

A Hundred Words for Snow by Tatty Hennessy

RORY:

My name is Rory. Yes, I know that's a boy's name. Yes that is my real name. Yes, really. Oh, alright. Full name. If you really need to know; Aurora. Yes. Aurora. Mortifying.

I swear the only people who like weird names are people with names like Bob or Sue or Tim. You like it? Try living with it.

It's weird to think Mum wanted me to be the kind of person who'd suit the name 'Aurora.' I wouldn't want to meet that person, would you? Sounds like a right bint. I've totally forgiven her, as you can tell. Joking. Nobody calls me Aurora. Call me Rory and we'll get on fine.

And this - {the urn}. Is Dad. Say hello, Dad. He's shy. Used to be a lot more talkative. Didn't you, Dad? Lost a bit of weight, too. {balances the urn on her outstretched hand}

It's weird a whole person's in there. This is Dad's story really.

He died. Obviously. Car accident. Walking home from school. He's a teacher. At my school. I know. Mortifying. And a geography teacher. The worst. Sorry, Dad, but it's true. They didn't let me see the body before we got him cremated. I say 'we' but I didn't have anything to do with it, and actually if you ask me I think he'd've hated being inside a shitty urn for eternity but nobody did ask me did they do here he is.

The funeral was awful. The coffin, like, slides behind these red curtains, and all I could think about was how many other people must've been burned in there and how unless they're really good at sweeping there's probably little bits of other people still in there with him and I wondered who they were and what their family thought about when the curtain shut. Mum did a reading but she was a total state, like, crying so much she couldn't even get the words out which was actually a blessing cos the poem she'd chosen was rubbish. He would've hated it. And all my dad's work friends which basically meant all my teachers coming to ours for sandwiches and relatives I never see saying empty things like 'oh well, wasn't it a lovely service' and I'm like actually my mum cried so much she couldn't string a sentence together and then they burned my dad in a fire so lovely isn't really the word for it, Aunt Carol.

I didn't say that. Obviously. I made the tea. People can't talk to you if you're busy making tea. And if they try you just say 'Sugar?' like that and they get distracted. I went to stand in the garden, just, breathe a bit and Mum's out there. Crying. Again. Leaving me to talk to everyone by myself. Very responsible.

