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Stephan Jean De Jonghe

- *Death Warmed Up*

A Full Length Play – 4 Acts - Black Comedy

Running Time: approx. 120 minutes

Period: Present Day

Synopsis:

A black comedy which takes a light-hearted look at the funeral industry from inside the State Cemeteries Administration Board (affectionately known as SCAB) office. Based on the real occurrences of life at the cemetery, this play covers many aspects of death and funerals which most people only come into contact with on the occasion of the death of a family member.

This play, which also deals with typical office relationships, will make audiences laugh and reflect.

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by Stephan Jean De Jonghe is copyright
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About the Playwright: Stephan Jean De Jonghe



I originally wanted to write *Death Warmed Up* as a comedy. However, death demands respect. I hope I have brought both humour and dignity to this sensitive topic. If audiences feel entertained, enlightened and a deeper sense of respect toward those who work in the industry, then I have achieved my goal. Throughout my writing, my wife Chris has been encouraging, supportive and contributively forthcoming. Without her, this play would not be possible and I thank her. This play is dedicated to Chris.

About the Play:

Death Warmed Up was first performed at Kalamunda Dramatic Society (KADS) in Kalamunda, Western Australia from 13 July to 4 August 2007, and directed by Joy Northover.

The original 2007 cast:

Kristine Lockwood as Deirdre
Irina Spradbury as Maggie
Graham Miles as Roland
Dominique Allis as Jasmine
Kim Taylor as Bill
Daniela Guy as Erika

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Death Warmed Up. A play in 4 acts by Stephan Jean De Jonghe

Cast

Jasmine	25-30 yo
Deirdre	40-50 yo
Margaret (Maggie)	30-40yo
Roland	early 40s
Erik (Erika)	late 30s
Bill	Late 40s

Cast Profile

Jasmine 25-30 yo

She is single and is a new employee. She is bright and bubbly. Smart and learns fast. She likes a joke and can give as good as she gets. She wears bright and colourful clothing. She is impressed with how Erik deals with death.

Deirdre 40-50 yo

She is single and has worked for the organization for over 20 years. She is the office 2IC and is efficient, somewhat cold about client needs. She has some feelings for Bill. She likes all the procedures to be followed and is very neat and organised. She has a surprising sense of humour and likes a joke on occasion. She wears a uniform.

Margaret (Maggie) 30-40yo

She is single and has worked at the cemetery for 5 years. She has a crush on Roland, her boss. She is trying to find a way to make him notice but so far has been unsuccessful. Her nature is a bit flighty. She is nosy and loves learning about people and about life. Great with clients as she can empathise with concerns and needs. Talkative and is prone to think out loud. She has a weak sense of humour and often unwittingly sets up the joke instead of being amid it.

Maggie is responsible for Jasmine's training. She also wears a uniform.

Roland early 40s

He is single. Roland is the director of the cemetery. He is also over-qualified for the job. He is bored and tries to deal with boredom by being over creative. He has been in the role for more than 3 years. He is a health fanatic and participates in health and fitness programmes and eats natural foods. He is aware of Maggie's interest and has been neither interested nor uninterested in her. He wears a collar and tie and uniform coloured trousers. He has a jacket but it lives on a coat stand.

Erik (Erika) late 30s

He is married. Erik is a funeral director. He can't remember how he became a funeral director. He sort of fell into the job. 'It's a living,' he likes to say to people. He has a wicked sense of humour and likes to tease people. He is witty and charming. He likes Jasmine and likes to tease her about her newness to the job. Erik wears a suit and is always immaculately dressed.

At the director's discretion, a female actor can play this part. In the original presentation of the play, the male actor withdrew days prior to opening and a female actor took the role, saving the performances. The director must then allow for the gender differences within the script.

Bill mid 50s

Bill is a widower. He works as a senior gardener and monument installer. Has worked there for over 25 years but only as a gardener since his wife died 10 years before. He used to be the office manager before being the gardener. He has a dry and unexpected sense of humour. Bill wears a brown T-shirt and brown shorts and working boots.

