

THE DAY I DIE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER YARD - DAY

CHARLIE, 16 years old, is in his third year in the Juvenile Detention Center. He has bruises all over him, and half of his face is slightly swollen.

He is sitting down on the ground with his back up against the wall. Knees up to his chest and arms wrapped around them.

A group of teenagers are playing basketball on the court. The players are arguing about bad calls and missed shots as the guards look on.

Charlie looks up and stares intensely at the sky that has almost no clouds except for one.

CHARLIE  
(To the Guard)  
How much time do I have?

The GUARD is standing by the wall a few feet from Charlie.

GUARD  
You're due in about 5 minutes.

Charlie looks down at the ground.

CHARLIE  
What day is it today?

GUARD  
June 7th.

Charlie stands up.

CHARLIE  
I'm ready now.

The Guard proceeds to put cuffs on his wrists and ankles.

INT. PARK - DAY

Flashback.

The day is hot, and the sky is all clear except for one lone cloud. People are having a cookout with music blasting all through the park. Dancing, eating, drinking, laughing, conversations, and kids running around playing.

Charlie, 4 years old, is standing behind a tree, watching all the things around him.

"Electric Boogie" By Marcia Griffiths plays on the speaker.

LINDSEY (Late teens), Charlie's mother, is dancing and laughing with her family doing the electric slide. She is wearing a light blue sundress with white flip flops and her hair slicked back in a ponytail.

RANDOM FAMILY MEMBER  
Go Lindsey!

Lindsey grabs the hand of her MOTHER, who is sitting in a white plastic chair.

LINDSEY  
Come on and dance, mom!

LINDSEY'S MOTHER pulls her hand away.

LINDSEY'S MOTHER  
No, you better go on heffa.

LINDSEY  
(Laughing)  
Really mom?

LINDSEY'S MOTHER  
You better go get my grandson  
before he runs off.

LINDSEY  
My baby would never.

Lindsey runs towards the tree where Charlie is standing behind. She squats down.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
(Smiling)  
Are you ready to meet everybody, my  
sweet boy?

Charlie shakes his head in the no motion.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Ah, you are so beautiful.

Charlie smiles.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Come on, Charles. Come with momma.

"Always Be My Baby" By Mariah Carey plays on the speakers.

Lindsey picks up Charlie into the caress of her right arm.  
She starts to dance with Charlie in her arm.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
(Singing to Charlie)  
We were as one, babe, for a moment  
it time, and it seemed everlasting.  
That you would always be mine.

Lindsey twirls around, and Charlie is laughing.

LINDSEY'S MOTHER  
Is that my grandson?

Lindsey puts up Charlie's right hand.

LINDSEY  
Wave hi to grandma.

Lindsey puts Charlie down and bends down to dance with him,  
holding his hands.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Happy Birthday my beautiful boy.  
(Singing)  
Boy, don't you know you can't  
escape me? Oh, darling, 'cause  
you'll always be my baby. And we'll  
linger on.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Flash Forward.

The Guard escorts Charlie to an office within the detention center. Three people are sitting and waiting. OFFICER CAMPBELL, SHEYLA NICHOLAS, and MICHAEL. Officer Campbell and Michael are sitting at the desk adjacent to Sheyla.

MICHAEL  
(To Officer Campbell)  
He won't make it on the outside.

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
You haven't even given him a chance-

Charlie enters the room, and the three quickly stop talking.

He stares at them with an annoyed look.

Officer Campbell, Sheyla, and Michael all stand up.

OFFICER CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
Charlie! Welcome! Please sit.

Officer Campbell extends his left hand near the chair.

MICHAEL  
Guard, please take the cuffs off of him.

GUARD  
Can't. He is a danger to himself and others.

SHEYLA  
I'm sorry. How is he dangerous?

GUARD  
He tried to kill himself five weeks ago.

Charlie looks down at the floor. The Guard lifts up Charlie's right arm to reveal a scar on that indicates self-harm.

SHEYLA  
You didn't answer my question.

GUARD  
He could harm himself again.

SHEYLA  
While four others are present?

