

Piecemeal

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White static on a black void. Non-existence, encroaching slowly. Consciousness clings to a last moment of life -

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

DERRICK'S POV

Intake of breath. Panicked eyes shoot open, look around. At first, vision's blurred. But eventually, shapes form...

Revealing a white hospital room. A MONITOR BEEPS nearby. Tangles of TUBES snake inwards towards:

DERRICK HARRIS (30s). Handsome enough to hint at a lifetime of pampering. But his gown is rumpled. Skin gray.

Spotting someone across the room, he raises an IV punctured, bruised - though muscled - arm.

DERRICK

Hey. Wait. What's going on?!?

The figure - a NURSE - spins around. Racing to the wall, she tabs an intercom.

NURSE

Mr. Harris is out of his coma!

DERRICK

A coma?!?

NURSE

(into the intercom)

No, I'm *not* kidding. Come look!

Though weak, Derrick waves towards the nurse.

DERRICK

Wanna answer my question? What is this, some sorta joke?

He gulps, starts to choke. A team of DOCTORS swarm in, just as... Derrick's consciousness slips away, once more.

LATER - AFTERNOON

More beeping. Derrick blinks.

The nurse from before, now his only companion. She bends over him, inserts a fresh IV into his arm. Derrick flinches.

DERRICK

No!

The nurse smiles, a gentle rebuke.

NURSE

It wouldn't hurt that much if you stay still.

DERRICK

I'm not a fan of pain. Or taking orders.

Still, he lets his arm drop. The nurse positions the needle again. Derrick eyes the cluster of bruises on his skin.

DERRICK

What's this from - practice?

The nurse tapes the IV down.

NURSE

No "practice" needed here. All of the staff in this ward are quite proficient with IVs. But you've been here quite some time, Mr. Harris. After enough "abuse", even the most gently cared for veins.. rebel.

DERRICK

"Quite some time"? How long have I been here?

NURSE

Since the assault. Three months.

DERRICK

Three months? You're shitting me!

The nurse's serenity falters; peeved at his choice of words.

NURSE

Mr. Harris, this isn't a "joke", as you asked before. To be honest, you've been quite the miracle patient. Given your injury, most of the staff didn't expect you to wake up at all. It's a good thing your family's well off. Most comatose patients don't get half this much pampering. That key factor bought you time to come around.

DERRICK

(scoffs)

My family? I did it on my own.

Derrick attempts to swing a leg out of the bed. Winces.

DERRICK

Ow!

A monitor shrieks. The nurse turns it off, pats his arm.

NURSE

Now now, Mr. Harris. You're not even
remotely out of the woods. Rest.
Until a suitable donor comes around.

Rising, she heads for the exit.

DERRICK

A suitable donor? Huh?

The nurse smiles, doesn't answer. Closes the door. CLICK.

LATER - NIGHT

More beeping. By now, a familiar "tune."

Derrick wakes up, squints towards a dark figure in the room.

Back to the bed, they clear off a food tray. Arranging a
STACK OF PAPERS and CLIPBOARD in its place.

DERRICK

Listen, Ms. Isn't a Doctor But Thinks
She Knows It All: you left while I
was asking a question. So here's two
more: Who's your supervisor? And I
need a donor - for what?

The figure swings around. NOT the nurse. Rather: a thin male
dressed in scrubs. Derrick squints at the man's name tag,
which reads: MURPHY.

DERRICK

Murphy? Oops. Mistook you for someone
else.

Gathering the papers, Murphy walks over.

DERRICK

So, you're the new guy?

Murphy gives Derrick a silent once-over. Checks his vitals.
Pupils. Derrick squirms, not comfortable with being touched.

DERRICK

Good. I hope they fired her. That
disrespect for patients -

MURPHY

Fired?

(chuckles)

No, I work most in a different department. And night shift only. You'll see your regular nurse in the morning.

DERRICK

Huh.

Derrick shoots Murphy a "don't give me bullshit" look.

DERRICK

I still have two questions. Though, different ones for you.

Murphy continues checking Derrick's vitals. Looks concerned.