Death Warmed Up Act 1.

The play is set in a modern, open plan office. The day is a Monday and it's Jasmine's first day in a new job. In the office are two desks with phones, computers, stationery and meagre personal possessions. Deirdre and Maggie are in the office as the curtain opens. They are both wearing office uniforms.

Deirdre: He won't fall in love with you.

Maggie: He might, one day. He's just shy.

Deirdre: No. He won't. Your pining all the time is very annoying. *(Pause)* Get on with your work.

Maggie: How can I?

Deirdre: Maggie!

Maggie: Roland is in there, with her?

Deirdre: Her has a name.

Maggie: What kind of a name is Jezebel anyway?

Deirdre: Her name is Jasmine. A Jezebel is a woman of loose morals.

Maggie: It should be Jezebel. Have you seen the way she dresses? They've been alone in there for far too long.

Deirdre: Roland is just going through her induction. *(Pause)* You know that. Do get on with your work.

Maggie: Roland said I have to train her. Why me? You're senior to me, why don't you train her?

Deirdre: Because she'll be doing the same work as you and you'll be working as a team. Anyway, I'll be assisting Roland.

Maggie: Where's she going to sit? Oh dear, this isn't going to work.

Deirdre: She can share your desk during her training. After that, we'll find a desk for her.

Maggie: Why me? *(She sighs)*

Deirdre: You're the 'Client Liaison Officer Trainer' so... just do your job. OK?

Maggie: I suppose so... I hear them coming.

(Roland and Jasmine enter the stage. Roland is leading.)

Roland: This way, Jasmine. This is Deirdre and Maggie. They're dying to meet you. Deirdre, Maggie, this is Jasmine.

Deirdre: Welcome to SCAB.

Jasmine: I beg your pardon. Did you say 'welcome scab'?

Deirdre: No dear, I said 'Welcome to SCAB'. This is where you work now. State Cemeteries Administration Board. S. C. A. B. SCAB. We don't use the full name as it takes too long. Anyway, you'll get used to being called a SCAB worker.

Jasmine: *(To Roland)* I don't think I'm going to like it here.

Maggie: Oh, don't worry Jazzy; we have a warped sense of humour here. You need one or you'd go crazy in a place like this. I'm your CLOT.

Jasmine: It's Jasmine. You're my what?

Maggie: Your C.L.O.T. Clot. Client Liaison Officer Trainer.

Jasmine: Does that make me a Cloit?

Maggie: A Cloit?

Jasmine: A Client Liaison Officer In Training.

Maggie: That's good. I'm going to like you.

(Pause)

Roland: Right, I'll leave you all to get acquainted. *(To Maggie)* Don't forget Jasmine will need some time on the front desk as well as learning her memorial work. *(Looking at Deirdre)* Now, I'd better sort out your office keys. *(Pause)* It wouldn't surprise me if Annie were planning to cause us some trouble.

(Roland exits)

Jasmine: *(Uncertain of what is going on)* Oh. Where do I sit?

Maggie: With me for now. We're going to share a desk while I teach you the job.

Deirdre: I hope Roland has luck getting those keys back. I'm going to need them.

Maggie: The keys are a set of master keys. A woman named Annie, who used to work here, has taken them with her. I gather she's quite angry with poor Roland.

Jasmine: Isn't there another set?

Deirdre: Oh yes, of course there is, but Roland doesn't want the Minister to know what happened. *(Pause)* Oh, I think I hear an opportunity to get those keys back. Won't be long. *(She heads for the door)*

(Deirdre exits)

Maggie: Shall we start? *(They sit)* As client liaison officers, it's our job to take calls about memorials. There are two types of clients.

Jasmine: Dead and alive?

Maggie: That's the idea, but not what I meant.

Jasmine: How about people who come in and people who phone?

