

The First Sixty Minutes of Eternity

written by

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY**

A high rise apartment building looms in the distance.  
The back door of an older SUV is open, filled with boxes.  
JULIA (mid 30s) places a box marked "Makeup" into it.  
She's short and curvy.

JULIA  
I think that's everything.

**BARK!**

Julia turns and sees RAYLAN (large dog) walk up to her.  
Raylan's owner WADE BRAXTON (mid 30s, screenwriter) is next to him. He's tall with horn rim glasses. A t-shirt with an obscure heavy metal band hangs off of his wiry frame.  
A box marked "Printer supplies" is in his hands.  
She grabs the box from him and places it inside.  
He closes the door.

WADE  
So... what do we do?

They look around awkwardly.

JULIA  
How about a public screaming match  
that ends in tears?

WADE  
We already did that.

Beat

JULIA  
Take care of yourself.

WADE  
Drive safely.

She gets into her car and starts the engine.  
Wade and the dog walk back towards the apartment building.

Julia drives away.

Wade stops and watches it.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's a little late, buddy.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)  
She left behind her copy of "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." In a way it's close to a win, right?

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's the two-disc special edition.

Wade's phone rings. His caller ID reads "Mom."

**INT. BRAXTON FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY**

Small, quaint and suburban.

Wade's mother LINDSAY (mid 50s) looks at a lasagna dish in the oven, her phone on speaker.

She's short, looks older than she is.

WADE (V.O.)  
Hey mom.

Wade's father FRANK (mid 50s) walks in. He's tall, powerful and has a striking resemblance to his son.

LINDSAY  
How are you doing?

INTERCUT BETWEEN WADE AND LINDSAY

WADE  
She just drove away.

LINDSAY  
I'm so sorry.

WADE  
I thought she'd change her mind.

LINDSAY  
She wasn't the right one.

WADE  
I didn't see this coming.

Lindsay looks at Frank.

LINDSAY  
Do you want to talk to your father  
about this?

WADE  
I'm good.

Beat.

LINDSAY  
I don't like this between you two.

WADE  
We'll talk when I'm ready.

BARK!

LINDSAY  
How's the little man?

WADE  
He's good.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

A small two-bedroom apartment.

The most expensive thing in a room of cheap-looking furniture is a large, 4k smart television.

A retro video game system is on the floor next to it. Several controllers are on a small end table.

Next to a couch is a well-worn dog bed. Several toys are scattered around it.

A half dozen movie posters of various indie films are on the walls. All have "Written by Wade Braxton" on them.

Prominent on one of them is MARCUS (mid 20s, black) battling cheap CGI monsters. Marcus is tall, powerfully built and remarkably handsome.

A framed photo of Wade and Marcus, on set, is in the middle.

An older, cheap dining room table is crammed into a corner. The door opens, revealing Wade and Raylan. Raylan saunters over to the dog bed and lays down, asleep. Wade walks into a spare bedroom.

**INT. SPARE BEDROOM - DAY**

Two cheap desks are in each corner.

One has a laptop with several retro gaming stickers on it.

On the walls above it are framed title pages of ten different screenplays. All of them have labels, from "First finished feature" to "Blacklist 9." All were written by Wade.

A photo of Julia and Wade in happier times is prominent.

The other desk is empty, freshly cleaned and without a chair.

Wade walks in and sits down in his chair. His eyes spot the photo. He turns it face down.

His fingers quickly turn his computer on and pull up fancy screenwriting software. He clicks on "New."

"Fade in:" appears on the screen in an instant.

Wade stares at it for a long time.

His fingers type for a moment. He deletes it.

His eyes focus on the screen.

He types "INT" and stops. He quickly deletes it.

After a moment his phone rings.

Wade looks at the caller ID. It's "Bridget."

He answers it.

WADE  
Who passed this time?

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

Several fancy degrees and a framed Derek Jeter Yankees Jersey are on the wall.

BRIDGET (mid 50s, thick New York accent) sits behind a large executive desk in a large, throne-like leather chair.

She has short hair and a permanent scowl. A tailored business suit clings to her perfectly.

Downtown Los Angeles is visible through her windows.

BRIDGET  
Wicked Films wants to *make* "How  
Dark is My Valley."

INTERCUT BETWEEN BRIDGET AND WADE

Bridget looks out the window.

WADE  
Are you serious?

BRIDGET  
We're talking numbers right now. I  
should have a final offer to you in  
a couple of weeks.

WADE  
Julia said getting a nine on the  
Blacklist was just a number.

BRIDGET  
I had a client who got seven places  
to give us money for his nine.

WADE  
Did it get made?

BRIDGET  
He bought a house in Santa Monica  
with the second option.

WADE  
That's not answering the question.

BRIDGET  
It's in a drawer for another six  
months and then we go back out to  
get another check.

WADE  
I didn't write this to just let it  
sit in some asshole's drawer.

BRIDGET  
Not even for mid six figures?

Wade is stunned. He mouths a profanity.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

I love how the artist shit stops  
when the rubber hits the road.

(beat)

The short list of names they want  
to direct this is going to make  
your head explode.

WADE

I want to pitch for it.

BRIDGET

You don't have the resume.

WADE

Forty drafts and a pitch deck  
should be enough for a meeting.

BRIDGET

A major player wants to invest  
serious money into something you  
wrote on top of bringing in a top  
of the food chain director to make  
it a big tent pole feature. This  
could really screw it up.

WADE

They'll want to change it.

BRIDGET

It'll be for the better... art is a  
collaborative effort and I can  
assure you that whoever helms this  
will have lots of amazing ideas.

WADE

I don't know... it doesn't sound  
like the right deal.

BRIDGET

Do you hate the idea of paying your  
bills on time?

WADE

This is years of my life you're  
talking about, Bridget.

BRIDGET

And it can be in your drawer  
exactly as you like or on the big  
screen in a way you will be proud  
of, I guarantee.

WADE  
Are you sure?

Bridget sighs.

BRIDGET  
Once you see the check I'm going to  
get for you, you'll change your  
mind on this one.

WADE  
I hope you're right.

Bridget hangs up.

**INT. SPARE BEDROOM - DAY**

Wade pumps his fist. He goes through his contact list and  
pulls up Julia. His fingers go to press dial and then stop.

He mutters a profanity under his breath.

His eyes turns back to the computer.

His hands go to the keyboard.

Nothing.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. SPARE BEDROOM - DAY**

Wade stares at the same blank screen.

He hasn't shaved in a while.

Bridget calls him. He answers.

WADE  
I just got your email.

BRIDGET (V.O.)  
They made an offer that says "we  
are going to make this ASAP."

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

Bridget stares at paperwork on her desk.

INTERCUT BETWEEN BRIDGET AND WADE

Bridget glances at the first page.

