

DEARLY DEPARTING

Written by

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INT. ROSE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

It's still dark when ROSE (7) wakes up. We see she's huddled against a giant teddy bear that covers the right side of her bed. She hugs it briefly for comfort, trying to go back to sleep. But when she hears her door creak ajar, she bolts to look over her left.

There is no teddy bear guarding the other side of her bed, the doorway is empty. Rose shrinks further back into the giant teddy bear, alarmed, watching for any signs of movement. She cannot sleep now.

For a tense moment, she tries to calm herself down by taking deep breaths. Her eyes wander around the bed, looking for something to protect her. There are no other teddies around her except for the one behind. She sits up and finds the blue diamond quilted blanket laid out at the end of her bed.

An image of that same blanket on Rose's grandma's lap, we see no face, only her aged hands warm and comforting, patting for Rose to sit on her lap.

Rose gets out of bed and heads out the door into the dark.

INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rose quietly creeps into the room to find her grandma JUNE, (73) sleeping in her bed, hooked up to a machine that is barely keeping her alive. She breathes deeply, peacefully. Silver light spills through the window, where a stranger, RODNEY (67) sits over the other side of the bed.

When he sees Rose hovering in the corner, he winks and presses a finger to his lips. She stares at him warily, but complies.

Junes eyes blink open and the man grins.

JUNE

Rodney, I thought I told you to go away.

RODNEY

Believe me, for the longest time I tried. But I had to see you.

JUNE

(suppressing tears)

I didn't want you to see me like this. I was feeling fine until you came.

June's hands fly to her face, wiping her tears. Rose immediately makes herself know by rushing to June's side, hugging her lap since she's too short to reach higher.

JUNE  
Oh, hello baby.  
(brushes fingers through  
Rose's hair)  
Thank you.

We see Rodney taking in their hug, and seeing Rose exchange him a guarded expression, his smile is a soft, sad one.

After a moment, June looks at him.

JUNE  
Well... Aren't you going to say  
goodbye?

RODNEY  
(stares out the window,  
avoiding her gaze)  
No, patience my dear.

JUNE  
You and your patience.

RODNEY  
You're eager?

JUNE  
I'm more than eager. Seeing you has  
made me restless.

A beat. The silence between them is a reflective one.

JUNE  
Rodney, I want you to know... You  
deserved everything good, and I  
will send it your way when I'm  
gone.

There is nothing but pure affection in Rodney's eyes.

JUNE  
You've always been an amorous young  
fool but I love you.

RODNEY  
(laughs)  
You've cracked! Finally!  
(cups her face lovingly)  
Trust me, this isn't goodbye.

He gives her a gentle kiss on the forehead.

INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Golden sunlight pours through the window, stretching across Rose's eyes. She wakes, still sprawled on June's lap. Rose see's she's fast asleep, and the man is nowhere in sight.

Except her mum RACHEL (38), his hunched at the end of June's bed, her head buried into the blue quilt blanket.

ROSE  
Mummy, whats wrong?

She gets no response.

ROSE  
Where did the m-

When she touches June's skin, she recoils, sliding from her lap. Slowly, Rose searches June's face, skin yellow. It dawns on her that this is very wrong.

RACHEL  
Baby, come here, Grandma-

ROSE  
Where did the man go?

RACHEL  
What man?

ROSE  
The one who visited grandma.

Rachel stares at Rose in confusion.

RACHEL  
No one else has come to see  
grandma, baby.

ROSE  
But I-I saw him!

Just as Rachel tries to reach out to her, Rose runs out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rose peeks into every room down the hallway, determine to find the man. Every now and then we see in her periphery a movement, a shadow, only to find nothing there. When it leads her down to the end of the hallway, she only sees dust motes swirling in the air.

RACHEL (O.S.)  
Grandma's in the sky now, Rose.

We see Rose's face, defeated.

INT. ROSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rose lays awake in bed, her eyes are red, clutching the blue diamond quilt blanket. When she rolls onto her side, her mum is sitting on the edge of her bed.

She sits up, intending to move closer to her mum. But then Rose stops, noticing that there is a translucent-like quality to her mum's dark silhouette. The longer we see Rachel's face, her facial features are hard to make out, indistinct. DEATH wears her mum's shape.

ROSE  
(alarmed)  
You're not my mummy.

DEATH  
You can see me. Not many people can see me.

ROSE  
You!

Rose jumps off the bed and presses herself into the wall.

ROSE  
You took my grandma away!

DEATH  
It was her time, we all have our time. It's just a matter of-

ROSE  
No! You made her hurt and you hurt me. I hate you!

Rose falls to the floor and pulls her knees up to her chest and sobs. Death doesn't move, only waits.

As her sobbing lessens, Rose gazes back at Death.

ROSE  
Are you going to take me away?

DEATH  
Not tonight.

ROSE  
When.

DEATH

Not for a very long time, child.

ROSE

You're tricking me.

DEATH

Why would I trick you?

ROSE

Because you're bad.

DEATH

When it is your time child, I will  
guide you to the rest of your loved  
ones.

(reaches out hand)

I don't want to scare you. It's all  
to help you.

Rose stares at their outstretched hand for a moment.  
Considering.

ROSE

Why do you wear my mummy's face?

DEATH

She is a comfort to you.

Rose considers again, slowly getting up from the floor. With  
newfound understanding, she puts her hand in Death's. It's  
solid just like her mum's. She smiles, unafraid.