Maggie: Well yes, there's that, but it's not what I meant either. There are those we call pre-need and those we call at-need. Pre-needs are sorting out what memorial they want before they die. At-need is sorting it out after a death occurs.

Jasmine: I have grave feelings about this job.

Maggie: That's it. You're getting into the swing of things.

Maggie: The front desk will take messages for you when you're out. The phone is dead at the moment but it can come to life at any moment.

(The telephone rings)

Maggie: *(Maggie answers the phone)* State Cemeteries, good morning, Maggie speaking. Yes, yes, *(She consults a diary)* 4 pm today. Yes, yes. *(Long pause)* I see. I look forward to meeting with you. Yes of course, goodbye. *(She hangs up the phone and turns to Jasmine)* One thing I should point out to you; this is a job where you've never seen or heard it all.

Jasmine: Why? What was that about?

Maggie: That man's had his arm amputated after an accident. He wants a formal memorial for its burial, and then wants to catch up with his arm after he dies. *(She laughs)* Apparently he used to be quite attached to it.

Jasmine: That's weird.

Maggie: Just a bit unusual. It'll mean exhuming the site to bury his body with his arm when he dies. Oh dear, *(She laughs)* I don't think we have a form for this one.

Jasmine: What else do we do?

Maggie: *(She passes a file to Jasmine)*. This file has photos and lists our products with prices. You have a look while I return a call to a client.

(Maggie picks up the phone and dials)

Maggie: Hello, is this Mr Sittella? It's Maggie calling from State Cemeteries. You rang earlier. *(Pause)* Yes sir, I see. You now want Mrs Sittella to be in tomb 16. That's three high, near the window overlooking the fountain. *(Pause)* Yes, I'm sure she will like the fountain.

(Deirdre enters with the master keys in her hand. She looks pleased with herself)

Maggie: Yes, Mr Sittella. *(Pause)* Yes, she will be closer to heaven. *(She hangs up)*

Deirdre: I got the keys.

Maggie: So I see. That was quick. How ever did you get them?

(Jasmine looks up from her reading)

Deirdre: I heard Annie's voice in reception. She was demanding her money. I confronted her about the keys. She denied having them so I told her we'd withhold her final pay until we got them back.

Maggie: Wow, what did she say?

Deirdre: She didn't. She went bright red. I then told her we would lose her superannuation details. She swore at me. *(She holds up the keys)*

Maggie: So Annie was here. *(She laughs)*

Deirdre: Why do you laugh?

Maggie: Well, Roland is on his way to her house right now.

(They both have a giggle)

(Roland walks in as Deirdre discreetly puts the keys in a desk drawer)

Deirdre: Any luck with the keys, Roland?

Roland: Err, no. She wasn't at home. I'll have to try again later.

(The phone rings and Maggie answers)

Maggie: State Cemeteries, this is Maggie.

(Bill enters the office carrying two urns)

Bill: Hello all.

Roland: Morning, Bill.

Bill: No, I'm not. Didn't even know 'em. *(Referring to the urns)* I just work here.

Roland: No, I mean 'Hello Bill'. Who have you got there?

Bill: *(He turns to face Roland)* The urns are from the couple that got cremated last week. It would seem they've been left behind.

Roland: What do you want us to do?

Bill: Erik will be here this afternoon to collect them.

Maggie: I've got your details, Mr Swan, and I'll ask and let you know. *(Hangs up the phone)*. Hello Bill.

Bill: Hi, Maggie. Who's this then? *(Looking at Jasmine)* Is this the new chum?

Jasmine: I give up. What does chum stand for?

Bill: You know. A person. A work colleague.

Jasmine: Oh, sorry.

Roland: Bill is our grounds keeper. He's in charge of the gardeners and the gravesites. Bill's been with us quite some time, haven't you Bill?

Deirdre: Bill is one of our longest serving and trusted employees.

Bill: Thanks Deirdre. I expect I'll be buried in my work one day. I just look after the roses really. Stop them from becoming sticks. What's your name, then?

Jasmine: I'm Jasmine. The new chum.

