

Tombstones

By Mitchell J. Ward

Mitchell J. Ward
4607 N. Ashland Ave., #3
Chicago
Illinois, U.S.A.
60640
316-214-9831
ward.mitchell@sbcglobal.net

Tombstones © 2017

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Body #1	Fearful.
Body #2	Skeptical.
Body #3	Lazy.

SETTING

A graveyard. A full moon looms above four tombstones.

NOTES

Character lines of dialogue should flow in and out of each other with no real beginning nor end.

(A full moon floats above four tombstones in a quiet cemetery. Three bodies lay behind three of the stones. A fourth stands alone.)

(At rise the three bodies, too, rise from an apparent slumber. They sit on their respective tomb stones. They are agitated.)

BODY #1

(Looking up at the moon.)

I was hoping we'd miss this one.

BODY #2

Such a bright one, too.

BODY #3

Go away, Moon! Come back in a million months.

BODY #2

It's longer when we're disrupted. Like sleep. Life moves slowly in a graveyard.

BODY #1

Every month - I'm afraid.

BODY #2

It'll pass soon enough, and again in 30 days it'll happen again.

(Pause.)

What were we talking about last time?

BODY #1

Religion?

BODY #3

Yeah, let's never do that again.

BODY #1

It's too spooky out to talk about *things*.

BODY #2

You're spooked?

BODY #1

Aren't you?

BODY #2

What are you scared of? *We're* the scary ones.

BODY #3

Boo!

(#3 laughs.)

Welcome to Hell!

Seriously, though, could you two stop the talking?

(Body #1 looks stage left and discovers the fourth stone.)

BODY #1

Shh! Look! Do you see that?

BODY #2

A new stone!

BODY #3

Were expecting?

BODY #2

Ah, ah, your grammar...

BODY #3

(Correcting herself.)

We're expecting?

BODY #2

We're dead, but you won't lose your humanity.

BODY #1

(RE: Fourth stone)

We haven't had a visitor in many, many moons. Poor thing.

BODY #2

Who, though?

BODY #1

I don't *know*.

BODY #3

The OxiClean guy.

BODY #2

He's already gone.

BODY #3

Shame. I loved the OxiClean guy.

BODY #1

What if it's someone who's not like us? Or, doesn't like us? Or, hates us?

BODY #3 (Sarcastically)

Wouldn't that be the worst.

BODY #1

Yeah.

BODY #2 (To #3)

You just hope they won't be loud.

BODY #3

My dreams have long been crushed.

BODY #1

What if it's someone who did something awful? Like someone who, in life, had a whole bunch of normal kids and a ton of normal friends and a plain, boring, normal husband and then one day just up and decided to murder the shit out of all of them with a hatchet or a crossbow or you know a frozen Snickers bar or something handy, and we are going to have to just listen to this person talk and talk and talk about *killing* things...

BODY #2

Not likely. All we know is there's a new stone. You jump.

BODY #1

I do not! I'm just sitting.

BODY #3

We should use reasoning. Ask: Did *our* stones appear before we came here?

BODY #1

Was mine? Like this one?

BODY #3

Probably.

BODY#2

Strange, I can't remember.

BODY #1

How long?

BODY #2

Unknowable.

They knew I was coming? BODY #1

That's Interesting. BODY #2

Terrifying. BODY #1

Boring. BODY #3

Predestined. ALL

(A pause.)

I wish they'd go ahead and get here already. Waiting's so anxious. BODY #1

All we do is waiting. BODY #3

I'm not used to this wait. BODY #1

Heavy, right? BODY #3

I hope it's him. I hope it's *'The Man.'* BODY #1

Which? Be specific. BODY #2

He who's coming. BODY #1

The man? BODY #3

You know, the one who killed me? Who scared me to death? BODY #1

BODY #3

Here we go...

BODY #2

You hush.

BODY #1

I'm telling you, he scared me to death! It was mortifying, and it's on his account I'm here now. Oh, I hope beyond hope that it's him. *He* deserves to be buried; not me.

BODY #2

What did he really do? No bull.

BODY #3

She's gotten good at lying out here.

BODY #1

I'll say this. It was back when I couldn't leave my house, you know. I was paralyzed; not psychically, you know, but just actually. But, I guess you can never be truly safe: not even in your own home.

BODY #3

He broke in?

BODY #1

Worse! He smoked me out. He knew that my nerves would get the best of me eventually, and so he waited outside my back door. He knew I'd try and sneak out that way. And, he hid behind my chiminea, and jumped out to grab me. It scared me – to death, and now I'm here. Anyway, it'd give me a lot of peace of mind to know the man is dead, that's all.

BODY #3

I guess it would be pretty cool to see my murderer in here, too.

BODY #2

You weren't murdered.

BODY #3

Pretty much, yeah.

BODY #2

That's not what you told me.

BODY #3

You misheard me, then.

BODY #2

You drove off a bridge.

BODY #3

It wasn't my fault, though. I couldn't stop.

BODY #1

That must have been...

