

REBIRTH

Written by

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INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Small, the apartment of the old, with wide doorways for wheelchairs. To one side, a china cabinet filled with the curios of a long life, with a family photo of Rose, husband and daughter. What most old people eventually move to.

ROSE, 100, sits in a wheelchair. She's wrinkled and frail, yet her eyes are lively. She's aware. BETH, 30s, pretty and bright makes tea in the kitchen area.

BETH

The cliché question is how does it feel to be one hundred?

ROSE

Am I that old? Lord, I don't feel that old.

BETH

It's a fact. You're a century old, and you're the oldest person on the planet.

ROSE

Oh no, that can't be true.

BETH

It is. You're the last of those born before the purge. Do you remember before the purge?

ROSE

Oh my, yes. Things were so much different then. I remember when women weren't allowed to drive or even vote. Am I really the last woman to remember?

Beth hands Rose a cup of tea.

BETH

Are you excited?

ROSE

About what?

BETH

Rebirth. What are you going to choose?

ROSE

I don't know. Is it important?

BETH
 Mom, it's the most important
 decision of your life. Well, of
 this life. Haven't you been
 counseled?

ROSE
 Counseled?

BETH
 It's part of the process. Someone
 tells you the options you have.

ROSE
 Oh, that, I guess I was counseled
 if that's what you mean.

BETH
 Then, you know what you want?

ROSE
 I want to finish my tea.

BETH
 Don't be difficult. How can they
 prepare your next vessel if you
 won't tell them what you want?

ROSE
 Who says I want another 'vessel'.

BETH
 Everyone gets another vessel. It's
 how you continue to live.

ROSE
 And living is so important? I knew
 lots of people who didn't keep on
 living.

BETH
 Before the purge, mom, before the
 purge.

ROSE
 Purge, smurge, nothing makes sense
 any more.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Rose, in wheelchair, in the middle of a green space
 surrounded by trees in bloom. As pretty a spring day as you
 might wish.

To one side on a bench, MIKALA, 40s, thin, bespectacled, intense. She starts the recording app on her phone and holds it close to catch Rose's voice.

MIKALA

I'm here with Rose, the last living person who remembers life before the purge. This is her birthday and her time of rebirth. Rose, before you move into your next incarnation, can you tell us what it was like before the purge?

ROSE

What was it like? I guess you could say it was harder in a way. I mean, women were different then. Oh, not totally different. It was just that they had to be more careful. And they had to worry about getting pregnant. Lots of women worried about that. Whether they could or they couldn't, they worried.

MIKALA

Were you married then?

ROSE

Yes, most of us were. We used to have dances and parties.

MIKALA

We still have those.

ROSE

But without men. We had men before the...whatever it was.

MIKALA

The purge. What else was different? What do you remember?

ROSE

Football. There were football games on TV, and thousands of people would go to the stadium to watch the game. I went just before the plurge. The redskins beat the giants, and most of the people booed because the giants were the better team. They also had the best cheerleaders. Could those girls dance.

INT. CLINIC - HALL - DAY

Beth pushes Rose down the hall of an immaculate, bright, sterile clinic, something straight out of the finest hospital.

Beth stops and comes around to sink to one knee in front of Rose. Beth takes Rose's hands.

BETH

We're going in, and that will change everything. Mom, I...I want you to know that no matter what you choose, I'll always love you. You're the best mom a person could have.

ROSE

We've been together a long time, haven't we?

BETH

Twice, mom, I've lived with you twice.

Rose lays her hands on Beth's head.

ROSE

I love you, Elizabeth. I love you.

INT. CLINIC OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Bright, white, a large screen dominates one wall. Rose, in her chair, faces the black screen all alone. She seems a bit confused and anxious, grasping the arms of her chair.

Into the room comes HEATHER, 30s, pretty and trim in her white lab coat. She carries a tablet and a smile.

HEATHER

Good afternoon, Rose, how are you?

ROSE

Tired.

HEATHER

We'll take care of that soon. I believe you have received counseling about rebirth.

ROSE

I want to go home.

HEATHER

I'm afraid that's not possible. You are one hundred today, and that's the limit. You must rebirth. It's the law.

ROSE

It's a stupid law.

HEATHER

Perhaps, but we're not here to debate the law. We're here to rebirth you into your new vessel.

ROSE

What's wrong with the vessel I have?

HEATHER

Since this is your first rebirth, I'll explain the procedure. We have mapped your brain and recovered all your memories.

ROSE

All of them?

HEATHER

Those memories have been aggregated in years beginning on every birthday. There are never many memories before age five, so age five is the youngest vessel you can choose. After that, annual aggregations occur up to age fifty. That is the oldest vessel you may choose.

Rose looks totally lost. Heather smiles and pats Rose's arm.

HEATHER

Think of it this way. If you want to rebirth as a thirty year old, your memories from birth to age 30 will be implanted in your new vessel. You will look, feel, and remember like a thirty year old.

ROSE

What happens to the rest of my memories?

HEATHER

They are lost. After all, you're going to create new memories as you live out your life.

ROSE

I want to be a hundred.

HEATHER

The oldest vessel you may choose is fifty.

ROSE

And that means I lose half my memories?

HEATHER

I'm afraid so.

ROSE

Why don't you just let me die?

HEATHER

Rebirth is a way to live many lifetimes and always create new memories. Now, I'm going to show you available vessels. Please watch the monitor.

Heather taps some keys on her tablet, and the big screen comes alive. On it, a perfect fifty-year-old woman.

HEATHER

This is the end of the line, our fifty vessel. If you choose this one, you'll rebirth in five years.

Rose stares at the image, and it's clear she's not exactly thrilled.

HEATHER

Is it true that you have memories of before the purge?

ROSE

You mapped or gathered or whatever, you should know.

HEATHER

All memories are private. This is our forty-five vessel.

A perfectly formed forty-five-year-old woman appears on the screen.

HEATHER

All vessels last for five years.
Small changes occur every year,
but a complete swap happens every
five.

The screen changes again.

HEATHER

I'm showing these in descending
order. Stop me when you see a
shell you want to choose or further
explore.

Rose studies the screen as the images change, and she's none
too happy.

HEATHER

If I may intrude, what do you
remember best about your time
before the purge.

ROSE

I remember men, boys, males.
That's what I remember best.

HEATHER

Society is so much better, more
calm since the purge, don't you
agree?

ROSE

Calm wasn't always what we wanted.

The images continue, but Rose seems uninterested. Then, her
eyes light up.

ROSE

That one. That one.

HEATHER

Are you sure?

ROSE

If I have to re-born, that's it.

HEATHER

I'll make arrangements.

INT. BETH'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Beth sits at the table. She uses a tiny brush to paint a
minute flower on a tea cup.

ROSE (O.S.)
Mom, where are my shoes.

BETH
Exactly where you left them. And
I'm not your mom. I'm your
daughter Beth.

Into the room bounds Rose in a ten-year-old vessel. Very short hair, jeans, tee, she looks like an old time tomboy. She goes to a drawer and pulls out a short knife which she sticks in her pocket.

BETH
Lunch is almost ready.

ROSE
I'm not hungry.

BETH
What do you need a knife for?

ROSE
There's a hawk's nest in a tree,
and I figure Mrs. Hawk might not
like me peeking.

BETH
You shouldn't climb trees.

ROSE
(heading for door)
If the chicks have hatched, I'm
going to take one and raise my own
hawk.

BETH
Don't you dare!

But Beth is too late. Rose is gone.

BETH
Where does she get these ideas?

Shaking her head, Beth paints.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Rose runs across the yard and down the sidewalk, as happy as can be.

FADE OUT.