

How To Bury Your Sins

by

Miranda Lynn

Miranda Lynn
10 Lovibond Lane
London
SE10 9FY
+447498323391
mirandaglasheen@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. BLACK SCREEN - DAY

A crackling TV screen. White noise. Then, an overview of the London of now is shown from the sky.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 We are all dying. Nothing new,
 really. Who knew that a disease
 would wipe us out this easily, but
 do any of us really care anymore?

A TV talkshow intercuts into the broadcast.

PRESENTER (V.O.)
 My mom decided to die this
 morning; face landed smack-dab in
 the middle of her scrambled eggs.

The STUDIO AUDIENCE begins laughing, acting way too light hearted for the discussion of a dead parent.

PRESENTER (V.O.)
 They just keep dropping like
 flies!

A TV advertisement intercuts into the broadcast.

AD ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Is your commute littered with the
 dead? We have a quick and easy
 solution for you at...

INT. MR. ANGEL'S ERADICATION EMPORIUM - EVENING

ALICE, a wallflower type in her mid-twenties, appears with her signature put-upon customer service smile, appearing morbidly cheery behind a counter.

ALICE
 (CONT'D) ...Mr. Angel's
 Eradication Emporium, your one
 stop for all of your corpse
 removal needs!

MONTAGE

ANNOYED COMMUTER
 In the middle of mowing the grass,
 my brother decided to bite it...
 give me something cheap.

The ANNOYED COMMUTER puts his credit card down on the table, obviously very much wanting to leave.

ALICE
 I will put through an E-Z-

Cremation for you then!

After the transaction goes through, ALICE immediately directs her gaze upwards at her score on the EMPLOYEE SCORE BOARD. Displeased with the amount, she feverishly looks at the FELLOW EMPLOYEE's score, which is neck and neck with her own. ALICE looks over at the entirely comfortable FELLOW EMPLOYEE standing at the counter right next to hers, frustration evident.

CUT TO

The FELLOW EMPLOYEE has a YOUNG MAN struggling to drag in a body bag approach, a lipstick smear going from his lips down his chin.

YOUNG MAN

The date didn't wait for
dessert...

ALICE looks up again at the SCOREBOARD, still tied up with the FELLOW EMPLOYEE.

CUT TO

A YOUNG WOMAN struggles to place the corpse on the scale.

YOUNG WOMAN

My husband, had the *nerve* to drop
on my birthday!

ALICE

Don't worry, we have a coupon for
that!

CUT TO

A SHIFTY WOMAN brings in a body with great effort to the FELLOW EMPLOYEE's counter

SHIFTY WOMAN

Think my brother here wanted your
cheapest burial-

BODY BAG

[Muffled] No, he really doesn't!

END OF MONTAGE

ALICE is stressed. Her eyes are in a furious loop of darting between the SCOREBOARD and the FELLOW EMPLOYEE, their scores still supremely close.

The door to the Emporium bangs open, and ALICE has a double-take as the customer who has just walked in is most bizarre in her upset demeanour.

The CRYING CUSTOMER, in her mid-twenties & boldly stated

in her uniquely colourful ware, is pushing a body bag in a WHEELCHAIR with care. She walks up to ALICE, who is currently looking more and more alarmed the more tears are being shed.

CRYING CUSTOMER

Please, just, please help me bury my dad.

ALICE

W-W-We offer a variety of burials & cremations for an easy eternal slumb-

CRYING CUSTOMER

NO! He- he isn't a loaf of *bread* you can just shove in an oven-

ALICE

[Small voice] It's not an oven, it's more of a furnace actually-

CRYING CUSTOMER

I want a funeral service. What do you have?

ALICE suddenly begins to perk up as she re-enters her comfort zone of customer service.

ALICE

We do have a package for you, Miss...?

CRYING CUSTOMER

Venus. And his name was Robert.

VENUS switches from upset to hostile upon stating her father's name, mortally offended by ALICE's dehumanising attitude towards her loss.

ALICE

I am just going to book you for our Bonfire Bonanza, the most deluxe funeral package we offer! A memorial fire-pit celebration, a full buffet, live band-

VENUS

You and your buffet choices can go fuck-

Very much put out of sorts, ALICE begins to tap her terminal screen with fervour, trying her best to find a solution that will make this distraught customer into a pleased one.

ALICE

How about our retro "Blast From

The Past" funeral party - our
hired priest is very authentic!

VENUS, upon hearing this latest offering, decides enough
is enough.

VENUS
'Authentic', my ass!

ALICE
I mean, there is no reason to
shout...

