

5 DAYS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. ROBERTSON LIVING ROOM- SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

We open on a FRAME hanging on a wall. Inside the frame is picture of a YOUNG BOY with shaggy brown hair and a MIDDLE AGED WOMAN, smiling towards the camera. Next to it, another frame hangs with an crochet CLOTH with Isaac Asimov's three LAWS OF ROBOTICS stitched in swirly patterns.

WOMAN O.S.

No! Please, don't take him away!
This isn't fair!

The camera PANS to show TOBY ROBERTSON (17), the young boy from the photograph, now older with a better haircut, staring out the window, where his NEIGHBOR'S BOYFRIEND was screaming as he was getting taken away.

TOBY

Well, there goes Pat.

He turns away from the window and moves towards the living room, where CLAIRE, the older lady from the photograph, is watching TV in her arm chair.

Claire jumps out of her chair and walks past Toby towards the window.

CLAIRE

Oh no! Poor Susan! I should bring her some apple pie, she loves my apple pie.

(pause)

I didn't even know Patrick was up for termination.

Toby, now sitting in the chair that Claire occupied earlier, changes the channel on TV.

TOBY

Yeah, Suzy's been crying to all the neighbors since the notice came in last week. At least now she'll shut the fuck up and leave everyone alone.

CLAIRE

Tobias Robertson! That is not a nice thing to say about a woman that is losing her family!

(quieter)

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
How would you feel if my
termination notice came in
tomorrow?

Toby slowly turns to face Claire, about to respond, when the red government seal plays on TV.

He looks back at the TV, where a commercial is now playing.

Camera ZOOMS IN to the commercial. It shows a FAMILY of four running away from what looks like a PATROLLING SERVICE.

V.O. ON TV
The Smiths tried to outlive their
termination notice and run away
from the service.

The scene changes to the YOUNGEST GIRL in the family standing in a barn, a bloodied SHOVEL in her hand, surrounded by the dead bodies of the rest of her family.

V.O. ON TV (CONT'D)
Little Lucy was not turned in by
her termination date, and ended up
hurting her family. You don't want
to end up like the Smiths. Turn
your robot in on time to make sure
that no one gets hurt.

Little Lucy walks out of the barn with a smile, swinging the shovel around in circles.

Claire looks at Toby as he watches the commercial intently, wondering if he would turn her in if the day ever came.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. KITCHEN- NEXT DAY- MONDAY.

Claire dances around the kitchen to her favorite SONG, a nice pop number, as she cooks dinner.

A crisp, white ENVELOPE addressed to "Claire E. Robertson" falls through the letterbox on the door. Other than her name, it's blank on both sides, sealed with the formal-looking red seal from the TV commercial.

Claire picks up the envelope and tears it open, pulling the LETTER out and letting the empty envelope fall to the ground.

She opens up the letter and gasps, quickly folding it back up, grabbing the envelope from the ground, and burying them under a bunch of books in a nearby drawer.

She changes the song playing and continues preparing dinner.

INT. LIVING ROOM- THAT NIGHT

Claire and Toby sit at the dinner table, eating MAC N' CHEESE, Toby's favorite dish.

CLAIRE
So, how was school?

TOBY
(confused)
Fine, why?

CLAIRE
Just curious. We don't really talk about... things anymore.

TOBY
(confused)
Mom, are you okay? Did something happen?

Claire shakes her head and smiles at Toby.

CLAIRE
Patrick being taken away made me realize that the time we have together is limited. I just want us to spend whatever time we have left as a happy family.

Toby, now slightly suspicious, raises an eyebrow in question.

TOBY
Are you sure?

CLAIRE
(quickly)
Yes! Of course, everything is fine!
(stops and smiles)
I just want to get to know my boy better, now that you're all grown up!
(gesturing wildly)
Do you like the mac n' cheese? I know it's your favorite dish!

TOBY
Yeah, when I was like, seven, it
was.

 CLAIRE
 (frowning slightly)
Oh. I just thought you'd like it
and I wanted to do something
nice...