Sheyla looks at Charlie.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
Charles, will you harm yourself during this meeting?

Charlie just stares.

Sheyla looks at the Guard with an angry look.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
Take them off of him, kindly. Thank you.

The Guard takes off the cuffs from Charlie's wrist and ankles and sits him down in the chair. He then proceeds to stand next to him.

MICHAEL  
Is that necessary?

SHEYLA  
(To the Guard)  
Please wait outside.

The Guard hesitates and walks out the door.

Sheyla looks at Charlie. Officer Campbell and Michael sit down.

MICHAEL  
Charles... I have good news and bad news. Which one do you want first?

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
(Clears his throat)  
Charlie.

MICHAEL  
Excuse me?

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
My man will only answer if you use Charlie.

Michael puts his head back just a little.

MICHAEL  
That's right. Charlie... I have good news and bad news. Which one do you want first?

CHARLIE  
It doesn't matter

MICHAEL  
Right. Well, you're getting out of here soon-

CHARLIE  
What's soon?

MICHAEL  
Let me finish, okay - But you have to see a psychologist -

Michael points at Sheyla.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
via Sheyla.

SHEYLA  
Don't point at me. Lawyers aren't supposed to point at people.

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
Yeah, that's quite rude, man.

Michael pauses and holds up his palms.

Sheyla reaches out to shake Charlie's hand. Charlie shakes her hand.

MICHAEL  
Sorry, my bad.

SHEYLA  
(To Charlie)  
My name is Sheyla Nicholas, and I am the new psychologist here at the center. It is nice to finally meet you, Charles.

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
(Clearing his throat)  
Charlie.

SHEYLA  
His name is Charles on my records.

Charlie laughs.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
(To Charlie)  
Oh, you're enjoying this?-

Charlie shakes his head, yes. Everyone is laughing.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
Okay, Okay. I love this energy from you.

MICHAEL  
Okay, back to what I was saying. And probation, aka community service. This is terrific news, Charles.

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
(Coughs)  
Charlie.

MICHAEL  
Charlie. I am telling you. You are getting a second chance at life. Myself and Officer Campbell, have worked tirelessly to make this happen.

OFFICER CAMPBELL

Yeah-

Michael goes for a high five-

OFFICER CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

-He worked all but one hour on this  
while I was doing the hard work.

-Charlie denies him.

MICHAEL

I work with so many people.

CHARLIE

I don't want one.

MICHAEL

No, no, no. Charlie, we talked  
about this. You wanted this for the  
longest of times-

SHEYLA

Wait, wait. Hold on, Michael.

(To Charlie)

You don't want a second chance?  
Others in your position would run  
over mountains to get the  
opportunity you have.

Charlie starts to slump in his chair.

Charlie looks down and has his right hand in the palm of his  
left with his left thumb in the palm of his right.

CHARLIE

I don't deserve it.

Everyone pauses.

MICHAEL

But-

CHARLIE

(Cries)

I don't want it! Guard!

The Guard comes in and cuffs him.

INT. CELL - DAY

Charlie is lying in his cell as the Guard looks on. He pulls  
out a picture of him and his mother at the park.



He stares at the picture as tears start to form. Gently rolling down his face from the corner of his eyes down to the bed.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Flashback.

Charlie is 6 years old. Lindsey, his mother, is in front of the school, dropping him off on his first day.

She squats down to fix his hat.

LINDSEY

Ah, Charles! My sweet boy! You are so beautiful, you know that?

CHARLIE

I don't want to go to school!

Charlie crosses his arms.

LINDSEY

Why not, sweetie?

Charlie holds his finger.

CHARLIE

(Pouting)

I hurt my finger.

LINDSEY

Aww, sweetie.

Lindsey grabs his finger and kisses it.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

Is that better?

Charlie is still pouting and crosses his arms once more.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

Charles, you have to go to school.

Charlie shakes his head.

CHARLIE

No!

Lindsey briefly puts her head down.

LINDSEY  
 Mommy has to go to the doctor  
 today, okay? I will be back to pick  
 you up.

Lindsey tickles Charlie's waist. They both laugh. She kisses  
 Charlie.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
 I love you, my sweet boy.