WADE

I can be down there in a couple of hours to sign this.

Wade opens his email.

His eyes focus on a new message marked "HWIMV Offer."

BRIDGET

They're OK with DocuSign.

Wade opens the message up. He quickly scans it finding a PDF. His fingers double click, opening it up.

WADE

Whatever works, I guess.

He scrolls through a contract, settling on a large dollar amount. His eyes open wide.

BRIDGET

Brass tacks time: This is a five-year option with a couple of points on the backend that you won't worry about until after the film gets made and released.

(beat)

Deadline called me looking for a nice fluffy statement. My in house flack gave a very nice, eloquent and on brand response for you.

WADE

And Julia thought your cut was highway robbery.

BRIDGET

She isn't industry people.

(beat)

Are things better with you guys?

WADE

She moved out.

BRIDGET

I'm sorry.

(beat)

What's your schedule look like?

WADE

It's open... ish.

BRIDGET

I'm expecting a lot of calls about you tomorrow.

(beat)

What are you working on?

Silence.

WADE

I haven't written anything worth a damn in six weeks, five days, eight hours and--

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

--thirty seconds.

(beat)

But who's counting, right?

BRIDGET

You need to fix that.

WADE

You've got a half dozen scripts that are ready. I can pitch any of those and it'll be on brand.

Bridget sighs.

BRIDGET

I'm going to be selling you as a new visionary, a Sorkin for the next generation. He's always got something that he's working on and you need to be that way.

WADE

Aren't generals just "is this guy a psycho" kind of things anyway?

BRIDGET

It's about making the best possible impression and if they see you as this guy with so many ideas, maybe they say "what would you do with this billion dollar franchise?"

WADE

I've never wanted to be that guy.

BRIDGET

You should see that guy's home in Orange County and the car he drives, Wade.

WADE

It beats a two bedroom in the Valley, I guess.

BRIDGET

Whiskey is a writer's best friend. I can send over a bottle or two, if that's what it takes.

WADE

I'm a writer. Writers get to be like this on occasion.

BRIDGET

And many famous writers were big time drunks, too.

(beat)

Have you done any research on a project, even?

WADE

I've been playing a lot of Nintendo games. It's starting to help.

Bridget groans loudly.

BRIDGET

Are you writing a film about "Super Mario" on spec?

WADE

In a week I'll have something that'll blow you away, promise.

BRIDGET

I hope so.

She hangs up.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Wade walks in. His eyes look around the room.

WADE

Ideas don't just fall out of the sky, right?

He looks up and sees Raylan, leash in mouth.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

A pair of older, well-used Chicago sports themed oven mitts are on the counter.

A large jar is marked "Treats."

Wade walks in and heads right to the jar. He opens it up and hands a treat to Raylan.

Raylan quickly gobbles it down.

Wade closes the jar and pets the dog.

WADE

Good boy!

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

I'm not hungry.

Raylan looks at him oddly.

Wade opens the freezer. Inside are microwaveable meals and a large, deep dish, Chicago style pizza.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

I always thought she and I would have this, to celebrate.

(beat)

She got it for the big break.

(closes the freezer)

That was four years ago.

**INT. SPARE BEDROOM - DAY**

Wade walks in and sits down.

He logs into his screenwriting software. His eyes focus on it. His fingers go to type. He takes a deep breath.

Nothing.

Julia calls Wade.

Wade stares at his cell phone for a long moment before answering it.

**INT. BASEMENT - DAY**

Partially finished with Julia's boxes all over.

Julia lies on an older futon.

A half dozen positive pregnancy tests are on a nearby table.

JULIA

I forgot how much I hate living in  
their basement.

INTERCUT BETWEEN JULIA AND WADE

WADE

It'll be temporary, right?

JULIA

Right.

She sits up and looks at the tests.

WADE

I sold "How Dark is my Valley."

JULIA

I'm pregnant.

Silence.

WADE

Oh my God.

JULIA

I missed right before I left. I  
thought it was stress but then I  
missed again last week.

WADE

Have you used a pee stick to--

JULIA

A dozen of them all said yes.

Silence.

WADE

Let's get married.

JULIA

Every woman dreams of a moment like  
this right?

WADE  
This is the hand we've been dealt  
with so let's--

JULIA  
What's changed since I left?

WADE  
This is a blessing.

JULIA  
A kid won't fix us.

WADE  
Let's do more therapy.

JULIA  
I've got an appointment with my  
doctor in two days.

WADE  
I want to be there.

JULIA  
My mother is coming with me.

WADE  
This is--

JULIA  
I'll let you know what she says.

WADE  
That's unfair!

JULIA  
This is my body, my choice, and my  
choice is for you not to be here.

Julia hangs up.

WADE  
You can't--  
(hears the phone hang up)  
--end it like that.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade walks back in and turns the TV on. He grabs a remote and  
channel surfs. His fingers settle on a cheesy horror film.

Raylan snores.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Wade is sound asleep.

A Carbon Monoxide detector goes off.

Raylan wakes up and looks around.

BARK!

Wade doesn't move.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade stirs in his sleep.

SFX: Door opens. Footsteps.

Raylan is sound asleep.

Wade wakes up and looks around. His eyes spot a large scythe.

It's held by the GRIM REAPER (speaks very formally, elegant), clad in black robes.

Wade is scared shitless.

Raylan is sound asleep.

WADE

What do you want?

A series of evil sounding noises come from inside the robe.

WADE (CONT'D)

What?

Coughs emerge from inside the robe.

GRIM REAPER

My apologies... seasonal allergies  
are quite unpleasant for me during  
this time of year.

Wade is confused.

A bony hand comes out from the robes and points at him.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Wade Alexander Patterson, it is  
time to come with me.

Wade looks at the Reaper. He shakes his head.

WADE

That is amazing prop work.  
 (touches the scythe)  
 I've been on enough movie sets and  
 I'll say, you almost had me there  
 for a moment.

GRIM REAPER

Please don't do that again.

WADE

(looks at scythe)  
 This is really good work. Did you  
 get David Baker to do this?

GRIM REAPER

I don't know who that is.

WADE

He's on "Forged in Fire" and makes  
 amazing props.  
 (looks at the robes)  
 You should have your costume rep  
 give those a good washing later.

GRIM REAPER

This isn't--

WADE

I'm being Punk'd, right?

GRIM REAPER

What?

WADE

(looks around)  
 Where's the camera crew?

GRIM REAPER

This is very real, Wade.

Wade thinks for a moment.

WADE

You should've used a gun and not a  
 Scythe. That'd be easier.

GRIM REAPER

This is not a robbery.

Wade summons an ounce of courage and shoves the Reaper to the  
 ground. He sprints outside.

The Reaper gets up, annoyed. He slowly walks to the door.

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Wade sprints towards an elevator.