Toby sighs and puts a smile on his face.

 TOBY
It's fine, mom. It's great. I love
it.

Claire smiles back in satisfaction.

INT. KITCHEN- TUESDAY MORNING.

TITLE CARD: 5 DAYS TO TERMINATION

Toby walks down the stairs into the kitchen with his school bag on his shoulder. He sits down at the island and pours some cereal into a bowl.

Claire stands at the sink, unloading the dishwasher. She picks up a mug that Toby bought for her birthday; it has a picture of the two of them standing with their arms around each other, smiling.

Claire looks out the window above the sink and notices her neighbor, Susan, sitting on her porch and crying.

The sound of Patrick screaming is heard.

Claire freezes and the mug slips out of her hand. It smashes to pieces on the ground.

Toby runs over to her, carefully avoiding the ceramic shards.

 TOBY
Mom! Are you okay? Did you get
hurt?

Claire stares at the broken mug, tears rolling down her face.

 CLAIRE
Oh, Toby! Honey, I'm so sorry that
I dropped the mug! I'm so clumsy
today, I don't know what's wrong
with me.

Toby hugs Claire as she cries into his shoulder.

INT. TOBY'S ROOM- TUESDAY NIGHT.

TITLE CARD: 4 DAYS TO TERMINATION

Toby sits on his desk, working. The only sound that can be heard is the CLACKING of the keys on his LAPTOP.

His room is a mess- PAPERS strewn all over the desk, CLOTHES covering every inch of the floor, and days old PIZZA lying on the TABLE beside the bed.

The near-silence is disrupted by the ringing of his PHONE.

Toby looks at the caller ID, which says PRIVATE.

An automated voice on the other end of the phone is heard.

AUTOMATED VOICE

This is a call for Tobias Matthew
Robertson. Please confirm.

TOBY

Confirmed.

AUTOMATED VOICE

We failed to receive confirmation
about the termination pick-up of:
CLAIRE E. ROBERTSON. Please request
pick-up time.

TOBY

(confused)

Termination? What are you talking
about?

AUTOMATED VOICE

The termination notice for: CLAIRE
E. ROBERTSON has been issued.
Termination pick-up within: 3 days.
Please confirm.

Toby ends the call. He brings the phone down to look at the background- a picture of a beautiful woman, with long blonde hair and piercing green eyes, standing next a man that looks exactly like Toby would in his thirties, and a three year old Toby standing in between them, grinning a toothless smile at the camera. To the right of the family stands Claire, looking no different.

A tear rolls down Toby's face. He locks the phone and places it next to the pizza. He climbs on to his bed and curls up in a fetal position.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. KITCHEN- WEDNESDAY EVENING.

TITLE CARD: 3 DAYS TO TERMINATION

Claire stands by the stove, stirring something in a large pot. She looks impeccable, and hums as she cooks, but the song is a slow, sad one.

The door opens and Toby walks in with a backpack on his shoulder. He looks tense, deep in thought. He doesn't notice where he's going and walks into the dining table, the sharp end of the table hitting him in the hip.

TOBY

Ow, fuck!

Claire turns at the sound and rushes over to her son.

CLAIRE

Toby! Are you okay? You can't even walk without hurting yourself.

Toby just glares at her and walks past her, towards the refrigerator.

He drops his bag and opens the refrigerator door, pulling out a carton of milk. He takes a swig from the carton and walks past Claire to the living room.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

That's disgusting, Toby, you're not the only one that drinks the milk from that carton.

Toby stops and turns.

TOBY

(deadpan)

I will be, soon enough.

He continues walking to the living room.

Claire realizes that he knows.

CLAIRE
(nervously)
W-what are you talking about?

Toby sits down on the couch, and turns the TV on.

TOBY
Your termination.

Claire shuffles over to the couch and sits down next to Toby.

TOBY (CONT'D)
I got a phone call last night. From
the termination service. They
called because I didn't ask for a
termination pick-up.
(beat)
Why didn't you tell me?