Bill: Nice to meet you. *(They shake hands)*

Maggie: Bill, is there any chance of some fresh flowers for the office?

Bill: Well, come for a walk with me and pick some out. It's a lovely day; the sun is shining, birds chirping, bees buzzing...

Maggie: *(To Jasmine)* You keep looking through that file. I'll only be a short time with Bill.

Bill: Before we go out, I'm afraid I got some bad news.

Roland: What's wrong?

Bill: The vandals have been back. They've spray painted quite a number of gravesites. I've called the police and they're coming to record the details and take photos. I've got my staff ready to clean it up as soon as they're finished.

Jasmine: That's terrible.

Roland: Thanks, Bill. Keep us posted. Better give us a list of affected sites, in case we have to advise family members.

Bill: Sure thing, Roland.

(Maggie and Bill exit)

Roland: *(To Jasmine)* This sort of thing happens far too often. It puts a lot of heartache on the families and lots of extra work on us. Hopefully the police will catch the bastards soon.

Jasmine: I hope they do. Graffiti on a monument is such a terrible thing.

Roland: You never get used to it. *(To Deirdre)* Could you come into my office for a moment please, Deirdre? I want to discuss the missing keys.

(They exit)

(Jasmine finds herself alone in the office. She walks up to the urns, picking them up)

Jasmine: So, Mr and Mrs Smith. Sam and Susan. They burned you and left you behind. How sad. At least there's no graffiti on you. I wonder what you were like? *(Long pause)* *(In a deep voice)* Hello Susan. *(In a high pitched voice)* Hello Sam. *(Long pause, turning the urns to face each other she says in a deep voice)* Hey Susan, where's

my dinner? *(In a high pitched voice)* Empty the rubbish bin, Sam. *(Pause)* It's sad that they left you behind.

(Jasmine put the urns back and returns to the desk. She scribbles some notes)

(Roland and Deirdre return from the meeting room)

(Maggie and Bill return to the office. Maggie is carrying a large bunch of flowers)

Jasmine: How many gravesites do we have here, Bill?

Bill: Thousands. It would seem that quite a lot of people have died.

Roland: They're dying to get into this place.

Maggie: And if they're not happy, we dig 'em up and give 'em back.

Bill: The dead ones never complain. Only the living ones moan about it.

Jasmine: I'm sure you have a few ghost stories to share.

Bill: Oh yes, my dear. This one time, there was...

Deirdre: Show some respect! Please.

Roland: Yes. That's enough time-wasting. Everyone back to work.

Bill: Yesterday there were 4 pallbearers walking around with a coffin. Three hours later they were still walking around with it.

(They look at him)

Bill: I thought to myself... 'These buggers have lost the plot'.

Maggie: Roland, a Mr Swan rang earlier and wanted to know if he could put a beer bottle border around his friend's gravesite. Can we...?

Deirdre: The public would turn this place into a rubbish tip if we let them.

Roland: This isn't a rubbish tip; it's a dumping ground for bodies.

Maggie: I'll ring him back and tell him 'no'.

Bill: Erik should be here soon to collect those. *(Referring to the two urns)*

Roland: Thanks, Bill.

(There is an awkward silence)

Bill: Right. I'm off, back to my office in the sun with the flowers and the birds and the bees. *(He moves to exit)*

Maggie: Thanks for the flowers, Bill.

Bill: You're welcome.

(Bill exits)

Deirdre: Maggie, sort out the flowers and please keep on with Jasmine's training.

Maggie: I just need to phone Mr Swan.

Jasmine: Would you like me to do that? *(She points to the flowers)*

Maggie: Yes please. There's a vase in the kitchen. It's through that door and to the left.

(Jasmine exits with the flowers)

Roland: Deirdre, can I see you in my office for a moment?

Deirdre: Of course.

