

IMPRINT

By Tom Smith

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(575) 635-5194
tom@tomsmithplaywright.com

CHARACTERS

Mark	30s-40s
Jason	30s-40s

TIME/PLACE

A hospital room
Today

IMPRINT

A hospital room. JASON in bed, hooked up to a lot of machines. MARK enters, cheery.

MARK

Happy Death Day!

JASON

There you are!

MARK

I brought you a gift.

(Hands over a suit in a garment bag.)

I figured it's the only present you can still use.

JASON

My very first suit. I thought I'd be able to go my entire life without ever having to wear one.

MARK

You will.

(Beat.)

How was breakfast?

JASON

Well, you know, they're very accommodating here. I was able to talk them into giving me red Jell-O instead of orange.

MARK

Lucky.

JASON

Coffee's still crap but I guess beggars can't be choosers.

MARK

You should talk to your insurance company and ask them which plan comes with lattes.

(Beat.)

JASON

You're late.

MARK

I know.

JASON

Twenty minutes.

MARK

I know. Sorry.

JASON

They'll be here soon.

MARK

I called ABC. They wouldn't tell me anything.

JASON

Nothing at all?

MARK

Nope. I even figured out how to get a hold of the head writer. It took me all day yesterday...

JASON

Did you tell them—

MARK

I don't think it was the first time they heard that excuse.

JASON

But it's probably the first time it's true.

MARK

Yeah.

JASON

I guess I'll never know what happens then. How it all plays out.

(Beat.)

You should cut your hair. I like it when it's really short.

MARK

I will. This summer.

JASON

You look so conservative.

MARK

I am conservative.

JASON

I know. When did that happen?

MARK

Patrick's the one who buys me this stuff. I'm happy in a t-shirt and jeans.

(Beat.)

Do we really have to do this?

JASON

What?

MARK

Bullshit about soap operas?

JASON

I like soaps. You did too. Before Patrick.

MARK

Is this really how you want this to go?

JASON

I had hoped we'd've gotten through the bullshit earlier. But you showed up late...

MARK

I wouldn't miss this. I mean, I wasn't trying to not be here.

JASON

I know.

MARK

I just wanted to...not be here for all of it. For the banter. The distraction.

JASON

Can you sit down? You're making me nervous.

MARK

No! I mean... I can't.

JASON

Ok.

MARK

Can we just talk about something else? Something important?

JASON

More important than Jell-o and "One Life to Live?" Because, frankly, they've been the most significant things in my life for the past three months. Which is a little sad...

MARK

Stop blaming me!

JASON

What? I don't.

MARK

Yes, you do. You told Manny it was incredibly cowardly of me to leave you when I did.

JASON

Well, it was.

MARK

You told me to go!

JASON

I know.

MARK

You said better now than later.

JASON

You're right; I did.

MARK

You told me to!

JASON

Because that's what I was supposed to do! I tell you—with a smile on my face—that it's ok to leave me to suffer alone. And you're supposed to say that you can't do it because I mean too much to you. You weren't really supposed to leave! God, haven't you ever seen a black-and-white movie?

MARK

I wasn't any good to you anymore. I mean, God... I was a ghost. I was so tired all the time!

JASON

We were all tired! Manny, Topher, Brian. Me! You had it easier than any of us. You were off at work, putting in overtime—

MARK

I knew the bills were going to rack up!

JASON

—while they were the ones taking shifts. Changing my sheets. Having conversations with me while I was doped up. Cleaning the shit!

MARK

I don't want to get into it anymore. I can't...

JASON

I don't see why this all seems unbearable to you. Eleven years. Remodeling the house. Applying for adoption three times and getting rejected three times. My affair. This isn't the hardest thing we've gone through together!

MARK

Yes it is! For me, it is!

JASON

Well, maybe it wouldn't be if you—

MARK

Stop trying to make me feel guilty! This can't be the last thing I remember about you!

JASON

I'm not trying to make you feel guilty!

MARK

Yes, you are! You want me to feel bad for doing something you told me it was all right to do! I didn't want to be here for this. I want to remember you the way I want to. Like you were before. That's what I want imprinted in my memory.

JASON

I know. And that's why I wanted you here.

MARK

You want me to watch you gasp and choke and pass away in front of me in retaliation for leaving you!?! Do you really hate me so—

JASON

I need to imprint you in my memory.

Don't you have any idea how important you were in my life? I had nearly given up. I hadn't found anyone willing to love me as much as I loved them. But then, when you told me that night that you felt overwhelmed by me—I mean, my God! That was the moment—the exact moment!—that I realized you were the dream I had when I was young. When I didn't even know what those feelings were. When I was lost inside someone else.

For the past three months, I've thought of nothing else but you!

MARK

Don't do this. Please... You said you wanted to go out laughing. Joking. "Happy Death Day," remember?

JASON

I don't want you to remember this room or these machines. The past three months. I want you to remember—I need you to remember—that for someone you were everything. Until their dying day. You were everything.

(Pause.)

MARK

She's going to die, too, you know.

JASON

Who?

MARK

That Buchanan girl on your soap. She's going to be poisoned.

JASON

How do you know? You said they wouldn't tell you anything.

MARK

And they'll be an explosion at a wedding next month. The priest is some long-lost relative or something.

JASON

Is that true? No one's even engaged...

MARK

Does it matter if it's true or not? You'll never find out.

JASON

(Smiles.)

What else?

MARK

Some totally hot guy will take off his shirt.

JASON

Don't do that. Don't just make stuff up...

MARK

But there's this other guy. A new character.

JASON

Yeah?

MARK

He's promised someone to do something for them. But he wishes to God he never promised to do it. Because he knows that doing it will make him feel something that he doesn't want to still be there. But it is. And it will always be there. Always.

JASON

So? Does he do it?

(Long look.)

MARK

Yes.

END OF PLAY