She says nothing. Toby blinks back his tears and stands up.

TOBY (CONT'D)
(angrily)
Claire! Why did you lie to me?
Answer me- that's an order.

At those words, Claire's mechanism kicks in and she finds herself speaking against her will.

CLAIRE
(quickly)
I knew you would make me leave and
I don't want to leave you.

She takes in a breath, her control over her body restored after answering the command. She slowly looks up at Toby, who is now towering above her.

Claire rises quickly and grabs his hand.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I will never leave you, Toby. I
love you, you're my son.

Toby glances at their hands, which are two different colors, and then pulls his away.

TOBY
(quietly)
No, I'm not.

He looks at Claire.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Everyone leaves. They left. And
it's time for you to leave too.

INT. TOBY'S ROOM- THURSDAY.

TITLE CARD: 2 DAYS TO TERMINATION

As Claire begins cleaning up the papers from Toby's desk, her hand accidentally brushes across the mouse, and his computer screen wakes up.

Pulled up on the screen is a user manual for robots, and the top of the page reads "Manual Shutdown Procedure".

Claire stares at the screen for a few seconds, tears welling up in her eyes.

She turns away from the computer and dabs at her eyes as she walks out of his room.

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATER

Toby drops his bag on the floor next to the TV, sitting down in the arm chair and turning the TV on.

CLAIRE O.S.
Dinner's ready.

Toby gets up and heads towards the dining table, but there aren't any plates laid out like they usually are. He looks at Claire in confusion, who walks past him with a plate full of food.

TOBY
Where's my food?

CLAIRE
In the kitchen. Help yourself.

Claire sits down and begins eating.

Toby sighs and walks to the island, helping himself to some food, and sits down across the table from Claire.

They eat in silence.

TOBY
So... do anything fun today?

Claire looks at him.

CLAIRE

You need to do your laundry.

She goes back to eating her food.

Toby attempts to say something else, but decides against it.

I/E. OUTSIDE TOBY'S SCHOOL- DAY

TITLE CARD: TERMINATION DAY. 3PM

Claire sits in the driver's seat of her car, listening to music as she waits for Toby outside his school. In the backseat is a large suitcase.

Toby notices Claire waiting for him as he walks out of school, surprised to see her there. He says goodbye to his THREE FRIENDS and walks towards the car.

TOBY

Claire? What are you doing here?

Claire turns the volume down.

CLAIRE

Get in, we're going on a family vacation.

Toby looks at her, confused. She raises her eyebrow and motions for him to get in. He does.

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR- CONTINUOUS.

Claire keeps her eyes on the road as she drives.

TOBY

What's going on? Where are we going? You have to be at home for the pickup at 5pm, Claire.

Claire glares at him from the corner of her eye.

CLAIRE

Or what? You're going to shut me down yourself?

Toby sighs and closes his eyes. He lays his head back against the headrest.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(quietly)

Why?

TOBY

You know why. I have to.

Claire shakes her head.

CLAIRE

No, you don-

Toby's eyes snap open.

TOBY

Yes, I do! Or else you'll go crazy
and hurt me!

Claire looks Toby in the eyes.

CLAIRE

You don't know that.

TOBY

(sarcastically)

Okay, fine. So, what, we're going
to run away to some distant land
and live happily every after? You
know we can't do that. They can
find you.

CLAIRE

I know.

TOBY

So what's your plan, Claire? Where
are we going?

CLAIRE

I'm working on it.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING- 4PM

Claire and Toby are standing in the doorway of the living
room of a half-constructed apartment, in a building on the
outskirts of town, by the docks.

The room is bare, save for an old, tattered arm chair in the
far back, by a large window, and a small, round side table. A
thick layer of dust has settled on every available surface,
diluting all of the color that would have otherwise made the
room look more inviting.

The only sound that can be heard is the constant HAMMERING
going on in the neighboring lot.

Toby steps past Claire and looks around. He turns to face her.