The Grim Reaper exits and slowly follows him.

GRIM REAPER  
You can not escape this.

Wade frantically presses the down button.

WADE  
You can have my stuff! I don't care  
about it, honestly.

GRIM REAPER  
I would rather not.

BING!

Wade gets in the elevator and smashes the door close button.

The Grim Reaper walks towards Wade.

WADE  
Come on, come on.

GRIM REAPER  
I am going to be written up for  
this, Wade.

WADE  
That sounds like a "you" problem,  
not a "me" problem.

The door closes.

GRIM REAPER  
It is always a "me" problem.

The Grim Reaper walks up to it. He looks up and sees the  
elevator go to the first floor.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Wade sprints out and looks around. His eyes circle until he  
spots an older sedan. He sprints towards it.

The Grim Reaper emerges from inside. He makes a beeline  
straight to Wade.

GRIM REAPER  
It is not going to work.

Wade reaches into his pocket. There's nothing in there.

WADE

Come on!

The Grim Reaper stops ten feet away from Wade.

Wade looks around. His body tenses up, ready to fight.

The Grim Reaper looks at Wade. He snaps his fingers.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Grim Reaper and Wade are inside, seated on the couch.

Wade looks around, mystified.

GRIM REAPER

Will you please calm down?

WADE

(points in a random  
direction)

Look over there!

The Reaper looks over in that direction.

Wade sprints to the bathroom.

The door slams shut, the lock turned on.

GRIM REAPER

I need to stop indulging them.

The Reaper relaxes and looks around.

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Wade sprints in and locks the door. He waits for a moment, listening to the other side.

Nothing.

His eyes glance around the room, looking for something.

WADE

This isn't real.

(sees the window)

This is just a dream.

(slaps himself hard)

A really elaborate dream.

Wade focuses on the bathroom window. It's just big enough that he can squeeze out of it. His body tenses up.

WADE (CONT'D)

You always wake up before you hit the ground, right?

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Reaper taps his foot impatiently.

The sound of the bathroom window opening up is barely heard.

Wade's screams pierce the air.

The Grim Reaper snaps his fingers.

The screams stop.

The Reaper casually snaps his fingers.

The screaming is just outside the front door.

THUMP!

Moans of pain are heard.

The Reaper snaps his fingers.

The front door opens, revealing Wade on the ground.

Wade cries in pain.

WADE

You're not supposed to land in your dreams, man!

GRIM REAPER

Have you ever felt pain in your dreams before?

Wade looks around.

WADE

Maybe this is a first.

The Reaper snaps his fingers.

Wade is dragged inside by unseen forces.

The Reaper snaps his fingers.

The door closes on its own.

The Grim Reaper walks up to Wade and touches his forehead.

Wade's eyes open wide. He sees the most fucked up things he has ever seen in his life.

WADE (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
Mommy.

Wade stumbles over to the couch and crashes down onto it. His eyes quickly look over the room until they settle on the Reaper. His breathing quickens.

WADE (CONT'D)  
You're... you're--

GRIM REAPER  
Death.

WADE  
And I'm--

GRIM REAPER  
Dead.

Beat.

WADE  
I just had a good checkup with my doctor three months ago.

GRIM REAPER  
I would say you should call him but you are not in the desert of the real anymore, Wade.

Wade reaches into his pockets.

WADE  
It's charging in my bedroom.

GRIM REAPER  
It won't be of any use to you.

The Grim Reaper looks around. His eyes spot the poster. He snaps his fingers and turns into Marcus, clad in an expensive black suit and red tie.

WADE  
Oh my God.

GRIM REAPER  
Is this better?

WADE

Better than her, at least.

The Reaper points to the door.

Blinding white light emerges from the cracks.

GRIM REAPER

You need to let go of what used to be your life, Wade.

WADE

I didn't get a fucking NINE on the Blacklist to just let it go. She told me about our kid and I'm not letting that go, either.

The Reaper stands up and walks to the door.

GRIM REAPER

It is getting late.

Wade's eyes spot the game system. Inspiration hits him.

WADE

Every movie says you get to battle the reaper for your soul. Don't I get a chance to fight for my life?

GRIM REAPER

(under his breath)

Fuck me.

(deep breath)

If you challenge me for your soul, and win, you get to live.

WADE

I challenge you, then.

GRIM REAPER

There is a reason why no one has stories about beating me to save their soul.

WADE

Then why is it in the movies?

GRIM REAPER

Because bored screenwriters want to think that they can cheat Death for one more day to do something grand.

WADE

What about the "Seventh Seal?"

GRIM REAPER  
Have you even watched that movie?

WADE  
In film school.

GRIM REAPER  
He challenges death for his soul,  
not to stave off death another day.

WADE  
It's kind of inferred. He comes  
back from the Crusades, Death is  
waiting as the Black Plague ravages  
Europe after the Crusades.

GRIM REAPER  
If you want to be accurate, at  
least reference "Bill and Ted's  
Bogus Journey." They challenge  
death to go back to Earth, and then  
beat the Evil Bill and Ted robots,  
because they saw the poster for  
"The Seventh Seal."  
(beat)  
It is not very good.

Wade points to his retro gaming system.

WADE  
How about some old school Nintendo?

The Grim Reaper looks at it.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's got every NES game, ever.

GRIM REAPER  
So you want to bet your chance at  
life over a game of "Super Mario?"

WADE  
Best of five.  
(beat)  
Winner calls his shot.

The Reaper looks around, contemplatively.

GRIM REAPER  
Listen, wherever you are going is  
better than here.

WADE  
Hey!

GRIM REAPER

This looks like every apartment you see on PornHub.

WADE

So I skip my one chance to stay alive for what?

GRIM REAPER

I'm just the messenger.

The Reaper and Wade exchanges looks.

WADE

Best. Of. Five.

The Reaper nods.

GRIM REAPER

No repeats.

Wade turns the game system on. His hands grab a controller.

WADE

That would be cheap.

The Reaper sits down next to Wade.

GRIM REAPER

Sooner or later you will be coming with me, Wade.

WADE

I'll deal with that many years in the future, then.

GRIM REAPER

What if it is tomorrow?

WADE

Then I'll find five more games.

GRIM REAPER

When this is over, and I have won, you will come peacefully.

Wade nods. He powers up the retro gaming console.

WADE

Me, death and the best of five to determine if I live.

(beat)

Bridget would love it, except for it being set in my apartment.

GRIM REAPER  
This is not your apartment.

WADE  
Certainly looks like it.

Wade cycles through the games.

GRIM REAPER  
I thought you'd be asking about the big things of existence.

WADE  
This is a lot to take in.

GRIM REAPER  
Most people wonder if Elvis is really dead or about dinosaurs.  
(beat)  
He wanted back in for five minutes, so he could wipe.

