

PHOENIX FUNERAL DRAFT 3

By Patrick Gabridge

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ISBN 1-931805-98-9

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SCENE: A funeral home. In Phoenix. An urn is on a dais on one side of the stage. On the opposite side are several rows of chairs.

AT RISE: MARTHA, a very attractive young woman, sits in one of the chairs. SHE holds a stack of papers in her hands. SHE looks around, a little bewildered.

(DESI enters, apparently unseen by Martha, and speaks directly to the audience. SHE's in a bit of a rush--someone not quite able to keep up with the bustle of her life.)

DESI: **(to the audience)** Phoenix Funeral Draft 2. SCENE: A funeral home. In Phoenix. An urn is on a dais on one side of the stage. On the opposite side are several rows of chairs. AT RISE: MARTHA, a very attractive young woman, in her early 20s, sits in one of the chairs. She holds a stack of papers in her hands. She looks around, a little bewildered. DESI enters in a bit of a rush--she's in her late 30s, someone not quite able to keep up with the bustle of her life.

(DESI takes a step back and re-enters, this time immediately noticed by MARTHA.)

DESI: Sorry I'm late. Matthew had violin lessons and I had to drop Kanisha off at a swim meet. Seems like I can barely find time to think these days.

MARTHA: Right. I understand. Thank God mine is grown. Not that I don't miss the times when she was little.

DESI: Parenthood gives a new meaning to the notion of time not being a constant. Fast and slow, painful and joyous. Mostly it just leaves me confused.

MARTHA: You're able to accept it better than most, I think. Confusion.

DESI: Resistance is futile. Embrace confusion I say.

MARTHA: I wish I could. But I don't enjoy it quite as much as you.

DESI: I try to approach it like a Bhuddist might--to seek clarity is to obscure it. Answers are only found when you stop asking questions.

MARTHA: I don't get--

DESI: That's the point. Enlightenment is not about answers, not even about questions.

MARTHA: Right. Okay. But what if I do have questions? For example, why are we meeting in a funeral home instead of at the theatre?

DESI: Your office is all the way across town. I'm a woman for whom time functions as an invisible boa constrictor--this helps soften the squeeze. And you need to get out more anyway.

MARTHA: Okay, so I'm a little stage bound, but getting out more would not normally include being at a funeral home.

DESI: That's true. Revise that. What I meant to say is that we're here because James just died.

MARTHA: What?

DESI: I can barely talk about it.

MARTHA: I'm so... But we just...

DESI: It was a freak thing. I didn't even know sewer gasses were flammable. I always begged him to stop smoking.

MARTHA: I'm so sorry.

DESI: At least it was quick. They said he hardly felt a thing. They didn't even need to do any additional cremation--they just swept him up.

MARTHA: This is just so... sudden.

DESI: I don't know how I'll go on. Somehow I'll rise from the ashes.

MARTHA: Well, sure you will, Desi.

DESI: It won't be easy. The kids don't know what to think.

MARTHA: Yes, I can only imagine the trauma of finding...

DESI: Thanks so much for coming. You're a true friend. I know I can count on you to boost my spirits.

MARTHA: Right. That's important at a time like this. **(looks at the papers in her hands)** We'll have to talk more later, for some reason I thought I was coming here to--

DESI: No, don't go. I can't let this stop my life, Martha. James wouldn't want me to. You and I were planning to meet.

MARTHA: Right. To talk about your script for the festival.

DESI: Yes. My writing will keep me going. As long as I nurture my soul, I can face any adversity. A production at a time like this... Theatre is really all about family, and I'll need it more than ever, now.

MARTHA: Maybe this isn't the best time--

DESI: Please. I can use a little distraction.

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