

"Burying Uncle Gustav"

by
Mike Murphy

112 Lovering Street
Medway, MA 02053-2326
508-533-8310
mikeandzachary@gmail.com
WGAE Registered

1

INT. HOBSON FUNERAL HOME - EVENING

1

What you'd expect from such a place: Dim lights and wood-paneled walls, though a bit rundown. Relaxing piano music plays softly over the sometimes-crackly ceiling speakers.

MR. HOBSON, 50, the funeral director, and MR. WEEMS, 28, his client - both of them wearing suits - sit in facing chairs. About them are several floor-model coffins, their lids open.

Weems holds a weathered gym bag on his lap.

HOBSON

I'd like to thank you for choosing
Hobson Funeral Home in your time
of need.

Weems speaks with a noticeable European accent.

WEEMS

Thank you for agreeing to meet me
after normal business hours.

HOBSON

Think nothing of it. Sorrow does
not punch a time clock. We are all
subject to death's schedule. Many
of my clients have day jobs and
need to meet with me during the
nighttime hours.

WEEMS

Oh, that's not the case at all.

HOBSON

No?

WEEMS

Actually, I'm unemployed at the
moment. I just thought it best
that we meet at night.

HOBSON

No matter. You are here now.

(beat)

May I take your bag?

Weems clutches it close to him.

WEEMS

No. . . thank you. I prefer to
keep it. . . *handy*.

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON

(confused)
Whatever you say.
(beat)
How may I help you?

WEEMS

I need to make funeral
arrangements for my Uncle Gustav.

HOBSON

My condolences on your loss. I
trust he lived a good, long life.

Weems grins.

WEEMS

(oddly amused)
Oh, he certainly did.

He gestures at a coffin directly behind Hobson.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

That casket would do nicely.

Hobson turns and taps on it.

HOBSON

You have a keen eye, sir. The
Model 107I is of impeccable
quality and made entirely here in
the United States. I can get you
one in -

WEEMS

I want *that* one.

HOBSON

But it's a floor model.

WEEMS

So?

HOBSON

There might be some nicks or
scratches on -

WEEMS

Uncle Gustav will not mind.

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON

I can understand your desire to make these arrangements as quickly as possible, but we simply do not allow our customers to purchase floor-model caskets. I can get you a *brand-new* 107I in just -

WEEMS

Can't you sell me that one and replace it later on - even if it's not the way you usually do business?

HOBSON

Well. . .

WEEMS

I'll pay full price.

HOBSON

I suppose I *could* sell it to you - if you insist.

WEEMS

I do.

HOBSON

I'll see what we can do about covering up any marks on it so the mourners -

WEEMS

There will be no mourners.

HOBSON

No one to grieve your uncle's passing?

WEEMS

Not a. . . soul.

HOBSON

No family?

WEEMS

Only me, and I choose *not* to mourn him for personal reasons.

HOBSON

That is, of course, your prerogative.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON (CONT'D)

(beat)
Now, about the flowers -

WEEMS

None.

HOBSON

Services?

WEEMS

None.

HOBSON

I. . . see.

WEEMS

Is there a problem?

HOBSON

No, but I've seldom interred
anyone in such a. . . *thrifty*
manner.

WEEMS

If you refuse to help me. . .

HOBSON

Please don't think that. I will
honor your wishes for your uncle
to the letter. To the *letter*!

WEEMS

Good.

Weems reaches into his shirt pocket, removes a card, and
passes it to Hobson.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

On the back, you will find the
address of my family's cemetery
plot where Uncle is to be buried.

Hobson nods that he understands.

HOBSON

Where can I find the body?

WEEMS

It should be here presently.

HOBSON

Someone is bringing it by?

(CONTINUED)

WEEMS

(beat)
Not exactly.

A hiss of smoke enters the room from under the door.
Hobson sees it and jumps to his feet.

HOBSON

A *fire*! Mr. Weems, quickly! Come
with -

Weems remains calm.

WEEMS

There is no fire.

HOBSON

But the smoke -

WEEMS

It's *mist*.
(beat)
There is no need to panic.

With the mist slowly coming into the room, Weems unzips
the bag on his lap, reaches in, removes a garlic
necklace, and hands it to Hobson.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

You'll want to put this on.

HOBSON

(sniffs)
Why would I want -

WEEMS

Because that mist *is* Uncle Gustav.

The mist solidifies into the form of the elderly UNCLE
GUSTAV, a corpulent man dressed impeccably in an old-
style tuxedo. He speaks in an accent similar to his
nephew's.

