

YOUR FUNERAL

By Rod

Based on the story of the raising to life of Jairus' daughter recorded in Mark5: 20-24. Seen through the eyes of the undertakers for the funeral that never was.

CAST

Malachi Cheetham Insurance broker
Moses Going Undertaker. The leader of the two undertakers. Can get quite worked up.
Aaron Downe Partner to Moses. Tends to be less forceful. Calmer and more lugubrious.

[Cheetham is seated at his desk. Going and Downe enter. He rises to greet them.]

Cheetham Good morning gentlemen, welcome to Cheetham and Steele, insurance brokers. My name is Malachi Cheetham, how can I help you?

Going We want to make a claim on our insurance policy.

Cheetham I see. And you are... ?

Going Moses Going.

Downe And Aaron Downe.

Going Of Going, Downe and partners, undertakers you can trust. Our brochure. *[Hands over brochure]*

Downe We take care of your loved one so you are free to grieve.

Cheetham Not exactly free if I read your price list correctly.

Downe Dying is an expensive business.

Cheetham So what exactly is the nature of your claim?

Going You know Jairus, President of the synagogue?

Cheetham Secretary of the Capernaum Chamber of Commerce?

- Going Yes, that's the one. Well, we didn't do a funeral for his daughter yesterday.
- Cheetham You didn't?
- Downe What my colleague means is that there should have been a funeral, but there wasn't.
- Cheetham I'm not sure I quite follow..
- Going We'd heard on the grapevine that his twelve year old daughter was seriously ill.
- Downe At death's door apparently.
- Going So we were sad, but not surprised when one of his servants came bursting in to say she had died.
- Cheetham But you said there wasn't a funeral.
- Going Be patient. We'll explain. Once we got the distressing news we put our professional services fully at Jairus's disposal. Jairus is a man of considerable substance and standing in the community so we knew he would want only the best.
- Downe I phoned the mourners hiring agency for their number one team of whiners, wailers and screamers.
- Cheetham You should have tried X-factor.
- Downe I beg your pardon?
- Cheetham Nothing.
- Going I contacted the wholesalers for ten bales of sackcloth and two hundred kilos of ashes.
- Downe I placed an order with the Capernaum bakery for a lavish spread; their finest funeral feast – mourning is a hungry business.
- Going And I even went round to the stonemason to get him to enlarge the burial chamber, and prepare his top of the range hand chiselled marble headstone.

- Cheetham You are thorough – no wonder you are expensive.
- Downe Nothing is too dear for your dearest. That's another of our mottos.
- Going Well, I was on the way back from the stonemason when another of Jairus' servants stopped me with the message that the funeral was cancelled.
- Cheetham They'd found a cheaper undertaker?
- Downe No, because the girl wasn't dead.
- Cheetham But I thought you said she was. You really should have checked the death certificate before...
- Going *[Forcefully]* Of course we did. Do you take us for a couple of amateurs?
- Downe We saw the certificate, and the doctor had pronounced her dead.
- Cheetham Well what happened?
- Going Not what, but who.
- Cheetham Who?
- Going Jesus, that's who.
- Downe Yes, you know, Joseph's son from Nazareth.
- Going He walks in bold as brass.
- Downe Dismisses my wailing team saying "She's not dead but asleep". They laughed, I can tell you, because they'd seen her dead, poor child.
- Going But they stopped laughing when next thing she's skipping around outside without a care in the world.
- Downe And on Jesus' orders tucking into the Capernaum Bakery's finest funeral feast.
- Going Which still hasn't been paid for.
- Downe And nor have the hiring agency, the wailers, the wholesalers and the stonemason. We are seriously out of pocket.

Cheetham So you are not laughing either?

Going Indeed we are not, and that is why we want you, as our insurers, to give us some compensation.

Cheetham *[Pause as he considers]* There is a precedent you know?

Downe How do you mean?

Cheetham Have you ever been to Nain?

Going Maybe a couple of times.

Downe It's just south of Nazareth.

Cheetham Well there was a widow there whose son died. They were carrying him off to be buried.

Going Well what happened?

Cheetham Not what, but who.

Going Don't tell me, it was that Jesus fellow.

Cheetham That's right, along he comes and the boy jumps right off the funeral bier.

Downe And you say the undertakers made a claim?

Cheetham Indeed they did,

Going Well what happened? Did they get their money?

Cheetham Not a shekel. Their insurance was declared void.

Downe Why on earth?

Going Yes, what was the reason?

Cheetham Because it was declared to be – an Act of God.

THE END

