

FUA 30: For the Dead

STATIC FADES IN AND OUT

KLEIN

Love is right, at the end of the day. We should do something.

I should do something.

PAUSE.

OFFICE CHAIR SQUEAKS. KLEIN SIGHS.

KLEIN

I dunno. What would they even want?

The metal boxes are real. When people are high enough up, or when they don't have any next of kin to take them. You get cremated and buried in a little silver box. The date. Your name.

But we don't have anywhere to bury people in here. We just put them in the incinerator.

PAUSE.

KLEIN

They deserve better. She deserved better.

SHE TAKES A DEEP BREATH.

KLEIN

It'll be a good last hurrah, you know?

CLICK.

HARLEY'S OFFICE AMBIENCE.

HARLEY

When someone dies in the line of duty at the Foundation, one of three things happens.

Number one: anyone with next of kin is handed off to their families. In the case that their people are not also Foundation employees, they're given a cover

story most fitting their manner of death. That cover story often includes an explanation of why there isn't a body.

Number two: what's left of you is cremated and packed into a metal box. Sometimes that box can be claimed by someone here who was close to you, other times not. Usually they put your name on it.

And the third option. Reserved for the worst case scenario. Catastrophes. Disasters. Critical containment breaches, mass casualty events.

Everybody goes in the same box.

When you're new, you learn all these options. You fill out your intake paperwork and you mark which you would prefer, the coffin or the box.

I chose the coffin. I might have gotten the box.

CLICK.

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT HUMMING.

ROPES SHIFTING.

LOVE

See? It's not so bad. Nice and cozy.

ROPES TIGHTEN, DUMPTRUCK WHEEZES

LOVE

Maybe a little too tight. Here.

SQUEEZED SQUISH NOISE.

LOVE

I know, I'm sorry! I don't like it any more than you do. I can't fit you in the backpack.

Dumptruck, listen.

LOVE SQUISHES DUMPTRUCK.

LOVE

I need you. I may need you now more than ever. You're the lynchpin of this operation, buddy. It's all resting on your... round... top.

DUMPTRUCK SQUISHES.

TYPING ON KEYBOARD.

LOVE

Oh, he understands. Look at him.

DUMPTRUCK SQUISHES.

LOVE

Alright! I have to go. I'll see you later.

TYPING.

LOVE

Yeah. I will.

CLICK.

COMPUTER HUMMING.

PAPER RUSTLES.

KLEIN

She liked, quote "headache inducing colors," unquote. She refused to wear black, said it was boring. Sometimes she would wear horrible pattern combinations just to irritate the others in the department.

She was on an e-sports team on the outside and regularly participated in casual tournaments for uh, Soul Calibur 2. Also claimed she wasn't very good at it, which the other engineers appear to... vehemently refute.

(chuckles)

It says that in her first year of undergrad, she tried to double-major in engineering and piano performance. I guess she gave up after getting some pretty brutal criticism from a professor, and that was the end of that.

I played trumpet in sixth grade.

PAUSE.

PAPERS SHIFT.

KLEIN

Favorite colors, favorite foods,  
favorite movie; lots of things she  
liked and places she wanted to see  
and-

KLEIN SIGHS HEAVILY.

PAUSE AS SHE PULLS HERSELF TOGETHER.

KLEIN

I didn't know any of this. I knew  
her name.

Her last name.

Her first name is Kasey.

WAS Kasey, I guess.

CLICK.

SURVEILLANCE OFFICE EQUIPMENT HUMMING.

BUTTON CLICKS, INTERCOM CHANNEL STATIC.

HARLEY

Is Love in there? She left her  
water bottle in my office.

CLICK CLICK

HARLEY

Thanks.

PAUSE. INTERCOM CHANNEL IS STILL OPEN

HARLEY

How are you doing?

PAUSE.

TYPING.

HARLEY

(awkwardly)

Good.

PAUSE.

TYPING.

HARLEY

No, I don't need anything else. I  
just wanted to check in.

SILENCE.

HARLEY

How's the...

SILENCE.

HARLEY

The- is your door on the ceiling  
now? Or a different wall? How are  
things, uh...

PAUSE.

HARLEY

Nevermind.

INTERCOM CLICKS OFF

RADDAGHER'S HEAD THUMPS ON THE TABLE, SHE GROANS.

CLICK.

FLUORESCENT LIGHTS BUZZ LOUDLY.

DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

LANCASTER

Second rung down is loose, by the  
way.

KLEIN

Thanks.

LADDER RUNG FOOTSTEPS.

KLEIN

Hey.

LANCASTER

Hey.

KLEIN

How are you doing?

