

# City of Lonely Angels

by Lisa Haisha



When I told friends I was going to be writing an article about loneliness in L.A., I got a few raised eyebrows and smirking comments like: *What? You?! With the dozens of close friends and a family you love, who lives not in Timbuktu, but near-by San Diego?* Yes, I sighed. We all have our moments of loneliness... especially in a city like L.A., with its storied isolation and de-emphasis of family and community in favor of self-absorbed ambition.

Not long ago, I had broken up with a boyfriend and found myself at what normally would have been an exciting event, meeting new people and sharing a great experience with my beloved. Instead, I ended up feeling self-conscious and lonely

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even while surrounded by friendly people. Loneliness is not cured simply by sharing laughs with friends or being invited to A-list parties or even maxing out our credit cards at Barney's. All these things are fleeting pleasures that stroke our egos, rather than fill our souls.

So, how do we deal with loneliness? Well, one culture that shares some of L.A.'s negative traits (i.e. excessive materialism and chronic alienation) is Japan. While visiting Tokyo during a recent holiday season I learned from some of the locals of an interesting way that they handle loneliness. When the holiday blues descend, the socially isolated can contract with a "Rent a Family" company to lease a surrogate grandparent, child, loving mother or pet — even a whole brood if they desire.

In advance, you give the company a bio of yourself so your surrogate family can learn all about you and make the relationship feel natural.

On your special day, they knock on your door bearing gifts, compliments on how good you look, and that all elusive "love." When they leave, it is with hugs, tears, and promises of looking forward to seeing you again. Nice, huh?

Could this Japanese model work in L.A.? Well, you could try...but you'd probably end up with a bunch of struggling actors from Central Casting, most of whom would be far too good-looking to be your real family. And right in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner your beloved "family" just might get paged for an audition and have to bolt. Or "Grandma" might trip on your carpet and sue you for everything you're worth.

Nope, probably wouldn't work out here. So, what can you do if you're lonely in L.A. during the holiday season? One friend of mine makes a point of fleeing the country between Thanksgiving and New Year so he doesn't have to listen to two months

of sappy holiday favorites piped in from every Starbucks, TV set and radio station in the city.

But a better solution, in my mind, would be to shift our focus off our own loneliness by volunteering our time to help others. Put in a few hours at a soup kitchen, read to children at an orphanage or hospital or pay a visit to elderly folks at a nursing home who have no one who cares about them. The smiles and the light you will see in their eyes not only will make you forget your loneliness, but make it go away altogether.

Until next time...detach and become.

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# Gott

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*Beverly Hills*  
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advocate of women

# STAYI



her new book, *Stayed*  
*Female in an Unsa*  
women who own  
crimes, rape & de  
author of "Armed  
on gun self-defens  
taught thousands

**Christopher K  
gets to the  
"Kennedy**

Every family  
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Christopher  
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Magic Myth" is  
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Rose Kennedy  
first penned a  
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into the lives  
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