GUSTAV

He wants you to wear the necklace
because I am a vampire.

WEEMS

It should keep you safe.

Hobson quickly dons the necklace and sits.

(CONTINUED)

WEEMS (CONT'D)

So. . . nice to see you again,
Uncle.

GUSTAV

You're a poor liar.

WEEMS

Still hungry?

GUSTAV

Famished.

WEEMS

Sorry, but my blood *isn't* on the
menu.

GUSTAV

I will keep trying. One day,
you'll let your guard down, and I
will be ready.

WEEMS

For years, I've been using every
trick in the book to keep you from
making a meal of me.

GUSTAV

I know. I've found it *most*
aggravating.

Visibly nervous, Hobson speaks from his chair.

HOBSON

Wh-Why do you need *his* blood? I
thought *any* blood would do.

GUSTAV

Not when your soul - if I still
possess one - is seized with
loneliness.

HOBSON

What?

GUSTAV

My immortality makes me terribly
lonely. I need companionship, and
my only living relative is *him*.

(beat)

Think about it, nephew. Together,
we could rule over the night!

(CONTINUED)

WEEMS

I would have to die first.

GUSTAV

A mere technicality.

WEEMS

Maybe to you.

(beat)

You've been following me around
since you died three years ago.
I'm getting tired of it. Garlic
and crosses aren't cheap, you
know. I can't lead my life
wondering if you'll be around the
next corner.

(beat)

I need to put a stop to this.

Weems reaches into the bag and removes a wooden stake and
a mallet. He stands, puts the bag down on the chair, and -
brandishing the items - slowly walks toward Gustav.

GUSTAV

(chuckles)

How quaint! Did you craft the
stake yourself?

WEEMS

I *did*. The mallet is from the
hardware store.

GUSTAV

You're not capable of killing me.

WEEMS

No?

GUSTAV

I've known you all your life. You
don't have what it takes. You were
always the shy, bookish type.
Killing isn't in your nature.
You're not *man* enough.

Weems stops walking within striking distance of his
uncle.

WEEMS

Times. . . *change*.

Weems and Gustav briefly struggle, the older man baring
his fangs during two unsuccessful lunges at his nephew.

(CONTINUED)

Finally, Weems gets the upper hand and hurriedly positions the stake over Gustav's heart.

HOBSON

Mr. Weems! No!

Weems pounds the stake with the mallet a few times. As blood spurts everywhere, Gustav lets out an ear-piercing scream.

Finally, his body drops to the floor, the stake sticking out of his heart. Weems, his Uncle's blood staining his clothes and skin, tries to catch his breath.

WEEMS

It is done.

Blood is all over - on the rug, the walls, and some of the floor-model caskets. The piano music plays over the speakers as though all is well. Weems drops the mallet. Hobson rushes over, aghast at the condition of his parlor and the blood on his guests.

HOBSON

I. . . I've never. . .

WEEMS

Help me pick up the body.

HOBSON

Me?

WEEMS

Please. . . and *quickly*.

Weems grabs Gustav's arms, Hobson his legs. Straining, they pick him up and carry him to the coffin Weems selected earlier. They carefully set him down inside it. Hobson looks briefly ill when he notices that some of Gustav's blood is now on *him*.

The two men stand over the dead body. Hobson, swaying occasionally, holds onto the coffin for support.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

You see now why I wanted an available coffin. I suspected Uncle would visit here while we were talking.

(beat)

Is something wrong?

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON

(astonished)

Is something wrong? You just murdered a man and you ask -

WEEMS

I *murdered* no one. He's been dead for years. I sent a vampire to his eternal rest.

HOBSON

You expect me to believe that?

WEEMS

You saw Gustav materialize out of the mist. Could a person do that?

HOBSON

No, but -

WEEMS

Do you honestly think I would commit murder in front of a witness *and* on your security cameras?

HOBSON

I don't. . .

WEEMS

You will see to the burial?

HOBSON

I. . . I don't know what to say.

WEEMS

I will pay you handsomely for your services - *twice* your regular fee.

HOBSON

Mr. Weems -

WEEMS

You are a businessman, sir, and money is money. Is it not?

HOBSON

(ashamed)

It is.

WEEMS

Also, you are in this very deeply yourself.

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON

Me?

WEEMS

How would you explain what went on here this evening to the police? You didn't try to stop me. You even helped lift the body into the casket.

HOBSON

I. . . hadn't thought of that.

WEEMS

I will require a death certificate indicating that *dear* Uncle Gustav passed on at. . .

