

**MY FIRST DAY**

written by

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**EXT. DEPT. OF LIFE & DEATH - MORNING**

A massive, gleaming skyscraper extending into the city skyline. EMPLOYEES hustle up the steps and hurry inside.

A sign affixed to the building reads: *DEPARTMENT OF LIFE & DEATH.*

**INT. DEPT. OF LIFE & DEATH - INTERN PIT - MORNING**

A congested area of messy cubicles. Over-worked, underpaid INTERNS slave away under their enormous workload.

**INT. DEPT. OF LIFE & DEATH - RONNIE'S OFFICE - MORNING**

The walls are covered in framed photos from a long-spanning career.

RONNIE, 60s, grey hair, exhausted, sits at his desk. Plowing through some paperwork.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

RONNIE

Come in.

The door opens and in walks CALEB, late-20s, eager to please and dressed well in a button-down and khakis. A folder under his right arm.

Caleb closes the door behind him and approaches Ronnie's desk, extending his hand.

CALEB

Nice to meet you, I'm Caleb.  
You're Ronnie, right?

Ronnie shakes Caleb's hand.

RONNIE

I am.

CALEB

Awesome.

Caleb hands over his folder. Ronnie takes it, looks it over.

RONNIE

Not bad, not bad. Good  
credentials.

CALEB

Thanks. My mom says it's important to put your best foot forward and make a good first impression. It's a creed I've lived by my entire life and it's always lead me to--

Ronnie raises an eyebrow.

RONNIE

Calm down, kid. Breath. You need a paper bag or something?

CALEB

Sorry. I'm a little nervous.

RONNIE

Couldn't tell.

Ronnie tosses the folder onto his desk.

RONNIE

Well, they hired you, so must've done something right. I won't sugarcoat it for you, kid, I'm retiring in a month. I need a replacement and I've gone through five potentials. I'd love it if this could work out, but I won't be terribly surprised if it doesn't.

Caleb deflates a bit. This probably isn't how he pictured this going.

CALEB

Really? Five?

RONNIE

Harbinger of Death isn't an easy job. Not everyone's cut out for it.

CALEB

I'm ready. I can do it. I went to college.

RONNIE

How nice.

Ronnie gets up slowly from his desk, moaning a symphony of dad noises.

RONNIE  
Let's get going. No time to waste.  
Here...

Ronnie fishes in his pocket. Pulls out a SMALL BLACK REMOTE WITH A SINGLE RED BUTTON IN THE CENTER.

Caleb stares at the remote, almost intimidated by it.

CALEB  
Wow... that's it, huh?

RONNIE  
That's it. When they're ready to go, just press the button, then we move on to the next one. You'll do that every day for forty years, then you retire.

Ronnie takes a step closer to Caleb, pulling back his sleeve to reveal an APPLE WATCH-STYLE WRISTBAND WITH AN OLED SCREEN.

RONNIE  
You ready?

Caleb nods. Takes a step toward Ronnie.

Ronnie presses a button on his watch, immediately teleporting them to--

**INT. RETIREMENT HOME - REBECCA'S ROOM - DAY**

--the room of resident REBECCA, 70s.

She lies in bed, hooked to an oxygen tank, barely conscious.

Caleb shakes his head quickly, wiggling his arms and legs. He leans over, putting his hands on his knees. Looks like he could throw up.

CALEB  
Jesus... Does it always feel like that?

RONNIE  
You get used to it.

Ronnie grabs a chair from the corner and pulls it to Rebecca's bedside. Takes a seat.

Caleb looks around, expecting to see family, visitors, anyone.

CALEB  
Where's her family?

RONNIE  
Not here.

CALEB  
Do they know?

RONNIE  
They know. Guess they got better things to do.

Caleb looks from the remote in his hand to Rebecca.

CALEB  
This is messed up.

RONNIE  
If you wanna keep your job, you're gonna have to get used to this.  
(beat)  
Or we can leave and you can resign. Your call.

CALEB  
Is anyone gonna miss her?

RONNIE  
Honestly?

Caleb nods.

RONNIE  
I don't know. I like to think someone will, but it is what it is.

Ronnie stands. Holds out his hand for the remote.

RONNIE  
You gonna hit the button or not?  
(re: Caleb's reluctance)  
She's in pain. Has been for a while.

Caleb looks at the remote in his hand, thumb hovering over the button. Finally, he presses it.

Instantly, Rebecca's head sinks deeper into the pillow. Her chest relinquishes one final breath of life--

--then she's gone.

No dramatic lights, no epic music. There one moment, gone the next.

Ronnie pats Caleb on the back.

RONNIE  
You did good, kid. We need to get going, we've got other places to visit. Best not to linger.

Ronnie presses the button on his watch--

**INT. CAR - DAY**

--and they're suddenly sitting in the backseat of a sedan.

DANTE, 30s, drives, listening to music. He thumbs his fingers on the steering wheel to the beat.

Caleb looks around, confused. He leans forward, taking in Dante's youthful appearance.

CALEB  
Seriously?

RONNIE  
What? You think only old people die?

Caleb sighs. Reaches for the remote's button--

Ronnie raises a hand to stop him.

RONNIE  
Hang on.

CALEB  
For what?

**EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY**

Dante's car drives along with the traffic.

A TRUCK barrels through a red light, SIDE-SWIPING DANTE'S CAR, SENDING IT HEAD-FIRST INTO THE GUARD RAILING.

