

The sanctuary of the church was long and rectangular, full of sunshine pouring through tall windows ~~and~~ packed with people gathered to lament the death of Howard Brighton. ~~Though they were gathered to mourn~~ However, there seemed to be little “mourning” actually taking place.

“Upon my last visit with Howard,” the pastor had said through his book cover smile, “during which we sat on his lovely balcony and drank dark, exotic tea from one of his trips to Kenya, he said he was not afraid to die. He was ready for something new; he requested that I tell you all this, that ~~HE WAS READY~~ he was ready, and that you should rejoice for his new adventure.”

And so there were sunflowers, yellow tulips, and white lilies everywhere. ~~To~~ To remind the guests that Howard had moved up in the world, all the way into the next one.

The guests swapped stories. Howard had rolled across the continental U.S. in a Zorb ball to encourage the sharing of ~~cultures~~ cultures. He gave a fleet of ~~s~~ Segways to a small, middle of nowhere village in Chile and taught the locals how to use them to get around. He’d adopted all of the cats and dogs from three local animal shelters and opened a ranch for them to live on, who would then be visited by mentally-challenged, paraplegic orphans who posed with Howard and a kitty for the cover of Time.

These stories and more flew around the church, the laughs rose, and all but Daniel chatted it up.

Daniel waited at the base of the stairs for a married couple in their ~~50s~~ fifties to finish saying their final goodbye at the side of Howard’s casket. It was all so inappropriate to him. The whole thing: sunflowers, sunshine, sunny people—inappropriate. They were all just happy rich people revelling in a happy, richer man’s life.

Daniel had worked as Howard’s personal assistant for fifteen years, running his errands, getting his coffee, even rubbing his feet. He spouted encouraging anecdotes when Howard drank too much ~~S~~ cotch, shredded the evidence from the embezzlement scandal with the auto-parts company Howard ran on the side, and paid off the secretary who ~~m~~ Howard had run to for comfort and non-consensual sex after the death of his wife.

**Commented [EIE1]:** Referring to the ranch here? If so, we suggest “which” instead to remove any ambiguity of what’s being visited.

**Commented [EIE2]:** Love how this paragraph paints such an over-the-top picture of Howard. It’s almost satirical, and in this story, it really works. Good characterization!

**Commented [EIE3]:** This feels a little vague. Perhaps you could try grounding the reader a bit more to the setting in this sentence. E.g., are the stairs at the sanctuary?