

Obituary: A Grave Beginning

By

The Barryte Bros.

EXT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - AFTERNOON - 2004

JUNE (4) holds an open shoebox with a dead rabbit inside. Her parents stand beside her. She wears a SKELETON KEY NECKLACE.

JUNE

I wish Mr. Rabble didn't have to die.

MR. CROCKER

June, everyone dies eventually.

JUNE

Will you and Mom die?

MRS. CROCKER

Well... yes, honey, we will. But that won't be for a long-

SLAM. A SATELLITE CRUSHES both parents.

June looks horrified. A beat. She drops the shoe box.

TITLE CARD - OBITUARY

EXT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - MORNING

The tombstones look lovely.

Title Card: 10 years later.

SANDY (V.O.)

Hurry up, June. You don't want to be late for your first day of high school!

INT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - JUNE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JUNE CROCKER (14) packs her backpack. She wears a striped long-sleeve shirt, jeans and her skeleton key necklace.

The room feels a bit like it was copied out of an Ikea catalog with the exception of the taxidermied birds and a few strewn about comics. On the wall there are a handful of photos of June growing up and smiling, but always alone.

JUNE

Just a moment, Sandy. Be right there. Do you think I should I wear my beanie?

(CONTINUED)

SANDY (O.S.)

I think it looks swell on you!

She samples it on and off in the mirror.

JUNE

Hmm...

SANDY (O.S.)

June, you're over-thinking this.
Instead, think of all those people
just waiting to be your friends!

JUNE

I just hope nobody think I'm weird.

SANDY (O.S.)

Now why would anyone think that?

JUNE

Really?

She opens the door.

Oh, yeah. SANDY (15) is a ghost. Wispy tail and all.
She wears late 1950s garb.

INT. EETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Sandy follows June down the stairs. Ghosts here and there.

SANDY

Oh, June, don't be such a Worrysome
Wendy. It's just school.

June walks through a burly Russian ghost, DMITRI, and a
ghost in a mismatched suit, LESTER CATFIELD.

LESTER CATFIELD

Good morning to you, June!

DMITRI

Morning, June.

JUNE

Morning, Mr. Catfield. Morning,
Dmitri.

SANDY

Everyone here loves you. And you
want to know why? You're the
sharpest person any of us know!

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

I'm the only person you-

As they reach the bottom of the stairs, an ERM EMPLOYEE FLINGS open the break room door.

ERM EMPLOYEE

June! I can't believe you're headed off to school already!

The employee's mouth unhinges like a snake's and a Union General ghost, TRULISH GRAMPLIN (50), emerges from it.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

And not just any school! The school named after me, General Trulish Gramplin! We must commemorate this moment with a photograph!

He wisps out; the employee collapses.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN (CONT.)

Gather 'round everyone!

Ghosts float over June excitedly and pose. Among them are LADY PLUME, CARMEN and HILARY, a Victorian, punker and grunge ghost, respectively.

JUNE

This really isn't a big deal, guys.

LADY PLUME

Nonsense. It's like you're coming out as a lady.

CARMEN

That would have been Hell in Victorian times.

Hilary and Carmen laugh. A few other ghosts snicker.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

Settle down and smile, everyone.

A COLONIAL GHOST snaps a Polaroid - CLICK.

The photo pops out. Everyone gathers around: It's just June.

JUNE

...are you guys... gonna be okay without me?

All the ghosts offer feigned reassurance.

(CONTINUED)

TRULISH GRAMPLIN
Of course, June! I mean,
there are so many... urns
to organize...

JUNE
Oh, certainly, don't you
worry about us. We'll be
plenty busy.

CATFIELD
What are ya talking about?
We'll be fine.

CARMEN
You think we'll run out
things to do if you're not
around? As if.

SANDY
Don't worry about us, June. Now get
out there and make some friends!

-- ALTERNATE END TO SCENE--

JUNE
Okay... well... I'll see you all
after school then.

She leaves.

A beat.

The ghosts panic.

LADY PLUME
With that lovely youth
gone, my existence seems
so futile now.

CATFIELD
What are we supposed to do
with all these spare ashes?