They hug.

CHARLIE  
 I love you too, mommy.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Charlie is in Sheyla's office.

SHEYLA  
 We have been at this for one month,  
 and you have been avoiding me,  
 Charles.

Charlie laughs.

CHARLIE  
 Charlie.

SHEYLA  
 Excuse me?

CHARLIE  
 I earned the name, so you might as  
 well use it.

SHEYLA  
 I go by the name your mother gave  
 you. That's what you told me,  
 right? Your mother gave you that  
 name?

CHARLIE  
 Yeah.

SHEYLA  
 The topics we have discussed have  
 been the happenings of this center,  
 but what about your parents,  
 Charles? Your mother? Your father?

Charlie looks down at the ground. He then looks up at her and is visibly sad.

CHARLIE

My mom's gone. She died when I was nine. God took her away from me as punishment.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Lindsey is in the doctor's office, waiting for the doctor to come in.

DOCTOR SHELBY comes into the room and swiftly sits.

DOCTOR SHELBY

Hi Lindsey. My name is Doctor Shelby, and I am the-

LINDSEY

Can you just skip to it, please?  
I'm sorry... but please.

Doctor Shelby has a concerned look on his face.

DOCTOR SHELBY

Right. Lindsey, it is great that you came to get checked out. Umm-

Lindsey starts tearing up.

SHEYLA

Please.

DOCTOR SHELBY

Cancer has, unfortunately, progressed to stage 4.

LINDSEY

Stage 4 what.

DOCTOR SHELBY

Cancer of the breast.

LINDSEY

I'm nineteen.

DOCTOR SHELBY

It is extremely rare that someone your age has this type of cancer and that it has progressed to this stage. I'm so sorry.

Lindsey breaks down, crying.

LINDSEY

What about my son? He's 6 years old. I just dropped him off at school.

DOCTOR SHELBY

You can fight this- With chemotherapy and-

LINDSEY

Chemo?

DOCTOR SHELBY

Yes.

LINDSEY

What's the rate?

DOCTOR SHELBY

Less than twenty-five percent.

Lindsey cries into her hands. Endlessly sobbing.

LINDSEY

Tell me you're joking. I beg of you.

Doctor Shelby gets up and walks over to Lindsey and touches her right shoulder.

DOCTOR SHELBY

I will let the nurse help set up a treatment for chemotherapy. Take all the time you need and good luck.

Doctor Shelby walks out the room.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Lindsey walks into the school to pick up Charlie. She is visibly upset. Face red, and cheeks are wet from crying. She sniffles and wipes her eyes.

Charlie sees her and runs to her. Lindsey squats down.

CHARLIE

Mommy!

Charlie runs into her arms.

LINDSEY  
My Charles.

She holds him tightly. Charlie notices her upset.

CHARLIE  
What's wrong, mommy?

Lindsey stares at him and smiles. She stays strong for Charlie.

LINDSEY  
Everything's fine.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Charlie is now 17 years old and in Sheyla's office.

SHEYLA  
Why do you say that?

CHARLIE  
I didn't know at the time. I was too naive.

SHEYLA  
You were a child, Charlie. Your mind couldn't comprehend.

CHARLIE  
She stayed strong through everything to raise me right and keep me happy.

SHEYLA  
You blame yourself?

CHARLIE  
Yeah.

SHEYLA  
Why?

CHARLIE  
I knew she was suffering, but I was defensive. My dad used to beat her.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Flashback

STEVEN and Lindsey are arguing while Charlie, 4 years old, is watching TV.

LINDSEY  
I should've never met you!

STEVEN  
Shut up! Nobody told you to mess  
with me.

Lindsey starts crying.

LINDSEY  
I'm packing my things!

STEVEN  
Good! Get the hell out.

Lindsey walks to the room.

LINDSEY  
I'm taking Charles.

STEVEN  
Oh no, you're not.

Steven squats down next to Charlie. Charlie looks directly into his eyes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
She trying to take you from me.  
You're my son. You wouldn't be in  
this world without me!

