

THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

On a suburban street, the driveway of the Funeral Home and the adjacent street parking fill with an assortment of middle-class cars. A Mercedes glides into an adjacent parking lot, surrounded by a sea of working-class vehicles, as it searches for an available space.

PHONE RINGS

Among the parked cars, a lifted truck audaciously occupies two spots, its bumper sticker proudly proclaiming, "Don't tread on me." The Mercedes pulls up behind it.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

MAJOR DODGE (30s), a rugged and weathered man, showcases the hardships he has endured. Yet, his eyes exude a spark of optimism, even in the face of adversity. There's a certain rugged charm about him, and his indomitable spirit shines through his persona. Major casts an unfavorable glance at the truck and shakes his head in disappointment.

PHONE RINGS

A satisfying CLICK resonates.

JR (8), a slender figure with a radiant smile and wide-eyed wonder, exudes an innocent aura. His unique charm, a combination of extroversion and introversion, is reflected in his gaze. He sits in the passenger seat, his hand gently rests on the seatbelts release.

The seatbelt retracts as the PHONE RINGS.

Major is frustrated as he swiftly retrieves the retracted seatbelt while simultaneously tapping 'ACCEPT CALL' on the in-dash command center.

MAJOR

Really? Rapid fire calling me? Stop behaving like a brat.

JESS (V.O.)

Don't call me a brat, asshole.

MAJOR

Whoa! Watch your language.

JESS (V.O.)

Did I hurt your delicate ears?

Major looks at JR and shakes his head.

JESS (V.O.)  
Where are you?

MAJOR  
I took a wrong turn.

JESS (V.O.)  
(sarcastic)  
I'll never forget these streets.

MAJOR  
And I cherish every moment it took  
to forget them.

Major parks the car and gazes at JR.

JESS (V.O.)  
Hilarious. So, are you close?

MAJOR  
Just parked. We'll be inside soon.

JESS (V.O.)  
We?

MAJOR  
Let's not do this now.

JESS (V.O.)  
Do what?

MAJOR  
Okay, I'm hanging up. See you soon.

JESS (V.O.)  
Okay? Okay big man. Look out, the  
big man's back in --

Major presses the 'DISCONNECT' button and glances at JR.

JR presses the doll's stomach, but nothing happens.

MAJOR  
Damn. Forgot to get batteries.  
I've been so absent-minded with --

Major glances over his shoulder at the funeral home.

MAJOR (CONT'D)  
Do you want to leave it in the car?

JR shakes the clown's head "no."

MAJOR (CONT'D)  
Alright. Ready for this, bud?

JR's eyes speak volumes before he conveys a resolute "no."

Major suppresses his emotions, forges ahead, and scans for a vacant parking spot.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Major gazes at his own reflection in a car window, as he meticulously adjusts his tie and smooths down his hair. He then delicately pulls back his cuffs, which reveals an exquisite bracelet and an opulent watch that both glimmer in the sunlight.

JR clutches the clown doll tightly and finds solace in its presence, while Major firmly grips his other hand and leads him towards the solemn entrance of the funeral home.

MAJOR  
We won't stay for long.

JR  
You always say that.

JR struggles to resist, but Major pulls him forward.

MAJOR  
We need to pay our respects to  
Grandma, and then we'll --

Major kneels beside JR, who remains fixated on his doll.

MAJOR (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry you never had the chance  
to... well, you have me, so you  
have family, just... You were too  
young to remember, but when Mommy  
passed, I couldn't look. It's been  
hard on me every day since, and I  
don't want the same for you.

JR's eyes remain glued on his doll.

MAJOR (CONT'D)  
Come on, kiddo. Remember what we  
learned about band-aids?

JR  
They stick to hair and hurt when  
you take them off.

MAJOR

Don't make this more difficult than  
it needs to be.

JR

I don't wanna to go inside.

MAJOR

I'm the father, and you're the  
child. You'll do as you're told.

