

All Funerals Are the Same (Sample)

Written By

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Characters

Jamie Foster ----- 13, hostile, well versed for her age.

Oliver Peterson ----- 12½ , nerdy, gangly, wears the same sweatshirt everyday.

Austin ----- Preppy bully.

Kyle ----- Dirty bully.

Jamie's Mom ----- Off stage voice.

Scene 1

Lights up on the Web's basement. It's dim. A TV and a beaten up couch sit among towers of dusty, forgotten boxes. JAMIE sits on an old box. She is dressed in funeral attire, her short hair pinned back in the front with a bow. She stares at the floor.

OLIVER enters, also dressed in funeral clothes. He's carrying a small plate covered in cocktail wieners.

OLIVER

I got some cocktail wieners, want one?

He takes a seat by Jamie, she looks up at him.

JAMIE

I'm not very hungry.

OLIVER

(Shrugs and pops a wiener in his mouth) More for me.

JAMIE

How's the party going up there?

OLIVER

(Annoyed) It's not a party, Jamie.

JAMIE

Feels like one.

OLIVER

Everyone's crying, parties don't have crying.

JAMIE

Then what do you call it?

OLIVER

My mom says it's a reception-

JAMIE

There was a reception at my cousin's wedding. It was a party. This is a party too.

Jamie gets up, walking around a bit.

JAMIE
Specifically, it's a death party.

OLIVER
Don't say that...

JAMIE
I mean everyone came out here to show off how much they "loved" Tommy, just like a birthday party.

OLIVER
(*Agitated*) Stop.

JAMIE
And they're dressed nice, like a party.

OLIVER
Stop!

JAMIE
Or a wedding!

OLIVER
JAMIE SHUT UP!

Jamie takes a seat, folding her arms.

JAMIE
Whatever... You didn't answer my question. How's the *reception*?

OLIVER
Lame. His aunt's crying again.

JAMIE
Of course.

OLIVER
Coach Morris is talking about what a great pitcher he was.

JAMIE
He couldn't throw for shit, but okay.

OLIVER
Crystal was going on and on to me at the snack table about how she knew Tommy had a crush on her and she felt so bad for telling him she just wanted to be friends.

JAMIE

I wanna shove that girl's head in a meat grinder.

OLIVER

Jamie-

JAMIE

It's a figure of speech, Peterson, calm down. What else is going on?

OLIVER

I scoped out Tommy's room.

JAMIE

And?

OLIVER

It's exactly how he left it.

JAMIE

Well, that's to be expected, the kid's dead he's not gonna move anything.

OLIVER

Jamie!

JAMIE

It's the truth, I'm not gonna beat around the bush like those imbeciles upstairs!

This hangs in the air a moment.

OLIVER

My point is that this is a really sensitive subject right now, Jamie.

Jamie crosses her arms.

JAMIE

(Steeling herself) So?

OLIVER

So you can't be so up front about everything! I told my mom what you've been saying and she thinks you're gonna hurt people!

JAMIE

I'm hurt!

OLIVER

So am I! But for once in your damn life you need to shut your mouth.

Long silence.

OLIVER

This place feels so empty without him.

Jamie gets up, shaking her head.

JAMIE

We're not doing that.

OLIVER

(Offended) Not doing what?

JAMIE

We're not talking about him like he was a freaking saint, Oliver. That's what they're all doing upstairs and it's nauseating! This room is just the same now as it was before!

OLIVER

But it's different now!

JAMIE

Why is it different?

OLIVER

Because he passed/ away!

JAMIE

Because he's dead!

Long pause. Oliver gets up.

OLIVER

I know you're mad, Jamie, but don't treat *me* like crap.

JAMIE

(Softening) Oliver-

OLIVER

No, you're being a real jerk. I'll see you in school on Monday. I'm gonna go sit with my mom.

Oliver exits.

JAMIE

Whatever.

Jamie sits down on the box, resting her face on her hands and staring out blankly.

JAMIE

All funerals are the same... There are flowers, everywhere, the nasty scent of them fills the room and chokes you until you're purple... And it's crazy quiet, no one talks but if you have to say something, you're supposed to whisper... There's always a crowd, because the second you die, everyone likes to pretend they knew you. And they're all dressed in black, of course, sniffing and crying, putting on a show so they can pretend they meant something in your life, which again has gained tons of meaning since it ceased to exist... the flowers' smell fills the room like gas while sad old ladies and confused children crowd around to gawk and gripe at the empty shell in the box at the front of the room... then you sit down in one of those crappy folding chairs, the ones with the cheap padding on them. It's kind of comfortable at first but by the time the speakers and family are done droning on about how they'll "Live forever in our hearts" your ass is chapped and those DAMN flowers are still kicking you in the face.

She gets up, pacing slowly.

JAMIE

(Angry) And Tommy's funeral was no different. My mom made me wear these clothes that I hate! These- these shoes that squeak when they touch each other and this dress- I hate dresses... Tons of people came, people that didn't even know Tommy, there were like a hundred of them, easy. All dressed in black and sobbing and hugging when they didn't even know him! *(Laughs bitterly)* I don't think I've ever seen that many people putting on a show at one time before. There were teachers and hall monitors and coaches from the little league team Tommy quit 3 years ago... His aunt who he hardly even knew stood by the casket for like 30 minutes just wailing as if she'd lost her own son. She. Didn't. Know. Him. *(Pause)* Tommy's dad stood at the back of the room most of the time. I've never seen someone so dazed. Empty eyes... pale face... frozen... He didn't know Tommy either.

Long pause.

JAMIE

Oh, and Tommy's mom was a mess. I mean, that's to be expected she waited on the kid's hand and foot from the second he was born and his sister wasn't much better... There were hordes of people around the casket, every single kid in our damn school trying to get one last look at the face they'd pushed into the mud every single day since the third grade... After a while I went up to the front... *(Holding back tears bitterly)* You know, I half expected him to wake up... He looked like he was

sleeping... my- my mom told me not to but when she walked away, I shook his arm a little, trying to make sure he was still dead... *(Angry)* And he was!

She paces, pulling her hair.

JAMIE

(Explosive) Then they made speeches about what an amazing kid he was! And how smart and how he'll always live on in our memories even though the truth is- *(rubbing her face, miserable)* Grown men carried a child sized coffin onto their shoulders and brought it out to a hearse in the middle of funeral home parking lot... we drove in a long line led by police and a limo and a hearse to a cemetery and they put. My friend. In the ground.

Jamie sits down, wipes some tears away. Lights down.