

Death Watch
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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A LOUD BOOM erupts the night. One man is lying 15 feet away from his damaged vehicle. Surrounded by a huge puddle of blood, the man attempts to write something in the mud. He doesn't finish before the loss of blood takes him.

The other vehicle involved in the accident is a large truck. A man in the truck tries desperately to start it up again, but fails. After a few more attempts, he stumbles out of the truck, and runs away from the scene.

INT. LILLIAN'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

In a small house, LILLIAN puts flowers in a vase on the table. Lillian is a pretty woman seeming to burst with excitement, looking on top of the world and very much in love.

Lillian heads back to the kitchen to check the food.

She returns with matches, and lights the two candles on the table. She takes a step back, evaluating the table, and smiles with joy.

Just behind her, a small fire erupts in the kitchen. She quickly runs into the kitchen and puts it out. She gives a sigh of relief, then proceeds to dump out the contents and start all over again, with a smile on her face.

INT. SMALL COUNTRY HOUSE - NIGHT

The quiet country evening is disrupted when BOB, greasy looking nincompoop, bursts through the door.

BOB
(frantic)
Rachel! RACHEL! Where are you?!

Entering from the other room is RACHEL, a somewhat goofy looking woman with a slight hobble who once could have been beautiful, but now seems worn down by life.

RACHEL
Will you stop yellin' and tell me
what got you in such a fuss?

BOB

I was just in an accident! The other guy was crazy and just came into my lane!

RACHEL

Well, is he OK?

BOB

No, no I don't think he is. I think he might be dead.

RACHEL

Dead!? Bob, we should call the police.

Rachel goes to the phone and picks it up to dial. Bob grabs it from her hand and slams it down on the receiver.

BOB

NO! We can't!

RACHEL

Why not?

BOB

Listen, I had a few drinks earlier. And if they find out, I'm done for, Rachel.

RACHEL

But, he might not be dead.

Bob begins pacing around the room, musing over what he should do next. A sudden surge of drunken inspiration overcomes him.

BOB

I got it! We'll call in as an anonymous tip.

RACHEL

Bob! We have to make sure he's OK. He might not even be dead!

Bob goes to the phone and starts dialing 911.

BOB

Yes, I'd like to report an accident on 83...Yes...I'd like this to be anonymous...Thanks.

Bob hangs up the phone. He looks over at Rachel, who is looking out the window.

RACHEL
Bob, where's your truck?

A look of fear overcomes Bob.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PETER is enjoying the evening by laying on his bed reading a novel. Peter, 24, is a deeply contemplative soul stuck in an average body.

His bedroom is very much lived in, and is covered with various pictures of he and his best friend, Matt.

His relaxation is interrupted by the RINGING OF A DOOR BELL. He sets down his book and walks out his bedroom.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Peter walks to the front door and opens it. Standing in front of him are JESSICA, SARA, and BEN, the close circle of Peter's friends.

Peter is surprised to see them.

PETER
Hey guys, what are you doing here so late?

JESSICA
Peter, we have news about Matt.

PETER
What? What happened to Matt?

INT. LILLIAN'S DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The candles on the table have melted all the way down. Lillian's gaze lingers on the flame of one of the candles. She is very upset.

She grabs her cell phone, presses one number, and listens to the ring

MATT (V.O.)
Hello? Hey, how's it going? Yeah I'm great too. HA-HA gotcha! I'm actually not available now, please leave a message after the beep.

LILLIAN

Hey, this is your fiancée, you know, the woman you were supposed to have dinner tonight with. You better have a good reason for being so late! Call me back, now!

Lillian hangs up, throws the phone on the couch and sits angrily crossing her arms.

INT. PETER'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Peter, Jessica, Ben and Sarah stand in Peter's kitchen, silent. Peter has his arm around Jessica as she is resting her head on his shoulder.

PETER

Did they know who did it?

BEN

It's the weirdest thing. Whoever did it, fled the scene, but left their truck there. The cops seemed to know who it was, and they should be going to his house anytime now.

The group of friends fall silent.

Pause.

JESSICA

Well... Who should tell Lillian?

They all look at each other.

