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This morning, on my way to work, I was driving by a cemetery, and they were having graveside services. Nothing unusual so far, right? But here’s the thing…there were only two people there. I figured one of them had to be a minister, so that left only one person to mourn for the dearly departed. Okay, so maybe the deceased wasn’t so dear; after all, but come on…one person at a funeral? It’s sad enough when someone dies, but I think it is equally sad if there’s no one who cares if you died. Driving down the road right then and there, I had an epiphany. I have decided that on my days off… I will attend funerals.

Okay, attending funerals might not sound normal to the average person, but... for a single girl with no social life…I figure it will at least get me out of the house. My day off is two days from now. After work today, I stopped by a newsstand and got the daily paper. There were fourteen people listed in the obituaries, and four of them have a funeral on my day off. Now the hard part. Choosing which funeral to attend. My choices are: Morgan Freeman, a retired insurance salesman, not the actor, with six lines of surviving relatives; Sally Kensington, a salon stylist. Don’t you know she’d be picky about who does her hair for the funeral! Dylan Moore, age six…I just don’t think I could attend the funeral of a child so young; and Carl Stewart, survived by three grandchildren. Well, it seems my choice is made. Carl Stewart, I will see you on Thursday.

The funeral was very moving today. And there were a lot of people in attendance. It seems that Mr. Stewart was a very active man. He was very involved in his church, so there were a lot of parishioners there. And I couldn’t be sure, but it seemed like all three of his grandchildren were there as well. All in all, I’d say Carl Stewart left quite a legacy behind. There were lots of tears, dozens of beautiful floral arrangements, and four people that I had never met...hugged me.

I may not go to a funeral tomorrow. It’s supposed to thunderstorm, and I have been battling a cold. I’ll wait until the morning to make
my decision, but right now? I’m staying in bed and reading a little Judith Krantz…

Even though I’m not a hundred percent well, I decided to go to the funeral of a Mr. Earl Watkins. It rained cats and dogs this morning. By mid-morning, however, the skies cleared up, and I decided that getting out might make me feel better. And it did. Trust me. It did. I got to the service just after it started, so I had to take a seat on the last row. Like I said, I still wasn’t a hundred percent, and my nose was running, so all in all, I definitely looked like I belonged there. My nose has been beet red for three days. As I was trying to quietly blow my nose, the man next to me leaned over and asked if I was one of Mr. Watkins’ former students. I looked at him, not knowing what to say, and said, “Yes. Yes, I was.” He asked how long ago. I said, “I was his student five years ago.” He then scooted over closer to me and whispered in my ear, “Liar.” Then he just kept staring at me and smiling. After I give him this what-did-you-just-say-to-me look, he leans over one last time and says, “Earl Watkins retired eleven years ago.” Caught, I just turned my face straight-ahead, listened to the eulogies, and as is customary for me, said a prayer for the dearly departed. After Mr. Watkins’ funeral was over, I headed straight to my car…only to be followed by…you guessed it… by Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself. “How did you know him?” he asks. Wanting nothing more than to leave, I decided to tell the truth. “I didn’t,” I said. “I go to funerals on my day off. It’s what I do. It’s who I am. Okay?” Now, he is the one not knowing what to say. But like all men, he finds something to say quickly. And like all wallflowers who watch way too many movies, he says the perfect line, “Mr. Watkins… would have really liked you.” Well, it seems that a group of Mr. Watkins’ students were getting together for a little reunion of sorts, and would I like to go? Having no “chalkboards” to clean…I said, “Fine.”

I met Bill, that’s his name, at a restaurant, along with about a dozen of Mr. Watkins’ protégés. What a teacher he must have been! Everyone took turns telling his or her favorite Mr. Watkins’