TOBY
What are we doing here?

Claire gives him a tired smile, dropping her bag on the table.

CLAIRE
This might very well be my last
hour alive, and I wanted to spend
it with you.

TOBY
Why didn't we just go home?

She sits down and runs her fingers over the armrests, the dust clinging to her fingertips.

TOBY (CONT'D)
You can't run away from the
service, Claire.

She looks at Toby from the corner of her eyes.

CLAIRE
I think I just did.

TOBY
They'll find us. Or rather, they'll
find you.

Claire looks out the window, and then back at him.

CLAIRE
Why are you so adamant to send me
away, Toby?

TOBY
Because... because that's what I'm
supposed to do.

CLAIRE
But do you want to?

Toby's eyes widen. He casts his eyes downwards and stares at the floor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Why are you trying to push me away,
Toby?

He says nothing.

Claire stands, and walks towards him as she speaks.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you remember when we went to the amusement park on your seventh birthday? We got separated while walking through the crowds, and when I found you, you were so scared that you held on to my legs and made me promise to never leave you.

She stops in front of him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm trying to keep my promise, Toby. I won't leave you, not like they did.

Toby's head snaps up. He has tears in his eyes.

TOBY

Don't. Don't talk about them.

CLAIRE

They did love you, Toby. They ju-

Toby glares at her through his tears.

TOBY

Don't try to defend those monsters. They knew what they were doing.

CLAIRE

No, Toby, they had to leave! They did it to protect you!

He laughs humorlessly.

TOBY

Protect me?

(beat)

I was three years old, Claire. I had just started school. Do you know how hard it was for me to see the parents of all the other children come to pick them up after school, when all I had was a fucking robot?

(sneers)

My parents abandoned me before I was even old enough to understand what that meant.

(points at Claire)

(MORE)

TOBY (CONT'D)

And you! You tried to pretend like it was okay! You behaved as if nothing had happened. You tried to take over as my parents.

Claire takes a step towards Toby, now furious.

CLAIRE

(loudly)

What would you have done, Toby? What would you have done when a little three year old boy knocked on your door at 2 in the morning because he missed his mommy and daddy? What would you have said to that little boy?

TOBY

(yelling)

I wouldn't have pretended to be his parent if I was a fucking robot!

Claire goes silent.

CLAIRE

Is that all I am to you?

TOBY

Yes. You're a robot. And it's time for you to go back to the pile of scrap that you came from.

CLAIRE

(quietly)

I didn't leave you when you were three. Don't leave me now.

TOBY

We're born alone. We go through life alone. We die alone.

Claire looks at him for a few seconds before pulling out a PICTURE- the picture of the two of them from the living room.

CLAIRE

We're a family. We always have been. Don't do this to us.

Just then, the clock on Toby's phone changes to 5:00PM. An alarm goes off, which reads "CLAIRE TERMINATION".

Claire and Toby look at the alarm.

He shuts his phone off and walks past her, after grabbing the picture of them from her hands, to the large window by the chair. He stares out the window towards the blue sea, and then back at the picture.

Claire sits down against the wall, pulling her knees closer to her chest and holding them close.

There is SILENCE. The hammering outside has stopped.

Toby grips the picture of the two of them in his hand, ripping it slightly because of how tightly clenched his hand is.

TOBY

It doesn't matter what I want anymore.

CLAIRE

What are you talking about?

Toby stuffs the picture in his pocket and walks over to Claire.

TOBY

We're officially fugitives. And they know where we are because of that stupid chip in your arm.

Claire runs her fingers over a raised part of her left arm absentmindedly.

TOBY (CONT'D)

What were you thinking, Claire?

CLAIRE

(quietly)

I guess... I wasn't.

Toby sighs and sits down next to Claire, resting his head on her shoulder. She smiles slightly.

TOBY

You need to keep running.

Toby reaches out and grabs Claire's left arm.

TOBY (CONT'D)

And we need to do something about this.

