

Scene 1

Lights up. We are in a funeral home, blank walls, two desks or tables with chairs behind them and a few flowers dotted around the place, Tony and Emma are both centre stage heads bowed in a sombre way with 'death march' music playing in the background, we get the impression that this is an actual funeral then suddenly the music fades out and they snap out of it.

Emma: That was pathetic.

Tony: I tried my best you know.

Emma: Come on you call that being sombre I've seen a better performance at a wedding.

Tony: Look stop going on about it okay I'm doing my best. It was only a rehearsal anyway what's the point?

Emma: The point is, Tony, my dear and dull apprentice. We have to be the best we can be in this job. You have to have decorum and grace.

Tony: Emma, my dear and dumb boss although technically we are equal here. What does that mean?

Emma: It's everything you're not that's what it means. And stop copying my attempts to bring you down.

Tony: Do you have to do this after every rehearsal?

Emma: Yes, especially after your performance. This is a disgraceful situation when people come to a funeral they want to see that the undertakers are more depressed than they are, you look far too jolly to be one.

Tony: Jolly, I'm wearing black.

Emma: But is it black enough, why aren't you wearing a black shirt? Or a black face huh?

Tony: We are not the SAS and why aren't you?

Emma: Don't change the subject. We're talking about you not me. I'm in charge here.

Tony: That's only because we don't have a manager yet and I can't be bothered to do anything.

Emma: Yes I know. You're lazy and bored with your job and that means the buck stops here; I am the Rubicon that cannot be crossed. I am that line in the sand at

the Alamo. I am a few thousand Zulu warriors going to kill those men at Rorke's drift in that movie Zulu. I am the living embodiment of god. So shut up and do what I say.

Tony: And people think you have something wrong with you.

Emma: Did I tell you to speak?

Tony: No, not exactly.

Emma: Did I not tell you to shut up?

Tony: That was your wording however I saw that underneath that you wanted me to continue.

Emma: Shut up, it is spelt S H U T U P U.

Tony: Is it now, did you have to go to a university to learn that?

Emma: I said shut up we need to work on that rehearsal.

Tony: I am not standing like that again it ruins my posture.

Emma: No, besides I prefer sitting down. We have to think about how we as a team can improve it, so shut up while I think.

Tony: Yes, that's real team work in action.

Emma: SHUT UP! Thank you now we need to think about an action plan for the next rehearsal.

Tony: You know what I think we need to reconsider a few things.

Emma: I said...hold on, you spoke and sounded like you had an idea. What do you mean?

Tony: I mean we need to think about the deceased in a more real context.

Emma: The deceased is dead, how can we do that?

Tony: Yes but he or she or even dog or cat, used to be alive and kicking, so how about we do a funeral based on their lives.

Emma: Are you seriously thinking about creating a themed funeral?

Tony: Yes, what if he was a banker we can cover him over with fake money and dirt.

Emma: Fake dirt?

Tony: No normal dirt but the money would be fake.

Emma: That's interesting please continue.

Tony: And if she was a footballer's wife then we can bury the paparazzi with her and have people standing there criticising what she is wearing as she is put into the grave.

Emma: Well you are thinking outside the box I'll give you that but there's one problem with it.

Tony: What?

Emma: It's crap.

Tony: Critic.

Emma: Think about it six feet is not deep enough for all the paparazzi she needs to be placed in there with her, we'll a mass grave for that and I am not doing a funeral like that again, the foot and mouth outbreak had us doing that everyday.

Tony: Yeah I remember, those poor cows, no one there for them in the end except for environmental health officers.

Emma: What we need is a good war.

Tony: What to improve our techniques?

Emma: Yes, you see the problem is that there isn't enough death around what we require is something truly horrific to happen; swine flu is working far too slowly for my taste.

Tony: True, although you have no taste, people are dying from swine flu everyday and you have to make into a business statement.

Emma: What? Do you really think that the undertakers during the Black Death were saying, oh, this is such terrible time, no they weren't, they were saying, this is great plenty of practice and now we perfect our techniques.

Tony: I suppose.

Emma: The problem is you don't know your history, you haven't studied like I have. Did you know that after the Battle of Hastings the local undertaker finally learned how to get a hundred knights six feet under at once? Now that was genius unfortunately the technique has been lost.

Tony: Oh and why is that?

Emma: Because he buried himself with them by accident, they dug him out eventually but it was too late he had already succumbed to what killed them.