Lindsey comes rushing out of the room and goes to grab Charlie when Steven grabs her and pushes her to the ground.

LINDSEY  
Stop! Steven, please!

Charlie goes back to watching TV.

STEVEN  
You're not taking my son! Your bags  
are pack so dip!

Lindsey gets up and goes to grab Charlie once again.

Steven punches her on the left of her face and falls to the ground. He then goes on top of her and holds her down.

LINDSEY  
Help!

STEVEN  
Nah, you not taking my son.

LINDSEY  
I wish I never met you!

STEVEN  
(Laughing)  
You just some stupid hoe that  
wanted some pipe.

He punches her again.

LINDSEY  
Stop!

Charlie turns and looks at them. He stands up and heads to  
the bedroom.

Lindsey looks at him.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Charles! Baby!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Charlie bends over in the chair, puts his hands to his face,  
and rubs up and down.

CHARLIE  
My mom had me when she was  
fourteen. My pops was nineteen. She  
raised me while going to school,  
and then she gave it up to be with  
my pops.

SHEYLA  
Do you hate your father?

CHARLIE  
Yes. I despise him. He never loved  
my mom. He just used her. She  
stayed with him because of me.

SHEYLA  
Why do you say that?

CHARLIE  
I think she just wanted me to be in  
a household with two loving  
parents.

Charlie starts to cry.

SHEYLA  
Why are you crying Charlie?

CHARLIE  
Because I let her down, and I let  
God down. I get out in three months-

SHEYLA  
A second chance-

CHARLIE  
-I don't deserve it.

SHEYLA  
Yes, you do. You have made  
fantastic progress. Don't put  
yourself down when you are so close  
to freedom from this damn place,  
Charlie.

Charlie looks down.

SHEYLA (CONT'D)  
God loves and forgives you.

Charlie smirks slightly.

CHARLIE  
Impossible, I have done so many  
horrible things in my life.

The Guard comes in and says that their time is up.

SHEYLA  
Excuse me? We're not done.

GUARD  
Time's up.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Charlie, 18 years old, exits from the center and walks onto  
the sidewalk. Sheyla, Office Campbell, and Michael greet him.

Charlie smiles.

SHEYLA  
Is that Charlie smiling?!

OFFICER CAMPBELL  
Oh my goodness, is it.



CHARLIE  
Man, shut up.

Charlie goes to hug each of the three, one by one.

MICHAEL  
Ready for another chance at life?

CHARLIE  
Nah, Yeah, I am actually.

EXT. CAR - DAY.

Lindsey is driving on the highway with Steven sitting in the passenger seat and Charlie, 6 years old, in the back.

Steven and Lindsey are arguing.

STEVEN  
Yo, take me back!

Steven tries to take control of the wheel. Lindsey quickly pushes his hand away.

LINDSEY  
Stop! We can crash!

STEVEN  
I don't care!

Steven pulls the car out of the ignition, and the car violently comes to a stop. Lindsey's head hits the wheel, and the airbag activates. She has a laceration just above her right eye.

Without a second thought, she turns around to check on Charlie.

LINDSEY  
Oh, my goodness! Charles! My baby,  
are you okay?!

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

"So They Say" By Lalah Hathaway plays.

Charlie, 21 years old, frantically runs into the hospital. He has blood running down his arm. He talks to a woman at the main desk.

CHARLIE  
Does Sheyla Nicholas work here?

WOMAN AT DESK

Yes, she does. What can she do for you?

CHARLIE

Tell her it's Charles and that my father was killed. I don't want to live anymore, man.

Charlie breaks down, crying and falls to the floor and up against the desk.

WOMAN AT DESK

Okay! Just calm down. I will get her.

The nurses come to his aid, but he denies it.

CHARLIE

Leave me alone!

Sheyla runs to him.

SHEYLA

Charlie! Charlie!

Sheyla quickly drives onto the floor to comfort him,

CHARLIE

My father was killed! Sheyla, I never got to talk to him before he left. God hates me, man!

SHEYLA

No, that's not true!

Sheyla grabs him into her arms and hugs tight.

CHARLIE

I have no one left!