(Roland and Deirdre exit to Roland's office)

Maggie: *(Maggie picks up the phone and dials)* Hello, is that Mr Swan? Yes sir, this is Maggie from State Cemeteries. You rang about the beer bottle border for your friend. *(Pause)* I'm sorry, sir, but we can't oblige with that request. Yes, sir, that's right. No, sir, *(Pause)* thank you for enquiring. Goodbye. *(She hangs up)*

(Jasmine returns with the flowers in a vase)

Jasmine: Here you are.

Maggie: Thank you. They look great.

Jasmine: Bill seems very nice.

Maggie: He was once the manager of this place. When his wife died, he demoted himself to head gardener. He wanted to stay close to her.

Jasmine: That's so touching.

Maggie: Deirdre's been watching out for Bill ever since.

Jasmine: Does she love him?

Maggie: I don't know. Maybe.

Jasmine: I suppose we should do some work.

(Deirdre enters)

Deirdre: So, Mr Swan wanted a beer bottle border for a gravesite?

Maggie: Yes. I told him 'no' and he started laughing at me. I...

Deirdre: Think about it.

Maggie: Oh dear. I've been had.

(Maggie enters with a vase full of the flowers she had brought in from the garden)

Deirdre: Maggie, please explain about Mr Swan.

Maggie: *(Laughing)* I should have realised it was a joke. He's a lonely old man who gets kicks out of phoning us with dumb requests for fictitious friends.

Jasmine: Like a beer bottle border for a burial plot.

Maggie: The other week he was Mr Jock Strap and he wanted us to arrange a bust of Julius Caesar to keep order so that the dead wouldn't roam around.

Jasmine: I'll watch out for him.

Deirdre: See that you do. He rang me once with a request to have corpses' shoes donated to third world charities.

Jasmine: What?

Deirdre: He said that the lost souls no longer needed their soles. He said it was wrong to bury or burn them when they could be better used, to help the poor.

Jasmine: Wow, that's deep. What did you do?

Deirdre: I took him seriously and asked Roland about it.

Jasmine: What did he say?

Deirdre: He couldn't stop laughing. He said 'Imagine the look on family members faces when they found out we were lifting shoes'. Anyway, I haven't fallen for his pranks since.

Jasmine: Poor Deirdre.

Maggie: I asked Roland if we should get the police onto it as we have his number.

Jasmine: What did he say?

Maggie: He didn't want us to make a fuss, so we just humour him.

Deirdre: It all started when he rang looking for Mr G Raff. That's an old one that the zoo has to contend with.

Jasmine: I'll have to be on my guard.

Deirdre: When you're ready I want to discuss some of our forms that we use.

Maggie: *(Singing)* Forms forms forms forms forms!

Jasmine: Right, before we do, I need the Ladies. Where do I go?

Maggie: *(Pointing to a door)* Through there and down the passage to your right.

Jasmine: Shan't be long.

(Jasmine exits)

Deirdre: How are you two getting along?

Maggie: She seems all right. Her humour suits this place and she seems to be learning quite quickly. I don't like her clothes much.

Deirdre: I think she does some fancy type of dancing.

Maggie: Professionally?

Deirdre: Just a hobby.

Maggie: No wonder she wears such loud clothing. What type of dancing?

Deirdre: I don't know. Why don't you ask her?

Maggie: I wonder if it's exotic.

Deirdre: Oh dear, do you think it could be? I'll ask her to tone her clothes down a bit.

Maggie: Is she married?

Deirdre: I don't think so. I know she's an orphan.

Maggie: Roland's an orphan.

Deirdre: Only by choice.

Maggie: Does Jasmine have any family?

Deirdre: She apparently has an aunt that she said she's very close to.

Maggie: Now she has this place too. Just like us.

Deirdre: *(Singing)* Three lonely ladies working in a cemetery.

Maggie: *(Singing)* We are here from Monday to Saturday.

Deirdre: Well, we're not dead yet. Let's bury ourselves in some work.

(The phone rings and Maggie answers)

Maggie: Hello. *(Pause)* OK, thanks *(To Deirdre)* There's a package for Roland.

