

REV. ROSE (to MIDDLE-AGED NONA)

Are you Ok? You look like you could use a friend?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

I'm sorry to barge in like this but the door was open, and the music called to me.

REV. ROSE

You didn't barge in. Everyone's welcome here.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

That's good to hear. Hi, I'm Carmela Vega ... but everyone calls me Nona.

REV. ROSE

And I'm Rose Bennett.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

Nice to meet you. What kind of a church is this?

REV. ROSE

It's a place of refuge for anyone ... for those who are tired of fighting and want to create some peace in their lives. Most of the people come here because we celebrate all faiths. In that way, we can learn from one another.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

Oh. I was raised Catholic and we weren't allowed to visit any other churches when I was growing up. It would have been really nice though.

REV. ROSE

Why were you crying?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

I'm hurting. I guess I should go and see a priest.

REV. ROSE

Would a healing minister do?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

What's that?

REV. ROSE

Someone whose dedicated their life to learning all the healing arts including meditation and the laying on of hands.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

That sounds good. I surely could use some healing.

REV. ROSE

Then talk to *me*.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

You're a minister? But you're a woman ... and so young.

REV. ROSE

In our community, women ... even young women ... are encouraged to be ministers ... It's not very different from a mother's role so we seem to have a natural knack for it. This is my sanctuary. Here they call me Rev. Rose.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

That's amazing.

REV. ROSE

So, what happened?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

I had a terrible fight with my son Frank ... and he won't let me see my granddaughter anymore. It's breaking my heart. *(beat)* Do you have children, Rev. Rose?

REV. ROSE

Well, I was once married to a wonderful, kind and loving man. We had a beautiful son. His name was Edward ... and his smile was so big, it would light up any room. About 5 years ago, they were both killed by a drunk driver on the Turnpike.

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

Oh my God.

REV. ROSE

Exactly. That's when I had to turn to the power of the universe or go insane. I was one of the lucky ones though. The universe gave me this place of refuge and more "children" to take care of. I created a new family ... and I just know that something wonderful is coming to you too. I can feel it in my bones

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

I sure hope that the universe can put me and my family back together.

REV. ROSE

A piece of cake for someone who's also called The Almighty, don't you think?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

I guess so. Thanks for your words of kindness.

REV. ROSE

I've got lots more to say. Lots more ... but I have a special errand to run. I could use some help. Can you come with me?

MIDDLE-AGED NONA

Sounds better than crying in the rain.

REV. ROSE

Great. Can you grab my guitar over there so we can get moving?

(REV. ROSE picks up a poinsettia plant and a large sack of Christmas presents and slings it over her back. NONA reaches for the guitar.)

MIDDLE-AGED NONA
(half-laughing)

You look like an Elf. Where are we going?

REV. ROSE

You'll find out when we get there.

NONA
(grinning)

Ok.

(MIDDLE-AGED NONA and REV. ROSE EXIT)

(LIGHTS FADE - End of Scene)