Wade looks around, confused.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)  
Elvis died on the toilet. He had a heart attack after--

WADE  
(looking around)  
Where are we?

GRIM REAPER  
We are on a spectral plane and the system automatically recreates the last place you physically existed. It's all... very complicated.

WADE  
Is it so I can feel comfortable or something like that?

GRIM REAPER  
When it first started out, I had to bring people to this white room with a couple of chairs and a nice desk. You talked, you said your last words and that was that.

WADE  
That sounds very peaceful.

## GRIM REAPER

People got it out of their system.  
Now... now people do not accept it  
like they used to. It is a lot of  
whining and complaining and--

(mock whiny voice)

--Oh my god, I don't want to die. I  
have so much to live for.

(normal voice)

The boomers may have been a lot of  
bad things but they took their end  
fate much more honorably than your  
generation does. My job went from  
being a transporter of the dead to  
debating the end of life with  
people who have managed to take an  
Introduction to Philosophy course  
at some point in their life.

Wade puts the control down. He turns to the Reaper.

## WADE

How does this work?

The Reaper turns and looks at Wade.

## GRIM REAPER

Before we begin, you will accept  
the rules unilaterally.

The Reaper's eyes glow red. He stares deeply at Wade.

## GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Once the outcome is decided, the  
game is concluded.

(beat)

I will not alter the agreement and  
neither shall you.

(beat)

If you decide to run away, you lose  
the game.

(beat)

If you decide to change the rules  
of the game, you lose the game.

(beat)

If you decide to attack me, you  
lose the game.

(beat)

Unless otherwise specified, the  
game will be played by the rules of  
the game itself.

(beat)

If you break any of these rules, it  
is over and you lose the game.

Wade is clearly intimidated.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)  
Do you accept them?

WADE  
Yes.

The Reaper hold holds his hand up.

SFX: A loud gong.

Wade looks around.

GRIM REAPER  
It has begun.

WADE  
I thought you'd be--

GRIM REAPER  
Colder?

Wade nods.

WADE  
You're the Grim Reaper.

GRIM REAPER  
After a while it's all the same:  
you show up, get someone to accept  
death and then move on. I always  
said that the whole commonality of  
human existence is that it ends...  
but then, for some reason, your  
kind started to fascinate me.

WADE  
Shouldn't you have seen pretty much  
all of what humanity has to offer  
by this point?

GRIM REAPER  
You're thinking of it as a binary,  
of a finite what is and what is not  
left. I view it as more of a matter  
of choice... and your kind chooses  
things that always surprise me. You  
have also evolved so quickly in  
such a short amount of time in the  
context of the lifespan of things.

(beat)  
It has proven difficult to not  
evolve with you.

WADE

And yet we still don't know, like really know, about everything.

GRIM REAPER

It is why it is called faith and not proof, Wade.

WADE

A little proof could make the world a better place.

GRIM REAPER

Let's begin.

Wade selects Battle Toads.

WADE

Hyper Tunnel.

GRIM REAPER

The single toughest part of one of the toughest games ever made.

WADE

Unless it's too hard for you.

GRIM REAPER

Do you want to play to it or what?

WADE

I've got a Save State.

GRIM REAPER

This is the real version, right? If there are any modifications--

WADE

I found the ROM online. It's the real deal.

GRIM REAPER

Do you want to warm up?

A bead of sweat comes down Wade's brow. His heart races, his hands unsteady. The controller wiggles in his hand.

WADE

I'm good to go.

Wade selects "Battle Toads." He pulls up a save state and uploads it.

GRIM REAPER  
Who goes first?

Wade takes a deep breath.

WADE  
Do you have to be so methodical?

GRIM REAPER  
Is there any other way?

WADE  
You look like Marcus, you have his  
voice... we've played this game  
together and you sound like--  
(robot voice)  
I've got a rod up my ass.

GRIM REAPER  
We have never played this game.

WADE  
You're him.

GRIM REAPER  
I can turn into anyone you want, or  
into my true form--

WADE  
This is easier.

GRIM REAPER  
Is there anything else you'd prefer  
for this?

WADE  
Marcus swears like nobody else.

The Reaper shakes his head no.

GRIM REAPER  
I will not indulge you on that. I  
do have... dignity.

WADE  
I'm just trying to make it less  
creepy for you.

GRIM REAPER  
This is nowhere near as creepy or  
weird as it gets.

WADE  
What's been the weirdest?

Wade presses start.

GRIM REAPER  
Are you sure you want to know?

WADE  
When I win I'm probably going to chalk this up as a bad dream. I see the script in my head and I just need to flesh it out a little bit.

The Reaper doesn't believe him.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's how I learned to play. My brother and I played for hours and neither of us shut up.

GRIM REAPER  
That sounds awful.

Wade's character jump on a vehicle. The screen rapidly advances forward.

WADE  
It was the best part of growing up.

GRIM REAPER  
Playing video games older than you?

WADE  
Spending time with my brother.

GRIM REAPER  
Are you and your brother close?

WADE  
We were... and then college, he had kids and things happened.

GRIM REAPER  
But you still have the memories.

WADE  
Yeah... the older we get, that's all we seem to have.

GRIM REAPER  
Siblings grow apart.

WADE

He had a family, I got swamped with trying to make it and it got easy to miss calls. I did it with my friends, too.

GRIM REAPER

Time has a way of moving on without us, it seems.

Wade effortlessly plays the game.

WADE

Where's the weirdest place you ever had to do this?

GRIM REAPER

Are you sure you want to know?

WADE

I need details for my Reaper.

Silence.

GRIM REAPER

Malaysian Air Lines flight four three zero eight. A hundred people from a dozen places, all dying in a brutal way.

Wade grits his teeth as he focuses on the game.

WADE

Did you need an interpreter or--

GRIM REAPER

A gift from the man above is that whatever language you speak is the language I speak.

WADE

So you had individual conversations with everyone in a row, right?

GRIM REAPER

I had to go in front of everyone and tell them they're going to die.

WADE

So this isn't normally a one on one conversation.

GRIM REAPER

I show up for the moment of death.  
If there is more than one person at  
that moment, so be it.

WADE

Wouldn't it be easier--

GRIM REAPER

I told *him* the same thing. Well, I  
did not really tell him. I sent a  
memo and I got one back that it was  
not my position to ask why.

WADE

So God doesn't take you seriously?

GRIM REAPER

He is busy.

WADE

I thought you'd get priority when  
it comes to complaints.

GRIM REAPER

One would suppose so but alas, I do  
not. He has his motivations that  
are beyond my grasp.

Wade's hands expertly move the Battle Toad, weaving in and  
out. One of his fingers is slightly off the directional pad.

WADE

This is... a lot.

GRIM REAPER

You can not play in silence.

WADE

We can't stop now, either.

