

BURIED

A soft-hearted bouncer struggles to organise a funeral for a family member, sinking deeper into depression with every setback.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

DENNIS, mid-forties, a brute in a suit sits squashed in a narrow high back leather chair with a large duffel bag at his feet

A FUNERAL DIRECTOR sits opposite, a constant expression of sympathy painted onto his face.

A range of caskets adorn the parlor.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

That's the harvest oak casket from our premium range, upgrading from the standard brass to rose gold handles featuring a tan crepe interior and wheat motif detail?

Dennis nods wiping away his tears with a delicate silk handkerchief.

He blows his nose hard into it and hands it back.

The funeral director raises his hand -- keep it.

DENNIS

I'm sorry, I must look ridiculous. A man of my size crying into a little hanky like that.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Not at all. Coping with the loss of a loved one can be one of the hardest challenges we have to face.

(beat)

Now we can supply flowers at an additional cost --

DENNIS

-- She was the warmest, most loving creature on the planet. When most people look at me they see a big, tough man and they expect me to be the strong one and look after them but she saw through that. She was always there for me. Even when I'd come home late from work. I work unsociable hours.

(CONTINUED)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Yes, you mentioned you're a bouncer.

DENNIS

A door supervisor, that's right. I'd come in at 4, 5, 6 in the morning and she'd be curled up on the sofa waiting for me. I'd join her, she'd bring me my slippers and then snuggle into me and we'd just watch TV in perfect silence before going to bed and... Oh God, I just miss her so much.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

She sounds delightful.

(beat)

You mentioned you wanted a dual plot, our dual plots cover a minimum hundred year period but for a meager fee it can be extended at 25 year intervals.

DENNIS

A dual plot, yes I need that.

FUNERAL ATTENDANT

We can update the headstone to reflect the second occupant but in the first instance what would you like the stone to read.

DENNIS

Peggy, you weren't just my companion, you were my best friend and I love you dearly. You'll be sorely missed. All my love, Dennis.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Excellent. Now of course there's a matter of the fee but first I need the death certificate.

He looks to Dennis expectantly.

Dennis doesn't respond.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

You have got a death certificate, haven't you?

Dennis pulls his duffel bag up onto his lap and takes tight hold. He still doesn't respond.

INT. DENNIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Dennis enters, deflated with a heavy look of despair, he still has a tight hold on his duffel bag.

He looks over to the unoccupied sofa. Tears well in his eyes.

He sits down, running his hand into the dented cushion of the seat next to him. He rests his head into the large groove. He hugs his bag with all his might as the tears roll down his rugged cheeks.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR STEVEN SOMNERS, (45), is sat behind his desk making notes.

RAISED VOICES from outside the office cause him to stop working.

The muffled SOUND OF COMMOTION grows louder.

His door opens and Dennis bursts in, bag in tow.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S)

You can't go in there

DR SOMNERS

Dennis?

The RECEPTIONIST appears behind Dennis.

DR SOMNERS

It's okay Jen.

She returns to her desk.

DR SOMNERS

Come in Dennis, close the door.

DENNIS

I'm sorry to barge in like this Dr Somners.

(closes door)

I just didn't know where else to go.

(CONTINUED)

He crosses the room and gently puts his bag down on the Doctor's leather couch.

He stands with his back to Dr Somners.

DENNIS
I need you to write me a death certificate.

DR SOMNERS
Who died Dennis?

DENNIS
Can you do it?

DR SOMNERS
What's in the bag?

DENNIS
They won't have a burial without one.

DR SOMNERS
Who's getting buried Dennis?

No response.

DR SOMNERS
Can you look at me please?

Still no response.

DR SOMNERS
Dennis? Can you look at me?

Dennis slowly turns around, his head down, looking at his feet.

DR SOMNERS
I can't help you Dennis if you don't tell me what's happening.

DENNIS
I want to have her buried --

DR SOMNERS
-- Who?

DENNIS
-- and I can't without a death certificate --

DR SOMNERS

-- Who died?

DENNIS

-- so I need you to write me one so
I can have her buried.

DR SOMNERS

Dennis. Who died, who needs
burying?

Dennis' eyes are red, heavy and full of sorrow. He finally
lifts his gaze to make a moments eye contact with the Dr.

DENNIS

Please.

DR SOMNERS

I can't help you Dennis, if you
don't tell me why you need help.

DENNIS

I've told you why.

DR SOMNERS

You've said she and her, I need a
name Dennis.

DENNIS

You know her name.

DR SOMNERS

I need you to say it.

DENNIS

I don't want to say it. I just
want you to help.

DR SOMNERS

I can't help you until you say it.

(beat)

The name.

DENNIS

Peggy!

(beat)

Peggy died, I need to bury Peggy, I
need a death certificate, can you
please write me one?

DR SOMNERS

You know I can't.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A bright sunny day has brought people to the park.

Couples holding hands and kissing under the shade of the trees, families in paddle boats in the lake and playing in the play park, people walking their dogs and Dennis -- duffel bag in one hand and a shovel in the other.

A hardened, menacing expression dawns his face and despair seeps from his deadened eyes.

He crosses the park with uncontrollable purpose.

Picnic blankets are dotted around the open green land. Families are eating, people sunbathing and enjoying the spoils of the day.

Dennis sinks his shovel into a small, free space of green land.

He furiously digs, breaking soil and casting aside the upturned earth.

Soil flies through the air landing in people's food, hair and clothes.

Families start packing up their belongings and ushering their frightened children away.

An UPSET FATHER approaches.