PAUSE.

KLEIN

Right. I need to ask something of you. For tomorrow.

LANCASTER

I thought- I thought we weren't going to start testing until- until the cycle rolls over.

KLEIN

Not testing. I'm- we're uh, we're doing a thing tomorrow.

LANCASTER

You're doing a thing.

KLEIN

A vigil. For Kasey.

LANCASTER

Kasey wasn't my patient.

KLEIN

It's not about- we've never done something like this before. I have no idea what to expect. Or how people will react. I think I'm gonna need all the help I can get.

LANCASTER

So is there a catch?

PAUSE.

KLEIN

Two armed guards.

LANCASTER

No.

KLEIN

Come on. I HAVE to-

LANCASTER

Klein, having- me being there as a contained anomaly isn't going to do anybody's mental state any favors.

PAUSE.

LANCASTER

I'm not in a position to help anybody right now. I have my own stuff to work on.

CLICK.

MACHINERY HUMMING, LOUD ECHOING AMBIENCE.

VARIOUS LOVE EFFORT NOISES AS SHE CLIMBS A ROPE.

LOVE  
UGH, of COURSE they'd give me the  
HARDEST ONE TO GET TO-

SHE GRUNTS AS SHE CLIMBS ONTO A LEDGE.

LOVE CATCHES HER BREATH.

LOVE  
How ya doin' back there?

DUMPTRUCK SQUISHES.

LOVE  
Good boy, Dumptruck. Okay. Where's  
that big one?

Oh. Here it is. Crack in the wall.  
From that table hitting it, I  
think.

BACKPACK SHIFTS AROUND.

LOVE  
Stand back, buddy, here goes-

SPRAY CAN SHAKES.

CAN SPRAYS, LIGHTER CLICKS.

FIRE IGNITES.

SCI-FI POPPING NOISE.

FIRE GOES OUT.

LOVE  
Ha! Suck it!

DUMPTRUCK THRASHES.

LOVE  
Whoa, hey!

That didn't scare you, did it?

DUMPTRUCK SET ON GROUND.

PAUSE.

RAPID DUMPTRUCK FOOTPAPS.

LOVE  
Wait, where are you going?!

FOOTSTEPS AS LOVE FOLLOWS.

LOVE  
What? What is it?

DUMPTRUCK SQUISHES AS HE SITS.

LOVE  
...Did you find one?

OBJECTS MOVE.

LOVE  
Oh, shit!

SEVERAL CRUNCHING IMPACTS OF SOMETHING SMACKED AGAINST A WALL.

LOVE  
There! Not moving anymore, is it?

DUMPTRUCK'S FEET PAP AROUND AS HE WANDERS.

LOVE  
Any more?

DUMPTRUCK PAPS AIMLESSLY.

LOVE  
I'll take that as a no.

Man, this would be so much easier  
if you could climb.

PAUSE.

LOVE  
I just had an idea.

CLICK.

COMMUNICATION OFFICE AMBIENCE.

HARLEY  
(to himself)  
"Just turn your torso to the side  
a little! It won't hurt!" It said.  
It'll be totally fine, it said.

Nothing inside you will make a  
weird crunchy squeak noise! All I  
want to do is have a bit of a  
range of movement, but NOOOO.  
Can't have shit in Site-107-

DOOR OPENS.

PAUSE.

HARLEY  
(surprised)  
Oh, hey-

RADDAGHER  
Hi.

PAUSE

RADDAGHER  
Can I come in?

HARLEY  
Sure.

DOOR CREAKS, FOOTSTEPS CLIMB OVER OBJECTS.

PAUSE.

HARLEY  
(awkwardly)  
So. Uh, to what do I owe the  
pleasure?

RADDAGHER EXHALES.

HARLEY  
Did you come in here to look at  
me, or...

RADDAGHER  
No.

HARLEY  
Then what?

RADDAGHER  
Wait.

PAUSE.

RADDAGHER  
I'm- sorry.

PAUSE.

RADDAGHER

I'm- mm. Hm-

RADDAGHER GROANS IN FRUSTRATION.

PAPER RUSTLES, PEN CLICKS.

FURIOUS WRITING ON PAPER FOR SEVERAL SECONDS.

PAPER RUSTLES AGAIN.

PAUSE.

HARLEY

I didn't mean what I said, either.  
I was... I was upset. But I wasn't  
mad at you, and I shouldn't have  
taken it out on you.

RADDAGHER

Me neither. I'm sorry.

HARLEY

I'm sorry, too.

RADDAGHER

Um-

MORE WRITING.