Claire looks at him, confused.

TOBY (CONT'D)

They're probably already on their way here. And if you want to get away, then we need to get that chip out of your arm.

Claire snatches her hand away and gets up.

CLAIRE

Toby, you know what will happen if I take the chip out. There is no way I'm going to do that.

Toby stands up and takes a step closer to Claire.

TOBY

We have no choice. If they find us here, they're going to kill you.

(beat)

But if we get that out, you can keep running. You can get away.

CLAIRE

(louder)

I told you, I'm not doing that! End of discussion.

Toby snorts.

TOBY

Yeah, and the end of your life, too.

Claire glares at him.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Claire. Listen to me. What's the worst that could happ-

CLAIRE

(yelling)

If you take that chip out, Toby, that's it! I lose all my memories! I won't know you anymore! I won't remember you, or our entire life together!

Toby smiles.

TOBY

But you'll be alive.

Claire takes a few steps away from Toby, covering the area with the chip.

CLAIRE
No, Toby, I will not let you do
this!

Toby walks towards her.

TOBY
You don't have a choice. We don't
have a choice.

Toby lunges towards Claire, and she sidesteps him.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Stop running away, Claire! Let me
do it!

Claire moves further away from Toby, the fear in her eyes
clearly visible.

CLAIRE
Stay away from me, Toby. I don't
want to fight you, but I will not
let you do this!

TOBY
(softer)
Think about it, Claire. You want to
be a family, but how can we be a
family if you're dead?

Claire stops in her tracks.

CLAIRE
How can we be one if I don't
remember you?

Toby steps closer to Claire.

TOBY
I'd be happier knowing that you're
alive and safe, even if you don't
know who I am anymore.

She looks at him, now quiet.

CLAIRE
I can't let you do this. I won't.

Claire begins to move away from him.

Toby closes his eyes, a tear rolling down his face.

TOBY

I love you, mom. I'm sorry. You
left me no choice.

He takes two large strides in her direction, and grabs her hand before she can react. She tries to fight him off, slapping his arm.

TOBY (CONT'D)

(aggressively)
Stop moving. That's an order.

Claire freezes. Holding her arm firmly, he pulls the chip out of her arm, and Claire's eyes close. Toby steps away from Claire, and waits for her to wake up.

Claire's eyes open after a minute, and she looks at Toby, confused. She looks around the room, unsure of where she is.

CLAIRE

Where am I?
(looks at Toby with fear)
And who are you? What am I doing
here?

Toby picks up Claire's bag from the table and holds it out to her. She takes a step back hesitantly.

He takes a deep breath to calm himself down, and puts on a warm and trusting smile for her.

TOBY

Your name is Claire. And there is a
car downstairs with a bag full of
your stuff. You need to take the
car and get as far away from here
as you can.

CLAIRE

You haven't answered any of my
questions.
(beat)
Who are you? Where am I?

TOBY

I'm Toby. I'm your so- I'm a
friend. I'm trying to help you.

Claire looks at Toby, her resolve unwavering. She begins to question him further, when Toby cuts her off.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Please, just trust me. You're not
safe here. You need to leave.

Her gaze softens when she notices the pleading look in his eyes. She reaches out and takes the bag from his hands.

She heads towards the door, and stops in the doorway.

CLAIRE

I don't know why, but I have a feeling that you might be in trouble for helping me. Take care of yourself, Toby.

Toby nods and smiles.

TOBY

Stay safe, Claire.

She smiles back and leaves.

Toby pulls out the picture of the two of them, and looks at it wistfully. Just then, his phone rings.

VOICE

Is this Tobias Robertson?

TOBY

Yes, who is this?

VOICE

Sir, I am calling from the termination service. We are currently at your residence to carry out the termination pick up of Claire E. Robertson, but she does not seem to be at home, and her tracker has been offline for the last ten minutes. Do you know where she is?

Toby smiles.

TOBY

She's gone.

Toby hangs up and walks out of the building.

FADE TO BLACK.