SHEYLA

You have me! You have me.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Flashback

Charlie, 6 years old, is at church with his mother. Lindsey is wearing a yellow dress with floral patterns and a big white hat.

They are standing in one of the aisles in the middle of the church—Charlie tugs at her dress.

CHARLIE  
I can't see mommy!

Lindsey lifts him up into her arms. Charlie is wearing a black suit.

LINDSEY  
My sweet boy. You know, Jesus loves you?

CHARLIE  
Yes, mommy.

LINDSEY  
Yes! And no matter what is going on in your life, run to Jesus, and he will catch you. God will take you up and love you.

CHARLIE  
Jesus?

LINDSEY  
Yes! God sent his one and only son Jesus Christ to die on the cross, so we will one day spend eternity with the Lord.

Lindsey begins to cry.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Lindsey is in the hospital bed with an IV and a machine attached to her that keeps track of her heartbeat. The beeping of the machine is loud.

She is extremely skinny.

Charlie, 9 years old, walks into the room and cries.

Lindsey has a slight smile on her face.

LINDSEY  
My beautiful boy. Come to momma, Charles.

Charlie runs to the right side of her bed near the window.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Nurse, can you sit me up? Thank you  
so much.

NURSE  
Of course.

The NURSE sits Lindsey up.

Lindsey cries and is having trouble looking Charlie in his  
eyes.

CHARLIE  
Mom? Why didn't you tell me?

LINDSEY  
I didn't want to hinder you, my  
son. I wanted you to have a  
childhood full of joy.

CHARLIE  
Mom, I am so sorry! I did this to  
you, didn't I?

LINDSEY  
Come here.

Lindsey wipes the tears from Charlie's face.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
Now, why you say that?

CHARLIE  
'Cause I stayed with dad and not  
you.

LINDSEY  
A boy needs his father.

CHARLIE  
I hate him!

LINDSEY  
Charles, there is not a day where I  
don't regret meeting your father.

Lindsey smiles.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)  
But if I hadn't met him, I would  
have never had you.  
(MORE)

LINDSEY (CONT'D)

You are the joy of my life. God has  
blessed me with you.

INT. SHEYLA'S OFFICE - DAY

Present-day.

Charlie is 23 years old.

Charlie and Sheyla are meeting in her office.

SHEYLA

Your final day here.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

SHEYLA

How do you feel?

CHARLIE

Happy.

Sheyla takes out a King James Holy Bible and a framed picture  
of him and his mother and hands it to Charlie.

SHEYLA

Happy Birthday, Charles.

Charlie tears up.

CHARLIE

Thank you, Sheyla.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Lindsey holds Charlie's right hand and then looks out the  
window. The sky is blue and almost has no clouds except for  
one.

Lindsey hands Charlie a journal.

LINDSEY

I know it isn't much, but Happy  
Birthday, my beautiful boy. I want  
you to write about everything you  
do. I have a feeling you will  
become sad, and I don't want that.

CHARLIE  
I don't want you to go!

LINDSEY  
I know, sweetie, but God will make  
you strong.

The beeping sound from the machine keeping track of her heartbeat stops. Silence overtakes the room as the doctors and nurses run in.

INT. BODEGA - DAY

Charlie walks into the bodega with his bible in hand. The bible is open to Psalms 27.

Charlie picks up a bag of chips and soda. He stands in line behind a MAN who is raising his voice.

MAN  
Shut up!

BODEGA OWNER  
Okay, I'm sorry. Take it.

The Man tries to run and bumps into Charlie, and a shot rings off.

The Man turns to him and is frozen. Charlie looks at him with a confused look.

The Man looks down at Charlie. Charlie looks down at the spot where the Man is looking.

Blood is flowing.

The Man runs out of the bodega.

Charlie drops to the ground.

The Bodega Owner grabs the phone to call 911.

BODEGA OWNER (CONT'D)  
Wait right there, sir! I am calling  
911.

Charlie is on his belly and turns over to his back, clutching his stomach. He then drags himself to the sidewalk.

He looks up at the blue sky, and it has no clouds.

CHARLIE

God, forgive me. I am ready to see  
her again.

END.