BEN

Maybe you should do it, Peter. You are...were his best friend.

SARAH

I know it's hard, but Lillian seemed to always like you the best. Maybe it'll be easier coming from you.

Peter looks scared, having feared this would happen.

PETER

I...Can't.

BEN

You have to, who else will? We can't just call her. We need to tell her in person.

PETER

You don't understand.

JESSICA

What?

Pause.

PETER

They just got engaged.

A look of shock goes over everyone's face. Sarah buries her face in Ben's shoulder.

Jessica looks into Peter's eyes.

JESSICA

If you don't want to, we'll understand. We'll just call her and tel--

Peter shakes his head. He walks over to the front door, grabs his coat and keys. He turns his head toward the direction of his friends.

PETER

I'll go do it. I'll be back later.

Peter opens the front door, but just as he is about to walk out, Jessica calls out to him.

JESSICA

Peter, wait!

Jessica runs up to Peter, and hugs him. The two embrace.

Peter lets go slowly, takes a step back, and walks out the door.

I/E. PETER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Peter opens the car door and gets in. He puts the keys in the ignition, but before he turns them, an extreme flood of emotion overcomes him. He starts smashing his fists against the dashboard and anything else he can.

After his burst of energy, he collapses onto his steering wheel, crying.

After a few moments, he composes himself, turns the key, and drives off.

I/E. PETER'S CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Peter pulls up to the front of Lillian's house. He turns off his car, and takes a deep breath.

MATT (O.C.)

Peter, can we talk?

Peter turns and sees MATT, a good looking 25 year old who is passionate about life and it's new adventures, sitting in the passenger's seat.

Peter faces Matt.

PETER

What is it, Matt?

MATT

I... I'm going to ask Lillian to marry me.

PETER

Matt! That's great!
Congratulations!

MATT

She's so beautiful. I haven't met anyone whose made me feel so...
alive!

PETER

You two will be great together.

MATT

But, Peter. May I ask you something?

PETER

Sure! Anything.

MATT

Will you be my best man?

Pause.

A huge smile comes across Peter's face.

PETER

Matt, I would be honored to be your best man.

Peter reaches over to give Matt a hug. Just as he turns, Matt is gone.

Pause.

Peter looks down, realizing that this moment was only a memory.

Matt takes a moment to collect himself, opens his car door, and exits.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Peter walks up to the door, takes a deep breath, and knocks on the door very softly.

No answer.

He knocks a little harder.

Still no answer.

He knocks very loudly now.

He waits a few seconds. Just as he is about to knock again, the door bursts open.

LILLIAN
Why didn't you...

She stops yelling as soon as she sees it's Peter.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry, Peter. I thought you were Matt. Come on in.

Peter nods and goes into the house.

INT. LILLIAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Peter walks into the house, he notices the stale diner on the table.

LILLIAN
You know, it's pretty late, and your dumb friend isn't here, and it's a good thing too, I'm actually pretty upset at him right now. We were supposed to have a nice diner tonight to celebrate our engagement. Great way to start our life together, right?

Peter's eyes glisten, but he stands firm.

Peter walks up to Lillian and places his hands on her shoulders.

PETER
Lillian, please sit a second.

Peter guides Lillian down onto the chair. He then gets on one knee in front of her.

PETER (CONT'D)
Lillian... Matt... he was in an accident.

LILLIAN
(in shock)
Is he OK? What hospital is he in?
We need to go!

Peter looks down, slowly shaking his head.

PETER
No, Lillian, he's not in a hospital. He didn't make it. He was killed on impact. I'm so sorry.

Lillian looks at him in disbelief.

Beat.

Lillian pushes Peter away.

LILLIAN
That's not funny! You guys are always messing around. Where is he?

Peter begins breathing harder. He slowly looks back into Lillian's eyes.

PETER
Lillian, Matt is dead. A drunk driver hit him head on. The police have gone to his house and arrested him. I'm sorry.

Lillian continues to look angry at him.

LILLIAN
You're saying, my Matt, my *future*, is dead because of some drunk bastard going out on a driving spree?

PETER
Lillian, I know this is hard, but
please calm down.

