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## Ellie and Eric and Master Ah

I FEEL SO GUILTY ABOUT WHAT is happening to the Master. I wish I knew where he was—no one has seen him for weeks. I've tried to talk to Ellie about it.

"Ellie, do you really believe they've put Master Ah in jail?"

But even though Ellie is my best friend and we usually talk about everything, she doesn't seem to have much to say about this, and she doesn't seem worried. "What needs to happen will happen. His karma will decide. Let's just live in the now, Wendy. That's the most we can do for him."

So I try to do that. I can't admit to her how worried I am about the terrible trouble I have caused.

I can't believe it's 1970 already. All through high school I watched that TV show *Here Come the Seventies*, and it was kind of like science fiction, but now it's here. Our new way of life is going to be much more beautiful than on that TV show, though. My friends and I and all our brothers and sisters in San Francisco and other places are radiating a new kind of strong love energy that will soon stop the fighting in Vietnam and make people stop eating un-macrobiotic food. This will happen when more and more people in the world get turned on and start meditating and taking acid. I am usually really happy and excited about our new life, but now this horrible thing that has happened to the Master has my stomach in knots, and nobody but me knows it is all my fault.



The first thing that got me committed to Master Ah was when he told us he was spiritually advanced enough that dropping acid would not affect him. That blew my mind. He said he had taken acid and nothing happened. Eric says that is a sure sign of someone who is enlightened because it means his everyday mind is beyond what you get on acid. The Master is

even older than Eric—it is hard to say how old, maybe about thirty-five, but when someone asked Master Ah about his age he said he does not measure in years but in kalpas, which is a Buddhist number of years which is very big. The Master told us that Eric and Ellie and I and our other friends are much older than our regular age, because we are old souls, and that is why he decided to teach us his yoga and meditation and spiritual secrets.

The disaster that has happened is something in Master Ah's karma, Eric says. I think this means it is not really the Master's fault. I mean, if you do something because you have to work it through from a past life, does that mean it was you that did it, or someone from the past? Can you be blamed? I told this to Ellie who just said, well, also if you do something very good or loving, it means it was your karma and you should not get the credit either, because really everyone is everyone.

Eric was listening when Ellie said that, and he has a very clear mind and he said it is not a question of credit or blame. Eric is twenty-five, a lot older than the rest of us, and he is so good at giving advice and seeing the wise way of thinking. Ellie is living with Eric now, and she practically worships him. She had never had a real boyfriend before, and now all of a sudden she's living with a guy eight years older. Her parents have sort of disowned her, but she doesn't seem to mind.

Mostly Ellie's parents were upset about her clothes. In high school she dressed like the popular girls, but now she wears beautiful things she gets from a costume shop and the new clothing store that sells long dresses with flower patterns and lots of buttons and she's let her hair grow long and straight and she goes around in bare feet. Her dad says she's "playing poverty." She's also lost lots of weight because of being on macrobiotics and she looks like an angel to me—flowing colourful dresses like in the old days when life was not so uptight, and long hair like Joan Baez or Joni Mitchell. Ellie was always a really good dancer and lately she has changed her way of walking and moving—it's more like a dance. "I'm trying to flow like the universe," she told me. Another way she has changed is that she seems more serious. She doesn't joke around like she used to.

And of course Ellie's parents are pretty angry about Eric. He is a new kind of person—he says he is a pioneer of the new consciousness. He always wears jeans and bright-coloured shirts with a red bandanna around his neck. He has a bushy black moustache and his hair is long and black, in a ponytail. He is very brave to do this because sometimes the police stop him and talk mean to him and ask him why he doesn't get a haircut.

Eric is a very smart person who reads a lot. He is studying Sanskrit. Nobody speaks it any more, he says, but he will be able to read sacred scriptures in the original holy language. He says translations take the life force out

of those writings. He told me even if he says a word out loud in Sanskrit, a holy word, it will heal a sick person even if they do not understand the meaning of the word. That's if the person speaking the word is clear enough in spirit, Eric said, and that is why he is studying the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the I Ching and dropping acid a lot out in the forest which he calls his Holy Mind Temple. He says he thinks I am almost ready to take acid too. He says you have to be spiritually prepared and have a good guide, not like those people that just take it at a party, which Eric says is wasting your power. Ellie and I are very lucky to have met Eric because he knows so much spiritual wisdom and the ancient ways, and because he introduced us to Master Ah. I love the name Ah because Eric told me it is the sound of the breath of life.

