

Terminal

by Abbey St. Brendan

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

This is an antiseptic white waiting room, all in white with plush SEATS and bland art on the walls. It is empty. A PANEL OF LIGHTS by the only DOOR blinks yellow - then a change of camera angle reveals THOMAS MARCANTONINI (60's, distinguished) standing here, dressed in stark white scrubs. The panel of lights goes then green, then Thomas's daughter, HOLLY (30's, tall and strong) enters. She stops as the door shuts and stares at him.

HOLLY

D... Dad?

THOMAS

Hey, kid. How are you doing?

HOLLY

I've been better. Dad? How... How are YOU? Are you all there?

She reaches for him but he pulls away slightly.

THOMAS

Sorry. Can't touch. But I think so. I feel fine, for the moment. Sit?

Thomas gestures at a couple of seats. Holly hesitates, then sits, and Thomas joins her. They sit for a moment, with Holly just staring at him with a half-afraid expression.

THOMAS

What? Am I covered with spiders or something?

HOLLY

'Or something'. I just didn't think I'd be able to talk to you again after your accident.

THOMAS

Well, here we are. And I hear you came a long way to see me and we don't have much time, so... spit it out.

HOLLY

It's not easy. I haven't talked to you in a long time, and the reasons for that haven't... haven't gone away.

Thomas looks away for a moment.

THOMAS

Of course they haven't. You always carry them around with you.

HOLLY

Okay, see, that was part of it right there.

THOMAS

It's just true.

HOLLY

Dad, you hurt me. A lot. You don't get to dismiss it, dismiss ME, out of hand any more.

Thomas shrugs and seems to lose some interest.

THOMAS

I always did my best for you and your sisters. That's all I can do.

HOLLY

No, it ISN'T. You can also LISTEN.

THOMAS

Listen to what? Complaining? Another 'oh pity me' speech? Christ, I thought we were done with that when you moved out.

HOLLY

There it is. There it is right there. The dismissal, the contempt. Why did it never occur to you to wonder WHY I was unhappy?

THOMAS

I did everything I could for you and it was never enough. You had everything you could need.

HOLLY

Physically, maybe. Not emotionally. Do you not even remember the things you said? Calling me fat, calling me lazy?

THOMAS

You were. It was for your own good.

HOLLY

You called me your biggest failure!

THOMAS

That was on me. You were my biggest failure as a father.

Holly shoots to her feet, tears in her eyes.

HOLLY
I AM NOT A FAILURE.

Thomas stands too

THOMAS
No, I didn't mean-

HOLLY
(crying freely)
You taught me to hate myself. You
taught me I could never be anything
worthwhile.

THOMAS
I was trying to make you strong!

HOLLY
You BROKE me. You taught me it was
okay to hurt me. Then they DID, and
I didn't know how to make it stop!

THOMAS
I... I... I'm sorry.

HOLLY
What?

THOMAS
I'm sorry. I didn't know. I only
wanted the best for you. I mean it.

A moment. Holly reaches for his hand, then stops herself.

HOLLY
Thank you. That's what I needed.

She heads for the door.

HOLLY
Goodbye, Dad.

THOMAS
Bye, kid.

Suddenly his affect changes to 'robotic service drone'

THOMAS
And thank you for choosing Memory
Lane Post-Mortem Reproductions.
Have a nice day.

As Holly leaves, the lights dim, and Thomas's form flickers
like a bad signal and winks out.