

Funerals are for the Living

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I don't know what I expected. Can you really have expectations for a funeral? That just sounds absurd. I guess, really, I just didn't expect this. Have you ever been to a funeral? You'll probably know what I'm referring to, if you have.

I walk in and all my family members are crowding together. Some are sobbing, some are stone-faced. There are people here that shouldn't be. It's my opinion that if you didn't truly know the deceased while she was alive, you probably shouldn't attend the ritual of close family and friends saying goodbye to this person forever right before they burn the body or enclose it in a dirt tomb forever. Just a personal opinion.

Her. Him. Her, too. Both of those two standing by the front-row pews. Should not be here. They have absolutely no relation with the person lying in the coffin. I move my way towards the coffin, ignoring the myriad of people with no business here. I can see people looking in—open casket, disgusting. Now, I'm not saying that the deceased isn't presentable. She wasn't in some horrific car accident, she isn't blue and puffy from water retention (she didn't jump off the bridge, even though she thought about it). She didn't shove a bullet through her brain. She didn't slide that smooth metal across her pale, blue-veined wrists. She went peacefully. I mean... as peacefully as taking your own life can be. You know, in some countries it's virtuous to take your own life. Yeah, maybe she wasn't doing it to defend her country, or whatever, but still.

"Charlotte was such a strong girl!"

"She was so sweet! And **so** beautiful—it's a shame."

I roll my eyes. People always want to say such kind things to each other about those who have passed. Where were these people when she was alive? I'm so irritated. I push past them, but they don't notice me. I bogart the coffin for myself. I turn my head and lean over the coffin. I want to see what she looks like now. My hair flows in waves over the side of the coffin, blocking out those silly people with their silly stories about how great she was. As I look into her face, I think of how silly, how pointless it is for them to say such things—this body can't hear them. Her skin is paler than usual. Her soft brown hair is dull; it lost all its radiance and shine (just how I imagine her green eyes did behind those thin lids). All I can think about are those eyes. They were so beautiful—my favorite quality. Now, I'm sure they lack all color—gray as this soul. Void of all life.



I continue my inspection, half expecting to see the pill bottle and a few miscellaneous candy-colored pills spilled around her frail fingers. They're not there, so I continue on. Ugh, the dress that was picked out is horrible. Clearly, Martha picked that out. Why actually think of what she might **want** to wear? No, I'll just dress her in an acceptable way for her to be presented to all these people. I hate that. Even in death, everyone else's needs and opinions are more important.

"I'll miss seeing her in English class. She was the best writer in our whole class."

"I know. Charlie tutored me because I was failing. It was so nice of her..."

"We had P.E. together. She was always so smiley."

"Her death was tragic. She was taken too early. Does anyone know what happened?"

"Her parents say that it was some kind of freak accident. They haven't said any more."

"Wow. That's crazy. I heard..."

I walk past them, ignoring what he heard. This whole thing is wrong. Why has no one taken into account what Charlie would want? Why is she dressed like she's going to church when that's the exact opposite of her personality? She should be in ripped jeans and a band tee, Chucks on, dark eyeliner. Instead she looks like a proper, wholesome bible-thumper here to eradicate sin. How ironic. Furthermore, why is it that everyone is digging out all these nice things to say about her? She was all of those things—beautiful, smart, sweet, strong. But no one saw that when she was alive. Have they not stopped to think that maybe if they talked to her like this when she was alive that, maybe, she might still be here? But no. Everyone is just worried about presenting themselves as something so vital to the life she had, talking her up like she was someone really important.

I'm so glad that I have the ability to move through these crowds of liars to hear the bull that they're spitting. Some of this stuff isn't even true! I just smirk and move along.

"We were like best friends. We talked all the time. I'm gonna miss her."

Umm, no. What a lie. If she had friends **she wouldn't have killed herself**. How many people here are going to claim that they were so close to her? I don't recall these people being there when tears were shed, when she spilled her own blood, when she screamed at the top of her lungs due to frustration. I don't remember them caring when she walked through the halls alone, being tussled around as people ran into



her, not even acknowledging that her body was occupying the space that they just bulldozed through.

I can't handle this any longer. It's too frustrating. I walk back to the coffin. I take one last look. It's so strange to see your own body. You know how they say that you never truly see yourself, just reflections? Well, imagine seeing yourself, **truly seeing** your body for the first time when it's devoid of life. It's so eerie and disturbing. I truly was beautiful, though. I see that now. I guess at this point I would be tempted to ask myself if I should have made a different choice. Should I have stuck it out? But what's the point in that? I'm already dead. Nothing is bringing me back. Charlie is gone forever. I no longer want to be here. This funeral wasn't about me. Its sole purpose is to make those that I knew feel better about my passing. It doesn't make me feel better at all. I take one last glance at my body, take in the view of my "friends and family," look over at my parents (who I'm sure are touting their love for me). It's all so revolting.

Never attend your own funeral. It's a sham. Funerals are only for the living—the deceased have no business there.