MURPHY

I keep no secrets. Shoot.

DERRICK

Can you get me a pen and paper? If I write it up, can you pass a complaint to management about that nurse?

Murphy fishes a blank page from his stack of papers. Hands it to Derrick, with a pen.

MURPHY

Today's your lucky day.

DERRICK

(grumbles)

So I'm often told.

MURPHY

This last page was boilerplate. Repurpose it to your heart's content.

DERRICK

I need to lean on something. Can I have that clipboard, too?

Shrugging, Murphy passes that over. Derrick instantly sets to work, scribbling out his complaint.

DERRICK

What's the nurse's name?

MURPHY

Sarah May. She's assigned to you.

DERRICK
(reading as he writes)
To Whom it May Concern: Yesterday...
(to Murphy)
What's the date?

MURPHY
The twelfth.
(beat)
Of June.

DERRICK
(reading/writing)
On the twelfth of JUNE, Nurse Sarah
MAY acted unprofessionally at your
institution. Given she's in your
employ, I wish to notify you of her
negligent attitude...

Derrick vents, scribbles more. Finishing with a flourish, he hands the complaint to Murphy.

DERRICK
There. Now for my other question.

Murphy stifles a snort.

DERRICK
What's so amusing? Do all the staff
of this hospital have a twisted sense
of humor?

MURPHY
I'm sorry. It's just that was FOUR
questions. No. Wait...
(counts on fingers)
Seven, if you count those last two.

Derrick glares. Murphy struggles to regain composure.

MURPHY
What's your eighth question? I'm
listening, glad to answer. No joke.

DERRICK
Nurse May said I "needed a donor". A
donor for what?

Murphy blinks - somewhat shocked.

MURPHY
They didn't tell you? After the
attack, our doctors fixed you up as
best they could.
(MORE)

MURPHY (cont'd)

But your heart was irreparably damaged. It's good enough while you're bed ridden. For a few more months. But it most positively must be replaced.

DERRICK

My... heart?!?

Murphy extends the papers to Derrick, drops them in his lap.

MURPHY

That's the reason I stopped by. You need to fill these out to officially get on the wait list. And - to give the hospital permission to make YOU a donor, too.

DERRICK

Wait, excuse me? For what?

MURPHY

You know. To help others. In case - well, if the heart transplant doesn't work out as we hope.

NEXT MORNING

Derrick sits upright in bed - looks peeved. Ready to pounce.

Nurse Sarah eases in. Shoots a look at Derrick, annoyed. She sets about checking monitors, doesn't say a word.

DERRICK

You heard about the complaint. Didn't you?

NURSE

Around here, things can get... emotional. While I may disagree -

She moves to his IV, checks it's inserted properly. Derrick flinches at the needle.

DERRICK

Ow!

NURSE

But you have every right to your opinion, Mr. Harris. Despite what you asserted, I care quite deeply for my profession's standards. So I will care for you as best I can. Whether you appreciate it, or not.

She turns to leave. Derrick barks after her.

DERRICK
Don't go yet!

The nurse whirls around. Pissed off.

NURSE
What?

Derrick holds out completed paperwork.

DERRICK
I got word the pencil pushers in your
back office need this to get me
that - uh - replacement part?

NURSE
Yes, of course.

The nurse takes his offering, flips through.

NURSE
Well done. Signed and dated. Good.

DERRICK
When I do things, I'm a stickler.

The nurse stops, confused.

NURSE
The organ donation waiver's not here.

Derrick points towards a TRASH CAN besides his bed.

DERRICK
That page? When I sign things, I read
'em, too. The fine print says that's
optional. I may not be a Jehovah's
Witness...

The nurse grins, nods towards Derrick's muscled arm.

NURSE
I didn't think you were.

DERRICK
But I'd rather keep my organs where
they are. Thank you so very much.

A wry expression on Nurse Sarah's face.

NURSE

Yet, you're happy to receive from
another donor.

DERRICK

(shrugs)

To each their own. Right?

NIGHT

Derrick surfs on his PHONE. He's feeling good enough to do that, at least.