The car's front end CRUMPLES on impact. Bending and warping like a tin can.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Dante lays forward over the steering wheel, resting on the air bag. Motionless. BLOOD trickles down from his forehead.

In the backseat, Caleb and Ronnie sit upright, unharmed. Ronnie looks unperturbed, Caleb is freaking out.

RONNIE

Okay, now you can push the button.

CALEB

You're kidding? The crash wasn't that bad. And the airbag--

RONNIE

I don't make the rules, kid. I'm just doing my job.

Caleb looks out the window at the SMALL CROWD gathering around the crash.

Caleb presses the button.

Ronnie touches his watch.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

MARK, 40s, emaciated, lies on the dirty floor. Face-up. Arms and legs sprawled out like a starfish. Eyes glazed over, small traces of foam dripping from his mouth.

Caleb and Ronnie stand over Mark, looking down at him. Their faces a mix of pity and disgust.

CALEB

How long's it gonna be before someone finds him?

RONNIE

Hard to say. He doesn't really have any friends-- I'm sure the landlord will find him when the rent's due.

CALEB

And there's nothing we can do?

RONNIE

I told you, kid, we just do our jobs. Besides, this guy had it coming. He chose this, no one forced him. You make bad choices, you pay the consequences.

Ronnie crosses his arms. Regarding Caleb like an overbearing parent.

RONNIE  
What's it gonna be?

Caleb-- dejected-- remorseful-- presses the button.

**EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON**

Ronnie and Caleb sit at a picnic table, eating their lunch. Ronnie has almost finished his, Caleb's remains mostly untouched.

Caleb stares blankly down at the table.

RONNIE  
Ready to quit yet? You've done  
better than most people do. That's  
something to be proud of.

Caleb glances sideways at Ronnie, plastered a look of faux-confidence on his face.

CALEB  
I can do this.

Ronnie raises and eyebrow. He isn't so sure.

RONNIE  
All right...

**BEGIN MONTAGE - RONNIE AND CALEB AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

--Ronnie and Caleb visiting an ELDERLY MAN in his LIVING ROOM. He sits in his chair. Caleb presses the button.

--Ronnie and Caleb at ANOTHER CAR ACCIDENT. Caleb presses the button.

--Ronnie and Caleb in a WOMAN'S KITCHEN. She's preparing dinner. A listless Caleb presses the button-- she clutches her chest, then FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

--Ronnie and Caleb in another BATHROOM. A MAN is submerged in the tub, RAZOR BLADE TO HIS WRIST. A heart-broken Caleb presses the button.



**END MONTAGE - RONNIE AND CALEB AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS****INT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - SARAH'S ROOM - EVENING**

SARAH, 7, lies in bed. Bald, losing her battle with cancer. Her MOTHER and FATHER sit on either side of her, holding her for dear life. Tears pouring down their faces. Not ready to let go.

Ronnie and Caleb stand in the corner, watching the scene before them.

Caleb stares at Sarah. The stress of the day showing on his face.

CALEB

No... please...

For the first time all day, Ronnie looks saddened himself. A small chip in his stone exterior. Maybe there's a human being in there after all.

RONNIE

I wish we didn't have to but--

CALEB

You know what? Fuck you and fuck this job! What kind of bullshit is this?

Ronnie grabs Caleb by the shoulders, pulls him closer so they are eye-to-eye.

In a slightly shaky voice--

RONNIE

It's our job. It's what we do. I told you this wouldn't be easy.

(beat)

At least she's lucky enough to have a family with her, letting her know she's loved. That she's not alone.

(beat)

They did everything they could. Sometimes... that doesn't matter. When it's your time, it's your time.

Caleb-- tears forming in his eyes-- looks down at the remote.

CALEB

What happens to them? Where do they go?

RONNIE

I don't know. I like to hope they go somewhere they're not in pain anymore. Somewhere peaceful. It's gotta be better than this.

Ronnie looks down, unable to look Caleb in the eye any longer.

RONNIE

But I'm not sure. Maybe it's just blackness. But at least they're not suffering anymore.

Caleb starts to press the button--

--but Ronnie snatches the remote from Caleb's hand.

CALEB

What are you doing?

RONNIE

You don't have to do it all on your first day.

CALEB

Thanks.

RONNIE

Pretty soon you'll be doing this by yourself. I won't be there to do it for you.

Caleb looks over at Sarah. Nods.

Ronnie PRESSES THE BUTTON.

**EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING**

Ronnie and Caleb walk down the sidewalk. Completely ignored by the people around them.

They walk for a moment in silence. Caleb looks like a beaten dog.

RONNIE

You did good today, kid. Better than most. Hell, you did better than I did on my first day.

Caleb manages the smallest of smiles. He needed to hear that.

RONNIE

I promise it gets easier.  
(MORE)

RONNIE (CONT'D)  
Little by little. You're gonna be  
okay.

CALEB  
(low)  
You really think so?

RONNIE  
Yeah, I do.  
(trying to make light)  
I mean, not as good as me-- don't  
get ahead of yourself. But, yeah,  
I think you'll do okay.

Ronnie checks the time on his watch.

RONNIE  
Almost quitting time.

Ronnie takes off his watch. Hands it to Caleb.

RONNIE  
Wanna send us back? Just tap the  
little triangular icon.

Caleb presses the icon on the watch. The pair IMMEDIATELY  
DISAPPEAR FROM SIGHT.

The PEDESTRIANS on the sidewalk continue along on their  
commute. Unaware.

FADE TO BLACK.