

THE LATE GORDON KAPLAN

Cast of Characters

RABBI: 50's or older, male or female, rabbi of local synagogue

NORMA: Late 60's or so, grieving widow

DINA: 30-something, a young mother and Norma's daughter

Place

A private room in a funeral home

Time

The Present

NORMA

I mean it. Nothing good. Or I walk out.

RABBI

On your husband's *funeral*?

NORMA

I swear to God.

RABBI

*(Trying to ratchet this down a notch.)*

All right, just hang on a second. Let's talk this through—

*(DINA enters.)*

DINA

Mom, the guy from the funeral home wants to know--oh, hi Rabbi, excuse me—

*(Goes and greets/hugs the RABBI.)*

RABBI

Hi, Dina.

NORMA

Where have you been?

DINA

I told you not to worry; I got back in time—

NORMA

—Don't even tell me—I can only imagine. Your father used to go missing like that!

DINA

*(Ignoring her, continuing to the RABBI.)*

—the director guy wants to know if we want to see the body.

NORMA

Oh, sure, *now*, someone wants to know if I want to see his body. I never saw it for more than two seconds when he was alive, why should I care if I see it now?

DINA

*(Sotto voce to NORMA)*

Mom . . . do we have to start this now?

RABBI

You know, maybe that would be a good idea, Norma. I mean, you certainly don't have to, but it might be good if you did.

NORMA

Why? So that I'll have *(with air quotes)* "closure"? So, that I'll have a good cry, like everyone keeps telling me to do?

DINA

*(This is not the first time today that they've had this conversation)*

Look, I don't care if you cry or not, Mom, but let's at least say goodbye.

NORMA

How do you say goodbye to someone you hardly ever saw.

DINA

Oh, c'mon, Mom. *Really??*

RABBI

Dina, would you mind telling the funeral director that we're not sure and that we'll get back to him in a few minutes.

DINA

*(Happy to be given a task so as to be finished with this conversation.)*

Absolutely. Thanks, Rabbi.

*(Starts off)*

NORMA

*(To DINA, as she exits)*

Don't disappear again.

DINA

*(As she's exiting)*

I'm not going anywhere--I'll be right back!

*(Dina exits)*

NORMA

*(Once DINA has left, back to the RABBI)*

I'm not going to change my mind.

RABBI

*(In all seriousness)*

And I'm not going to try to change your mind.