(beat)

Damn it.

GRIM REAPER

It is kind of nice to be able to  
play like this.

(watches the TV intently)

I really like this television.

WADE

My ex didn't want it.

GRIM REAPER

I bet watching movies on this has to be amazing.

Wade stares at the screen intently.

WADE

It can be.

(beat)

So what happened on the plane?

GRIM REAPER

It was the usual, up until people started to look around.

(beat)

A third of them are missing, so everyone is seeing who survived.

(beat)

It was such a trash fire and then I have to do my job. I grab the in plane mic and basically walk everyone through the whole process like I was a damn flight attendant.

(mock flight attendant voice)

Now on your left you are going to see the end of your existence. If you will kindly exit your seat and approach the bright light, I would appreciate it.

WADE

So what... I got lucky to be all alone with you?

GRIM REAPER

One time I showed to this dump in Jersey. Two mobsters killed each other and of course I have to escort them both to the other side.

(beat)

As soon as they see each other they take their guns out and I had to sit and wait while they just shot each other.

WADE

I keep thinking what if Julia was here right now... she'd probably ask to see your manager.

GRIM REAPER

They looked at me and asked for more bullets. It took them like an hour to figure it out.

Wade's finger falls off the pad.

WHAM!

Wade's character dies.

WADE

(under his breath)

Damn it.

GRIM REAPER

It turned into a therapy session once they calmed down. Some guy had sex with somebody's wife, blah blah blah, and they wound up in the cross-hairs of some stupid war.

(beat)

After that they just accepted they died and came with me. Most people do once it all hits.

Wade curses to himself. He pauses the game.

WADE

I'd gone ten weeks in a row without losing a guy here.

GRIM REAPER

It looks really tough.

Wade takes a deep breath. He wipes his hands on his jeans.

WADE

Battle Toads was the first game that Mike and I beat when we were kids. We were in junior high and spent fifteen hours straight on summer vacation playing it.

(beat)

Everyone at school laughed when they asked what I did over the break... except for my teacher.

(beat)

I just remember the laughs from my classmates and I don't know why.

Wade unpauses the game. He plays again.

GRIM REAPER

Kids are the worst part about this.

Wade's character expertly weaves and dodges.

WADE

It's because they're innocent.

GRIM REAPER

I am not one to question the boss  
but kids with cancer just... yeah.  
That's always a hard day.

WADE

They just don't accept it like you  
want to, huh?

GRIM REAPER

Imagine telling some six year old  
who has only experienced horrific  
pain in his life that it's over...  
but that he will not be seeing Mom,  
Dad or his dog Sparky ever again.

(beat)

Nine times out of ten it's someone  
who has lived their life. There is  
rarely a child in the same position  
in their life.

Wade's hands expertly move. His thumb is firmly on the  
directional pad.

WADE

How do you determine that?

GRIM REAPER

You think this is too soon for you?

WADE

Clearly.

GRIM REAPER

You have had moments of pure joy...  
you know what the good times mean.

(beat)

A kid who has gone through all the  
bad things in life, he does not. He  
just knows his life has been awful  
and now he is dead.

WADE

Now you sound like Marcus.

GRIM REAPER

You look at all the things you could do if you walk away from this... and I see the kid who didn't get a real life. He did not even get a chance at one.

(beat)

Someone can write that you were taken too soon, that you had plenty left to give. What about a child?

WADE

They haven't done anything.

GRIM REAPER

And that is what gets me sometimes.

(beat)

You do this job for long enough and you can see how unfair life can be.

WADE

How do you handle it?

GRIM REAPER

Usually I turn into a parent, to give them a level of dignity in their death.

WADE

You don't have to take them.

GRIM REAPER

That is what I was created to do by powers well beyond anything you could possibly imagine.

Wade completes the level. He pumps his fist. His hands quickly pull up the save state.

WADE

Two tries.

The Reaper grabs the controller from him.

GRIM REAPER

That is going to be very difficult to beat, Wade.

(presses start)

I am not as skilled at the game as I wish I could be.

WADE

Do people always challenge you to play video games?

GRIM REAPER  
It's usually more modern.

The Reaper expertly controls the Battle Toad.

WADE  
What do you normally play?

GRIM REAPER  
For some reason everyone thinks  
they are the best at Mario Kart.

Silence.

WADE  
You could give people the ability  
to say goodbye.

GRIM REAPER  
What would that do?

WADE  
Give people a sense of closure to  
their existence.

GRIM REAPER  
Humanity would not appreciate the  
beautiful fading nature of their  
own existence if they knew they got  
a phone call before they died.

WADE  
It'd make life--

GRIM REAPER  
Worse.  
(beat)  
You get to say goodbye, whenever it  
is the right time, so the thought  
of not telling your loved ones  
goodbye one final time would not be  
an issue.

WADE  
Says the child killer.

GRIM REAPER  
I am just the--

WADE  
Messenger, yeah yeah yeah.  
(beat)  
You're part of the process.

GRIM REAPER

I envy the way you look at this.

WADE

Because I can see kids as something besides people who die?

The Reaper completes the level.

GRIM REAPER

Human beings have a short time to live their lives before it is over. In the scope of it all, your lives are a beautiful candle in the wind. It shines brightly but at some point, like all candles, it goes out and never comes back.

Wade looks into the distance. He takes a deep breath.

WADE

Four more to go.  
(grabs his stomach)  
Stress, you know?

The Reaper shrugs.

Wade sprints to the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Wade slams the door behind him and locks it.

His breathing quickens.

His hands turn the faucet on and splash water on his face.

WADE

You're just off your meds.

Wade opens up the medicine cabinet and looks inside. Nothing is in it but a small pistol.

Wade takes it out and looks at it.

WADE (CONT'D)

Where did you come from?

He carefully examines it.

A small cross is on the handle.

Wade unloads the magazine and looks at the bullets.

They're marked "Heavenly Ammo."

He opens up the door slightly, his eyes focused on the mirror. He can see the Reaper.

Wade looks at the gun and then focuses on the Reaper. His hand grips the pistol tightly. It feels custom made for him.

WADE (CONT'D)  
One shot and--  
(looks at the gun)  
He's messing with you.

He places the gun back inside.

His hand turns the faucet off.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Raylan walks up to the front door and grabs his leash.

The Reaper looks at the dog oddly.

GRIM REAPER  
I don't know what you want.

Wade walks in and spots Raylan.

WADE  
(to Raylan, smiling)  
Hey buddy.

BARK!

GRIM REAPER  
He should not be here.

WADE  
He always sleeps out here.

BARK!

GRIM REAPER  
No, I mean it was an order for one.

WADE  
An order?

GRIM REAPER

I get paperwork that says "bring such and such" every time I have to do something. Yours just said "Wade Alexander Patterson," not "Wade Alexander Patterson and a shaggy dog." I double-checked it.

