

A LIFETIME

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CABANA AT THE WATER PARK - DAY

A REPORTER (Ellie) and her CAMERA MAN (Doug) are setting up equipment in the shade of a cabana at a water park.

CAMERA MAN  
(pausing to look around)  
Can you believe all this water?

REPORTER  
It's wasteful.

CAMERA MAN  
Yeah but--

REPORTER  
(annoyed)  
Stop gawking and set the camera up over there.

The camera man moves the camera over a few feet and looks at the reporter with raised eyebrows. She nods.

CAMERA MAN  
You sure she's strong enough for this interview?

REPORTER  
If we keep her out of the sun, we should be fine.

The camera man says nothing. The reporter looks down at a page of interview questions and scowls.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
(angrily)  
I didn't ask for this assignment but I'm certainly not going to let anything mess it up.

The camera man puts his hands up as if in surrender, then grabs a pair of headphones.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
(adjusting her lapel microphone)  
Testing. Testing. How's my volume?

The camera man listens for a moment, then gives the reporter a thumbs up.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Okay, here she comes.

A frail, elderly woman, SIMONE, enters, heavily assisted by a NURSE. The reporter and the nurse help her into a chair.

SIMONE

(grasping the reporter's  
hand)

Ellie, can you believe it? We're  
really here!

The reporter jerks her hand out of Simone's grip and furtively wipes it on her pants. Simone eyes her uncertainly. The reporter plasters on a smile.

REPORTER

(overly gracious)

Simone, you are looking good today.  
The fresh air suits you!

SIMONE

I feel positively youthful! How  
about this place? Have you ever  
seen so much water?

The reporter looks out at the water park, dutifully taking it in.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

They have a whole river where you  
can just float around for hours!

The reporter attempts another smile but it doesn't reach her eyes. She motions the camera man over.

REPORTER

Doug's going to get you set up with  
a microphone. Is the chair  
comfortable enough?

SIMONE

Oh it's fine! You don't have to  
fuss over me.

REPORTER

Great, how about we get started  
then?

Simone nods. The reporter takes a seat and motions to the camera man.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

(to the camera)

We are here at Roaring Rapids Water Park in sweltering North Dakota and I'm talking with Simone Patrick, recipient of a Wishes Come True trip.

(to Simone)

How does it feel to finally get your wish and be here at this exclusive water park?

SIMONE

It really is a wish come true! I never thought I get to experience something like this.

REPORTER

Can you tell us a little about how this all came about?

SIMONE

Well, six months ago the doctors told me that I was terminal and that I was eligible for a gift from the Wishes Come True organization.

REPORTER

(to the camera)

Wishes Come True is a nonprofit organization that arranges experiences for patients with critical illnesses.

(to Simone)

What made you decide on the water park?

SIMONE

When I was a kid, I would watch reruns of the old Olympic Games. I desperately wanted to be an Olympic Swimmer but--

(she shrugs, then laughs)

Where I grew up was all desert.

Although the camera man laughs, the reporter looks bored. She sighs, looks down at the page of questions and grimaces. She flips the paper over in her lap.

REPORTER

Going back to the day when the doctors told you that you were running out of time...how did you feel?

The camera man stares at the reporter curiously. She's gone off script.

SIMONE  
Didn't feel really any different, I guess...

REPORTER  
(eagerly)  
Do you have any regrets?

SIMONE  
Regrets?  
(laughs)  
I can see how you might think that. It might be hard for someone your age to understand, but no, I don't have regrets. I could only play the cards I was dealt.

REPORTER  
(disappointed)  
It sounds like you've made peace with your situation.

SIMONE  
Well, I've known for a long time that it was coming. I mean, we all knew.

REPORTER  
When you say 'we', you mean all the survivors?

Simone nods.

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
You are the last living survivor of the Denver Bombing, is that right?

SIMONE  
That's what they tell me. It's funny really. That day, I was working on the outskirts of town. It's the only reason why I survived.

