

MEENA lowers the wig and adjusts it onto MOM's head.

MOM

Good. Now don't forget to pinch these little side curls along my cheekbones. It makes me look less severe.

MOM stands up and admires herself in the full-length mirror.

Start → Here! I'll want you to read this.

MOM hands a folded piece of paper to MEENA.

MEENA

MEENA unfolds the paper and reads.

Do not stand at my grave and weep/I am not there, I do not sleep./I am a thousand winds that blow;/I am the diamond glints on snow./I am the sunlight on ripened grain;/I am the gentle autumn's rain./When you awaken in the morning's hush,/I am the swift uplifting rush/Of quiet birds in circled flight./I am the soft star that shines at night./Do not stand at my grave and cry./I am not there; I did not die. Anonymous.

MOM

Nice, huh?

MEENA

'Did not die'!? Where did you get this?

MOM

Dear Abby.

MEENA

You want me to read a poem by 'Anonymous' from Dear Abby at your funeral?

MOM

You can do it at the cemetery, if you like. Before they lower me in.

MEENA

This is dreck!

MOM

It's very beautiful. To me. I can hear the sobbing.

MEENA

But the title reads, 'Do not stand at my grave and weep.'

MOM

I know. I hope this will bring comfort to those I leave behind.

MEENA

But it's total denial. 'I am not there'? 'I did not die'!?

MOM

I believe in this. This is my faith. I don't try to impose it on you.

MEENA

But you want me to read this on your behalf, as part of my eulogy to you.

MOM

Is that too much to ask? Because I can ask your brother to do it for me.

MEENA

That jackass? Over my dead body/

MOM

No, over MY dead body. This is what I want read over My. Dead. Body.

MEENA

And you actually want them to cry *more* after hearing this, don't you? I should have known you'd figure out a way to manipulate people in the Afterlife.

MOM

This is not about you. This is about what I want my family and friends to remember of me.

MEENA

But you are so much more than this! If I had my way, you would be buried without any wig, without makeup, with a simple, but elegant dress that didn't compete with you, Mom.

End →

MOM

I'm not beautiful. But I know what to make of what I've got.

MEENA

When I ask you, 'why do you put on so much powder? Why don't you let your hair down?' Don't you know I'm saying, 'MOM, you're beautiful as you are! Let be.'

MOM

I thought you wanted styling tips! Why don't you wear any makeup yourself, Meena? You look so plain..and drab. At the very least, wear a padded under-wire bra!

MEENA

If that's your idea of glamour...cosmetic surgery and layers of makeup, a padded bra...I'll definitely *never* be the glamour girl you want me to be.

MOM

Well maybe you could be, if you did something with yourself. Look at me! A woman in her 70's and Dr. Chang following me around like a hound dog. Your father was so jealous!

MEENA

Dr. Chang is a closet drag queen. He wanted styling tips.