SANDY
Everyone! Everyone! Let's not get
hysterical. There are certainly
things we can do without around the
mortuary without June.

LADY PLUME
But what about her? It's not safe!

DMITRI
She will be brainwashed!

SANDY
Nonsense! She's going to just fine
because high school's the best!

INT. TRULISH GRAMPLIN HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

CHATTER. Girls titter. A bully, VINCE, slams a nerdy kid with headgear, BLATSY, repeatedly against a locker.

PRINCIPAL SHALAT

(Over the PA)

Good morning Trulish Gramplin High School! This is Principal Shalat speaking, welcoming you back from summer break and wishing you a wonderful first day.

JUNE apprehensively enters and everything gets quiet. STUDENTS murmur as June walks through the crowd.

STUDENT 1

It's that weirdo from the cemetery.

STUDENT 2

I've heard about her...

STUDENT 3

She is different and I don't know her. That frightens and upsets me.

JUNE

(to herself)

Well... this is going well...

VOICE (O.C.)

Witch!

THE BELL RINGS TO:

INT. ETERNAL RIVERS MORTUARY - LIVING ROOM

Sandy moves the Scottie Dog piece.

SANDY

Three, four, five... Oh, yay, Free Parking!

She claps quietly. DMITRI, CATFIELD and GRAMPLIN also float around the Monopoly board. Carmen lazily strums her ghost guitar. Lady Plume does needlepoint.

DMITRI

What is point of such game?

He flips the board over, pieces fly everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

SANDY

We can try something else!

She holds up some other board games. Perfection. Checkers. Subjectivism: The Game.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

Oh, it's no use. What else can we do that doesn't involve June...

They all think for a moment.

SANDY

Oh, I bet June would know!

CATFIELD

Well, what are we waiting for?
Let's go ask June!

INT. TGHS - HISTORY CLASS

Repeated soft THUMPING from the back of the classroom as COACH MCKINNEY, a bloated sack of crap, spews-

COACH MCKINNEY

Alright you sniveling bagworms,
welcome to Freshmen World History!

June glances at some students who then look away.

COACH MCKINNEY (CONT.)

History of the world: Karma,
shawarma and the Dalai Larma! Now,
crab daggit, Vince Rasp! What are
you doin' to that piss-ant?

Vince stops slamming Blatsy's head against the desk and coolly lights a cigarette as he responds.

VINCE

Just showing him where the desk is,
sir, is that a crime?

COACH MCKINNEY

Now, rip-tornit, Vince, don't you
give me that back-talkin' guff.
We're takin' a march to Counselor
Stien-Stien's office, young man!

As Vince and McKinney exit-

(CONTINUED)

COACH MCKINNEY (CONT.)
Take out your books and start
mem'rizing flags!

SLAM.

A BLONDE, LISA ROSE, leans over to June.

LISA ROSE
So. You're the Cemetery Girl, huh?

JUNE
Oh, um, yeah, I guess, but actually
my name is Ju-

LISA ROSE
You have to forgive everyone for
staring, Cemetery Girl. Nobody's
ever seen you before... For the
longest time people were saying you
were some monster made out of deer
parts...

Daisy laughs.

LISA ROSE
Were you home-schooled or
something?

JUNE
Well...

INT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - BASEMENT

HISTORY - June scrubs a corpse's hand as-

PURITAN GHOST
-and those godless Iroquois
warriors thought their King Phillip
would protect them -

EXT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - GRAVES - LATER

SCIENCE - June digs a grave as-

SKIPPER GHOST
-with steam you can harness
unimaginable power to even travel
upriver-

INT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - LOBBY - LATER

PRISON SELF-DEFENSE - June rinses an urn as EDMUND, a ghost in a prison uniform, frantically sharpens a shiv-

EDMUND

-and I likes to leave it with some jagged-y edges, you see, to really cuts 'em deep-

INT. TGHS - HISTORY CLASS - CONTINUOUS

JUNE

Yes...

LISA ROSE

Well, I only ever went to *normal* school. Anyway, I'm Lisa Rose and these are my besties, Daisy and Violet.

DAISY

We're The Flowers!

They "jazz-hands" around their faces.

LISA ROSE

(extending her hand)

You must be so glad to meet me.