Master Ah has meditation groups almost every evening. Everyone has to be silent in his sacred space which is actually Louise's living room which the Master blesses every time before we use it—to get rid of defilements, he says. When we have to bow to the Master, he says it is not his physical being we are bowing to, but to the ancient sages. He said he represents them, so I have no problem bowing. There have been some people who leave the group because they don't want to bow, and that's OK, they have some negative trips to work out so I don't act judgmental to them. I learned this from Eric, that some people are just turned off and if they took acid or turned on to something spiritual to get rid of their hang-ups, they would be happier. So when I bow to the Master I feel like an ancient person through all history from the times when wisdom was everywhere.

Well, I mean I felt like that until the catastrophe that I caused.

My friend Kenneth used to come to meditation too. Kenneth is very beautiful, thoughtful, kind, and funny. He is tall and blonde and I love to look at his arms and his hands and his face. He always wears this long colourful serape he got in Mexico. He and I go for long walks on the beach and talk about everything including our childhoods. But Eric says Kenneth has some karmic problems that prevent him from completely understanding Master Ah's teachings.

One day Kenneth said to Eric, "In reincarnation, if the population of the world keeps increasing, where do the new souls come from?"

And another time he asked Master Ah, "Why do the ancient masters and modern ones not just put an end to war and poverty using their mental and spiritual power?"

Eric told me that these questions show that Kenneth is operating too much on a material plane and needs to work through some life lessons by meditating and listening more to Master Ah. I love Kenneth and I feel a bit bad about loving him because I think he might be holding me back spiritually.

Before we meditate, we chant a chant that the Master taught us:

*Baba naam*  
*Kevalam*  
*Love is all there is*

It has a beautiful melody that goes with it, and we sing it many times, maybe a hundred or more. When the Master is chanting it he rocks from side to side, so the rest of us do that too. Then we meditate. He tells us to think about love and about the holiness of our body, and to follow our breath. We sit on cushions, and then sometimes we lie flat on our backs and meditate that way, visualizing our bodies sinking into the earth. I never thought much about the earth before, but now I realize the earth is our home. Home is not just my mom's house, or Eric and Ellie's place where I am staying, or the city. It's the Earth! When the Master told us this it blew my mind and I knew I was so fortunate to have met him. I really hope he gets through this awful crisis he is in now, and I wish I could think of how to help him. I wish I even knew where he was. I try to send healing energy to him every day, and I think that if he comes back, I would do what he wanted this time, and not refuse him again, like I foolishly did.

I am pretty good at cooking and sometimes when I made the tea for the meditation sessions I made cookies too. They are whole wheat ones I found in the *Tassajara Bread Book*. Eric told us he could see white light coming off that book because it was blessed by the Zen Master Suzuki Roshi who is the spiritual master of the author of the book, and Eric told me I might be able to see that light sometime soon if I keep meditating. But we have learned something about that Zen Master since then that has made us stop using the book—we have learned that he is not as pure as some people think.

The cookies I make are very healthy because I have learned from Eric and Ellie that you are what you eat, and that makes so much sense. When I told my Mom about that, and made her some bread made out of whole wheat flour with whole wheat kernels in it and no yeast, she didn't quite seem to get it.

"Honey, I think it's also important that you like what you eat," she said. "And what about the food groups? Does macrobiotics follow those? I'm a bit worried you and your friends are going to end up quite unhealthy."

Eric says she is just hung up on her old habits and does not want to embrace the new consciousness but we should not judge her for it, it's just where she is on the path. He says he has found out about a way not to use yeast in bread, where the recipe has honey and salt, and the bread rises

because of a tension between the honey and the salt, if it's sea salt, regular salt won't work. In Chinatown, Eric gets herbs and makes tea and soup out of them to make us more spiritually receptive to the Eastern mind. Eric has been studying macrobiotics too, reading a book by George Ohsawa, and that's how we eat at his place. Soon Mr. Ohsawa will be advising the presidents of all countries on how to eat, Eric says.

