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One Way

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Online Edition

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Blinking he wondered when he dozed off. Where was he? Looking around him, he saw that he sat in what looked like a large waiting room. He was the only person there, which meant he was next, next for what? Stretching he stood up and began pacing the length of the room. Looking for an indication of what kind of waiting room it was. On the coffee table there were a couple of books and magazines. He picked up a magazine and idly flipped through it. It looked like something his wife would read.

"Hi there," a small thin woman with blond bouncy curly hair beamed at him. She was pretty but not his type. "Betcha you're wondering where you are?"

He nodded, "Is this a waiting room?"

Grinning she nodded, "you could say that. What's the last thing you remember?"

"I was at work. The guys and I were joking around, I ... I remember, I remember falling. Does that sound weird?"

"Nope, I hear that all the time."

"Where am I?"

"A waiting room," she smiled.

"For what?"

"What?"

"What am I waiting for?"

"Oh, you are waiting for me to come and begin the processing."

"Processing for what?"

"It's your afterlife. Once we get through the paperwork, we can get you sorted."

"Get me sorted?" Sorted? Wait, did she just say afterlife? There was something going on that was a bit of a blur, just out of his reach. There but not there.

"Yes," she came over and looped her arm through his and led him into another room.

"Please sit down." She walked around the desk and sat down across from him.

She flipped open a book and read something to herself then shook her head and clucked her tongue against the roof of her mouth. Peeking up at him once she frowned then her eyes dropped back to the book, she took one finger and skimmed two paragraphs. Then sat back and looked at him with a smile.

"Well, I can see your confusion. I thought you knew. Your wife prolonged it by not wanting to pull the plug on you. That's a shame when that happens. Some people just don't get it."

"Get what? Can you please explain to me what I'm doing here?"

"I'm sorry I assumed you were smarter. Welcome to your afterlife."

"My what?"

"You're dead, brain dead, well that's just arguing semantics, but you are in fact dead and you have crossed over."

"I don't get it," he rubbed his head and closed his eyes. "I'm sorry this has to be some kind of mistake."

"Oh, I assure you Mr. Rybeck this is no mistake. Everyone comes here at some point."

"That's impossible."

"Is it?" She raised an eyebrow and smirked at him.

"Hell yes," there was a rumbling that shook the building.

She laughed, "Please choose your wording carefully. Mr. Rybeck."

"I don't understand how is this possible?"

"Maybe this will help!" she jumped up and stepped over to a stage.

Where the heck did the stage come from? He looked around the room. He hadn't noticed that there when he first came into this room, "where did that come from?"

She pulled out a hat from behind her back, the lights went low and a spotlight shone on her, "one way or another, we're gonna find ya, we're gonna getcha, getcha, getcha, one way or another you're going cross over and we're going getcha, getcha, getcha ..."

His boot went flying across the room and hit her in the leg.

"Owe," she stopped singing and a few seconds later the music stopped too. "Why did you do that?"

"Send me back," he demanded.

"I'm sorry weren't you listening it's a one-way trip." she bent down and picked up his boot.

"That's not acceptable send me back now!"

"Mr. Rybeck, stop acting like this, it's not like this is the first time that this has happened to you."

"I'm sorry what?"

She moved towards him the spotlight disappeared, as did the stage and the regular light came back on.

"It's like when you were a fetus, you were connected to the wireless network of other fetuses, until you were born. It's the same kind of one-way trip. Why do you think babies cry? It's

a traumatic experience being born, leaving your friends and family behind. This is kind of like that, a one-way trip."

"You can't be serious?"

"Oh, I'm very serious," she handed him back his boot and sat down across from him. "So, you are currently a vegetable until your wife decides to let you go. How were you going out?" she tilted her head to the side and stuck her tongue out. "You know, cremation? Buried? Or frozen," she shivered. "Or did you donate it to science?"

"I don't know, we never discussed those things."

"I see," she handed him some forms. "Please sign these."

"What are they?"

"It's paperwork. We'll need to find a place for you here. Can't do that until we get them signed."

She handed him a pen. Looking at the first sheet it was titled, "Welcome to The After-Life Placement Evaluation Form 1 of 46004."