His gaze fixed on the doll, JR shakes his head. Major walks away as JR stares at his doll until he looks up to see Major has continued on. JR quickly catches up and reaches for Major's hand as they proceed towards the funeral home.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

At the back of the room, an open casket remains veiled, as it conceals the identity of the person inside. INDISTINCT CHATTER emanates from a group of somberly dressed GUESTS positioned to the side.

Major gazes intently at the casket, lost in thought as JR clings tightly to the clown doll.

JR looks up at Major. He then turns his eyes towards the casket but quickly averts his gaze.

Major takes JR's hand and begins to walk towards the casket, but JR resists. Major looks down at JR, who shakes his head.

MAJOR

If you don't do it, you'll regret  
it. Trust me, bud, you -- .

JESS (O.C.)

Major!

Major glances over his shoulder to where JESS, an authoritative and powerful woman, points firmly to her side, her eyes convey repercussion if he does not comply.

MAJOR

Speaking of... Okay, time to  
practice what I preach.

Major heads towards Jess, but JR, fixated on the casket, remains rooted in place.

MAJOR (CONT'D)

Let's go. Now.

JR, still locked on the casket, hesitates before he reluctantly steps back. Major looks down at him.

JESS (O.C.)

Major!

Major's gaze shifts over his shoulder, compelled to address Jess's insistent call communicated through her angry eyes.

JR's attention shifts to the casket, fear fills his eyes as he flinches at Major's tap on his shoulder.

MAJOR

You can stay here, but eventually, you will approach that casket and pay your respects.

JESS (LOUD HISS)

Major!

Major firmly grasps JR's shoulder and locks eyes with him.

JR watches as Major walks away, then quickly glances back at the casket. He unconsciously takes a step backward.

Major approaches Jess.

JESS (CONT'D)

Took you long enough. God, is that JR? Bring him over here.

MAJOR

I can't believe you dressed her like that. It's so disrespectful. You need to do something about it.

JESS

No. This is what she wanted. You can't control everything.

JR accidentally backs into some ridiculously baggy, bright orange pants. He spins around to face the WOMAN, adorned in a distinct clown costume covered in a kaleidoscope of neon colored polka dots, and a whimsical assortment of ruffles and bows, as she gazes down at him.

JR's eyes briefly dart towards the casket, then back up at the Woman.

WOMAN

Friend of yours?

JR is perplexed, unsure how to respond to the joke.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Never mind. It was a bad joke. I'm not the funniest clown.

In the background, Major can be seen at the casket, as he rips a large, silver-haired wig from inside it. Jess rushes towards him, and they struggle over the wig.

JR

It's okay to tell jokes?

WOMAN

We all cope with death differently. But death itself is nothing to fear. Everything eventually comes to an end.

In the background, Major rushes to the end of the casket and grabs a pair of glossy, vibrant red oblong forms that are approximately one foot in length, then uses them to fend off Jess as she approaches him.

JR

I, I'm scared. I want to say goodbye, but... why do people die?

WOMAN

Death reminds us to cherish each moment and fill our lives with love and compassion. It gives us purpose and serves as a reminder to create a life of kindness that endures long after we're gone.

The Woman looks down at JR's doll.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

May I see that?

JR looks down at his doll, hesitates for a moment, then hands it over to the Woman. The Woman examines the doll, then squeezes its belly.

JR

Dad was supposed to get BoBo new batteries. He forgot because he rushed to get here.

In the background, Jess chases Major around until she wrestles him to the ground, where he taps out before they sit and catch their breath.

WOMAN

What does BoBo usually do?

JR

Bobo talks. His mouth and eyes  
move. All kinds of stuff.

Woman stick BoBo into JR's face.

WOMAN

Are you scared of BoBo?

JR smirks and takes BoBo from her.

JR

That's just what makes Bobo talk  
and move on his own. Even without  
batteries, he's still a clown. I  
know how he is. We still do all  
kinds of fun things.

WOMAN

Well, just like Bobo, Grandma's  
batteries ran out. There's nothing  
to be scared of. Even though Bobo  
is out of batteries, he still holds  
a special place in your heart, just  
like your grandma always will. All  
the fun things you did with her,  
you still have the memories. And  
through those memories, you can  
always play with her.