Tony: What being stabbed to death by some else's sword?

Emma: No, boredom. Those soldiers at Hastings were too bored; do you know how long a battle takes? It takes hours to finish and nothing happens except people kill each other now if that isn't boring I don't know what is.

Tony: That's ridiculous.

Emma: Never the less it is part of history recorded by the bloke who pushed him and stamped on his head a few times to keep him down.

Tony: So he was murdered?

Emma: That's one interpretation, anyway enough about this, what about this?

Tony: What about what?

Emma: This, this.

Tony: This what?

Emma: This, what we were talking about.

Tony: I can't remember back that far.

Emma; Nor can I and it's all your fault.

Tony: What now?

Emma: What now, you have put me off my ingenious train of thought that's what.

Tony: You can't even remember what you were doing.

Emma: I know but I am ingenious and that is what matters okay.

Tony: Hang on....You were talking about.....techniques.

Emma: Yes I know you don't have to remind me!

Tony: Well carry on then.

Emma: I will! If you would just let me.

Pause

Tony: Well talk about it then?

Emma: There it is, you cannot stop can you? You have to interrupt me when I am getting going.

Tony: Well go keep getting going then, whatever that means.

Emma: It means shut up I am thinking.

Pause. Then Tony begins tapping on the table.

Emma: You just can't stop can you?

Tony: WHAT!

Emma: I am trying to think and you interrupt me.

Tony: I am just tapping on the table with my finger, what is wrong with that?

Emma: You are deliberately trying to make me look like a fool.

Tony: I don't need to try you already look like one.

Emma: You ungrateful little swine. Do you know why I hired you?

Tony: You didn't the last manager did before you 'accidently' shoved him into the crematorium. Head first.

Emma: Yes but I told him to hire you.

Tony: No you didn't I told him to, I was part of his secret society, the sci-fi fan club.

Emma: How is that a secret?

Tony: We don't talk about that.

Emma: Look, never mind, let's just focus.

Tony: That'll take some doing.

Emma: The important thing is to work on our technique.

Tony: Right absolutely.

Emma: Now what is wrong with it?

Tony: You're asking me?

Emma: Yes I am asking you.

Tony: You're actually asking me to suggest something?

Emma: There's a first time for everything in this world and here it is, so suggest something.

Tony: I suppose we could try less colourful flowers.

Emma: What do you mean?

Tony: Oh come on you're a woman you have to have noticed. We wear black and this clashes with the flowers that have many colours. Roses are red, violets are blue and created an awful clash with our suits.

Emma: Go on.

Tony: I can't that's it.

Emma: So, we could either wear less black or have black flowers instead of coloured ones.

Tony: Exactly that way everything is coordinated and we don't clash with one another.

Emma: That is actually, a good idea.

We hear the sounds of people cheering, Emma offstage and starts shouting.

Emma: Shut up we're busy with a dead guy in here! Hey don't make me come down there and measure you up pal!

Then Emma returns.

Emma: Another match day, why we had to build this place next to a football stadium I'll never know.

Tony: Because it meant that the place was cheap when they bought it.

Emma: Yes that's why. Great now I have contradicted myself plus I lied, are you happy now?

Tony: Well you had to say that you'd never know when in fact I knew and I told you.

Emma: Good, now let's carry on.

Tony: Yes, what about music?

Emma: Music?

Tony: Yes I hate the death march thing, how about this?

Then Leann Rimes' nothing better to do is heard playing. Then it stops.

Emma: No too ironic.

Tony: How about this?

Baby come back is heard. Then it stops.

Emma: That's just sick and how do you do that?

Tony: I don't know it just happens whenever I want it to, I shall demonstrate. How about this?

Then 'it feels like' by Leann rimes chorus is heard playing.

Tony: See easy.

Emma: Do you do requests?

Tony: No but I do have the most ironic playlist in the world.

Emma: Great, okay consider new music for funerals. We need to the most ironic things possible that way maybe people will laugh.

Tony: Now that would be a new thing to happen at a funeral.

We hear a phone ringing. They react confused by this.

Emma: Do we have a phone?

Tony: No, it kept interrupting our rehearsals plus the ringtones were awful so we got rid of it.

Emma: Where is that coming from then?

Then a letter is thrown onstage.

Emma: Oh it was the doorbell, it's a letter.

Tony: Do you have commentate? I can see it clearly.

Emma: I am in charge and I will state the obvious if I want to.

