Into That Goodnight

By

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FADE IN

INT. ANNIE’S ROOM – MORNING

Sunshine peeks through the curtains of a brightly colored room and finds ANNIE (23), sleeping in bed.

From seemingly nowhere, EMMA (6), wide-awake and full of energy, jumps on the bed.

EMMA
Mommy. Wake up.

Annie opens her eyes and looks around, groggy.

EMMA
What were you dreaming about?

A smile leaks through Annie’s tired expression.

ANNIE
You.

She kisses and hugs her daughter, then sits up as Emma jumps down and runs out of the room.

Annie looks to her end table, where a hologram clock display reads: "7:28am". She bolts out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Annie rushes into the room. It’s sparse and decorated in an ultra-modern style, with little technological flourishes (like a paper-thin TV) scattered about.

ANNIE
Your bus is gonna be here any minute.

Emma passes her, carrying a finished bowl of cereal.

EMMA
It’s okay. I made breakfast.

ANNIE
That’s not okay at all. I should be making your breakfast.

EMMA
It’s okay. I know you been sleepy. I’m responsible.

Emma continues into the...
KITCHEN

...followed by Annie.

ANNIE
Speaking of responsible. There’s something we didn’t get to finish talking about last night. You remember what it was?

Emma shakes her head...

EMMA
Uh uh.

...then sets her bowl on the counter and tries to walk quickly out of the room.

Annie stops her.

ANNIE
Your teacher called and said you hit another girl at school, remember?

EMMA
She started it.

ANNIE
So you were defending yourself?

EMMA
(thinks about it)
Yeah.

Annie pulls out a very thin, smartphone-like device and holds it up.

ANNIE
Honey, I’m going to be able to see exactly what happened. You’ve got one chance to tell me the truth.

Emma looks at the device.

EMMA
She started it.

ANNIE
Alright.

Annie holds the device up to Emma’s left temple. The device glows, and so does a small SUBDERMAL IMPLANT underneath Emma’s skin.
The device BEEPS. The screen lights up... "Data transmitted"

The device BEEPS again and the screen reads: "BUS HERE: PRESENT or ABSENT?"

Annie taps "PRESENT". She and Emma move back into the...

**LIVING ROOM**

Annie grabs a bright pink backpack off the couch and puts it on her daughter, then grabs a small stuffed bunny and hands it to Emma.

**ANNIE**
You better be telling me the truth,
or Mister Wiggles is spending the weekend in the closet.

**EMMA**
Don’t take it out on him.

Annie walks Emma to the front door, opens it, and stoops down to hug her daughter.

**ANNIE**
Be good. I love you.

**EMMA**
Love you too.

Emma trots out and Annie closes the door behind her. She turns away then stops, like she’s having second thoughts.

Annie tries to open the door again, but it won’t budge. She looks at the knob, perplexed, then notices...

...a SCAR on the palm of her left hand. She blinks and the scar is gone.

Dizziness overcomes her and she leans against the wall to keep stable.

**ANNIE**
Hestia, call Doctor Duncan.

The TV in the living room comes on and an ANIMATED FIGURE appears on it. Annie walks toward it.

**ANIMATED FIGURE**
Hello, Annie. Doctor Duncan is busy with a patient. I’m his digital representor. How may I assist you?
ANNIE
The sleeping pills Henry gave me work too well. I’m oversleeping and I still feel tired all day.

The Animated Figure freezes in place for one creepy second while it processes.

ANIMATED FIGURE
Please indicate all side effects that you have experienced that may be due to your medication. Grogginess, dizziness, depression, headaches, hallucinations, memory loss, rashes, internal bleeding-

ANNIE
Just grogginess, thank you.

The Figure processes.

ANIMATED FIGURE
I can authorize you to cut your pill in half and will recommend a smaller dose for your next prescription. Would you still like Dr. Duncan to call you when he becomes available?

ANNIE
Yes.

ANIMATED FIGURE
Thank you, and have a healthy day.

The TV turns off and Annie sits on the couch. She reaches forward to the glass coffee table before her and grabs a SMALL METALLIC HEADBAND.

She puts the headband on so that its two ends meet the temples of her head.

She taps at her hand-held device.

ONSCREEN: "Transmitting memory data"

Annie closes her eyes. The tips of the headband glow. Two subdermal implants in Annie’s temple glow in response.

The SOUNDS of children playing fill the air...
EXT. PLAYGROUND – DAY

ALL FROM POV:

A little more than three feet above the ground, we move across a bustling schoolyard, approaching a LITTLE GIRL playing with some dolls.

Our hand holds Mr. Wiggles out before us...

    EMMA (OS)
    Can Mr. Wiggles play?

    LITTLE GIRL
    They don’t want to play with Mr. Wiggles.

    EMMA (OS)
    Please?

    LITTLE GIRL
    No.

    EMMA (OS)
    I asked nicely. You have to say, "yes" if I ask nicely.

    LITTLE GIRL
    No one wants to play with your stupid rabbit.

END POV

INT. LIVING ROOM – MORNING

On the couch, Annie flinches at the sound of a LOUD SMACK, followed by the Little Girl BAWLING.

Annie takes off the memory band and tosses it on the table.

    ANNIE
    God damn it.

She gets up and heads into the...

KITCHEN

She takes the cereal bowl, drops it into a cluttered sink, then goes to work washing dishes.

She uses her nails to get a particularly stubborn piece of crud off a steak knife when-

RING, RING!
She jolts, accidentally slashing open her left palm.

She looks at the cut, a sense of unease overcoming her when-

**INT. ANNIE’S ROOM – MORNING**

Sunshine peeks through the curtains of a brightly colored room and finds Annie sleeping. From seemingly nowhere, Emma jumps on the bed.