Murphy knocks, enters. Pulling up a chair next to Derrick's bed, he sits down.

MURPHY

In the mood for Angry Birds?

DERRICK

Angry Birds? That hasn't been a thing
for almost ten years!

MURPHY

Sue me. I don't get out much. I'm no
socialite. I'd rather stay home.
Or... work.

Derrick's eyes stay glued to his screen.

DERRICK

A strong work ethic. That's my guy!
Nurse Sarah may not like it. But I
do.

Murphy watches Derrick fiddle with the cell. Eventually,
clears his throat.

MURPHY

I hear you... rejected the organ
waiver.

DERRICK

Yupppp. Rejected the paperwork. Not
the organ.

MURPHY

I've brought you another one.

DERRICK

A new heart? That's... nice of you.

MURPHY

No, the waiver.

Murphy pulls out PAPER, sets it gently in Derrick's lap.

MURPHY

I hope you'll reconsider. And sign.

Derrick groans. Puts his phone down. Ignores a beep.

DERRICK

I already told your girl -

MURPHY

I don't have a "girl".

DERRICK

I told her no. Quite clearly. This is
borderline harassment.

MURPHY

All I'm doing is asking. Gentle
persuasion. No strong arm techniques
involved.

He eyes the muscles in Derrick's arm.

MURPHY

I wouldn't win that in a million
years.

The two share a laugh at the joke. Murphy pulls out a pen,
lays it on Derrick's bed.

MURPHY

No pressure. Just... think it over.

Getting up, Murphy heads for the exit. Turns last second.

MURPHY

A question.

DERRICK

(laughs)

Your turn. And... I'm counting. No
more than eight.

MURPHY

I've never seen you have visitors.

DERRICK

That's not a question.

MURPHY

It's implied.

DERRICK

I...I'm kinda a stickler with work,
too. Type-A personality. That pushes
the riff-raff away, ya know?

Sympathy in Murphy's eyes. He nods.

MURPHY

Mr. Harris -

DERRICK

Call me Derrick.

MURPHY

Derrick... popularity isn't a measure
of the value one brings to this
world. And - as individuals - we're
not just a jumble of organs,
assembled piecemeal. No, beyond a sum
of our parts, we all have SOULS.
Something MORE. Still, organ donation
is valuable. When - if - the worst
happens, you won't be around to care
where your body parts end up. But
that gift could save another's life.
You yourself know how needing such
things feels.

Derrick growls, scoops up his phone.

DERRICK

I still don't like the idea of giving
chop-docs permission to dice me up. I
worked hard to get my body in this
shape.

MURPHY

Just don't rip this one up. The
paper, I mean. Sleep on it. Please?

MORNING

Nurse Sarah walks in, avoids Derrick's gaze. Eventually,
Derrick interrupts her chores.

DERRICK

Listen, about the other day. I think
I was a LITTLE out of line.

NURSE

A "little"?

DERRICK

It's not totally my fault. I'm going through a lot.

NURSE

A little. And a lot. Both can coexist.

DERRICK

So profound. I'm impressed. Apology accepted... Nurse May? Or should I call you Sarah?

Despite herself, the nurse smiles.

NURSE

We'll pretend it never happened, get back to how things were before. Though with more talking, of course.

She checks Derrick's IV. A little more careful than before. Derrick eyes her work.

DERRICK

You've been watching over me since... well, the start?

NURSE

Since you came in? Yes.

DERRICK

Do you know if they caught the guy?

Nurse Sarah freezes.

NURSE

The man who -

DERRICK

Shot me. Yeah. Who else would I ask about?

NURSE

They don't generally inform us about such things. And all we're concerned with is fixing you up.

(beat)

And right now, helping you lean forward. I need to swap that pillow out.

DERRICK

No, I'm a "big boy".

NURSE

So I see.

DERRICK

I got this. Hold up.

Grunting, Derrick leans forward. Painful, but he succeeds. Nurse Sarah's face lights up.

NURSE

Wow, that's an achievement!

DERRICK

Baby steps. But when I want something... I don't stop!

