

Grave

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Fluffy snowflakes tenderly float to the ground.

Gravedigger JOHN stands near a fresh grave, as gravedigger MARK straightens the walls of the grave.

JOHN

What are you looking for down there, dragon treasure?

Mark puts a brief fake smile on his face. He keeps working in contemplation.

JOHN

You should be looking for a different job, buddy, if you plan to be this serious about it. Can't be this serious around here and stay sane.

MARK

Hey, who knows, maybe you're the nutjob here and I don't even exist.

A beat.

JOHN

Ha-ha-ha! That's my boy, you're getting there!

John becomes contemplative himself.

JOHN

Are you afraid of death?

MARK

Are you?

JOHN

I asked first.

MARK

Then my guess would be that you are. You joke about death, you think about fear of death, and you're uncomfortable answering your own question. I'm somewhat afraid, yes.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

What are you, an undercover shrink?

(a beat)

I had this death ed class when I was a kid. There was this chick, she taught us that death is a natural part of life, and there's nothing to be afraid of. We wrote letters to "Dear Death" and had class tours to cemeteries. I don't even remember how long has it been since then. It's as if I never returned from one of those tours. But I remember she kept telling us that death is beautiful.

John glances over the cemetery.

MARK

Do you think it's beautiful?

JOHN

You know, my wife went to a shrink once, she kept talking to me like this for a year.

(a beat)

I don't know. What else can you think? You'll loose your mind soon enough if you keep brooding over every death, every buried corpse.

(a beat)

No. But I used to think like that.

MARK

Death is a tragic fault of our world.

John doesn't answer.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A hearse and a van near the fresh grave. A CROWD of dozen people dressed in ridiculous skeleton costumes have fun, dancing and cheering around a coffin.

The wind becomes stronger and makes it impossible to hear their talk, apart from an occasional burst of laughter.

The two gravediggers watch them from afar.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN  
Do you think he was a good man?

MARK  
I think he was.

John looks at him sceptically.

MARK  
I do think that. He doesn't deserve  
this treatment. What do you think?

JOHN  
How should I know? They seem to...  
err... They're happy he's...  
well... What's wrong with you, why  
you keep asking me? Who cares. Look  
at these people, they're  
celebrating... life!

The crowd sings:

CROWD  
Happy birthday to you, happy  
birthday to you, happy birthday,  
happy birthday, happy birthday to  
you!

Mark takes his shovel and moves towards the crowd.

JOHN  
Please... let them. They don't  
understand. You can't beat decades  
of teaching with a shovel.

MARK  
Someone must at least tell them  
it's wrong.

John gestures: go ahead.

Mark and John approach the crowd.

MARK  
Excuse me. I have to tell you  
something.

The surprised crowd turns to Mark.

MARK  
Please, have some respect to the  
deceased...

The snowfall intensifies. A YOUNG MAN from the crowd steps forth.

YOUNG MAN

Sir, you must have misunderstood.  
We celebrate out of utmost respect  
to our beloved friend. We celebrate  
the victory of life over death.

MARK

He's dead. The one you said you  
love is dead. It's on the nose, but  
what else can I say? All life ends  
with death. It's not life you're  
celebrating, don't you see?

The snowfall makes it hard for them to see each other. They  
don't look at John at all.

YOUNG MAN

Sir, it's funny to argue about this  
in 2020... Death is a natural part  
of life. Of course we love him, but  
we don't want to part with Jack in  
tears. Who would want to?

MARK

I cry for those I love. What's  
wrong with that?

YOUNG MAN

Sir, may I ask... Might you be  
afraid of death?

MARK

You're the ones afraid of looking  
death in the eye, letting it into  
your lives and recognizing it's  
ultimate injustice. Doing that  
would collapse your comfy little  
world. Had you been less afraid of  
it, you would have seen that  
there's nothing more unnatural to  
life than death.

The snowstorm walls them off completely from one another.

YOUNG MAN

I wholeheartedly disagree with you,  
and would love to talk some more,  
but I'm afraid we have a more  
pressing matter. Sir, the grave  
might fill with snow. We must ask

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MAN (cont'd)  
you to lower the coffin  
immediately.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

The snowfall has stopped. Mark and John stand near the same grave.

JOHN  
They didn't even see me. Did you notice?

MARK  
I guess they didn't want to.

JOHN  
Those New Age kids. How did I even raise them to be like that...

MARK  
You didn't. Someone else did.

JOHN  
That explains it, though still makes me a horrible father.

MARK  
Then we have a whole country of horrible fathers. No, it's not that. It's that... someone must really want this. This thinking. Some spiderweb we're in... John. How does it feel being there, on the other side?

JOHN  
Cold.

MARK  
Cold?

JOHN  
Trust me, you don't want to know the rest. It's like... being in a black hole... Forever..?

They stand in silence.

JOHN  
You fight them, buddy. You're the only one I know who at least tries.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (cont'd)  
Cut that spiderweb. This mustn't  
stay as it is. This is...  
devilry... a plot against life...  
What the hell am I even saying...

MARK  
Are you leaving?

JOHN  
I am. I'm sorry.

MARK  
Don't be sorry. It's not your  
fault. It's... its. I'll miss you.

Both shed tears.

JOHN  
I wish you a fruitful life. I'll  
miss you too. And remember: some  
enemies are too big for shovels.

A moment later John is gone. Mark stands near the grave  
alone, with a sad, but determined look on his face.

FADE OUT.

END.