Master Ah and all the people at the meditation sessions like my cookies so he asked me if I would help make soup and salad for a full-day meditation session. So I did, and I learned so much from a girl called Nancy who knows all about healthy eating. She told me she used to work in an herb store in San Francisco and they had big buckets of dried herbs, and the aromas and essences wafting up from those herbs into the store all day long are going to stop her from getting sick all her life, because it nourished her spiritual body so powerfully, she said. When she said spiritual body, I was amazed because I had never thought of it that way before, and I was so inspired. The Master talks about spiritual body too. He says our usual physical body is not the real one, and that after meditating a long time we don't need to be too concerned with it. That's why he says he could drink a Coke or eat a steak and it wouldn't hurt him, while for us it would still be poison.

One day I brought my brother Michael to an evening meditation session. He is sixteen, a year younger than me. I told him to just go with the energy and be receptive and he said he would, but maybe he is too young because there were some things he did not understand.

"Hey Wendy, why is Mr. Ah's turban a fake one? Why does it just sit on his head like a hat?"

"Master Ah, not Mister," I said.

"OK Master, but why the fake turban?"

Eric was there listening and he said it's a sign of Master Ah's non-attachment to the outer manifestations. He said what clothes Master Ah wears is unimportant. Just like us, he said, we are an ancient tribe re-born, and we do not wear the conventional clothing of the society, and Master Ah's turban is a statement about breaking from all conventions and being free.

Then my brother said, "How come he was sleeping during the lying-down part of the meditation?"

"He wasn't," I said.

"He was snoring," said Michael. "I was right beside him and he was snoring. You heard it. Everyone must have. It was pretty loud."

Eric told Michael it's the sign of a deep trace state. It's yogic breathing, it happens when the chakras are clearing. Eric said you can read about it in

lots of the sacred Sanskrit texts. Anyway, an enlightened man would never sleep in meditation, Eric says. In fact he probably never sleeps at all—a lot of masters transcend the need for sleep.

“I think he was sleeping,” Michael said.

Needless to say, I never invited Michael over again. Eric told me later he liked Michael and we should not judge him, and that he thought Michael was just beginning to discover some basic things about the path of existence but would have to let go of a lot of his hang-ups before he would be ready for Master Ah’s meditation techniques.

The Master’s way of meditating is very difficult, especially the following the breath part, but I love it anyway. If you say you don’t know how to do that, he just says, “Yes you do. Have faith that you do know, connect with the part of you that knows.” Wow. Every time I think of the time he told me that, I just get this rush of energy, and I feel such love for him.

Master Ah has individual meditations with people so he can work with them personally. Eric said that during his session, the Master transmitted ancient secrets to him, mind to mind, without speech. In mine, Master Ah told me that for people at my level, clothing can stop divine wisdom from coming into the body, especially clothing made from modern industrial processes, and that meditating naked is very beneficial. So he and I meditated naked, and I didn’t mind, it was more natural, and I am not ashamed of the temple of my body. It was a bit cold, though.

He did that with Ellie too, and she told me about sacred sex, which the Master does with the student. It helps the student reach new spiritual levels, and the Master does not feel it as sex at all, it’s just another way of teaching. Ellie told me she did that with Master Ah, and she said I should too, it would really help me. She said Eric told her it was all right. When Ellie first started living with Eric she told me absolutely everything about sex with him, but when I asked her to tell me about this new kind of holy sex with Master Ah, she wouldn’t. I was very excited and a bit scared because I had never made love with anyone before and I thought how fortunate it would be to have my first time with a spiritual master.

But I did not want to do it with Master Ah, because as soon as he left his meditation cushion and got really close to me, with both of us naked, he smelled bad, both his breath and his body. I just kept looking at his face or out the window—I could not look down at his body. When he started to touch my breasts, I told him I had to go to the bathroom, which I actually did. I went out and took my clothes with me and did not come back. I cried a lot the rest of the day because I thought I had let him down terribly and I knew I should break through the hang-up that was holding me back. I felt so guilty because I wanted Kenneth to touch me like that,

and I felt like such a failure for feeling bad about Master Ah. I didn't want to admit to Ellie what had happened.