Lillian breaks down.

LILLIAN
BUT WHY!?

Lillian collapses onto Peter and begins sobbing. Peter
embraces her, trying his hardest to be strong.

INT. LILLIAN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Lillian fell asleep in Peter's arms. He never moved or slept
all night.

Just as Lillian is turning in her slept, she slightly opens
her eyes to see Matt holding her.

MATT
Good morning.

LILLIAN
(content)
Hmm. Good morning, baby.

Just as she opens her eyes, she see that it was Peter all
along. Lillian looks into Peter's eyes. A wave of
disappointment comes over her.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
I...saw him.

PETER
Me too...me too.

EXT. SMALL HIGHWAY - MORNING

As peter is driving home from Lillian's house, he pulls over
on the side of the road where the accident occurred the night
before.

Peter gets out of the car and starts walking around,
imagining Matt lying there, all alone the previous night. He
can even hear the SOUNDS FROM THE CRASH from the night
before.

Peter begins to cry, and breaks down.

PETER
Damn it to hell!

Peter begins kicking the dirt in anger. Just as he is about to kick again, he notices something written in the dried mud. He gets closer to examine it. In the mud is written "L-I."

PETER (CONT'D)

"L-I"?

Peter examines it for a few minutes more, and heads back to his car, contemplating what "L-I" stands for.

INT. COURTHOUSE - 2 MONTHS LATER

The courtroom is filled with friends and family of Matt. Only a few people have showed up for Bob.

The whole room stands as the JUDGE, a man in his 40's trying to fit the part, enters and takes a seat. Everyone sits down.

JUDGE

Bob Wilson, this court finds you
guilty and sentences you to 12
years for vehicular manslaughter.

The Judge smashes his gavel down.

Everyone begins MUMBLING as a few people CLAP. Rachel begins SOBBING.

Lillian stands up.

LILLIAN

That's it! My fiancee's life is
only worth 12 years!

Peter stands up after her, and tries to get her to sit back down.

Bob slumps down in his chair and begins to cry.

As Peter is supporting Lillian, a moment of realization comes over his face.

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. A PARK BENCH - A DISTANT MEMORY

Matt and Peter are enjoying the summer afternoon sitting on a park bench, drinking coffee. They both are laughing and having a good time.

After a moment of silence, Peter Turns to Matt.

PETER
Hey, Matt?

MATT
What's up?

PETER
Have you ever thought about death?

MATT
Honestly, I haven't. And what does
it matter? What we do in life is
more important than death.

A smile comes over Peter's face as they start talking again.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. COURTHOUSE - BACK TO REALITY

Peter slowly mouths the letters "L-I."

Peter leaves Lillian and walks up to Bob, putting his hand on his shoulder.

Bob looks up at Peter.

PETER
I forgive you.

Bob places his hand on Peter's.

PETER (CONT'D)
I forgive you for the pain you've
caused me. But a bigger man than
myself can only forgive you for
snuffing out the life of a man
worth more than you ever will be.

Peter pulls his hand away and walks away, leaving Bob all alone.

EXT. SMALL HIGHWAY - THE NEXT DAY

All of Matt's friend's and family are gathered on the side of the highway where the accident occurred. Ben and Peter erect a small, white cross with Matt's name on it.

Lillian walks away from everyone to take a breath of fresh air. As she walks, she notices something written on the ground. She gets closer and reads the letters "L-I."

Lillian begins crying, but tears of joy mingled with sadness.
Ben notices Lillian standing off by herself.

BEN
Lillian, are you OK?

Lillian turns around and points to the ground. Everyone comes over quickly to see what she is pointing at.

LILLIAN
It...it spells my name.

Everyone takes a closer look, except Peter.

PETER
No.

Everyone turns to look at him. They are all baffled and upset by his statement.

PETER (CONT'D)
It spells "LIVE."

Peter goes and grabs Lillian.

PETER (CONT'D)
Come on, let's go.

As everyone goes to their cars, Peter stops and looks back at the cross. After a few moments, he goes to catch up with everyone. The group gets in their cars and drive away, leaving the white cross as the only thing in sight.

FADE OUT.

THE END