BARK!

WADE

Maybe your creation brought a copy of him in here for a reason.

GRIM REAPER

Or they did not attach the paperwork to yours.

Wade walks over grabs Raylan's leash.

WADE

Whatever the reason here, he's not shitting on my carpet.

GRIM REAPER

It is not--

WADE

Just humor me, at least.

GRIM REAPER

I suppose I could use the fresh air... even though--

BARK!

WADE

We know.

Everyone leaves.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Wade walks Raylan.

The Reaper walks next to Wade.

GRIM REAPER

How often do you do this?

WADE

Two to three times a day.

GRIM REAPER  
That is a lot.

WADE  
He's a working dog. They need to be worked, hence the title.

GRIM REAPER  
Obviously.

They walk for a while.

WADE  
I'm the only owner Raylan has ever had. Isn't that--

GRIM REAPER  
No.

Silence.

WADE  
When they go... are you there?

GRIM REAPER  
Yes.

WADE  
What's that like?

GRIM REAPER  
Most times I take an animal, they are in pain. They know it's time to go but they can not quite say it.  
(beat)  
They wake up on my side pain free and ready to run in one of God's many playgrounds for animals.

WADE  
It's a mercy humans don't get, being put to sleep like that.

GRIM REAPER  
I hate the euphemism.

WADE  
What would you call it?

GRIM REAPER  
I do not know.

WADE

My dad always said it was courtesy that animals get. They get to go with their dignity.

GRIM REAPER

Animals always look for their owner, for that final comfort.

WADE

I always thought how I'd handle it but... you know.

GRIM REAPER

If you win, and that is a big if, make sure you go in there with him.

WADE

I assumed I would.

GRIM REAPER

A lot of people don't. Death is by and large uncomfortable, especially when it is not your own.

Silence.

WADE

This is too much to handle.

GRIM REAPER

What did you expect?

WADE

A quick fade to black. One day you go to sleep and you never wake up.

GRIM REAPER

That is bleak.

WADE

I grew up Catholic. After a while you think they just made it all up for money.

GRIM REAPER

God created you guys, you guys just created what you think of him.

WADE

What's he like?

GRIM REAPER

He is the CEO and I am just a guy  
who works fo rhim.

WADE

What about all the "powers beyond  
your control" bit?

GRIM REAPER

They are beyond my control too.

WADE

How do you put up with it?

GRIM REAPER

It is what I was created to do.

WADE

Don't you ever want more?

GRIM REAPER

This is all I know. Do you think I  
would be better suited to drive a  
truck or wait tables?

WADE

Nothing wrong with either of those  
things, by the way.

GRIM REAPER

I am not implying that, either.  
(beat)

What I am saying is that I was born  
into this reality for something  
specific. Ours is not to question,  
just to serve.

WADE

So you're a slave.

GRIM REAPER

I am what makes reality work, or at  
least part of it.

Raylan stops.

Wade and the Reaper stop.

Raylan sniffs the Reaper. His tail wags.

WADE

I thought he would hate you.

BARK!

The Reaper awkwardly pets him.

GRIM REAPER

He thinks I am whoever this man is.

Raylan walks back to the apartment building.

WADE

That's a friend of mine, Marcus.

Wade and the Reaper follow.

GRIM REAPER

He must be a good friend.

Wade looks at the Reaper and then into the distance.

WADE

As much as you can be out here.

GRIM REAPER

I can change into anyone you would like, if it helps.

WADE

It's better him than anyone else.

Wade's body tenses up. The leash gets light in his hands.

GRIM REAPER

If you wanted to play NES with a naked porn star it would be weird but I could do that.

WADE

People do that?

GRIM REAPER

Someone wanted to have their final moments watching "Top Gun" with Tom Cruise once.

WADE

That's something.

GRIM REAPER

It's part of the job.

WADE

Does anyone ever run?

GRIM REAPER

One time I had to grab a guy who died after ramming his car into oncoming traffic while he was drunk. He woke up on this side just three sheets to the wind. It took me four miles before I caught him.

WADE

Did he try to hide?

The Reaper turns to Wade.

GRIM REAPER

If you think you can find a way out, which untold billions of beings have tried for countless millennia, then I do not know what to tell you.

Wade nods and grips the leash tight.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade, the Reaper and Raylan walk in.

Raylan sprints into the kitchen.

WADE

He gets a treat after every walk.

Wade goes to the kitchen.

The Reaper sits down on the couch. He scrolls through the library of games.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Wade walks over to the treat jar and opens it up. He grabs a treat and hands it to Raylan.

Raylan scarfs it down and sprints outside.

Wade pets him.

WADE

Good boy!

BARK!

Wade looks at his kitchen counter.

A large block of high-end kitchen knives is on there.

Wade looks at them intently. He slowly moves his body to look at the Reaper in the living room.

The Reaper is going through video games.

Raylan is asleep next to him.

Wade's eyes turn back to the knives. He takes one out.

It shines in the light, sharp enough to cut God himself.

"Judges 3:16-23" is written on the blade's Ricasso.

Wade grips it tightly. It feels custom-built for his hand. He takes a deep breath.... and places it back into the block.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade walks in and sits down on the couch. His eyes glance over to the television, his hands grabbing a controller.

GRIM REAPER  
Winner calls it.

The gaming system is set up on Contra.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)  
As far as you can go without  
needing to continue.

WADE  
No Konami code.

GRIM REAPER  
That is fair.

WADE  
I remember my brother once said you  
couldn't beat the game without it.

The Reaper presses start.

The game begins.

GRIM REAPER  
It does make it significantly  
easier to beat.

The Reaper's character stutters for a moment.

WADE

To prove him wrong I decided to beat it enough times in a row to get thirty guys.

GRIM REAPER

Impressive.

WADE

It's why I came out here; he always was telling me what I couldn't do.

GRIM REAPER

Maybe he was secretly motivating you, Wade.

WADE

He also dated one girl his whole life and is still at the first company that hired him.

GRIM REAPER

Stability is a good thing.

WADE

Or he doesn't like risk.

GRIM REAPER

You must, then.

WADE

I didn't go to film school so I could just learn a trade, you know?

GRIM REAPER

Why did you go to film school?

WADE

Some people see their heroes on a football field and want to do that. A Marvel movie came to my hometown to film a couple of scenes, so my dad took us down to look. As soon as I saw it thought I want to be there someday. Coming here was the first in a lot of steps.

The Reaper's hands are awkward on the controller.

GRIM REAPER

I can't get this to feel right.

WADE

Relax your hands... this is a mashing game.

The Reaper's character dies.

WADE (CONT'D)

Is there any other way of getting out of this... besides winning.