Nurse Sarah removes the pillow. Hovers over Derrick, hesitation in her eye.

NURSE

Do you mind if I asked what happened?
With the... assault?

DERRICK

Mind? No. I mean, it was total bullshit. And not anything anyone would expect. Right outta the blue, a complete blindside -

EXT. NIGHTCLUB SIDEWALK - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Most of the memory's blurry. Like coming out of a coma... but the visceral moments, crystal clear.

Derrick stands in a line: perfectly groomed. Muscles wrapped in designer clothes. Every inch of him screams IMPATIENT.

DERRICK (O.S.)

I was in a rush to get in this club. Waited almost an hour. You'd think tipping the bouncer woulda helped, but then I see this guy cut the line.

A MAN in a BLACK JACKET cuts the line. Derrick glares.

DERRICK (O.S.)

Shit like that would enrage anybody, right? So I snapped. Would YOU let that go?

Rolling up his sleeves, Derrick storms over to the man, grabs his collar. Spins him around, too fast to see his face.

DERRICK
Hey, asshole!

The man whips out a gun - FIRES directly into Derrick's chest. Blood spatters. Derrick crumples.

PEOPLE in the line run. Scream.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Nurse Sarah's blinks - in sympathy and disbelief.

NURSE
You almost got killed because a night club line was too long?

DERRICK
More like because some asshole couldn't wait his turn. You gotta call out behavior like that, or it continues. Never ends.

NURSE
But if you hadn't grabbed him -

DERRICK
You woulda gotten away with it. Which, if they didn't arrest him -

The two lock eyes.

DERRICK
He still did.

Nurse Sarah fluffs the fresh pillow, sets it in place behind Derrick's head. Turning on the charm, Derrick grins:

DERRICK
Hey, five star hotel treatment. You guys got a rehab department, too?

NURSE
Of course, but you're not ready.

DERRICK
Appearances can be deceiving.

He winks her way.

DERRICK
You know I've got money. Sneak in some ten pound dumbbells, and I'll make it worth your while.

NURSE

Don't push yourself too hard.

DERRICK

Trust me, I know my limits. But I'm a survivor. And I INTEND to get back in shape for when that donor heart rolls around!

Nurse Sarah nods, reaches for his BED PAN to clear it away. Frowns - finding the ripped up organ waiver sheet inside. Derrick sees her disappointment, shrugs.

DERRICK

Why sign away what I intend to keep?

Nurse Sarah looks down. Sighs.

NIGHT

Derrick curls 10 POUND DUMBBELLS from his bed. Pretty lightweight stuff. But he's grooving on it, nonetheless.

A sound at the door. Derrick glances up.

Murphy glares at Derrick from the entrance. Seeing the dumbbells, his eyes flash pure hate even more.

DERRICK

What's your problem? You wanted me to "sleep on it". I pissed on it too, just for fun!

Murphy storms off. Derrick chuckles.

DERRICK

Little prick thinks he's entitled to MY body parts?

Laughing, he crunches out a few more reps.

MORNING

Derrick performs knee to chest tucks. Leg day hasn't been forgotten; even if it's just body weight.

Nurse Sarah sticks her head in, elated. Derrick instantly picks up on her vibe. He freezes, legs still raised.

DERRICK

The heart came through?!?

NURSE

No, not yet! But thanks for signing the donation waiver! Not that it'll be needed, I'm sure. But doing the right thing - even symbolically - means so much! I *told* the girls at the desk you have a good heart.

DERRICK

Waitamminute. What?

NURSE

A metaphorical "heart", I mean. Your self-centered act's not fooling anyone.

She points to Derrick's knee-to-chest exercise.

NURSE

Make sure you don't pop a stitch. And keep up the good work!

Derrick yells after her.

DERRICK

Get me a walker. Please?!?

NIGHT

A WALKER sits by Derrick's bed. Nurse Sarah's come through with the goods again.

Sitting up in bed with a food tray, Derrick clutches a KITCHEN KNIFE. Eyes locked on the door, he fumes.

