

DEAR GRAVE PEDDLER

Written by

Megan Linton

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

FUNERAL DIRECTOR, mid 50's, sits at his desk in his office. He is sorting through the mail and comes across a pink scented envelope. Out of curiosity he opens the envelope, takes out the letter, and begins to read.

RAMONA (V.O.)

Dear Grave Peddler, I am not dead yet, but with my lucrative lifestyle I foresee my death in the very near future. That is where you come in.

INT. RAMONA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

RAMONA FAIRCHILD, 28, sits, typing a letter on her Mac desktop computer while casually sipping on a bottle of tequila. Her appearance is sloppy. Messy bun, last night's makeup is smudged on her face, and the sweats she is wearing have seen better days. The state of her bedroom behind her mirrors her unkempt appearance.

RAMONA (V.O.)

I am writing to you to acquire your services. I want you to help me throw the most, outrageous, almost offensive funeral ever.

Ramona gets up from her chair and begins pacing back and forth in her bedroom, bottle of tequila in hand.

RAMONA (V.O.)

Here is what I am requesting.

(Thinking)

I want a custom-made casket. I want it to be the brightest Barbie, pink color you can find. Inside of the casket, I want the liner to be made of the softest Egyptian silk possible. Let's face it, if I am going to be stuck in that casket for eternity, I want it to feel like my ass is floating on water. I also want the inside to smell like cotton candy.

She walks over to her bed, tequila bottle still in hand, and crawls in between her black silk sheets. As she lays in her bed, she glances around the room, admiring all of the pink colors that surround her. For a brief moment she glances over at a picture of her and her mother on the dresser.

RAMONA (V.O.)

(Grinning)

Now, here is the fun part, beneath the torso of my lifeless body, I want a springboard to be installed with a remote control to activate it. I want you to activate the spring board while my mother is giving her eulogy. I have my reasons.

Forgetting an important detail, Ramona jumps out of her bed and rushes back to her computer to begin typing again.

RAMONA (V.O.)

If it's not too much trouble, please push me back down after the fact.

Still sitting in front of her computer, she picks up a spoon and begins tapping the spoon against the palm of her hand. The wheels in her head are still turning as she is in deep thought.

RAMONA (V.O.)

(Begins typing again)

The funeral service at my actual gravesite, I am requesting several things.

(Glances at the leftover food on her desk)

First, I want a popcorn stand and a taco truck as refreshments for visiting guests. I want the smell of the food to be so incredible that it attracts people from across the graveyard to come looking for food.

As she types, she glances up at a picture on her cork-board above her computer. She stops typing and takes the picture down from the cork-board. She holds the picture in her hands and admires it.

The picture is of her and her best friend Ron. RON, 30, a Seth Rogen doppelgänger, has his arm around a intoxicated looking Ramona.

Ramona runs her fingers over the picture and kisses it before pinning it back onto the cork-board above her computer.

RAMONA (V.O.)

(Glancing at computer screen)

(MORE)

RAMONA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Second, I want my friend Ron to be there dressed as he grim reaper, sickle and all. Third and forth, I want my favorite song "Baby Got Back" to be played on an organ and munchkins to throw candy at the guests. If this makes guests to become uncomfortable, inform them they will not receive their complimentary twenty dollars at the end of the service...do not actually give them twenty dollars at the end.

Gearing towards the end of her letter, Ramona gets up from her desk and begins shuffling through the garbage in her room to find her purse.

Upon finding her purse, Ramona grabs her wallet and begins searching through it frantically trying to find an important business card.

RAMONA

Yes! I found it!

With her attorney's business card in hand, she goes back to typing.

RAMONA (V.O.)

If you accept to take on this fun filled challenge, please call me at (315) 777-1593, providing that I am not already dead. If you do accept and I have already met my demise, please call my attorney Ben Fogelstein, to make the arrangements. I am attaching his card to this letter.

RAMONA (V.O.)

Sincerely, Ramona Fairchild.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The funeral director chuckles and shakes his head in disbelief as he puts the letter back into the envelope. He doesn't throw the letter away, but puts it into his desk drawer to save for later, just incase.

A couple days pass.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The funeral director walks into his office with a handful of mail. He sits down at his desk and starts sorting through it.

Upon sorting, he finds a letter and recognizes the name at the top. Fairchild. Except this time, the letter is from a Charlotte Fairchild, not Ramona.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
(Curious)
Hm, I wonder if this the same
Fairchild family?