JR hesitates, then slowly turns his attention to the casket.

Major clenches the wig, locked in a stare-down with Jess as  
they catch their breath. He throws the wig to the ground.

MAJOR

This is all just a joke to you?

JESS

You're the only joke... and no  
one's laughing.

MAJOR

You're just jealous.

JESS

Bullshit.

MAJOR

I got out and made something of  
myself, and you... you're...

JESS

Happy?



MAJOR

You're stuck here.

JESS

Not everyone wants opulence and financial success. Open your eyes, there's more to life. Some people find joy in the simple things, a simpler life.

MAJOR

That's bullshit. Everyone wishes they had it, but only a few can achieve it.

**JESS**

You've got it so wrong. It's not your fancy car, your big job, this expensive suit, or even that ridiculous bracelet, that define real happiness.

MAJOR

I'm happy.

JESS

Your son doesn't seem to be.

MAJOR

He's just upset that I can't spend more time with him.

JESS

And that makes you happy?

MAJOR

You're the coldest, meanest, straight up angriest person I know. What do you know about happiness?

Jess looks at the casket.

JESS

When you left, it broke her heart. While you were away taking care of yourself, I took care of Mom. She grew older, but she also grew wiser. Instead of being depressed that you left, she chose to bring joy to others. So, yeah, that's why she's dressed like that... You better learn to appreciate it, before it's too late.

Major looks over at JR, who stands his ground as he stares at the casket.

JESS (CONT'D)

He's a smart kid, like you were.

MAJOR

Are.

JESS

She was just as stubborn as you.  
You had to be patient. She needed  
time to figure things out on her  
own and make the change.

Major and Jess watch JR slowly advance towards the casket.

JR nods his head as he tightens his grip on his doll and walks towards the casket. He freezes, then looks back and seeks reassurance from the Woman.

The Woman nods at him as she waves him on.

As JR turns toward the casket, all the lights dim. A spotlight beams down on him as he pushes himself to walk down the center aisle towards the casket.

Major and Jess watch anxiously as JR slowly continues towards the casket.

With every step, JR's determination grows stronger. He steals a glance back for reassurance from the Woman.

The Woman's smile and warm eyes provide him with the strength to continue.

JR stops a few steps from being able to peer inside the casket. Shaken and filled with trepidation, his gaze fixates on the last steps that lie before him. He turns around, seeking reassurance from the Woman.

The Woman's warm gaze beams back at him.

As Major steps towards JR, ready to offer his support, Jess intervenes. They exchange a silent understanding, their eyes locked on each other and then on JR.

The Woman stands behind JR. He steps away from her, and slowly approaches the casket. His eyes fill with a mixture of curiosity and apprehension as he peers inside.

Within the confines of the coffin rests the lifeless Woman, motionless, her eyes closed as she lies peacefully deceased in her distinct clown costume, covered in a kaleidoscope of neon colored polka dots, and a whimsical assortment of ruffles and bows.

JR looks back, but the Woman is gone. He spins around and looks back to the casket where the Woman lies dead.

Major watches JR stare into the casket, as the Woman steps up next to him. Major looks over and takes in her clown costume.

MAJOR

Not you, too.

Major turns his focus to JR, who still stands at the casket.

WOMAN

We've always dressed the same since birth. Growing up, kids always made fun of us for doing it, but she loved it. Nothing like growing up with a crazy sister. So I... I thought it would be nice to do it, one last time.

Major comforts the Woman.

SUPER: THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE

CREDITS ROLL

While Major stands with the Woman, her eyes suddenly widen in absolute terror, and she tightly grasps his shirt. His eyes also widen as he realizes what she sees.

JR is perched on top of the casket, positioned behind the propped up, lifeless Woman. His doll is in her lap, as he skillfully manipulates the Woman's arms like a puppet.

MAJOR (O.C.)

JR! Stop!

JR

She's just out of batteries.

**THE END**