UPSET FATHER
Excuse me.

Dennis doesn't flinch -- keeps digging.

UPSET FATHER
Excuse me.

Dennis has zoned out - more digging.

UPSET FATHER
Oi!

Dennis stops. His breathing heavy. Sweat drips from his brow. He doesn't look up.

UPSET FATHER
What do you think you're doing?

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS

Digging.

UPSET FATHER

I can see that I meant -- [why are
you]

Dennis continues digging, blocking out the continuing ranting of the upset father.

The upset father storms away.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park is empty. All but Dennis -- still digging.

Two police officers approach.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Sir, please stop what you're doing.

DENNIS

I'm nearly finished.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Please put down the shovel.

Dennis continues to dig.

The second officer drops his hand to his baton, his fingers firmly wrapping around the handle.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Stop!

Dennis stops. His head and shoulders are just above the deep hole. A mound of soil has built up around him. His duffel bag resting to the opposite side.

POLICE OFFICER 1

What are you doing?

DENNIS

What does it look like.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Answer the question.

DENNIS

Digging

(CONTINUED)

POLICE OFFICER 1
Why?

DENNIS
I need to bury... something

POLICE OFFICER 1
What?

Dennis finally lifts his head. A hard stare.

POLICE OFFICER 2
What?

The stare continues.

POLICE OFFICER 1
What is in the bag sir?

DENNIS
It's private.

The second officer approaches the duffel bag.

DENNIS
Don't touch that.

The officer grabs hold of the handles.

Dennis leaps out of the hole, wielding the shovel as a weapon.

DENNIS
I said get off!

The officers draw their batons.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Put the weapon down.

Dennis approaches still holding the shovel.

POLICE OFFICER 1
(on radio)
This is Niner Kilo Foxtrot
requesting immediate back
up. We have an EDP with a
potential ADW.

DENNIS
I said get away from my
bag.

POLICE OFFICER 1
I'm not going to touch the bag sir.

He backs away from the bag, hands slightly raised -
reassuring.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Now put the shovel down, you don't
want somebody to get hurt.

Dennis raises his arm over his brow, shovel in hand, hiding
his tearful eyes.

DENNIS
I am hurt!

POLICE OFFICER 1
Do you require medical attention

POLICE OFFICER 2
Where are you hurt?

Dennis thumps at his chest with his free hand.

DENNIS
Here!

POLICE OFFICER 2
Niner Kilo Foxtrot requesting an
ambulance, EDP with suspected Niner
One Four Hotel.

Dennis reaches for the duffel bag.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Stop!

POLICE OFFICER 1
Step away from the bag.

Dennis ignores them and picks up the bag.

The second officer swipes his baton to the back of his legs,
dropping him to his knees.

He gets Dennis into a headlock and drags him to the
ground. The first officer grabs a hold of Dennis' flaying
legs.

DENNIS
No! You don't understand, you have
to let me do this. Please!

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Dennis is stood at the front desk.

The desk clerk empties a large brown envelope onto the counter.

DESK CLERK

One ring, silver. One set of keys. One chain and personalized pendant and one return bus ticket. If you are satisfied that these are your belongings and that they are in the same condition as when you turned them over then please sign here, here and initial here.

He indicates on an elaborate form where Dennis scribbles his signature and initials.

Dennis takes the chain and puts it on, he pockets the other belongings.

Dennis stands waiting.

DESK CLERK

Yes?

DENNIS

My bag.

The desk clerk exits from behind the counter and enters the reception area with his bag.

DESK CLERK

Now you know what you have to do with this?

DENNIS

Yes, they told me.

DESK CLERK

And you have to do that --

DENNIS

--Tonight, yes. I'll go now.

He hands the bag over.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dennis meanders down the street -- a loose grasp of his bag.

Two YOUTHS approaching.

YOUTH 1

Excuse me, have you got the time?

Dennis stops. He places his bag down to check his watch.

DENNIS

It's eight --

The second youth grabs his bag and runs.

Dennis grabs hold of the first youth.

YOUTH 1

Get off me! Get off me man!

Dennis throws him down and takes pursuit of the youth with his bag.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The youth has the duffel bag open.

Dennis turns the corner and into the alleyway.

YOUTH 2

What the hell is this?

DENNIS

Get away from that. Don't you touch her!

The youth stands and starts to back away.

YOUTH 2

I don't want no trouble okay? I didn't see anything.

Dennis zips the bag shut.

DENNIS

Go.

(beat)

Now!

The youth flees the alley.

EXT. HOSPITAL - GARDENS - NIGHT

Dennis -- his bag -- and Dr Somners are strolling through the gardens. Planted solar lights guide the way.

DR SOMNERS

I'm glad you chose to come back.

DENNIS

It's hard sometimes, you know?

DR SOMNERS

I know. The death of a loved one is never easy, but you can't keep doing this, it's not fair on her.

DENNIS

Peggy deserves so much better than this, better than me.

DR SOMNERS

You have to face it head on, you have to go through the grief, it is a process.

They reach a small open grave marked with a makeshift wooden cross.

He lowers his duffel bag into the grave.

Tears silently roll, dripping from his squared jaw and into the grave.

DENNIS

Peggy, you were my companion, my best friend and my heart. And I miss you everyday.

He takes off the pendant from around his neck and holds it in his hand. It is personalized with the name Peggy on the front.

He drops it into the grave. It lands reverse side up.

THE PENDANT

The reverse also has a personalized engraving: If Lost return to Dennis Miller, 24 Belgrave Gardens.