gabe.

**GABE:** My pleasure, Joan. Let's see what's up next. *(He advances the overhead to "Earning Your Wings.")*

**JOAN:** Gabe, I see that the next topic is "Earning Your Wings." Is that some sort of automatic reward program?

**GABE:** It used to be automatic, but with all the recent budget cuts, and the focus on accountability . . .

**JOAN:** There has to be some way our students can get their wings.

**GABE:** There is, Joan. It's just not automatic like it was for thousands and thousands of years. Now our students will be required to strive for self-actualization.

**JOAN:** Self-actualization? What's that?

**GABE:** A term phrased by the late Dr. Abraham Maslow.

**JOAN:** One of our former students.

**GABE:** Class of '99! (*Beat.*) The Chief picked it up and decided to apply it to all afterlife programs. In order to earn his or her wings, the applicant must pass certain milestones, such as autonomy, self acceptance, interpersonal relations, democratic values, cultural transcendence and Resolution of dichotomies.

**JOAN:** Resolution of dichotomies? That sounds like some pretty tricky stuff.

**GABE:** It really isn't, Joan. Anyone can do it. The choices you make in your next life will determine whether you'll get those wings.

**JOAN:** But if you can't keep your memories and you can't pick who you're going to be . . . then this self-actualization thing is just the luck of the draw.

**GABE:** Not at all. It's not about who you are or what you remember. It's about living up to your potential. Being the best you can be with what you've got.

**JOAN:** Gee, you'd think there's an easier way to get those wings.

**GABE:** There is, Joan, but not in the Reincarnation Program. You have to try a different program, like . . . Bell Ringers.

**JOAN:** Bell Ringers? I've heard the wait is really long.

**GABE:** It is. Bell Ringers is the most popular program. Ever since that Frank Capra movie, everyone thinks it's their destiny to find some poor mortal down on his luck and show him how wonderful his life really is.

**JOAN:** I see. Well, here, this ought to move some of them along. (*Rings bell, laughs.*) How about that? Three more angels just got their wings.

**GABE:** You're always the helpful one, Joan.

**JOAN:** Thank you, Gabe. By the way, I'm sure some of our students have noticed that we have our wings. I bet they're wondering if we were Bell Ringers, or if we self-actualized.

**GABE:** Good question. I earned mine over four thousand years ago. Back then the Chief was still talking to the mortals. I whispered a few words to a shepherd once. He was so impressed, He gave me my wings on the spot.

**JOAN:** Ah, the glory days. I got mine through an act of selfless bravery. I was Joan of Arc in one of my previous lives.

**GABE:** Very well done, too, I might add.

**JOAN:** Naturally. Now that we've covered all the basics, I bet our students would like to know what's next. They've signed up. What do they have to do now?

**GABE:** That's easy, Joan. *(To audience)* Do you all remember your deaths? The tunnel? White light? *(He turns the overhead to illuminate the audience.)*

**JOAN:** I think they do, Gabe.

**GABE:** How about your births? Do any of you remember that? *(Waits for answer.)* No? I didn't think so. It's the same deal. Tunnel. White light. Just goes the opposite way. *(He turns the overhead back onto screen.)*

**JOAN:** Does that mean they'll have to die all over again?

**GABE:** Nothing that dramatic, Joan.

**JOAN:** Then how do they get into their new bodies?

**GABE:** Simple. All you have to do is jump.

**JOAN:** Jump?

**GABE:** Jump. Here, I'll show you. *(He advances the overhead to show a sketch of a heavenly cloud with an arrow pointing to Earth.)* You're up here in Heaven, see? And down here is Earth, where a woman with child is due any moment. This all has to be carefully timed, of course, but the minute you enter the kid's body, the shock erases your memories, sends Mom into labor and you're ready to be born. Again.

**JOAN:** What a fascinating process.

**GABE:** It sure is, Joan.

**JOAN:** So, how do you do this jump? Is it out of an airplane? I've noticed these parachute bags over here. Will our students have to wear these? *(She opens one of the bags.)*

**GABE:** They'll each be issued one at the end of the course. But they really won't need them. When you jump, you can't miss.

**JOAN:** Good thing, too, because they forgot to pack a parachute in this one.

**GABE:** None of them have parachutes. They're not needed. The tunnel of light takes you right where you need to go.

**JOAN:** Gabe, if the bags are empty, then what are they for?

**GABE:** I didn't say they were empty. There's just no parachutes is all. Go ahead and show them to our participants. *(She shows the empty bag to audience.)*

**JOAN:** Well, you got me confused. This one looks pretty empty to me.

**GABE:** There's something in there. I promise. Something these people will need.

**JOAN:** Something they'll need? I thought you weren't allowed to take anything with you.

**GABE:** They're allowed one thing with them. Faith. *(Advances overhead to "Faith.")*

**JOAN:** Faith? What are they supposed to do with that?

**GABE:** Sorry. Doesn't come with instructions.

**JOAN:** *(Fakes a laugh.)* Of course not. They'll get a whole lifetime to figure it out.

**GABE:** That's right, Joan. That's what reincarnation is all about.

**JOAN:** And they might even get their wings. Depends if they use what's in this bag in a way that pleases the man upstairs.

**GABE:** *(Whispers.)* Next door. He's technically not upstairs anymore.

**JOAN:** Next door? *(She looks offstage as if to get a glimpse.)*

**GABE:** Figuratively. Figuratively.

**JOAN:** Oh, I should have known, you little teaser. *(Gabe advances the overhead to "Fifteen Minute Break.")*

**GABE:** Well, Joan, I think it's time for us to take a fifteen minute break. When we come back we'll split up into small groups and talk about interpersonal verses intrapersonal relationships.

**JOAN:** Sounds fascinating, Gabe. *(To audience.)* We'll see you all in fifteen minutes.

*Lights fade.*

**THE END**