Rearing herself up to a full shout, VENUS takes the
public scene she has begun to make and stirs it up even
more with relish, whipping her phone out.

VENUS
I did not come all the way into
this disgusting city just to get a
half-assed burial-

VENUS continues her threat, not noticing ALICE suddenly
paling with fear at something behind her.

VENUS (CONT'D)
-So phoning up your manager may
get you on the right track!

INTERRUPTING VOICE
No need to get a manager, my
dearest customer, I can assist.

MR. ANGEL himself has walked onto the shop floor, his
car-salesmen signature sleeze expression identically
mirroring his massive portrait on the wall behind him.

MR. ANGEL
Is my specialist not offering you
the services you crave for your
mortal problem?

VENUS
Offering the what for my *what*?

ALICE, with one more panicked look at her sinking score
on the scoreboard, interjects before the situation
becomes even more of a mess.

ALICE
I was just about to help her with
her chosen arrangements!

Both VENUS and MR. ANGEL look at ALICE in different forms
of disbelief.

VENUS
Finally!

MR. ANGEL

What exactly are you carrying out
for our beloved, if not eclectic,
customer?

ALICE directly addresses VENUS, who is still looking as
if she wants to continue her yelling.

ALICE

She wants to bury her dad, and I'm
going to ensure that happens.

Taking the WHEELCHAIR with VENUS' FATHER within, ALICE
directs VENUS out the front.

VENUS

These people are *wild*. Get why we
never moved to the city now,
dad...

MR. ANGEL

[Calls after] Alice, my dear, I
would hope that this assistance
proves...satisfactory.

MR. ANGEL watches as ALICE continues to wheel the dead
father out the store with a still emotional VENUS
fluttering around the two. His eyes never leave ALICE's
back, watching her every movement in an alarmingly
focused manner. The FELLOW EMPLOYEE is stock still, not
wanting MR. ANGEL's attention to turn to them. ALICE's
score on the EMPLOYEE SCOREBOARD has now frozen, not
fluctuating one way or the other.

INT. MR. ANGEL'S ERADICATION EMPORIUM COMPANY CAR - NIGHT

ALICE and VENUS sit quietly next to each other, ALICE
behind the wheel & VENUS fidgeting in the passenger seat
beside her. The BODY BAG is propped upright in the middle
seat in the back, buckled in safely.

VENUS, not able to bear the thick silence for any longer,
switches on the radio. A classical song is playing,
barely understandable through the crackling low signal.

In an attempt to help, ALICE goes to turn it to the
Emporium's official company broadcast, which has a
clearer signal.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

-chopping up the corpses before
official disposal has really saved
a lot of space-

VENUS swiftly turns the radio off without a word.

LATER

ALICE
Where are we burying it?

VENUS
We are burying *him* by Shaynore
Lake.

ALICE
Oh, I know a closer lake that may-

VENUS
Thought you were following my
every wish & command to salvage
that score?

ALICE
Shaynore Lake is an *excellent*
choice!

ALICE nervously glances at her phone propped on the dashboard, which decided to light up with an incoming call from MR. ANGEL at that exact moment, which is left unanswered.

EVEN LATER

MR. ANGEL is calling ALICE once more on her phone, and she goes to answer it.

VENUS swats her hand away.

VENUS
Oi, hands free & eyes on the road!

They return to their awkward silence, both pointedly not looking at each other. VENUS has ALICE's phone in her hand, multiple messages from MR. ANGEL visible. He is threatening her job if ALICE does not update him to her whereabouts immediately.

VENUS does not alert ALICE to these updates, and instead looks out the window and lets out an exasperated huff. ALICE, noticing the growing annoyance in the other woman and not wanting her customer to give her an even worse review at the end, tries to salvage the situation.

ALICE
Let's play a game!

VENUS
Right... What kind of game?

ALICE
My sister and I used to play this
when walking to school, where you
would look for letters in signs
till you have collected the whole
alphabet.

VENUS latches on to the mention of ALICE's family, finally finding an opening to try and figure out why ALICE and the life within the city has become this cold.

VENUS

Tell me about your sister.

ALICE, not expecting this question, startles a bit.

ALICE

She kept me company as a child till she passed.

VENUS

You lost a sister and the only thing you have to say about her death was the loss of *company*?

ALICE

[Defensive] That is the function siblings play, to provide support during our formative years & provide assistance when needed.

VENUS, not able to comprehend this seemingly non-attached outlook to one's sister, bodily turns towards ALICE.

VENUS

Did you love her?