Weems removes his pocket watch from his vest.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

. . . 9:17 p.m.

He puts the watch back.

HOBSON

That's not in my power. You'll need a medical examiner or a doctor for that.

WEEMS

I don't suppose you'll have any trouble finding me a doctor who's willing to keep his mouth *shut* for a price. Correct?

HOBSON

I can think of a couple.

WEEMS

Excellent!

HOBSON

Why do you need a death certificate?

WEEMS

As proof.

HOBSON

Wasn't one issued when your uncle passed on. . . for the *first* time?

(CONTINUED)

WEEMS

Yes, but it was deemed in error by the local authorities.

HOBSON

What authorities?

WEEMS

My family is from a small village in Germany. When Uncle - as you put it - died for the *first* time, he left everything he had to me.

HOBSON

Was he a wealthy man?

WEEMS

Incredibly. However, the judge in the village refused to honor the terms of Uncle's will since Gustav had been seen by several good and true men walking the streets for many nights *after* his burial.

HOBSON

Not dead?

WEEMS

Undead. The new death certificate - and Uncle's absence from the village's streets - will provide proof that he is now deceased in *every* way.

HOBSON

And verify that the terms of his will should finally be honored?

WEEMS

Precisely. That is how I will be able to pay you and your doctor friend such exorbitant sums for your service and silence.

(beat)

Be very careful with the stake, Mr. Hobson. You can file it down a bit if it prevents the coffin lid from closing, but do *not* remove it. I am not versed enough in vampire lore to know what that might do.

(CONTINUED)

HOBSON

Of. . . Of course.

WEEMS

I would like Uncle to be buried
after dark and as quietly as
possible.

HOBSON

I can do that.

WEEMS

It would be unwise to draw
attention to this matter.

Hobson shakes his head.

HOBSON

Who'd believe me?

WEEMS

(chuckles)

Very true.

He stoops to retrieve the blood-drenched mallet and
offers it to the older man.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

You'll want to hold onto this.

Hobson shrinks from it.

HOBSON

Get it away from me!

WEEMS

But you may need it - in case
Uncle returns.

HOBSON

(laughs nervously)

You're kidding. Right?

WEEMS

I can't be sure.

HOBSON

But he's *dead*. You drove a stake
through his heart. I've seen
enough horror movies to know
that's how you kill a vampire.

(CONTINUED)

WEEMS

Usually, but there has *never* been a vampire quite like Uncle Gustav. I wouldn't put it past him to find a way around that whole stake-through-the-heart thing.

HOBSON

You mean he. . . might come back to life?

WEEMS

Unlikely, but possible. I wouldn't want you to become his latest victim if he *does* rise again.

Hobson grabs at his garlic necklace.

HOBSON

But you said this would protect me.

WEEMS

I said it *should* protect you. Uncle might find a way around that too. The mallet will best keep you safe.

HOBSON

If you're suggesting that I pound that stake further into your uncle's heart if I see him begin to move -

WEEMS

That's *exactly* what I'm suggesting.

HOBSON

I *couldn't*!

WEEMS

Even with the alternative - your own "undeath?"

HOBSON

(beat)

You. . . You have a point.

Hobson reluctantly and gingerly takes the offered mallet.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (13)

1

WEEMS

The wait shouldn't be long - only
until sunrise - and that's at. . .

He removes a piece of paper from a jacket pocket.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

. . . 6:47 a.m.

He puts the paper back.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

I've kept track of sunrises and
sunsets since Uncle began
thirsting for my blood.

(beat)

If he doesn't stir before then,
you should be safe.

HOBSON

But I. . .

WEEMS

Good evening, Mr. Hobson. I will
call you after sunrise to be
certain that all is well.

(beat)

A pleasure doing business with
you.

Weems zips up his bag, walks to the door, and opens it.
He takes a big gulp of air.

WEEMS (CONT'D)

Ah, what a *glorious* evening!
There's no better feeling than
having a tremendous weight *finally*
lifted from your shoulders!

He walks outside and closes the door behind him.

Hobson looks about nervously and, mallet in hand, sits.
He exhales deeply a couple of times.

We hear the beating of a heart, slowly at first and then
growing. Hobson feels his chest over his blood-spattered
white shirt. He sighs in relief.

HOBSON

My own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

Sweat forming on his brow, he tightly clutches the reddened mallet. He looks intently at the corpse in the box.

HOBSON

Pl-Please stay dead, Uncle Gustav.
Please!

FADE TO BLACK.