GRIM REAPER

If you are feeling lucky, I could summon Lucifer for you. Who knows what you will get but you could avoid the rest of the evening.

The Reaper's character dies again.

WADE

I should've picked this game first.

GRIM REAPER

Your controller stinks.

WADE

I used it last game.

The Reaper groans.

GRIM REAPER

I must be having an off day.

The Reaper begins to play better.

WADE

Or something about the man down below throws your game off.

GRIM REAPER

I have him on my speed dial, if you are inclined. The truly desperate maybe get a day or two in exchange for their soul from that man.

(beat)

Maybe less.

WADE

He's a good negotiator, huh?

GRIM REAPER

How long did it take for you and your ex-girlfriend to have sex?

WADE  
That's awfully personal.

GRIM REAPER  
You've asked plenty of me so far.

Wade thinks for a moment.

WADE  
It took about a month, which was an eternity in college.

GRIM REAPER  
But you were OK with waiting.

WADE  
Of course. She was worth it.

GRIM REAPER  
Imagine if you had six minutes to get in her pants the first time you met her.

WADE  
We didn't even kiss until the end of our second date.

GRIM REAPER  
Well, to continue this crusty type of metaphor... Lucifer does not have to have sex with you unless he gets what he wants.

WADE  
Like no butt stuff?

GRIM REAPER  
Right.

WADE  
At least I'd get another moment.

GRIM REAPER  
And then a one way trip to hell.

WADE  
How do I know I'm not?

GRIM REAPER  
Have you committed a mortal sin?

WADE  
I had sex before marriage.

GRIM REAPER  
That's not a mortal sin.  
(beat)  
Have you broken a commandment?

WADE  
No.

GRIM REAPER  
Then the odds are in your favor.

WADE  
Plus there's the whole "deal with  
the devil" bit.

GRIM REAPER  
You could get another day.

WADE  
I know exactly what would happen.

The Reaper dies again.

GRIM REAPER  
The waterfall is nasty.

The game over screen comes up.

Wade starts the game.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)  
If you want to bargain with him, I  
can arrange it. I can do his sales  
pitch verbatim, if you want a  
preview of what is to come.

WADE  
If I did, I'd get one more hour, to  
try and make amends with my dad,  
but I'd get a busy signal.  
(beat)  
Or the internet would go down so we  
couldn't Zoom.  
(beat)  
Or there's suddenly an oil crisis,  
a gas shortage and a statewide  
traffic jam when I try to chase  
after Julia.  
(beat)  
Or I walk Raylan again and he goes  
after a squirrel, taking the leash  
with him.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

(to Raylan)

You'd get lost, just because he'd stick it to me.

GRIM REAPER

That would be par for the course.

WADE

Is it a good sales pitch, at least?

GRIM REAPER

Of course... he's had millennia to practice it on the naïve.

Wade's character dies.

WADE

(quietly)

Damn it.

Wade plays again, much better than the Reaper.

GRIM REAPER

When the end is right here, instead of some hypothetical point in the future, sometimes people will do anything for just a little more time in this world.

WADE

People usually sell their soul for something better than a day.

GRIM REAPER

I would not call it better.

WADE

What would you call it?

GRIM REAPER

Throwing away eternity for some pleasure of the flesh.

WADE

You have to be desperate to sell your soul for anything, I guess.

GRIM REAPER

They don't see the consequences. That one small choice robs their end of dignity, knowing what is to come after.

WADE

So what, you show up with a one way ticket to hell?

GRIM REAPER

When someone sells their soul, it is always with the assumption that it is a someday in the future where the Devil will collect. And he will always collect.

Wade's character dies.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Sometimes people assume they had a mental breakdown and everything working out was just a coincidence.

(beat)

When I show up, and they know the rest of eternity will be spent downstairs... they become truly desperate. Those are the ones who run, who try to attack me. They don't have anything left to offer. I feel pity for them.

WADE

You shouldn't.

Wade takes a deep breath. He has zero lives remaining.

GRIM REAPER

Sometimes there are things outside of your consideration going on.

(beat)

What of that child with cancer? If selling your soul to beat it is the only way, I can not imagine many parents who would not.

Wade's eyes focus on the game.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

If he had offered you the ability to write a Hollywood movie, and be rich and famous, would you?

WADE

I'd probably be the guy who wrote a "Meet the Fockers" sequel.

GRIM REAPER

It would still be successful. That would not be taken away.

WADE

But you'd always be the "Fockers"  
guy, you know?

GRIM REAPER

I don't.

WADE

You can build a million bridges but  
if you suck one dick, you'll always  
be known as a cock-sucker.

The Reaper chuckles.

GRIM REAPER

Stunning and eloquent.

Wade takes a deep breath. His character is exactly where the  
Reaper's was.

WADE

I keep thinking if I had another  
day, what would I do with it?

GRIM REAPER

The answer would probably be  
something important. I think you  
could find something to do that  
would be profound.

WADE

Or I could try to bang my ex.

The Reaper laughs.

GRIM REAPER

I doubt in the grand scheme of  
things a blow job could be that  
substantial or meaningful.

WADE

It depends on the blow job.

Wade's character gets past where the Reaper's was.

GRIM REAPER

Unbelievable.

WADE

All tied up.

Wade pumps his fist and drops the controller.

GRIM REAPER  
That is not really winning.

WADE  
You know what they call the guy who  
finishes last in medical school?

The Reaper doesn't know.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Doctor.

GRIM REAPER  
What would you like to play next?

Wade's stomach growls.

WADE  
Are you hungry? I'm starving.

GRIM REAPER  
It is not really food.

WADE  
Does it matter?

GRIM REAPER  
Not really.

Wade stands up and walks to the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Wade walks in and makes a beeline for the refrigerator. He opens it up, looking inside.

It's full of takeout boxes, soda and condiments.

The Reaper walks in and looks inside.

GRIM REAPER  
So it is either leftover Chinese or  
leftover Mexican?

Wade closes the fridge and opens up the freezer. He smiles and grabs the deep dish pizza.

WADE  
No better time than now.

He puts the pizza box on the counter and slams the freezer shut. His hands quickly open it up.

GRIM REAPER

You could do worse. Way worse.

WADE

It's technically not my last meal.

(thinks)

The last thing I actually ate was something from a taco truck.

GRIM REAPER

You should eat the pizza.

WADE

It was for the big moment, the WGA sale that said "I've arrived."

(beat)

Funny enough it happened right after she pulled away.

GRIM REAPER

Did you call her?

WADE

I should've.

Wade turns the oven on to 400 degrees.

GRIM REAPER

Do you think she would have turned around, to have that meal with you?

WADE

I don't think so.

(beat)

Those truck tacos just gave me the worst shits.

GRIM REAPER

Not every meal is legendary.

WADE

What if you're on Death Row?

