

**All rights (including but not limited to performance rights) reserved by the author.
Contact Robert Kerr at RKerr@robertkerr.net for more information.**

FINNEGAN'S FUNERAL PARLOR
AND ICE CREAM SHOPPE
[EXCERPT]

a play in one act
by
Robert Kerr

Copyright 2011
By Robert Kerr

www.robertkerr.net
rkerr@robertkerr.net

CHARACTERS

KEVIN FINNEGAN, 18 years old
ARTHUR FINNEGAN, in his 40s
MONA FINNEGAN, in her 40s
ANVIL FINNEGAN, 16 years old
PAMELA FINNEGAN, a young girl
CAROL, 17 years old
ELAINE DEWEY, an elderly woman

SETTING

All action takes place in Finnegan's Funeral Parlor and Ice Cream Shoppe, approximately the present.

SCENE 1

(Lights up on KEVIN, ARTHUR, MONA, ANVIL, and PAMELA in a family tableau. A phone rings, and an answering machine takes the call.)

ARTHUR'S VOICE

Hello, you have reached Finnegan's Funeral Parlor and Ice Cream Shoppe.

(The tableau breaks up. MONA, ANVIL and ARTHUR exit. PAMELA remains onstage as KEVIN attempts to carry a cumbersome barrel of embalming fluid.)

Unfortunately, we are temporarily closed for renovation. If you are requesting the removal of a body, please leave your name, address, and phone number, and we will pick it up at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, please keep it in a cool place. A refrigerator set between thirty-four and forty degrees is ideal. Thank you.

(During the previous speech, KEVIN manages to regain his balance. Then PAMELA sneaks up behind him and pushes him offstage into the back room.)

ARTHUR (off)

Kevin, what are you doing? Watch out! Don't drop—

(The barrel is heard crashing to the floor offstage.)

PAMELA

Smack him, Daddy!

(ARTHUR enters, leading KEVIN by the arm.)

ARTHUR

You obviously have no talent for undertaking. Let's see if you have better luck with ice cream. Pamela, would you go clean up the embalming fluid Kevin spilled in the back room? There just might be a treat in it for you.

PAMELA

Goody!

(PAMELA exits.)

ARTHUR

Just one toe! No more! All right, Kevin. Fix me a sundae.

(KEVIN drops a scoop of ice cream into the dish.)

ARTHUR (*continued*)

That scoop is too big.

(KEVIN puts another scoop into the dish.)

That one is too small.

(KEVIN tries again.)

That one isn't round enough.

(KEVIN drops a scoop on ARTHUR's shoes.)

Kevin, what is the matter with you? Is it trouble at school? Girls? Kevin, Kevin, Kevin. What am I going to do with—

(ANVIL enters, listening to blaring headphones and wearing torn jeans and a heavy-metal T-shirt.)

Anvil... Anvil!... ANVIL!

(ARTHUR violently tears the headphones from ANVIL's head.)

ARTHUR

You're going to go deaf listening to that music so loud.

ANVIL

What?

ARTHUR

I said you're going to go deaf listening to that music so loud.

ANVIL

What?

ARTHUR

I said you're going to—

(ANVIL laughs hysterically.)

ARTHUR

What's so funny?

ANVIL

It's a joke, Dad. Don't you get it?

ARTHUR

Get it?

ANVIL

Yeah. You tell me I'm going to go deaf and I say "What?" and you tell me again... Forget it. You've been working with stiffes too long.

ARTHUR

Don't talk about undertaking like that. A mortician's business is a very respectable one. One I'll have to start teaching you now.

ANVIL

What the hell are you talking about? I don't want to be a fucking mortician.

ARTHUR

When business starts to pick up again, I'll have my hands full with the public relations and the ice cream shop. I'll need your help with the bodies.

ANVIL

Why don't you make Kevin do it instead?

ARTHUR

I have tried to teach him, but he is utterly inept. He can't even scoop ice cream properly. I think he's becoming feeble-minded. And we do have to continue the family tradition.

ANVIL

Fuck the family tradition.

(ANVIL puts his headphones back on.)

ARTHUR

Don't talk about the profession that way.

(MONA enters.)

MONA

Hello, Anvil. How was your day?

(tapping ANVIL on the shoulder)

Anvil?

ANVIL

WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT?

(MONA, startled and gasping for breath, falls back into ARTHUR's arms. ANVIL laughs hysterically.)

ARTHUR

Anvil, don't scare your mother like that.

MONA

If you keep listening to that music so loud you're going to go deaf.

ANVIL

What?

MONA

I said, you're going to go deaf listening to that music so loud.

ANVIL

I can't hear you, ma. I think I'm going deaf.

(ANVIL exits, laughing.)

MONA

Don't make fun of handicaps. It's not nice. Why isn't Anvil more like Kevin? Kevin never gives us trouble. He's never said an unkind word.

ARTHUR

He's never said any word at all.

(Loud heavy-metal music can be heard offstage.)

ARTHUR

Anvil, turn that music down! ANVIL!

(ARTHUR exits and PAMELA enters.)

PAMELA

Is Daddy going to smack Anvil?

MONA

Nobody is going to smack anyone, Pamela dear.

PAMELA

Oh. Do you want to hear my essay for second grade, Mommy?

MONA

I'd love to, dear.

PAMELA

"My Favorite Food by Pamela Finnegan. My favorite food is thighs. They are juicy and fun to eat. I don't like ears. There isn't much meat on them and they are too chewy because they are made of car-... cart-..." How do you say that word, Mommy?

MONA

Cartilage, dear.

PAMELA

"They are too chewy because they are made of cartilage. But sometimes Mommy will let me have a toe off a body if I'm good because you usually can't tell one's missing if they are wearing shoes. One time I cut off a whole foot, but I got in real big trouble and I didn't get any toes for a whole month." How do you like it, Mommy?

MONA

It's very nice, dear, but I'm not sure if it's... appropriate.

PAMELA

Don't you like it?

MONA

I like it very much, but most people don't have an undertaker in their family, so they might not understand.

PAMELA

You hate my essay!

(PAMELA starts to cry. MONA takes PAMELA into her arms and rocks her.)

MONA

That's not true! I love your...

(KEVIN, who is now wiping the counter, accidentally knocks a sundae dish off the counter.)

PAMELA

Smack him, Ma! Smack him good!

MONA

No one's going to...

(ANVIL enters, followed by ARTHUR.)

ARTHUR

Get back here, you punk! You're going to be a mortician whether you like it or not!

ANVIL

Fuck you and your stiffs!

ARTHUR

Don't you talk that way to me!

(ARTHUR and ANVIL exit.)

PAMELA

Anvil's gonna get smacked!

(PAMELA exits.)

MONA

No violence, please!

(MONA exits. KEVIN looks around to make sure he is alone and then produces from behind the counter something wrapped in a towel. He unwraps it; it is a mannequin head, upon which is a wig. KEVIN produces a pair of barber's scissors and begins to cut the hair on the wig. Blackout.)

[END OF EXCERPT]