He opens the envelope, pulls out the letter and begins reading.

CHARLOTTE FAIRCHILD (V.O.)
My name is Charlotte Fairchild, I
am the mother of Ramona Fairchild.

The funeral director puts the letter down on his desk for a moment and starts rubbing his head before picking the letter back up, to continue reading.

INT. CHARLOTTE FAIRCHILD'S HOMEOFFICE - DAY

CHARLOTTE FAIRCHILD, mid 50's, is sitting at her posh looking work desk, writing on a piece of paper with an expensive fountain pen. Her clothes look like they came straight out of the Saks Fifth Avenue catalog and her blonde hair looks like it was freshly dyed.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
It has come to my attention that
Ramona has recently written to you
in regard to her funeral
arrangements. I found the letter
open on her computer during one of
my recent visits to what she calls
"home."

INT. RAMONA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Charlotte is snooping around Ramona's room, as Ramona is in the bathroom. She notices the letter Ramona wrote to the funeral director, open on her computer.

She quickly reads the letter and makes her way back to the living room, as Ramona is coming out of the bathroom.

INT. CHARLOTTE FAIRCHILD'S HOMEOFFICE - DAY

Still sitting at her desk, writing on the piece of paper.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

While she is not wrong, that she will more than likely die soon due to her lifestyle choices, her demands are completely insane.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

I am writing to you, in hopes to convince you, of not fulfilling any of her ridiculous demands. In case you are having trouble, remembering the ridiculous demands of Ramona, let's go over it shall we?

Charlotte gets up from her desk and begins to pace the room. She is visibly deep in thought and appears to be talking to herself without actually saying any words.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Ramona requested that her casket be bright pink, smell like cotton candy, and have a springboard installed.

(Stern)

Now I am going to ask you a serious question. Does this sound normal to you?! I highly doubt that you have ever had such a request that was so preposterous as this. Also the springboard to be installed just to frighten me, is highly unprofessional and unethical.

She stops in front of a giant oil painting of her and a young Ramona on the wall of her office. She notices it is not straight and attempts to straighten it.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

For refreshments, she requested a popcorn stand and a taco truck and actually gave permission for random people to come and get food. This is also including the midgets she wanted to throw out candy.

(Stern)

I am sure you will agree that interruptions for such things is tacky and distasteful. Clear disrespect towards the deceased.

With the oil painting finally to her liking, Charlotte walks over to the leather couch next to the window and sits down.

Lost in thought, she stares out the window and clutches the rosary beads from underneath her shirt and runs them through her fingers.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Finally, we come down to her musical selection. I have not heard the song "Baby Got Back" before I read her letter, but I have listened to it since reading her letter to you and I must say that I am absolutely appalled.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Shaken)

I had to go to confession immediately afterwards to cleanse myself of that retched song. If you have not heard that song before, I suggest you listen to it so you can understand why it is an inappropriate choice for a funeral.

The thought of having listened to that song and the recounting of it, snaps her out of her trance like state. She makes her way back to her desk, picks up the fountain pen, and begins writing again.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

The bottom line is, Ramona's demands are not traditional or acceptable. I am sure a person of your position, who has arranged numerous conservative funerals, will see the big picture and realize that Ramona's funeral would be a train wreck. A train wreck that would not look good on you, if you were to be the one to arrange it. Think about it.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Grinning evilly)

Sincerely, Charlotte Fairchild.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Upon finishing the letter from Charlotte Fairchild, the funeral director puts the letter down on his desk, and starts blinking intensely.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
(Sarcastically) Lovely.

INT. RAMONA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ramona is pacing back and forth in her room. She is clearly angry and upset. In her hand, is a racquet ball that she keeps throwing against the wall and catches while she paces.

RAMONA
Hey Siri, start dictation.

Siri, on Ramona's computer BEEPS in response.

SIRI
(Robotic) Starting dictation.

Ramona still paces throughout the room, fidgeting with the racquet ball.

RAMONA
Dear Grave Peddler, this is Ramona Fairchild, writing to you again. It has come to my attention that my meddling mother caught wind of my original letter I sent to you with my funeral requests and has reached out to you herself, in hopes of convincing you to not go along with my "outrageous" requests.

As she paces the room, she notices the tequila bottle she was nursing days previous is now empty. This discovery leads her to a cabinet in her nightstand where she grabs a new, unopened bottle of tequila.

She opens the new bottle and takes a chug before continuing with her dictation.

