

1987

Tip Time, Funeral Fire

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Recommended Citation

Kern, Robert (1987) "Tip Time, Funeral Fire," *The Angle*: Vol. 1987: Iss. 1, Article 28.
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1987/iss1/28>

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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"I Wouldn't be caught dead in a funeral parlor!"

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: 1987.

Tip Time

Funeral Fire

(Or should the title be "Funeral under Fire?")

I wouldn't be caught dead in a funeral parlor!

Because all formal social events look the same, upon your arrival at a reception, ask outloud, so that everyone can hear, "IS SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED ... OR BURIED?" (In the case of a wedding, the answer is "all of the above.")

When it comes to funeral attire, I prefer the traditional:

Women should wear
Black dress, black shoes,
Black stockings and beads.
Black gloves, black hat,
Black bra, black skirt,
Black veil with solid cloth.
Black mink, black scarf,
Black vest, black shirt,
Black jewelry ankle chain.

Men in mourning wear
Black gloves, black belt*,
Black pants, black shirt,
Dark glasses or mask.
Black tie, black briefs,
Black socks, black shoes,
Black hat with black hat band.

Attend funerals at 11 A.M. It's a good way to keep your weight down: you won't want to eat anything afterwards, even though it will be lunchtime.

*Blackbelt. This also refers to a karate expert. Make sure you take one to the funeral; some of your relatives may get out-of-hand. (With a pun on the word "hand.")

At the funeral parlor: if the dead body moves, then slap it one.

Be sure to serve cake at the funeral reception. I suggest angel- or devil's- food, depending on the character of the candidate and where he or she has applied for admission.

Funeral dirge: "Ding-dong, the witch is dead."

When your spouse dies, try this tip (actually a condemnation) from Shakespeare: In Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 2, Hamlet says, "Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables." Hamlet is suggesting that the marriage (actually, remarriage, of his recently widowed mother) took place so soon after the funeral in order to save money on refreshments.

Trying to have a conversation with the deceased is like trying to talk with children: your words fall on dead ears.

I strongly urge you to prepare a will. The best part of it is that YOU decide who gets your stuff and what they get. If you have some nerdish relatives who have treated you with nasty malevolence, this way you can make sure they'll get NOTHING! (Unless, of course, you want to leave them your compost pile.)

Robert Kern