BODY #2

You couldn't stop, because you never had your brakes fixed.

BODY #3

I was gonna do it. I was gonna but, I had so many other things.

BODY #1

My father always said the one thing you never go cheap on / is tires and brakes.

BODY #2

On which you never go cheap... And, that's two things.

BODY #3

It's not cheap, I just put it off. Couldn't find the motivation. I should've just gotten up earlier and had a coffee and got'em fixed, but now I'm dead so the fuck anyway.

BODY #1

And, so early!

BODY #3

It isn't fair. I had so much I wanted to do out there. Easy things, too. Things I could've done. But, I was stopped short. Death by Apathy. Laziness is my killer, and I hope it's him that's coming.

BODY #2

That's tough.

BODY #1

If life was easy there'd be no need for coffee.

BODY #3

(Looking at fourth stone.)

I hope it's laziness. There's bugs here. Roaches. He'll fit right in.

It's cold. BODY #2

It's scary. BODY #1

It's Hell. I miss coffee... BODY #3

Mmm. Coffee. ALL (*inhaling*)

Who would you want the stone to be?
BODY #1
(*To BODY #2.*)

Ha, he won't say! BODY #3

Stay out. BODY #2 (To #3)

He won't say, because he doesn't have one! BODY #3

Stop. Talking. You. BODY #2

Why, what happened? BODY #1

I don't have to explain myself. BODY #2

You're holding back. BODY #3

Yeah big! BODY #2

You're hiding from it. BODY #3

I am. BODY #2

BODY #3

And, so?

BODY #2

I couldn't take it anymore. I didn't have a logical reason to go on the way things were; No family, no friends. I couldn't keep in control of things. So, I made the one choice we always have the power to make. Your deaths were unfortunate. Mine was desired.

(A pause.)

BODY #3

Buzz. Killed.

(BODY #3 stands.)

BODY #1

Wait! Where are you going?

BODY #3

I'm gonna see whose name's on the stone. Impossible to sleep with you all being depressing.

BODY #1

We can do that?

BODY #2 (To #3)

I've never seen you move before.

BODY #1

Don't do it. Something might happen.

BODY #3

We haven't tried before.

BODY #1

It's your funeral!

BODY #3

Yeah, too late for that.

BODY #1 (To #2)

Stop her!

BODY #2

Can't know if something's impossible until that something is first attempted to be possible. I support this effort.

BODY #3

What am I waiting for?

BODY #2

Grammar...

BODY #3

(Frustrated. Correcting herself.)

For what am I waiting?!

Nothing, I guess. Here I go.

(With effort, BODY #3 steps out of her grave and crosses to the fourth stone. SHE bends down to get a closer look. SHE stares at the stone for some time.)

BODY #1

Oh, Oh, Oh!

Hurry back!

BODY #2

Well?

BODY #3

It's blank.

BODY #1

Blank?

BODY #3

No words. No nothing.

(BODY #3 returns to her grave and sits.)

BODY #2

It makes no sense.

BODY #3

Welp.

BODY #1

What does that mean? Is anybody coming at all?

BODY #2

I'm sure someone's coming.

BODY #3

Some people just take their time.

BODY #1

They aren't coming at all!

BODY #3

You're being too much.

BODY #1

Why would it be here if nobody's coming!?

BODY #3

You're being hysterical!

BODY #1

It makes no sense! At all. We have names on ours!

BODY #2

Do we have names on ours?

(BODY #3 stands again and checks the other stones.)

BODY #2

Anything?

BODY #3

No names. No names at all.

BODY #1

What does it mean?!

BODY #3

Maybe they aren't coming, because they made a choice to live.

BODY #2

Is living ever a choice?

BODY #3

It was for you.

BODY #1

There has to be someone!

(She breaks down.)

I don't wanna be out here alone anymore.

BODY #3

You won't be. Maybe'll come or maybe not.

(Pause.)

BODY #2

Maybe it'll be somebody smart.

BODY #1

(Cheering up.)

Maybe it's somebody brave.

BODY #3 (Warmly)

Maybe it's somebody we'll hate.

BODY #2

Maybe it's somebody we'll love.

(BODY #3 reacts negatively.)

BODY #1

Maybe it'll be... somebody!

ALL

(Looking out to audience.)

Maybe it's you.

BODY #1

(Returning gaze to BODIES.)

Well, I hope it's *none* of them.

BODY #3

I hope, whoever it is, I'll sleep through it.

BODY #2

It's hard to rest when we keep being awoken.

BODY #1

I fear sleep the most. Dreams are the stuff of nightmares.

BODY #3

A nightmare different than this one.

I'm gonna lie back down now. Close my eyes.

(BODY #3 returns to her original position. BODIES #1 & #2 look at each other confused. They shrug and return to their positions as well.)

Goodnight.

BODY #1

Goodnight.

BODY #2

Goodnight.

BODY #3

I had so much I wanted to do out there...

ALL

(Inhaling deeply.)

Coffee...

END OF PLAY