(She exits and re-enters carrying a cardboard box for Roland and puts it on a desk)

Deirdre: More health food?

Maggie: He does like to take care of himself.

(There is a scream; Jasmine rushes into the room, frightened and sobbing)

(Roland rushes into the room from the other door)

Roland: Who screamed?

Maggie: Jasmine. *(Turning to Jasmine)* What's the matter, what's wrong?

Roland: Are you all right?

Deirdre: Are you OK?

Jasmine: *(Shaking and sobbing)* I saw something in there.

Roland: Where?

Jasmine: In the passageway.

Roland: What did you see, Jasmine?

Jasmine: Some white ghostly looking thing.

Roland: Bill!

Jasmine: I don't understand.

Deirdre: You just catch your breath. We'll have a talk with Bill.

Roland: We certainly will. Your first day and he's already scaring you.

Maggie: Sorry. I should have warned you.

Jasmine: Warned me?

Maggie: I'll make you some tea.

(Maggie exits)

Roland: Bill has this torch thing, which he lights up on a wall. It projects a ghostly image. He likes to scare new employees. I'll have a word with him.

Jasmine: I don't know what to make of all this. *(She laughs)* At least it isn't dull.

Deirdre: No dear. It never is.

(Erik enters).

Erik: Hello all. What's new?

Roland: Jasmine. I'd like you to meet my friend Erik. Erik, this is Jasmine. She's our new client liaison officer.

Erik: Oh, so I should have asked 'Who's new?' Hello Jasmine, very nice to meet you. Hello Deirdre. How are you all?

Deirdre: Erik. We're well, thank you. Are you here for the urns? *(She points to the two urns on the filing cabinet)*

Erik: Oh good. Thanks. *(Turning to Jasmine)* How do you like it here so far?

Jasmine: Well, there's a lot to learn. Everyone's been so helpful and kind. I'm sure I'll be very happy here.

Erik: *(Long pause)* I see.

Roland: Jasmine just had a scare. Bill's been messing about with his torch again.

Erik: *(He smiles)* I thought you were going to take it off him?

Roland: I will.

Deirdre: Maggie is making her some tea.

Erik: I'd love one!

Deirdre: You know where the kitchen is.

Erik: *(To Jasmine)* Well, if there's anything I can do to help, just sing out.

Roland: *(Explaining to Jasmine)* Erik is one of the main undertakers here at the cemetery so we see him quite often.

Erik: Roland and I sometimes go for a run together. He wants me to be a health nut too.

Jasmine: A health nut?

Deirdre: Yes. Our Roland is a very health conscious person. He eats only health foods and has an extensive fitness regime.

Roland: Bit of a passion.

Erik: It certainly is. He even runs in the marathons. Wants me to as well.

Roland: You should do the run one day, Erik. It'd be good for you.

Jasmine: Sounds like too much health and not enough fun to me.

Deirdre: Sounds like too much talk and not enough work to me. Goodbye Erik, do visit again soon. Don't forget the urns.

Erik: *(To Jasmine)* I don't know why Deirdre treats me so, Jasmine. I can only hope that we can be friends?

Deirdre: Erik, you must have better places to be.

Roland: Deirdre, please. Erik is my friend.

Erik: Yes, be nice to me, Deirdre. I may bury you one day.

Deirdre: Perish the thought.

(Maggie enters and she is carrying some tea)

Maggie: Hello Erik. *(She greets him with a peck on the cheek, then spots Roland and becomes embarrassed)* Oh.

Erik: Maggie. I'm relieved you're happy to see me. Shouldn't kiss me in front of Roland, though; he may get jealous. Deirdre's kicking me out, so we'll have to carry on with our love affair later.

Maggie: Very funny, Erik. Here's your tea. *(She hands the teacup to Jasmine)*

Jasmine: Thank you. I feel a bit silly.

Erik: It's only your first day, too. Lots can happen in a happening place like this.

Deirdre: I'll make you happen.