The next time we were naked together, Master Ah told me that the divine kiss was a gift from the ancient gods passed through him to me, and he kissed me, and I threw up all over him. He looked really shocked for a moment and then said I had insulted the divine power, and took his clothes and went into the bathroom. I left and cleaned up in the meditation room and in the other bathroom—I tried to do a really good job so no one would know, and then I ran outside and walked in the park, crying. I thought of never going back to the Master's group, but then I realized what Eric would say about that, and I changed my mind.

That afternoon I was supposed to skip meditation and be the main cook for the first time. I was supposed to meditate while I made the evening meal for everyone else. Sarah and Dale were going to help me. I realized I could not let them and all the others down, so I meditated at the duck pond in the park for a while and decided to fulfill my duty to my brothers and sisters. I went back and started setting up to make the meal.

Ellie brought all the ingredients for the meal—vegetables, rice, juice, and other things—into the kitchen in a box. She told me Master Ah had blessed this food and she said I was to use only the food in the box, none from the kitchen because it had not been blessed. I cooked for a few hours as the others meditated in the next room, and I did it all alone because Sarah and Dale did not show up, I don't know why.

I made miso soup, brown rice, vegetables, and Tibetan barley muffins. I put the juice in cups. I had to really hurry because I had no helpers. The final chant from the meditation room started, and I got all the dishes ready. Then Ellie came into the kitchen and told me Master Ah wanted to see me. I went into the meditation room feeling very humble and nervous before the Master because of what had happened.

Master Ah did not look directly at me. He told the group that they must not eat the food I had made because I had made so much noise in the kitchen when I was making it. He said the noise had so upset the vibrations of the meditation that anyone who ate the food would get very ill.

Kenneth held his hand up and bowed to the Master and said, "Master, could you not somehow bless this food and remove the spiritual poison from it?"

Master Ah said the poison was so strong that even he would be powerless to stop it without seriously damaging his karma and everyone else's in the room.

Then Kenneth really shocked the group. "I'll eat the food," he said. "I want to show gratitude to our sister Wendy here for working so hard

making food for us. I was not disturbed by the sound of the cooking, and I am really hungry.”

Master Ah told the group Kenneth would get very ill if he ate the food, and that Kenneth’s spiritual progress would go backwards for a thousand kalpas, and he might be reincarnated in lower and lower forms of life. Kenneth walked into the kitchen and I could hear him putting some food into a dish. All the other meditators bowed to the Master and sat down on their cushions. I didn’t know what to do so I went back into the kitchen. Kenneth was eating.

“This food is really good,” he told me. “I can tell you made it lovingly. Why don’t you eat with me?”

I was scared to, so I said I was not hungry. Actually I had eaten while I was cooking—I felt very guilty about that but I couldn’t help it, I had missed lunch that day because I was in the park crying.

“I think people should take food gratefully when it is offered,” said Kenneth. “I think that’s the most spiritual thing you can do. And we should enjoy it while we are eating it, just like your mom said. How’s she doing, by the way?”

I was starting to feel really sick while I was talking to Kenneth and I knew it was because I had eaten the food while I was cooking, but I didn’t say anything. I couldn’t concentrate on what Kenneth was saying. His words seemed to come from a long way off and they were kind of fuzzy. I started to feel like I was going to faint. My stomach started to hurt really badly—it felt like a red hot iron ball. I noticed Kenneth slide off his chair and sit down slowly on the floor, like in a dream, and I heard his dish shattering on the tiles.

When I woke up and realized I was in a hospital bed I was horrified because I knew that western medicine would not be able to cure the terrible thing I had done. I had poisoned myself and Kenneth because of making noise in the kitchen and eating during cooking and because of that terrible way I had treated the Master. When my mom came in I was crying about my spiritual stupidity, and she was very nice to me and she was crying, but I just knew she would never understand, because of her lack of spiritual advancement, although I don’t judge her for it. I have to be really open about it, even if she is not.

“Honey, I just knew something strange was going on down there with those people. The doctor thinks you have some sort of food poisoning. Kenneth is in the hospital too. I’ll stay here with you for a while and then your brother will come.”

She stayed a while and talked to me and then Michael came to visit me and he did not talk about Master Ah or anything about any of that. He



read me some poems he had written and told me about a girl he's met who likes all the same things he does, the first one he's ever met like that, and he told me about a new record by his and her favourite band, *Yes*.