Sandy floats through the wall.

SANDY

Oh, there she is! I found June, everyone!

June almost jumps out of her seat.

SANDY

And she's already made a few friends!

Ghosts pass through the wall, and excitedly zip around unnoticed by everyone but June.

Quick swish-pans as June glances around-

Lady Plume floats by some teens in mini skirts.

LADY PLUME

What sort of ghastly things are they wearing?

(CONTINUED)

Dmitri inspects a US presidents chart wrapping around the ceiling.

DMITRI

These are leaders of US of A? Ha.

Trulish Gramplin looks through a books on the desk.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

Really? My biography should definitely be core reading.

June looks horrified.

CARMEN

(to Hilary)

Looks like she just saw a ghost.

Carmen and Hilary snicker.

HILARY

(through laughter)

We say that all the time, but somehow, it's still hilarious in this instance!

LISA ROSE

Um...

JUNE

Oh. Sorry. Yes... Nice to meet you.

They shake. Catfield floats through their handshake.

CATFIELD

Legally binding agreement, that was!

June breaks the handshake, startled.

LISA ROSE

Is everything okay, Cemetery Girl?

JUNE

Oh, uh, yeah, sorry Lisa, I just-

LISA ROSE

Not Lisa, Lisa ROSE.

DAISY

Yeah! Lisa ROSE!

JUNE
...sorry, Lisa Rose.

June tries not to focus on the ghosts.

LISA ROSE
It was a simple mistake I'm sure
you won't make again.

Daisy laughs.

CARMEN
(to Hilary)
I kind of hope she does...

June glares at Carmen.

LISA ROSE (CONT.)
You know, I'm a bit surprised. For
someone who lives with corpses, you
put yourself together pretty well.
...I especially like your necklace.

JUNE
Oh, thanks...

LISA ROSE
What do you want for it?

JUNE
What?

Lisa Rose brings up her purse, Sandy wisps over to it.

LISA ROSE
(searching through her
purse)
Let's see... no... no...

SANDY
Oh my goodness, June.
Her purse is like a tiny
department store!

JUNE
(through gritted teeth)
Sandy...

Sandy isn't paying attention.
Nobody else notices Sandy rifling through the purse.

LISA ROSE
Um, actually, it's blonde, but good
effort. Here. We'll trade for my
lip gloss. My daddy'll just buy me
another one.

VIOLET

I've always wanted that lip
gloss...

LISA ROSE

Shut up, Violet.

SANDY

(picking up a glitter stick)
Ooo. Glitter!

CATFIELD

This stuff must sell faster than
radium water!

JUNE

Uh, no thanks, Lisa Rose. You can
put that down.

Catfield and Sandy look guilty and put down the glitter.

SANDY

Sorry...

LISA ROSE

Ugh. What? Is that some overly
sentimental necklace from your dead
parents?

JUNE

Um... that's an oddly specific
description... and yes...

LISA ROSE

I'm sorry, I don't know if I heard
you correctly. You're rejecting my
gift?

JUNE

Well it's not really a gift if you
wanted my-

LISA ROSE

Wow, Cemetery Girl. I came to you
offering friendship. Most would
kill for that. Don't you want to
popular instead of some weirdo?

DAISY

Yeah! Weirdo!

The ghosts gasp.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

I don't want to be popular or weird! I just want to be a normal student going to school to learn.

LISA ROSE

Well learn this, Cemetery Girl: turning down this lip gloss was the biggest mistake of your life!

Lisa Rose SNAPS the lip gloss in half. Violet whimpers.

SANDY

Well, at least she didn't say she hated your beanie!

VOICE (O.C.)

Witch!

A balled up paper smacks June in the back of the head. She grits her teeth.

INT. TRULISH GRAMPLIN HIGH SCHOOL - OUTSIDE HISTORY CLASS

JUNE

Well, there go my chances of fitting in...

SANDY

Oh, don't be such a Downtrodden Debbie!

CARMEN

Yeah, you have 5 more classes to *knock 'em dead!*

Carmen and Hilary laugh.

HILARY

Sorry, she can't turn it off!

June sighs.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

Come on! Buck up, June! Weather the storm!