REPORTER  
(hungrily)  
Can you tell us a little about your experience during the bombing?

The camera man looks alarmed and tries to signal the reporter. She ignores him.

SIMONE

It was just an ordinary day really.  
And then the bomb was dropped and I  
don't know...

(lost in thought)

It was chaotic. Nobody knew who had  
survived and who had been lost...

REPORTER

Did you lose anybody in the attack?

SIMONE

Yes.

The reporter stares at her expectantly but Simone says  
nothing. Finally, after an awkward pause, the reporter clears  
her throat.

REPORTER

How long after the bombing did you  
find out about your condition?

SIMONE

A couple of months, I think. I had  
gone in for my yearly Youth  
Treatment and it didn't take.

REPORTER

So, what did you do?

SIMONE

(shrugs)

It turns out that was happening to  
a lot of the survivors. Anyhow, a  
couple weeks later, they made the  
announcement.

REPORTER

And how did you feel after you  
heard?

SIMONE

At first, it didn't seem like a big  
deal. I didn't look different and  
I didn't feel sick or anything.

REPORTER

But then?

SIMONE

After a while people started  
getting uncomfortable.

The reporter nods sympathetically.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
(staring directly at the  
reporter)  
Then the media started calling us  
the Walking Dead.

The reporter squirms uncomfortably and the camera man studies  
the ground.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
I don't mind the term so much. I  
mean, look at me. It's pretty  
accurate, don't you think?

REPORTER  
(stumbling a little)  
Uh...It's been thirty years since  
the bombings and people say that  
not much as changed. What are your  
thoughts?

SIMONE  
I can see their point. But who said  
something like that guarantees  
change anyways?

REPORTER  
You don't believe that anything  
good can come out of a tragedy?

SIMONE  
I don't know. But those weren't the  
first bombings we've faced. When I  
was a kid, my dad told me stories  
about the Terror Attack in '22.

REPORTER  
I remember that one. I had just  
started college.

SIMONE  
A definite tragedy. And did any  
good come out of that?

The reporter frowns.

SIMONE (CONT'D)  
Gosh, I sound like a Debbie Downer,  
don't I? I don't mean to be. After  
all, change any piece of history  
and I might not find myself here at  
this wonderful water park.

The camera man laughs.

REPORTER

(regrouping)

What part of the Water Park are you most excited to visit?

SIMONE

Oh gosh. Let me think. I guess the Wave Pool. It's huge! I can't even imagine how much water it takes to fill up!

REPORTER

We walked by it earlier. Pretty impressive.

SIMONE

I've never seen anything like it.

REPORTER

Looks like it was made for an Olympic Swimmer...

Simone gives the reporter a big smile.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Well, Simone, I really appreciate you taking a few minutes to talk with us.

SIMONE

My pleasure, Ellie. Now if you'll excuse me...I've got a date with some water.

The nurse helps Simone up and they head toward the wave pool. The camera man starts breaking down the equipment.

CAMERA MAN

(shaking his head)

Ninety-five, poor girl. I hadn't even had my kids at that point.

The reporter pulls out a small bottle of hand sanitizer and douses her hands.

REPORTER

You know she got blacklisted after the bombing? All the survivors did.

CAMERA MAN

Wow. That's terrible.

The reporter digs out another small bottle, this time, lotion. She pours a small amount into her hand and rubs it into her skin urgently.

REPORTER

Yeah, I guess. But, honestly, would you want to work with someone that looked like that?

Taking a deep breath, the reporter examines her hands. She caress her smooth skin, looking relieved. The camera man watches her.

CAMERA MAN

No I guess not. Still. What a waste.

The camera man finishes packing the equipment. In the background, the nurse helps Simone into the wave pool.

CAMERA MAN (CONT'D)

You got a headline in mind for this interview?

REPORTER

Yeah. I was thinking...Bombing Survivor Dies Young at Ninety-Five.

As they turn to leave, the reporter and the camera man stop to watch Simone frolicking in the pool. She laughs gleefully.

FADE OUT.