

The Woman in Red Kimono

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Woman in red kimono by Takanori HAYAKAWA

Characters of the play

Takeshi OGAWA: A Japanese man (Early thirties)

Imelda: A psychic woman

A Japanese woman in red kimono

Joe: An Italian man

Setting: A lounge room in a pub.

(Takeshi with shopping bags appears and sits on a couch. Imelda approaches him.)

Imelda: Hi.

Takeshi: Hi.

Imelda: Are you Japanese?

Takeshi: Yes.

Imelda: I thought so. What's your name? Hang on! Let me see. Uuuuum, 'T'.

Takeshi: Pardon?

Imelda: 'T'! It begins with a 'T'. No, No, No, No. Your name has got 'T' in it. Right?

Takeshi: Yeah.

Imelda: I knew it. So what is your name?

Takeshi: Takeshi.

Imelda: TAKE SHIT?

Takeshi: No, No, No. Ta Ke Shi. T A K E S H I

Imelda T A K E S H..... Ah! Take Shit without T.

Takeshi: Yeah, Takeshi.

Imelda: What's your surname?

Takeshi: Ogawa. Takeshi Ogawa.

Imelda: Aha. So your name begins with 'T'.

Takeshi: Yeah. What's your name?

Imelda: Imelda. You live here, don't you. How long have you been in Australia?

Takeshi: About 5 years.

Imelda: I knew it, I knew it. Your English is very good.

Takeshi: Thank you.

Imelda: You live alone?

Takeshi: Yeah

Imelda: I see a woman.

Takeshi: Pardon?

Imelda: I see a woman behind you.

Takeshi: I'm sorry?

Imelda: I see a woman wearing a red, ahhhh. Kimo.....

Takeshi: Kimono?

Imelda: YES!! She is wearing a red kimono with gold embroidery on it. I see a woman behind you.

Takeshi: What are you talking about?

Imelda: I am a psychic. I can see things, you know. I see people from the past, and now I can see a woman right behind you.

Takeshi: You see a woman behind me?

Imelda: Yes, she is your guardian angel. She is always with you, protects you and guides you. Trust me.

Takeshi: She is always with me, protects me and guides me?

Imelda: Yes, and I understand what she says.

Takeshi: You must be kidding.

Imelda: No. I'm quite serious. She is right there, and smiling at me right now.

Takeshi: OoooKaaai, so what is she saying?

Imelda: Let me see. Ah! She said you have to stop being materialistic.

Takeshi: What?

Imelda: She said you have to stop being materialistic. You must stop buying things.

Takeshi: I am not materialistic.

Imelda: Yes, you are.

Takeshi: What do you know about me?

Imelda: I don't. But, she does.

Takeshi: My guardian angel?

Imelda: Yes, your guardian angel. What have you got in your bags?

Takeshi: Stuff I bought today.

Imelda: See? That's what she is talking about.

Takeshi: Wait a minute! By seeing these bags, anyone can make a comment like that.

Imelda: You don't believe me, do you.

Takeshi: Nope.

Imelda: But you must remember that I could tell your name.

Takeshi: Hang on. No, you didn't. You said my name has got 'T' in it. There are so many Japanese male names with T, like Takeshi, Toru, Tetsuya, Yoshitaka.

Imelda: Is that right? I didn't know that. She told me.

Takeshi: OK, if you say so. Tell me what I bought today, then.

Imelda: What?

Takeshi: Tell me what I bought today. What do I have in my bags right now?

Imelda: I don't know.

Takeshi: Why not? You said you are a psychic. If you are a real psychic, you should be able to tell me what I bought today, shouldn't you?

Imelda: No.

Takeshi: Why not?

Imelda: Because I can just tell what your guardian angel says. I don't know what's in your bags.

Takeshi: So ask her what I bought today. If she is always with me, she should be able to tell you what I bought.

Imelda: OK. I can't.

Takeshi: Why not?

Imelda: Because she's gone now.

Takeshi: What?

Imelda: She's gone. You know, she left. Because you didn't believe in her.

Takeshi: Crap!!

Imelda: Listen. Guardian angels do not communicate with the people who do not believe in them.

Takeshi: That's crap.

Imelda: Imagine! If you try to help someone, but they do not listen to you, will you still speak to them?

Takeshi: Weeeeeeeell, I suppose not.

Imelda: See! So, she stopped talking to me. She's gone now.

(Silence)

Takeshi: OK. OK. So who is she?

Imelda: I don't know. She's gone now.

Takeshi: But you saw her, right? So you can tell me what she looks like?

Imelda: She looked like your grandmother.

Takeshi: Hang on. My grandmothers are still alive.

Imelda: OK, then she must be your great grandmother.

Takeshi: I don't think any of my relatives wore a red kimono with gold embroidery.

Imelda: But she was.

Takeshi: What else did you see, apart from the red kimono?

Imelda: Her hair was jet black, and her hairstyle was very traditional, and she was wearing white make-up.

Takeshi: It's a geisha girl.

Imelda: Yes!! That's it!

Takeshi: What a stereotypical image of a Japanese woman! Not many Japanese women put on white make up and wear a red kimono. I've never even seen a real geisha in my life.

Imelda: But there are some, aren't there? She must be one of them.

Takeshi: No. No way! She is not my relative. I don't know anybody who was a geisha.

Imelda: She could be your great great grandmother.

(Imelda again focuses on a point behind Takeshi.)

Takeshi: What? What? Is she here?

Imelda: No. I was looking at a bug.

Takeshi: *(Sigh.)* So she's gone.

Imelda: Yep.

Takeshi: What else did she tell you?

