

MERRY-GO-ROUND

written by

Steven Sallie

EXT. HELL - DAY

Not what most people would probably imagine as the place for eternal suffering.

A massive parking lot. Not a car or building in sight as far as the eye can see. Under the BOILING SUN, a MERRY-GO-ROUND, spinning at an unnervingly slow speed, accompanied by a SHRILL, JAUNTY TUNE.

A MASSIVE LINE OF PEOPLE wait, backed up for what appears to be miles. None of them look pleased, but more of a mild annoyance-- like people complaining about their hotel accommodations.

As the line inches closer and closer to the merry-go-round, a man pokes his head around the person in front of him, looking in confusion at what's ahead.

This is BEN, 40s, a bit on the thin side. His eyes widen at the sight ahead and the insane music.

Ben looks at the ELDERY MAN, 70s, behind him.

BEN

Excuse me, do you have any idea where we are?

The Elderly Man shakes his head.

ELDERY MAN

Beats me, son. Last thing I remember was lying in bed. Next thing I know, I'm here.

The Elderly Man looks to a WOMAN, 50s, behind him.

ELDERY MAN

You know where we are?

The Woman just shakes her head. Not even making eye contact.

The Elderly Man turns back to Ben. Then looks around him at A LARGE MAN standing at the front of the line holding a clipboard.

ELDERY MAN

Maybe he knows?

Ben frowns.

BEN

This is ridiculous...

Ben looks down at his watch. Checks the time-- the hour and minutes hands spin around and around, first clockwise, then counterclockwise.

BEN
What the hell?

Ben looks up, checking the line. He's third. A pair of MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN ahead of him.

Ben shields his eyes with his hand, scanning the horizon for a sign of literally anything. But there's nothing. Just the merry-go-round, and the people in line.

He folds his arms, like a pouting child.

Finally, the two women get on. Now it's Ben's turn.

Ben stops suddenly, looking at the merry-go-round. It's still spinning, still playing horrible music, but THERE'S NO ONE ON IT.

Ben stares, confused. *Where'd everyone go?*

The Large Man with the clipboard clears his throat.

LARGE MAN
Name?

BEN
Um... Benjamin Janisse.

The Large Man checks his clipboard. Finds Ben's name. Nods.

LARGE MAN
Yep. There you are.

The Large Man gestures to the merry-go-round.

LARGE MAN
Go ahead, she's all yours.

Ben looks at the merry-go-round. Still trying to figure out what is going on.

BEN
Excuse me... uh... sir... but
where am I?

LARGE MAN
Hell.

Ben's eyes WIDEN. He can't believe what he's hearing.

BEN

What? That can't be right.

LARGE MAN

Nope, this is Hell. I've worked here for fifteen hundred years. I know what I'm talking about.

BEN

SO I'M DEAD?!

LARGE MAN

That's generally the way it works, yeah.

BEN

But I don't even remember dying! The last thing I remember was driving in my car.

LARGE MAN

That's not my department. If you have further questions, I can connect you with customer service?

BEN

But... I... There's gotta be some kind of mistake-- I'm a good person. I don't deserve to be here.

The Large Man taps his clipboard--

LARGE MAN

Not according to this. Now, do you mind? You're holding up the line.

Ben opens his mouth several times, trying to find the words.

BEN

I don't understand. I thought Hell was fire and brimstone and all that?

LARGE MAN

I know, I know. I'm sick and tired of people spreading all that misinformation. It's really effecting our bottom line. I got kids to feed, you know?

Ben points to the merry-go-round.

BEN

So if there's no fire, what the Hell is this?

LARGE MAN

This is your punishment. You'll get on for all eternity, and while you're on there, you'll relive all the worst moments of your life complete with realistic recreations of the people involved.

BEN

That sounds horrible.

The Large Man casually shrugs.

LARGE MAN

It's Hell, what'd you expect? Kittens in a basket? This is what you get. Now please get on, you're holding up the line.

Ben looks at the people behind him-- now a few of the people closest to him look concerned.

Ben turns back to the Large Man. Almost on the verge of tears.

BEN

Please... this can't be right. You've got to do something! I don't belong here!

LARGE MAN

Yes, you do! How many times do you have to be told?

The Large Man SNAPS HIS FINGERS.

The merry-go-round comes to a dead stop. The colorful lights strobe. The music continues.

LARGE MAN

Now will you please get on?

BEN

But, what did I do? I thought I was a pretty good person? I wasn't a saint, but I didn't think I was a terrible person.

LARGE MAN

I don't know. That's not my job.

(MORE)

LARGE MAN (CONT'D)
I'm just the guy with the
clipboard. Now please get on.

Ben takes in the merry-go-round. Breathing heavily. Tears beginning to fill in his eyes.

LARGE MAN
Please don't make get security.
Because I will.

Ben looks the Large Man over. If he's the guy with the clipboard, he doesn't want to see the security.

With the pace of a man going to his execution, Ben walks onto the merry-go-round. He takes a seat on a WHITE UNICORN WITH A SPARKLY HORN.

His hands GRASP the pole tightly.

Ben makes eye contact with the Large Man-- who nods.

LARGE MAN
All right, Benjamin Janisse. First
memory stop is walking in on your
parents having sex when you were
six.

Ben's face drops. His jaw falls open.

He lets out a UNEARTHLY WAIL. The sound of incomprehensible suffering.

The Large Man SNAPS his fingers.

The merry-go-round starts up and begins slowly spinning. It gradually picks up speed.

Before long, Ben disappears around the corner.

ANOTHER SCREAM.

The Large Man turns to the Elderly Man who was standing behind Ben.

LARGE MAN
Same damn thing every day.
(beat)
Name?

SMASH TO BLACK.