At this, ALICE fumbles the switching of gears, causing their car to stall in the middle of a small country lane. VENUS does not let this interrupt her interrogation. Even the body bag in the back seat seems to lean forward in anticipation.

ALICE tries to restart the car, but is too flustered to properly do so, acting as if she got caught in the act of something most foul.

VENUS

Are you saying that measly scoreboard matters more to you now than your sister's loss ever did?

ALICE

Becoming a *Senior* Eternal Sleep Specialist is no easy feat, I'll have you know.

Venus begins to understand why ALICE seems so out of water. Alice focuses on the conversation at hand, abandoning the car for a moment. ALICE's phone rings with yet another call from MR. ANGEL, but neither pay the lit up screen any attention.

VENUS

What did you do when your sister

died?

ALICE
We cremated her the same day.

VENUS
And you were okay with such a quick turn around?

ALICE
Why wouldn't I be? There were more important things to do.

VENUS
What could possibly be more important than properly saying good bye?

A bit of the righteous anger displayed in the Emporium makes its return within VENUS.

VENUS (CONT'D)
It almost sounds like you were glad she was gone, as if she was an inconvenience!

A nerve has been clearly struck. Any semblance of a customer service demeanour is stripped away, and ALICE immediately enters the defence.

ALICE
Don't you *dare* assume anything about our relationship.

ALICE finds herself unable to stop the flood coming out of her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Just because I buried anything I may have felt down like everyone else does not make me less than you.

VENUS
So you admit to feeling-

ALICE
Yes I did and I can't afford to let that happen again. Look at you.

VENUS looks shocked at the direct offensive path ALICE has veered onto.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You are *consumed* by his death. We are all hurtling towards early demises and you chose to stay

connected to a ticking bomb.

VENUS

But choosing to grow cold towards
a death is like not respecting
their life.

ALICE

You've gone too far though. Who
are you without your dad, then?

VENUS pauses, unsure how to fire back at this remark.

ALICE

At least I have *something* to keep
me going, no matter how much you
mock my scoreboard.

VENUS

(Quietly) Do you even remember her
name?

ALICE begins to reply, pauses, then looks alarmed at her
inability to recall this information.

No words from ALICE upon this statement immediately come
forth, too shocked by how cold she has become since this
loss. In a last ditch, desperate effort, ALICE states one
last defence.

ALICE

But we need to be separated from
those feelings, it's how it needs
to be!

VENUS

It's not how it should be though,
is it?

VENUS lets ALICE process this statement before
continuing.

VENUS

You're right in that I don't
really know who I am without
Robert, but I at least have a name
to call him.

After a moment, ALICE slowly turns the key in the
ignition. The car roars back to life, ready to finish its
journey. Before beginning to move forward, VENUS passes
ALICE her phone back, whose screen is covered in missed
calls and messages from MR. ANGEL. ALICE unlocks her
phone to go to ring him back but VENUS, who has turned to
re-adjust her father in the backseat lovingly, captures
her attention instead.

EXT. LAKESIDE - MORNING

ALICE and VENUS stand by the fresh dirt of a grave being patted in a final gesture of send off. They move to stand by the edge of the lake, a moment of silence settling between them.

ALICE looks over at Venus, who has begun to cry.

To both of their surprise, ALICE places a hand upon VENUS' shoulder in an attempt at a show of comfort. VENUS, moved by this shift in ALICE, turns this physical contact into a full hug. ALICE seems at a loss at what to do at first, arms hanging by her side for a couple of seconds, before slowly moving them up and around the other woman.

Buzz, buzz.

The phone in ALICE'S pocket interrupts the moment. She pulls it out, sees the dozens of missed calls from MR. ANGEL, and promptly chucks it into the lake. VENUS begins to look guilty at the lost device.

VENUS takes ALICE'S hand and, after one final look out over the sea, tugs the other hesitant woman gently back towards the company car.

INT. MR. ANGEL'S ERADICATION EMPORIUM - DAY

ALICE is sitting behind her counter, blankly staring at her new bottom of the list ranking on the EMPLOYEE SCOREBOARD. She doesn't really seem too bothered by it though, not even focusing on the job at hand.

ANNOYED WOMAN

[Snaps fingers] Hello, anyone home?

ALICE

So sorry Miss, how can I be of service to you today?

ANNOYED WOMAN

My kid has been stinking up the house for days. Now, do you still accept this coupon, I know it expired last week-

ALICE is startled at the phrase "my kid" and looks down at the bag, struggling to keep the smile on.

The tears break through, but that customer service smile stays put.

FADE OUT.

THE END