RAMONA (CONT'D)
Well, I am letting you know now that the argument about my funeral arrangements has finally reached a head. My mother is still insisting on the conservative, "traditional," boring arrangements while I fight for my creative freedom and nontraditional requests.

She takes another swig from the bottle and continues to pace fiercely.

RAMONA (CONT'D)

(Chuckling) This last argument was pretty intense, I thought the vein in her forehead was going to burst. Is it wrong that I was hoping it would?

Ramona walks over to her bed, bottle still in hand, and clears a spot of garbage off her bed so she can sit down. She sits down and starts rubbing her head.

RAMONA (CONT'D)

At this point, the head, we are going to court. Long story short, she is only fighting me on this because I know deep down, she only wants to look like a good mother in front of her friends and wants to use my funeral as proof. She doesn't actually care about me. So court it is. I will let you know what the verdict is.

She takes yet another swig from the tequila bottle, but this time, a longer swig.

RAMONA (CONT'D)

Let's hope I can make it to the verdict. Sincerely, Ramona Fairchild.

RAMONA (CONT'D)

Siri, stop dictation and print.

Siri BEEPS in response, the printer starts printing Ramona's letter. After the printer stops, Ramona grabs the paper and an envelope and prepares it to be mailed to the funeral director.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The funeral director is in his office reading Ramona's latest letter.

He finishes the letter and places it on his desk.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Hmmm. This just got interesting.
Never seen this happen before.
Could be worth my time.

EXT. BAR PATIO - NIGHT

A couple days later.

A mismatching Ramona is sitting outside a local bar, on the patio, with her laptop, a pack of cigarettes and a drink. She takes a big sip from her drink before opening her laptop before she starts writing her next letter.

She opens her laptop and Microsoft Word. She begins typing.

RAMONA (V.O.)

Dear Grave Peddler, Hi me again. In case you haven't caught on yet, this is Ramona Fairchild, again. There has been an interesting turn of events.

She stops typing to take another sip of her drink. For a moment, she looks around and notices a group of people drinking and having fun on the other side of the patio.

The group of people notice her and hold their glasses up in her direction. She smiles and holds her drink up before going back to writing.

Ramona starts typing again.

RAMONA (V.O.)

My mother and I went to court. I mentioned that we were going in my previous letter in case you don't remember. Let's just say, that court appearance was more outrageous than my funeral is going to be.

RAMONA (V.O.)

My mother came into the courtroom looking like her typical prim and uptight self. She even had the nerve to wear a black vail over her face. I am not dead yet. Jeez. I know it was just a ploy to get the judge on her side. Me on the other hand, I wore what was comfortable, I didn't care if it matched or not.

Ramona pauses from typing to pull a cigarette out of it's pack. She lights the cigarette, takes a couple puffs and sip of her drink.

She continues typing.

RAMONA (V.O.)

The judge heard both of our sides. I protested that I am a grown adult, I make my own decisions, and I am expressing my creative freedom. My mother tried to convince the judge that I should be declared clinically insane and requested emergency custody of me until I meet my demise. All based on my "sloppy" appearance and ludicrous funeral demands.

She takes a couple more puffs from her cigarette.

RAMONA (V.O.)

The judge, in response to my mother, asked me some questions and determined that I am not insane, just "unique." With that being said, the judge ruled in my favor. He said that I am not breaking any laws and I am allowed to make own choices. My mother did not take well to his decision.

Ramona takes another sip from her drink and looks up to see the group at the other end of the patio is inviting her over to join them.

She holds up a finger with a smile, implying that she will be there in a minute.

She returns her eyes to her computer, as she hurries to finish her letter.

RAMONA (V.O.)

My mother bent over and had a massive heart attack in the middle of the courtroom! Long story short, she is dead now and I need to plan her funeral. I have some great ideas that will make her funeral EPIC! Think you are up for it? Let me know! You have my contact information. Sincerely, Ramona Fairchild.

Just like that, it was all over. Ramona closes her laptop, grabs her things and heads over to the group people at the end of the patio.

BAR GOER

Hey! You looked lonely, sitting by
yourself over there. You good?

RAMONA

Never better. I am celebrating.

INT. FUNERAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The funeral director is at his desk reading Ramona's final letter. He places the letter on his desk and thinks for a couple of minutes.

He picks up the phone on his desk and begins dialing.

A couple of RINGS are heard until the call is answered.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

(Smiling)

Yes, hello. Is this Ramona? This is
the funeral director you have been
writing. I am calling because I am
interested in working with you on
your mother's funeral.