Imelda: Not much. You didn't believe in her, so she only said to stop being materialistic.

Takeshi: Can you ask her to come back?

Imelda: No.

Takeshi: Why not?

Imelda: I told you. I can't talk to her unless she talks to me.

Takeshi: Hang on. How do you communicate with her? None of my relatives speaks English.

Imelda: I just sense it. I just know it.

Takeshi: Where is she now?

Imelda: I don't know. She must have gone because you don't believe in her.

Takeshi: Alright. Alright. I believe in her.

Imelda: No, you don't.

Takeshi: Yeah, I do now.

Imelda: Say it. If you believe in her, say it again.

Takeshi: OK. I believe in her.

(Silence)

Imelda: No, she is not here.

Takeshi: C'mon.

Imelda: I cannot do anything. It was your fault, don't blame it on m.....

(The woman in red kimono appears)

Imelda: She is here again.

Takeshi: Where?

Imelda: Right behind you.

(Takeshi looks behind doubtfully and Imelda throws him a fierce look)

Takeshi: OK. So what's her name?

Imelda: I don't know unless she wants to tell us.

(The woman in the red kimono tries to communicate with Imelda through sign language. She shapes 'O' with her mouth and hands, but Imelda misunderstands. She thinks it is a sexual action.)

Imelda: What! That's rude! I can't say that.

(Imelda imitates the woman in the red kimono and laughs. Takeshi tries to run away but Imelda catches him. The woman in the red kimono gestures 'no'. Imelda tries again.)

Imelda: Big mouth? Uuuuuun, 'O'? 'O'! That's it! 'O'. It begins with 'O'. No. It has got 'O' in it.

Takeshi: Wait a minute. My surname begins with 'O'. So most of my relatives have 'O' in their names.

Imelda: I don't know. That's what she said.

(The woman in red kimono disappears.)

Imelda: Damn! She's gone again.

Takeshi: C'mon.

Imelda: It's you, not me. Listen. I do see things people don't usually see, but not all the time. When I see something, there must be reasons. Your guardian angel wants to tell you something. That's why she appeared."

Takeshi: What does she want to tell me?

Imelda: I don't know!! Believe her!! She is on your side. She wants to tell you something.

Takeshi: OK.

(Silence. The woman in red kimono appears.)

Imelda: She's here again.

(The Woman in red kimono gestures to stop buying stuff.)

Takeshi: What is she saying?

Imelda: She said stop being materialistic.

Takeshi: I know that.

(The woman in red kimono gestures being single.)

Imelda: Shhhhh. One? He is one? Ah! You are single, aren't you.

Takeshi: Yeah. That's it? You knew that.

Imelda: Nope.

Takeshi: I told you I live on my own.

Imelda: But it doesn't mean you are single, does it.

Takeshi: No, but.....

(The woman in red kimono mimes 'love'.)

Imelda: Hug? Kiss? Love? Love! You don't have a partner, do you. That's what she means. You are looking for a partner. That's the reason that she is here.

(The woman in red kimono nods and smiles.)

Takeshi: I am not looking for a partner.

(The woman in red kimono gestures 'crap'.)

Imelda: You are lying.

Takeshi: No, I'm not.

Imelda: Yes, you are.

(The woman in red kimono mimes 'wanker'.)

Imelda: She is also saying you are lying.

Takeshi: It's not true.

Imelda: You buy stuff because you are lonely.

Takeshi: No, it's not true. I like shopping, that's why.

Imelda: You come here because you are lonely. You don't want to go home where no-one is waiting for you. You want to be with someone. You don't want to be left alone.

(The woman in red kimono gestures that she agrees.)

Takeshi: No. It's not true. I just like drinking. It's not true at all.

Imelda: Are you happy?

Takeshi: Of course I am.

(The woman in red kimono gestures 'crap'.)

Imelda: You can lie to me but not to her. Are you happy?

Takeshi: Yes, I told you.

(The woman in red kimono gestures she disagrees and is frustrated.)

Imelda: No. You want to believe you are happy. Listen to your voice inside. Isn't it a fake happiness? Are you sure you are happy?

(Silence)

Takeshi: Alright. I am looking for someone.

(Imelda and the woman in red kimono are pleased.)

Imelda: Now you're talking!

Takeshi: So what! What can I do? What is she saying? If she's here to help me, tell me what I can do?

(Imelda looks at the woman in red kimono. The woman in red kimono gestures social activities e.g. dining, drinking, dancing, having party, and making love. Imelda is confused.)

Imelda: Drinking, eating, dancing? What? What are you doing? What do you want to tell?

(The woman in red kimono tries to simplify her gestures, and indicates talking to people.)

Imelda: Talk? Talk to people. That's it!!

Takeshi: What?

Imelda: Talk to people. She said talk to people. There are plenty of people here. Don't be shy.

(Takeshi looks around and sees people around him.)

Takeshi: No. I can't.

Imelda: Of course you can. You talked to me. Relax and talk to people, Take shit.

Takeshi: Ta ke shi.

Imelda: Oh, sorry. Ta ke shi.

(The woman in red kimono waits patiently.)

Imelda: Remember, she is always with you and supports you.

Takeshi But.

Imelda: She is always with you. Got it? You'll be fine. Go! Go!

(Imelda urges him to go. Takeshi exits and followed by the woman in red kimono smiling at Imelda. Imelda sees him off. Joe appears.)

Imelda Hi. Are you Greek?

Joe No, I'm Italian.

Imelda: Aha. Your name is...? Hang on. Let me see. Uuuuuuum, your name has got 'T' in it. Right?