A policeman came to see me the next day.

"How are you feeling? Getting better?" he said.

I said yes, and I told him I was starting to eat a bit.

"I'd like to ask you some questions about the meal you had just before you came into the hospital," he said. "And I will be honest with you—we believe someone poisoned it. Our lab people have analysed it."

I told him no, it was my spiritual mistake that caused it. He insisted that the food actually had a poison in it, and he told me the name of it, which I forget. He wanted to know where the food came from, and I told him some of the people at the meditation group bought it and that Master Ah had blessed it before I cooked it, so it could not possibly be poisoned. He asked me for the names of some of the people. He told me he would come back to talk to me again, and he hoped I got well soon. He said he was going to talk to Kenneth too. And he told me something else that really is freaking me—I might have to go to court. I hope by that time things like the police and court have disappeared, like Eric predicts.

It was weird talking to a policeman because mostly they bust people for grass and hassle guys on the street just because they have long hair, and in the States they shoot at people protesting for peace in Vietnam. I wanted to warn Kenneth, but I didn't know how.

Ellie brought me some muffins and we talked about the weird vibes in the hospital, and she told me some shocking news, really weird news. She said the police had arrested Master Ah, and that it was written up in the *Vancouver Sun*. Ellie said this proves how the world of our parents is coming to an end, when they do this kind of fascist thing. We and our beautiful new way of life will take over because of this kind of non-spiritual values of the police and the newspapers and everyone. Ellie said they arrested Master Ah for trying to poison us. Why would Master Ah do that? Would a parent poison his child?

After I got out of the hospital I stayed at my Mom's in bed for a few days. My Dad phoned me from Toronto. That's very unusual, I have not talked to him in years. He said, "I realize I have not paid much attention to you for a long time. I'm sorry about that, sweetie. It really has nothing to do with you, it's just that things have been so difficult between your mom and me, it's not your fault. I wish I could come and visit you. I'm going to send you something. A present." He did. He sent me the album *Da Capo*, by one of my favourite groups, *Love*. I already have that record, but it was

great of him to know what kind of record to send. My mom would never know what kind of record to buy me.

My mom talked to me about Master Ah. "That man is a horrible, sick criminal and I can't for the life of me figure out how you got involved with him. I hope this teaches you a lesson, and I hope they lock him up for a long time. I don't mean to get angry with you, I really don't, honey, I'm just so upset. I mean you could have died."

I really did not know how to explain anything to her. "Mom, it was not his fault."

"Not his fault? What are you talking about? The police have charged him."

"No, I mean on a spiritual level it's not his fault." I couldn't tell her it was my fault, because then I'd have to tell her what happened, and she would never understand that.

"Honey, what do you mean, spiritual level?"

"He's an Eastern master, Mom. He's more evolved." I learned that word from Eric—he uses it a lot. "And I love him, like not in the usual way, in a spiritual way."

Then she started to cry and told me she wanted me to talk to the pastor at the church. How could she think I would talk to someone like that?

Kenneth came to see me and we talked. "You know, that was just about the worst experience of my life," he said, "The police say somebody put poison in the juice and in the salad dressing. I have talked to the prosecutor about it and they are going to want to talk to you again too."

As soon as I heard that, I knew he had been sort of brainwashed by the police and maybe by my mom. I could not believe it. He really thought Master Ah had done something bad. At first I really wanted to just cut off my friendship with Kenneth, but I can't because he is so kind and beautiful looking, and so funny, and when I am with him I feel good, even though I feel guilty about it. So I am going to keep spending time with him. I'm going to try to help him.

I have moved back to Eric and Ellie's and I have been doing a lot of cooking here. I really enjoy it, and they tell me I am really good at it. We don't use the *Tassajara Bread Book* as much any more because Eric says Suzuki Roshi has cancer, and a real enlightened master would never get cancer.

Kenneth came to visit me today.

"How's it going, Wendy, you look so worried." He gave me a hug. This is the first time we have hugged because usually we are a bit nervous to touch each other. It felt really wonderful.

“A guy with a uniform delivered a paper to me today,” I said. “It said I had to go to court, but I threw it away because soon the court and the universities and the television and all the other uptight things of our parents’ world will be obsolete and replaced with love.”