

# THE CASKET AND THE CASSEROLE

By Jerry Rabushka

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### CHARACTERS:

**WILTON, an 18-year-old killed in a car crash**  
**PREACHER at the funeral**

**Both occasionally take on personalities of attendees.**

WILTON: I can't believe my mother made me wear that tie. It made me look like I was running for the Illinois senate. Paisleys. Big ones. Red ones.

PREACHER: (*as a family member, haughty*) Ugly ones. Must be his mother's side.

WILTON: Mom had no idea what looked good on me.

PREACHER: (*as another family member*) I saw a tie just like that in a retro museum.

WILTON: Old Uncle Bill kept blowing cigar smoke in my face and peering over at me like I was on display in an anthropology museum. I was afraid his glass eye would fall out.

PREACHER: (*as Uncle Bill*) What's with the kid? Did ya choke him to death putting on that tie?

WILTON: Auntie Ringworm – ok, that wasn't her real name, but there was some incident at a laundromat, apparently... she was wearing this perfume that smelled like rotten tuna. An ocean full of rotten tuna. Still swimming, but rotten. Fifteen people went home allergic. The cat thought she was dinner.

PREACHER: (*as a relative, kind of snooty and whiny*) Who brought that cat into the funeral home? It's not sanitary. Oh, like that matters now.

WILTON: Funerals in our family are just like weddings. You have to bribe them with the right food. They served head cheese at my sister's wedding and even the groom didn't come.

PREACHER: (*same relative*) Why is it at a funeral they serve food that the dead guy likes? They play music the dead guy likes? *He* doesn't appreciate it.

WILTON: I wasn't really quite sure whose funeral it was... they just say "Funeral!" and pack us in the car like we're going to the state fair! "Funeral" basically meant no hitting your sister on the way over. At the state fair I used to toss her into the pig pen. Once it took three days to find her.

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PREACHER: (**as yet one more relative**) Did cousin Roquefort come?  
She always brings the best casseroles!

WILTON: I really needed to get my tie off! But (**sassy**) that's disrespectful to the corpse!

PREACHER: (**as the PREACHER**) We are gathered here together to commemorate the life of-

WILTON: Auntie Ringworm started playing with her teeth, and Uncle Bill started playing with his eye. And here I was worried about a paisley tie.

PREACHER: Your attention please! We are gathered here together – (**joyful**) quiet, Auntie, or no casserole for ya! Now! Eww! Can we get a litter box in aisle six? (**takes a breath to start over**) We are, (**almost aside**) for the third time, (**to the crowd, loud and fast to keep their attention**) gathered here together to celebrate the life of a beloved young man...

WILTON: I was kind of wanting that casserole, too.

PREACHER: A young man who left us all too soon!

WILTON: I really wanted to get out of here early – for the casserole.

PREACHER: A young man who... well... died.

WILTON: I was afraid to admit I liked the casserole. At my age, casserole wasn't cool. Anyway, all these artificial body parts were taking away my appetite.

PREACHER: (**a little doltish**) What was his name? Winston? Carlton? (**finally!**) Wilton! I was wondering why we were gathered here.

WILTON: I heard my name, and I sat up with a jolt!

PREACHER: Usually, it's just for the casserole. Why can't we just get together and eat without having to drop someone into the ground?

WILTON: Well, okay, I didn't sit up. I thought I did, but-

PREACHER: Is it tuna? Is it albacore? Just the cheap stuff. That's disrespectful to the deceased.

WILTON: Same view. Ceiling fan. Looked like there was a sock flying around on one of the blades.

PREACHER: (**trying to figure it out**) It *smells* like tuna! Disrespectful. Next thing you know, people will start wearing shorts in church!

WILTON: Either a sock or... actually it was a prosthetic foot.

PREACHER: Oh, it's *her!* Will you move her to the back row? My sinuses, you know. Sensitive as a nun in an orphanage. Now if you'll excuse me, we have a body to mourn and inter.

WILTON: I've heard of kicking up your heels, but this was a bit much.

PREACHER: Whose foot is caught on the ceiling fan?

WILTON: (**thinks it over**) Wait a minute! No wonder they put a tie on me and started saying my name in sad, mournful tones.

PREACHER: (**sadly and mournfully**) Wilton! (**thinks it over**) Wilton? But he's so young!

WILTON: (*realizing HE might be... dead*) I guess that's why my sister kept hitting me on the way over.

PREACHER: It's always sad to lose a life. Well, okay, Mrs. Mueller's macaw had to go. (*scandalized*) The mouth on that thing!

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