

The Afterlife Transit Office
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SETTING: An office/waiting room type area. A MARGOT sits behind a desk, typing. A man is laying flat on his back on the floor.

AT RISE: The man on the floor sits up and gasps as if he has just risen from his grave.

TOM:

What the - ?

MARGOT:

Number 8,500,946. 8,500,946.

(He looks around, confused and points to himself.)

Yes, you.

(He timidly approaches her. She's overly cheery.)

Welcome to the after life transit office. I will be your liaison to What Lies Ahead. If you'll just –

TOM:

I'm sorry, did you say 'after life?'

MARGOT:

Yes, please don't interrupt. If you'll just answer a few questions then I'll be able to determine which path your soul is destined to take. I just need to verify some information.

TOM:

So, I'm...I died?

MARGOT:

(She looks him up and down.)

Yes.

(She pulls out a stack of paperwork. She checks off items as she reads them off.)

TOM:

How?

MARGOT:

(Checking the paperwork.)

Um...hit by a taxi.

TOM:

Oh...but I –

MARGOT:

All questions of “why me” and “how could this happen” can be answered when you get to your final destination. Now, let’s see...

(She checks the paperwork.)

You were called...*Thomas* in your living body, correct?

TOM:

Um...yes. Thomas Sawyer. Tom.

(She raises her eyebrow.)

Yeah, I know...

MARGOT:

Ok, good. You were most recently...thirty-six?

TOM:

Yeah, my birthday was last month...

MARGOT:

Isn’t that nice. Happy belated birthday. Ok, good citizen. Full-time job. Gave to the needy. Oh, that’s wonderful, good for you. Religion...oh, dear.

TOM:

What?

MARGOT:

You’re listed as Agnostic.

TOM:

Yeah, that’s right.

MARGOT:

Sir, you don’t have a final destination.

TOM:

I'm sorry?

MARGOT:

Well if there is no place for you to go, then I can't send you anywhere.

TOM:

What do you mean?

MARGOT:

Every religion has a designated "destination." Even Atheists. It's not glamorous, but it's something.

TOM:

But what about *me*?!

MARGOT:

(Sighing.)

Let me try to explain this to you...Agnostics have nothing concrete; they don't have any solid beliefs. They're all...wishy-washy...

TOM:

Excuse me?

MARGOT:

I'm sorry to be so crass, but it's just the nature of these things. I just can't send you anywhere. You understand.

TOM:

Um. No. I don't.

MARGOT:

But...I just explained it to you...

TOM:

Look, lady...I'm dead, apparently, at thirty-six. I was a nice guy. I helped out everyone I could in my life, and you're telling me that I have nowhere to go now because my religion is too "wishy-washy" for you!? What the hell!?

MARGOT:

Ooh...sorry... Hell is reserved for Christians.

(Beat. TOM tries to keep his cool.)

TOM:

Ok. Fine. Then...I change my religion.

MARGOT:

I'm sorry?

TOM:

I change it. I believe in heaven now.

MARGOT:

You can't just do that...

TOM:

Well, I did. Send me to heaven. Or hell. I don't even care at this point.

MARGOT:

I can't do that, sir.

TOM:

Why not!?

MARGOT:

It's against policy.

TOM:

It's against...fine...Fine, just...what do I do? I can't be the first Agnostic you've gotten...

MARGOT:

Let's see...

(She clicks away at the computer.)

I can request a religion transfer permit if you would like.

TOM:

Great, that sounds great. Let's do that.

MARGOT:

Ooh...it'll take a few years to process, though. Do you still want to fill it out?

TOM:

Years?! What am I supposed to do until then!?

MARGOT:

Hmm... We do have an opening in the Ghost Department.

TOM:

Ghost Department...

MARGOT:

It'll only be temporary. Just until the paperwork goes through for the transfer.

TOM:

(With exasperation.)

Fine.

MARGOT:

Ok, great. And what religion would you like to transfer to today?

TOM:

Um... Catholic, I guess?

MARGOT:

Ooh... you don't have the proper background for that one.

(He stares at her.)

Lots of ceremonies. Incense, holy water, vanilla wafers... the paperwork is insane.

TOM:

Great, ok then, um... Atheist, then.

MARGOT:

Ok... we can make that work. Wonderful. That's done. I'll send that out with tomorrow's mail.

TOM:

You can't do it today?

MARGOT:

Ooh, sorry... mail went out just before you got here.

TOM:

Great...

MARGOT:

Let me just find the paperwork for the Ghost Department...ah, here we go.

(She pulls out a stack of papers.)

You'll need to fill these out.

(She hands him papers one by one.)

There's the haunting location sheet; the soul-insurance coverage option, it's optional, but I highly recommend that one; the Type-of-Ghost request form...

TOM:

There are different types?

MARGOT:

Well, you could be an orb. Or a vortex. Not much fun in that. That's more for damned or incomplete souls. Again, wishy-washy. And then there are full-body manifestations. That's you as a whole. And...then there are poltergeists, but you need a special permit for that.

TOM:

Why?

MARGOT:

Well, you have the ability to take partial-corporeal form in order to pick up objects, you know? That paperwork takes much longer to process. Plus liability in case you damage anything that wasn't actually your own property.

TOM:

This is insane...

MARGOT:

It's not that bad.

TOM:

I just didn't realize dying required so much paperwork...

MARGOT:

You should see what they have to fill out in the mortal realm when you die. Good grief.

(She picks up a phone and dials.)

Denise? Hey, it's Margot. Yes, another one. I'm sending him down with the paperwork. Great, thanks! Haha, right? Ok...mmbye.

(She hangs up.)

Ok! You are all set here. Take these forms down the hall. You'll see a sign that says, "Ghost Department." Follow that doorway, ignore the screaming, they just want attention. When you get to the end there will be a glowing doorway on your right, take the next one down. Unless you'd rather be sucked into a vortex.

TOM:

I –

MARGOT:

When you get there ask for Denise. She'll take care of you.

TOM:

Ok...thanks.

(He shuffles off with his paperwork. He looks back at MARGOT, shrugs, and exits.)

MARGOT:

(She sighs and shakes her head.)

Tom Sawyer...good grief.

(Blackout.)