Tony: Hold it, don't open it.

Emma: Why not?

Tony: Because then we'd know what's in it and we'll never be able to go back.

Emma: I have to open it.

Tony: Why?

Emma: Because it's addressed to me.

Tony: It's a trick, they want someone else.

Emma: I am going to pick it up, *She picks it up* I am opening it, *She opens it* I am opening the letter to read it, *She opens it up* I am staring at the letters on the page, I can see the writing, I am reading it and oh look at this.

Tony: What is it a complaint?

Emma: No, they come with letter bombs attached silly. It's a letter from some lawyer; he says that we have finally been taken over.

Tony: Oh thank you god, we have been waiting for ages for that to happen.

Emma: We have been taken over by the, rest your weary head, legs, arms, hands, torso, feet, eyes, mouth, ears, toes, fingers and toes company international incorporated.

Tony: That's a long name.

Emma: I know and you should see the logo.

She shows it to him

Tony: That's sick!

Emma: I know, *Breaks fourth wall and looks at audience* Sorry we're not going to show you it. *Back to normal* We are going to get a new manager in order to facilitate our funerary policy within a complete Diagrama of diaspora and methodical letretical techniques.

Tony: What does that mean?

Emma: I have no idea I think they have made most of this up, hold on it says translation on bottom of page. There we are, you're getting a new manager and he's going to shake up your funeral home.

Tony: When is he or she coming?

Emma: Soon, but they don't give an exact date due to legal issues.

Tony: What legal issues?

Emma: They don't say, it simply says legal issues and there's a very big full stop afterwards. We need to prepare.

Tony: I'll heat up the crematorium.

Emma: No I can't do that anymore.

Tony: Why?

Emma: There's a coal shortage in Russia we can't use it unless we have to. We must wait until he or she or it arrives and then we will be ready for the putrid little manager who thinks he can be better than us. He won't know what's hit him when I'm through with him or her or it.

Tony: You really don't have a clue about what to do, do you?

Emma: No but I'd prefer to make a speech about it before I say we are totally bugged.

Tony: Makes sense let's tidy up for tomorrow just in case.

They look around themselves.

Emma and Tony: We're done.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Lights up. It's the next day in the funeral home, Tony enters humming goodbye and just settling in he has just arrived and is wearing the same thing he was the day before. Then we hear a door open and Emma comes in on as though she was a soldier avoiding being shot at, ducking, rolling on the ground, looking around herself as though looking for the enemy and finally she creeps up to Tony and asks.

Emma: Where is he, she or it?

Tony: Who or what are you talking about?

Emma: The new manager.

Tony: He, she or it is not here yet.

Emma: Oh damn! You mean I did all that for nothing.

Tony: It wasn't for nothing we have a camera up there I can put onto YouTube and everyone can have a laugh about it.

Emma: Damn! Where did that camera come from?

Tony: I don't know I just noticed it, did you know that there's a Starbucks just down the road?

Emma: No.

Tony: Okay.

Emma: Okay?

Tony: Yeah that's all I have.

Emma: What's on the agenda for today?

Tony: Well we have to prepare to bury a dog named Rover who apparently died because he refused to change his name, then we have to bury a cat that annoyed you and...The new manager that you tried to avoid is coming in today.

Emma: Is that confirmed?

Tony: No, but he has to come in at some time.

Emma: Right then. We have to prepare for his, her or its arrival; we need to make this funeral home into a ruthless, efficient machine.

Tony: Yes I can see that happening; come on what is this? A funeral home or an office?

Emma: It's both, I have told you before that we need to work at our most efficient and smooth speed. This is not just a funeral home, this is our funeral house. We are not just undertakers, we are striving to be the best undertakers in the world. If we have them, buried we do it with style and efficiency.

Tony: Do you have to say efficient or some variant on that whenever you describe this place? We are not the civil service.

Emma: No, we are a funeral service, we have to be the best we can be. What would have happened if the undertakers in World War 2 had been as lazy as you are?

Tony: Simple, they would have left them buried in the rubble of their houses.

Emma: And that is something you have experience with.

Tony: Only because they couldn't pay for the grave to be dug and it was a nice service.

Emma: Yes I was there for your speech. We are today to leave this man buried in his house right we're done let's go. Really professional weren't you?

Tony: I came, I saw, I left him there get over it.

Emma: You really are an amateur.

Tony: Then what would you have done genius?