**EMMA**
Mommy. Wake up.

Annie opens her eyes, groggy.

**EMMA**
What were you dreaming about?

Annie looks around, then down at her palm. There isn’t a single mark or drop of blood on it.

**ANNIE**
You.

Emma jumps down and runs out of the room. Annie looks to her end table, where a hologram clock display reads: "7:28am". She bolts out of bed.

**INT. LIVING ROOM – MOMENTS LATER**

Annie rushes into the room.

**ANNIE**
Your bus is gonna be here any minute.

Emma passes her carrying a finished bowl of cereal.

**EMMA**
It’s okay. I made breakfast.

Annie looks disturbed, confused.

**ANNIE**
I should be making your breakfast.

**EMMA**
It’s okay. I know you been sleepy. I’m responsible.

Emma continues into the kitchen. Annie lingers, trying to figure things out when-
ANNIE II (OS)
Speaking of responsible. There’s something we didn’t get to finish talking about last night. You remember what it was?

Annie goes into the...

KITCHEN

...and is horrified to see ANNIE II, another version of herself, speaking with her daughter.

EMMA
Uh uh.

ANNIE II
Your teacher called and said you hit another girl at school, remember?

EMMA
She started it.

ANNIE
(panicked)
Emma, get away from her. Come here right now.

But Emma ignores her, and the scene continues unabated. Annie II pulls out the thin device.

ANNIE II
Honey, I’m going to be able to see exactly what happened. You’ve got one chance to tell me the truth.

EMMA
She started it.

ANNIE II
Alright.

Annie II holds the device up to Emma’s left temple.

Annie lunges for her doppelganger, but an invisible force prevents them from touching.

ANNIE
Get away from my daughter!

No one hears her or reacts in the slightest. They move past her, back into the living room.
Annie leans on the counter, trying to collect herself.

    ANNIE
    I must still be sleeping.

She closes her eyes and pinches herself hard.

    ANNIE
    Wake up.

She opens her eyes. Nothing’s changed.

From the other room comes the sound of the DOOR OPENING.

**LIVING ROOM**

Annie rushes back just in time to see Emma walk out the front door and Annie II close the door behind her.

Annie runs to it and tugs at the knob... it won’t budge.

Annie II walks toward the TV.

    ANNIE II
    Hestia, call Doctor Duncan.

Annie continues to tug and pound at the door as the Animated Figure appears on the TV and converses with her twin.

    ANNIE
    EMMA!

She goes to a window and tries to open it... no luck.

    ANIMATED FIGURE
    Please indicate all side effects that you have experienced that may be due to your medication.
    Grogginess, dizziness, depression, headaches, hallucinations...

Annie freezes and turns to the TV.

    ANNIE II
    Just grogginess, thank you.

    ANNIE
    And hallucinations.

She drops to the ground and takes a few deep breaths, trying to calm herself.
ANNIE
Alright, don’t move. This isn’t real. You could be anywhere doing anything. Where are you? Come on. Remember where you are. Remember...

She looks up and sees Annie II sit on the couch and put the memory band on.

ANNIE
...where you are.

Annie reaches up, grasps the air around her head...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...and pulls the memory band off. She looks around.

She’s on the couch. The living room surrounding her is dark, drab and messy with beer cans and takeout bags. No one’s cleaned in weeks, maybe months.

She takes everything in, disoriented. Looks at her hand where there’s a long, healed scar... then something clicks.

ANNIE
EMMA!

She bolts out of the room. The sound of DOORS OPENING and CLOSING is heard.

ANNIE (OS)
EMMA! Emma, come out now.

Annie rushes back into the living room.

ANNIE
Emma, seriously. Mommy’s not playing...

She sees Emma’s bright pink backpack sitting next to the couch and picks it up.

The side with the straps has a DARK RED stain on it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Annie’s cleaning the steak knife when-

RING, RING!

She jolts, accidentally slashing open her left palm.

ANNIE
Fuck. Hestia, answer the call.

She wraps her hand in a dish towel.

FEMALE VOICE (VO)
Hello, Ms Harris.

ANNIE
Is this Doctor Duncan’s office?

FEMALE VOICE (VO)
No, this is the principle of Andrew’s Elementary. Miss Harris you need to listen closely.

The seriousness and barely restrained panic in the voice’s tone is unmistakable.

FEMALE VOICE (VO)
You need to go to Saint John’s Medical Center right away. Emma is on her way there now.

ANNIE
What do you mean? What happened?

FEMALE VOICE (VO)
(cracks with distress)
There was an accident. She dropped her stuffed animal under the bus and, I guess the sensors didn’t pick her up...

The voice fades off as Annie freezes in shock.

END FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Memories flooding back, Annie collapses next to the couch hugging the blood stained backpack to her chest. She lets out a deep tortured sob.

On the coffee table, she notices Mr. Wiggles. She picks him up, revealing a prescription pill bottle hidden behind him.
She gazes through tears at the bottle, considering.

She grabs it, pops a random amount of pills in her hand and downs them with a swig from a nearby beer can.

Annie picks up the memory band and puts it on. The band’s tips GLOW, as do her subdermal implants.

She lays her head back, closes her eyes and clutches the stuffed rabbit closer.

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Sunshine peeks through the curtains of a brightly colored room and finds ANNIE sleeping.

From seemingly nowhere, EMMA, wide-awake and full of energy, jumps on the bed.

EMMA
Mommy. Wake up.

Annie opens her eyes and looks up to see her daughter’s adoring face.

EMMA
What were you dreaming about?

Annie smiles and pulls Emma into a tight hug.

ANNIE
You.

FADE OUT