Erik: *(To Jasmine)* See you soon. Maggie will take care of you. Roland, *(Patting the box on the desk)* not too many pills or you'll ruin your appetite.

(Erik waves goodbye as he exits)

Maggie: 'Bye Erik.

Deirdre: Right. Let's all get back to work, shall we?

Jasmine: He seems nice.

Roland: Erik. Yeah, he's OK.

Maggie: He's a very nice man. He's really good with people.

Jasmine: How do you mean?

Maggie: Oh he's a bit of a stirrer in here. But out there, with the families of the deceased, he's very professional.

Roland: Erik understands the loss that families and friends feel. He has a way of relaxing people through the ordeal of burying a loved one.

Deirdre: I am hard on Erik but he seems to enjoy it. I will admit he's the best undertaker in the business.

Jasmine: Wow. That's high praise indeed. He must be good.

Roland: He's a family man too. He understands families' needs. *(Pause)* Now I must put my food away.

(Roland goes to his health food box to take it into his office)

Jasmine: So what sort of food do you have, Roland?

Roland: Oh, just some high protein formulas that I mix up for breakfast. They're fat free, low in sugar and high in fibre. It's all very good.

Jasmine: Doesn't it get boring?

Roland: Oh no. Good health is never boring. It's all we have, after all.

(Roland exits)

Maggie: I do admire him for it, but it would be nice to think that if he ever took me to a restaurant we could eat a big, juicy steak and some fried chips.

Deirdre: Roland won't take you out. He won't date staff.

Jasmine: Why, Maggie, have you got the hots for our Roland?

Maggie: I do, it's no secret. He knows, but he isn't responding. I live in hope.

Deirdre: Well, for now you can live in work.

Maggie: True. *(Pause)* Right, Jasmine. How are you going with that file?

Jasmine: Good. The cost to us of the brass plaques is in the first column and the sell price is the second column and the third column is how much profit we make.

Maggie: Yes, that's right. We get measured on how much profit we make.

Jasmine: So it's quite like a business, then? We need sales and profits?

Deirdre: We run this department on the profits we make burying and memorialising clients. The Government doesn't help much.

Jasmine: I'm surprised we don't have sausage sizzles.

Deirdre: Don't mention that to Roland. He'll think it's a great way to raise money.

Jasmine: I won't.

Maggie: It's our job to give people the full range of options and give good service. Most people have a budget.

Jasmine: It's so important that people remember their loved ones properly. People who don't, regret that later in life.

(There is an explosion outside in the cemetery grounds)

(Roland comes running out of his office and exits to the outside)

Jasmine: What was that?

Deirdre: It sounds like a pacemaker blowing up in the crematorium.

Jasmine: What!

Maggie: They're supposed to have them removed before cremation. The heat blows them up and it makes one hell of a mess.

Jasmine: That's awful.

Deirdre: Yes, Roland won't be happy. Someone is going to be in trouble for this.

Jasmine: No, I mean for the family.

Maggie: Oh, I suppose it would be.

Deirdre: The crematorium staff will deal with it.

Jasmine: This place is amazing. Hoax callers, ghosts and now bodies blowing up.

Maggie: Err, tell me about your dancing, Jasmine.

Jasmine: My dancing. What do you want to know?

Deirdre: Plenty of time for that later. Let's try and get some work done.

(Bill enters with an urn)

Bill: It's quite a mess at the crem. This is the client that was cremated just before the explosion. *(He is indicating the urn he is holding)* They asked me to keep this in here while they sort out the mess and calm the mourners.

Jasmine: Should we go out to help?

Deirdre: No. The undertaker's staff and the crematorium staff are there to help.

Bill: I'm not sure they'll be able to. It was a rather large service. Some mining magnate fellow blew up.

Deirdre: The undertaker will be charged for the cleanup. What's the damage bill?

Bill: I don't know. The crematorium staff are busy cleaning and checking it out.

Maggie: Is it one of Erik's funeral services?