HARLEY

Yeah, you know, you said some  
things that really hurt, I won't  
lie-

RADDAGHER

I'm sorry-

HARLEY

I believe you. And I'm still kind  
of angry at you, but I miss you. I  
miss having you around.

RADDAGHER

Me too.

HARLEY

Clean slate? Start over?

RADDAGHER

Yeah.

HARLEY

I was hoping you'd say that.

CLICK.

HALL CAVERN AMBIENCE, LOUD ECHOING NOISE.

LOVE  
(calling)  
Hello? Anybody in here?

A COUPLE SECONDS OF SILENCE. NO ONE RESPONDS.

LOVE  
Cool.

CLIMBING, OBJECTS SHIFTING, DOOR OPENS.

HUMIDIFIER RUNS QUIETLY.

LOVE  
Wow. This place is a mess. How are  
these still alive?

DEAD PLANT RUSTLES.

LOVE  
Oh. This one's dead.

LEAVES SHIFT, FOOTSTEPS ON DIRT.

PAUSE.

LOVE  
What do you think, Dumptruck? Like  
this one?

DUMPTRUCK SQUEAKS

LOVE  
I do, too.

CLICK.

HARLEY  
The vigil was today.

It was nice.

Klein had it set up next to the  
door into the Engineering office.  
A pile of little objects, small  
enough to be easy to carry. Candy,  
flower petals, cell phones, flash  
lights in place of candles. A lot  
of paint. One of the Security  
guards carried a bucket of it

over, the dark gray they use for the doors. It resulted in a surprising number of people painting messages and pictures onto the wall with their hands. Gray paint up to their elbows.

Only about a quarter of us showed up, but nobody anticipated more than that. Between many of us being stuck in place and Foundation personnel being relatively poorly equipped for outward mourning, a quarter is a pretty good turnout.

It was very quiet.

About thirty minutes in, people started adding things on behalf of the others we lost. There was a whole line of Security badges.

PAUSE.

HARLEY

Psychology were all there. Almost all of them, that is. Klein was well-intentioned, but maybe acted too soon. Nobody wanted to talk about it. Not there, at least. Perhaps later.

CLICK.

FLUORESCENT LIGHT HUMS QUIETLY, HALLWAY AMBIENCE.

KLEIN

Surprised you came all the way back.

HARLEY

I thought it would be empty.

KLEIN

Eh, people have been coming and going all day.

HARLEY

Makes sense.

KLEIN

We should paint on the walls more.

HARLEY

It's kind of nice, isn't it?

KLEIN

It is kinda nice.

PAUSE.

KLEIN

Raddagher asked Haldi to do one for the Security people we lost in the initial shift.

HARLEY

Good for her.

KLEIN

She HAS been getting better, I think.

HARLEY

I'm a little embarrassed that she was the one who took the initiative to apologize first.

KLEIN

Yeah? How'd that go?

HARLEY

I feel good about it. Then again, she's kinda hard to read, so maybe I shouldn't be so sure.

KLEIN

If she didn't want to talk, she wouldn't have.

HARLEY

You're right.

PAUSE.

KLEIN

You should talk to Lancaster.

HARLEY

I don't want to.

KLEIN

It wasn't his fault, you know. Not really.

HARLEY

I don't want to do this right now.

KLEIN

Whatever, man. Not like I can tell you what to do.

HARLEY  
You literally can. You're my boss.

KLEIN  
I'm only your boss for 8 more days, Harley. And then you're Alves' problem.

HARLEY  
What? Are you quitting?

KLEIN  
Excellent work, puzzlemaster.

HARLEY  
Why?

KLEIN  
I greenlit a test that got somebody killed.

HARLEY  
You weren't the only one pushing for it.

KLEIN  
Doesn't matter. Happened under my watch. I could have fought it harder.

HARLEY  
You can't put this on yourself.

KLEIN  
It's happened before.

PAUSE.

KLEIN  
I got transferred here after being demoted at my old site. I cleared a test I shouldn't have. I knew it was a longshot going in, but I thought it would be some kinda huge victory for me if it worked.

HARLEY  
And it didn't?

KLEIN  
It killed three people on my Research team.

PAUSE.

HARLEY  
I'm sorry.

KLEIN  
Sorry doesn't bring people back.

THE LIGHTS HUM.

CLICK.

HARSH FLUORESCENT BUZZING. LANCASTER HUMS TO HIMSELF, A  
TENNIS BALL BOUNCES AGAINST THE WALL AND FLOOR.

DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS ON LADDER.

PAUSE FOR SEVERAL SECONDS.

LANCASTER  
(surprised, anxious)  
...Hi.

HARLEY  
Hey.

END EPISODE