In the hallway, he spots Murphy. Who sees him, too. And slinks away. That's Derrick's cue.

Shoving the tray aside, he pockets the knife. Scoots to the edge of the bed. Grunts. Stands up.

Using the walker, Derrick hobbles hastily towards the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

And trails Murphy down the hall.

Derrick's eyes dart to other HOSPITAL STAFF - afraid he'll get caught leaving the room. No-one intervenes. Good.

Murphy walks to a stairwell. Enters. Descends.

DERRICK
 Little shit goes where I can't
 follow?

But - looking to the elevator, Derrick brightens. The sign indicates they're on the FIRST floor. And there's only one more stop down: the basement.

Derrick's joy turns to panic as he spots:

Nurse Sarah walking down the hall towards him. She hasn't seen him... yet.

Derrick breathes in relief when an oblivious Sarah enters his now empty room.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Shuffling quickly to the elevator, Derrick tabs the button.

As it descends, he leans impatiently against the walker. Growls as Muzak inevitably plays.

The doors slide open...

INT. HOSPITAL BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Derrick rolls out into an even darker corridor. Not much here: ELECTRICAL BOXES, doors for a BOILER ROOM. And...

A MORGUE. Derrick wrinkles his nose in disgust.

DERRICK
 So that's where this dick wad works?
 Mr. "I'm no socialite". Figures.

Rolling up his hospital gown's sleeves, Derrick throws all his weight behind the walker. Storms in.

INT. MORGUE - MOMENTS LATER

A BODY lies on the slab, covered partially by a sheet. Murphy hovers over it - back to the door.

Derrick rolls in - irate.

DERRICK
 Hey, Dexter: I've got more questions.
 This time, no counting allowed! Nurse
 Sarah told me a waiver was submitted
 to donate MY body parts.
 (MORE)

DERRICK (cont'd)

You forged it, didn't you? You know that's a felony? And for what - to traffic my guts on the black market? What the fuck is your game?

Murphy doesn't turn around. Instead, he reaches down to the body, arm phasing into the corpse's chest. And pulls out a HEART.

Derrick doesn't see. His view is blocked.

Murphy caresses the organ. Unbuttoning his lab coat, he presses it into his chest. The organ's ABSORBED.

At first, blood stains the fabric. Then it's absorbed, too.

Derrick rolls closer, growls.

DERRICK

Hey. I'm talking to you. Turn around!

As he did at the nightclub, Derrick grabs Murphy's collar, spins him around.

And gags at what's revealed.

MURPHY'S FACE IS SHIFTING. Nothing's solid. Bits of his body phases in and out - bobbing as if in liquid or ether - not set in reality. Realigning as the new organ's absorbed.

Derrick staggers back. Whips out the kitchen knife. The walker topples over on its side.

Murphy grabs Derrick's arms. The movement stops Derrick from falling with the walker. But keeps him pinned, too.

Derrick gapes at the now visible hole in the corpses' chest.

DERRICK

What did you do?

Murphy's voice sounds like gravel. It's phasing, too.

MURPHY

Recycling what's not needed. For him, no harm, no foul. For me: very good.

Derrick struggles to break free. But Murphy's grip is iron. Whatever he is, he's stronger than he seems.

DERRICK

That's why you wanted my organs? You were going to take them, and do... what?

MURPHY

I need to replenish. I'm a survivor,
like you. But I need not kill. Better
to wait until death chooses, and pick
through what remains. But since
you've seen me, I am forced.

Murphy reaches a hand into Derrick's abdomen, skin phasing
through like a phantom and pulls out...

His LIVER. Derrick writhes in agony. Stares in horror as
parts are removed. Each integrated into the Murphy creature.
Who sighs in bliss as they're absorbed.

MURPHY

Ah, you've taken wonderful care of
yourself. Except for the heart. I'll
leave you that. I promise, your parts
will be much valued. All will be put
to good use.

DERRICK'S POV

Consciousness clings to a last moment of life. Derrick
stares at Murphy's shifting face.

Then reality collapses into: white static on a black void.

FINAL FADE OUT