Bill: No. It's a new crowd. I haven't seen them before. I'll just leave this here. *(He puts the urn on the filing cabinet)* I'd better go and rescue Roland. *(He exits)*

Jasmine: Does this happen often?

Deirdre: Not really. Once every three months or so. Roland is forever sending out letters reminding the funeral directors.

(Roland enters. He falls into a chair)

Roland: Deirdre. There are an awful lot of upset and confused mourners outside. Could you three circulate amongst them for a while, until this blows over?

Deirdre: Of course. Maggie, Jasmine. Let's see what we can do to help.

Roland: And tell Bill I want to see him.

Deirdre: Yes, Roland.

(Deirdre, Maggie and Jasmine exit).

(Roland picks up the phone and dials)

Roland: Hello. Yes, this is Roland from the cemetery. Is Geoff available please? *(Pause)* Hello Geoff. Roland. We've had another explosion in the crematorium and the gas injectors won't fire up. *(Pause)* Yes, they did that and no, it didn't work. Yes, if you

could, please. There's quite a few to do today and we're already behind schedule.
Thanks, Geoff.

(He hangs up the phone and sits quietly in contemplation. He spots the urn on the filing cabinet and walks up to it, picking it up and reading the notation with the urn.)

Roland: George Tomb. Oh, I remember you. So here you are, dead and reduced to ashes. You're the mould that other bastards are cut from. How many lives did you ruin, George Tomb? Leading our business empire into ruin. Blaming others for your incompetence. The retrenchments, the shame, the hardship you caused and the families you destroyed. Six months it took me to find a decent job after you finished me off. I hated you so much and now you're dead. *(Pause)* Good.

(He puts the urn on the floor and kicks it)

Roland: I promised myself I would dance on your grave but you cheated me out of that too, you bastard.

(He starts to hum, moving slowly at first. He starts to dance as he sings)

Roland: La cucaracha, la cucaracha. Dona na na na naa.

(He stops and puts the urn back on the filing cabinet)

(Erik enters)

Erik: There you are. You'll have services queuing up soon. Are you getting the crematorium fixed?

Roland: Yes. Geoff is on his way. I wish you people would be more careful.

Erik: Don't look at me. It's those new 'budget priced' funeral boys. I'll blow them up. They give poor service and are giving us all a bad name.

Roland: I'm sorry; I know it's not you. It's been a harrowing day.

(Maggie and Jasmine all enter from the outside)

Maggie: Most of the mourners are leaving, Roland. We've done what we can.

Jasmine: Those poor people; some were quite upset.

Maggie: One couple thought it was quite funny. The deceased being a retired demolition expert and all.

Roland: No. Really? *(He laughs)*

Maggie: Are we holding you up with this, Erik?

Erik: No, no. I'm using Crem Two.

(Bill enters carrying his special torch)

Bill: You wanted to see me, Roland?

Roland: Yes, Bill, it's about that...

(Bill turns off the office lights and shines the ghostly image on the office wall.)

Roland: Bill! Stop doing that!

(Curtain)

END OF ACT ONE

Death Warmed Up Act 2.

It is now morning of the following Wednesday. In the office there are two desks with phones, computers, stationery and meagre personal possessions. There are now several potted plants and some personal effects that Jasmine has brought in. Roland and Maggie are in the office as the curtain opens.

Roland: Maggie, about these plants and decorations that Jasmine has brought in. I'm sure Deirdre won't like them.

Maggie: I like them. I always thought this place looked too sterile. It's a memorials office, not the morgue.

Roland: Well OK, but if Deirdre wants them gone...

Maggie: Yes, Roland. *(Pause)* Did you have a word with Bill about what he did to Jasmine?

Roland: Not yet. Her first day and she thought she saw a ghost.

Maggie: I'm glad she didn't quit there and then.

**This is not the end of "Death Warmed Up"
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This script also comes with a Property and Sound Effects list.



Performance at Kalamunda Dramatic Society (KADS) 2007