LOCKER SLAM TO:

INT. TRULISH GRAMPLIN HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER

June empties her locker. On it in lipstick is written:
GO BACK TO YOUR GRAVE, CEMETERY GURL - <3 THE FLOWERS

TRULISH GRAMPLIN
Well, better luck tomorrow!

JUNE
I don't want to try again tomorrow,
Gramplin. This whole day has been
horrible. Everyone's so judgmental.
And it certainly didn't help that
you all kept distracting me in
class. Everyone must have thought I
was crazy whenever I tried to say
anything to one of you.

CATFIELD
But June! No one can hear you when
you talk to a ghost unless you want
them to!

Everyone stares at him.

CATFIELD (CONT'D)
Oh wait, I got that one backwards
again...

JUNE
I had one shot at being normal. And
I blew it...

The ghosts look at each other, then look depressed...

TRULISH GRAMPLIN
No...I suppose we blew it...

JUNE (CONT.)
Let's just go...

VOICE (O.C.)
Before you go, can you open this
locker?

June leans over and cautiously opens a nearby locker.
BLATSY spills out.

BLATSY
Hey, thanks. I would have asked
earlier, but you sounded busy.

(CONTINUED)

LADY PLUME

Oh, what wonderful manners he has.

BLATSY

Oh! Hey, you're June! Man, you were pretty brave in history class- kind of dumb considering that Lisa Rose is the richest girl in Ludburrow County... but still... pretty brave... I'm Blatsy, by the way!

JUNE

Uh, hey, Blatsy. Look, I was just headed home so I -

BLATSY

Home? Oh, wow, me too! We can totally walk together!

Blatsy runs on ahead. June stares after him.

BLATSY (O.C.)

Come on, June, catch up!

She grabs her backpack and runs after him.

EXT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY - LATER

Blasty glances at the tombstones as he walks with June. Sandy floats above.

BLATSY

Wow. So you really live at a mortuary...

JUNE

Yeah. I can't exactly blame people for thinking I'm weird...

BLATSY

Well of course you're weird, but that's what makes you cool. I mean, we're all a little weird; like, I have a gland problem!

SANDY

And I've been fifteen since 1959!

They've reached the mortuary lobby entrance.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

So it's normal to be weird then...

BLATSY

Yeah, how strange is that, right?

A beat.

BLATSY (CONT'D)

Well, it was nice talking to you,
June. ...It's so cool to have a
friend at school. See ya tomorrow!

He starts to head off.

JUNE

Blatsy. Wait. Would you like to
meet my family?

Blatsy smiles.

JUNE

Everyone! I want you to meet,
Blatsy! You can reveal yourselves
to him. He's a friend.

GHOSTS materialize and shout greetings at him.

SANDY

Hiya, Blatsy!

LADY PLUME

Charmed to meet you, young
sir.

EDMUND

Brought a live one, she
did!

CLOWN GHOST

(throwing confetti and
spiders)
It's a friendship party!

JUNE

You see, Blatsy, all my friends are
dead... uh, Blatsy are you okay?

Blatsy's eyes are wide. All the ghosts fall silent.

BLATSY

This. Is so. Cool.

The ghosts CHEER and June SMILES.

TRULISH GRAMPLIN

Let's commemorate this victory with
a photograph!

June, the ghosts and Blatsy enter the mortuary, revealing an ominous limo at the bottom of the hill.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Lisa Rose puts down her binoculars which are still hanging from Violets neck choking her a bit. Lisa Rose turns to Violet and Daisy.

LISA ROSE
So it seems the Cemetery Girl has
made a friend...

INT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY LOBBY

The camera flashes and the ghosts, June and Blatsy gather around as the photo rolls out.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

LISA ROSE
... but if she thinks she that will
help her get through high school,
well...

INT. ETERNAL RIVER MORTUARY LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

In the photo: June and Blatsy stand together; Blatsy's pointing at a ghost no longer visible. Everyone SMILES.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

LISA ROSE
...We'll be sure to be The Flowers
on her grave.

EXT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

As the limo drives off, Lisa Rose laughs, then-

VIOLET (V.O.)
Can I have my binoculars back?

LISA ROSE (V.O.)
Shut up, Violet.