GRIM REAPER

I was sent to someone on Death Row once, making my rounds. Inmate number eight four three five six seven, known to the world as Richard Crosby.

(beat)

There was a mix up because the inmate was not supposed to succeed in taking his own life... I showed up and he was in and out of it.

WADE

How did you explain it to him?

GRIM REAPER

I did not have the time, at least the first time around. It was "Hey, I am Death" and then he would vanish back to the mortal coil.

WADE

That sounds awful.

Wade grabs a pizza pan from underneath the oven.

GRIM REAPER

He said it was like an acid trip, when we actually got to talking.

WADE

Why didn't they let him die? You know, two birds one stone.

GRIM REAPER

Apparently that was not good enough for the state of Texas.

WADE

Don't underestimate the power of a bunch of hillbillies with a hard-on to kill someone.

GRIM REAPER

He was clinically dead for five minutes in a row once. Someone upstairs thought he was gone and didn't remember the quaint aspects of the American judicial system that day. I had to apologize for the mix up and remind him of our appointment later.

WADE

That had to have been weird.

BING!

GRIM REAPER

Nothing makes you feel more like a jerk than having to tell someone "See you later, when you are dead"

WADE

You didn't tell him that, did you?

GRIM REAPER

I told him it was not his time. He seemed to appreciate it... but at the same time, I don't think he really wanted more time.

WADE

What was it like when he did actually kick the bucket?

GRIM REAPER

It was a different conversation.

Wade puts the pizza into the pan and then into the oven.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

The first time he died, he was scared of death. Most people are.

Wade sets the timer for thirty minutes.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

He was OK with it during our second conversation. He confessed his sins to a priest, apologized to the family of the victim and found some sort of peace inside.

WADE

I always thought the death penalty was cruel because of that. You're put in front of people who just hate you and want you to die.

GRIM REAPER

It is not as cruel as it could be.

WADE

On the one hand, being in jail for the rest of your life is awful. Every single day until there are none left you are in the same place, same routine, with a whole lot of very bad people.

GRIM REAPER

On the other, they did something to earn permanent expulsion from any sort of civilized society. I get a file on all of the people I take and death row inmates usually have done things beyond the pale.

WADE

Imagine waking up, counting down to one day where it ends. It's that knowing that seems cruel to me... no matter what you do, your life ends at midnight that day. It all comes down to one set moment where you will die... life in jail seems a lot more compassionate when you compare it.

GRIM REAPER

He did not want anything from me but one final conversation. He wanted to feel like a human being one final time.

(beat)

Richard had a picture of a man he grew up with, the only friend he had that was a decent man. He died of cancer, years ago, and Richard never got to say goodbye. He had an older photo and we had a lovely chat about the old days.

(beat)

Rick and his old friend "Balls" got to catch up, like old friends.

Wade looks at him oddly.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

His friend had a long last name, hence the nickname.

(beat)

His brother was "Big Balls," his wife was "Misses Balls" and his son was "Little Balls."

WADE

What did they call his old man?

GRIM REAPER

Mister Baltramonas.

(beat)

You should have seen his final meal. It was... something else.

WADE

Lobster and Caviar?

GRIM REAPER

Four pounds of Golden Teriyaki  
chicken wings from his home town,  
Blue Cheese and a two liter of  
Doctor Thunder soda.

WADE

That must've been hell to clean up.

GRIM REAPER

I did not stick around long enough  
to find out.

WADE

If I could choose, I'd want more  
than just wings from some hole in  
the wall joint and Walmart soda.

GRIM REAPER

Think of everything he could have  
had. He wanted to feel a certain  
way one last time, if only for a  
fleeting moment. I always have  
thought it was him figuring out  
when the moment of no return was  
for him in that life. Your life  
choices take you to many places but  
his went to me.

Wade looks at the timer.

WADE

We've got time for number three.

The Reaper points to the living room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Both men walk into the room and sit down on the couch.

GRIM REAPER

Are you sure I can not talk you  
into just letting it go?

WADE

I can't.

GRIM REAPER

How about we alter the game?

WADE

No.

GRIM REAPER

I was going to offer up a chance  
for you to finish the game if you  
win the next round.

WADE

And I get to pick the game too.

GRIM REAPER

Of course.

WADE

And what happens if I lose?

GRIM REAPER

Then the game would be complete and  
you would accompany me to your  
final destination.

Wade contemplates it.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

There are no tricks here.

WADE

So what, this is out of the  
goodness of you heart?

GRIM REAPER

You are fine company, Wade, but I  
do have others to pick up.

Wade looks at the Reaper and shakes his head no.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

So be it.

The Reaper grabs a controller and pulls up "Mike Tyson's  
Punch-Out!!" on the video gaming system.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Mike Tyson is the hardest video  
game boss of all time.

WADE

You just have to learn the pattern  
to beat him, that's all.

GRIM REAPER

You want to fight him?

WADE

How about Glass Joe?

GRIM REAPER  
If you lose to him, you should be  
banned from video games.

WADE  
Then you shouldn't have any  
problems with him.

GRIM REAPER  
Fastest to the knockout wins.

WADE  
I have no qualms with that.

GRIM REAPER  
We can still--

WADE  
I'm good.

Wade hands the Reaper the controller.

GRIM REAPER  
For some reason that final chat  
with Balls is on my mind.

WADE  
Was it substantial?

GRIM REAPER  
Who was the last person you talked  
to, Wade?

WADE  
My agent.

The Reaper presses start.

GRIM REAPER  
Was it a good one?

WADE  
It started that way.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)  
I'm a writer, writers go through  
things like this.

GRIM REAPER  
Why do you talk to him like that?

WADE

Usually it's for comedic effect.

GRIM REAPER

How meta.

The game starts.

WADE

It started out as a joke when I met him and it just kept going.

GRIM REAPER

How did you get him?

WADE

A friend of the family is big into fostering dogs. Julia and I went and he decided he was coming with us no matter what.

The Reaper's character beats the ever-loving piss out of Glass Joe.

GRIM REAPER

How cute.

WADE

I told Julia it would be temporary but he and I... he's my guy.

GRIM REAPER

She was not a fan, I take it?

WADE

We just came back for the weekend and I brought a dog back out here with us. It's easy to have a dog when he can roam my folks' place... but a two bedroom isn't exactly the biggest space for him.

Glass Joe is knocked down.

GRIM REAPER

Fifty-two seconds.

WADE

He'll be up at eight.

GRIM REAPER

He is down. It is over.

Glass Joe gets up at eight.

WADE  
You have to TKO him.

The Reaper knocks Joe down again.

GRIM REAPER  
Stay down.

Joe is back up before the ten count.

WADE  
I live here but home... home is a  
plane ride away.

The Reaper frantically taps buttons.

GRIM REAPER  
What is the difference?

WADE  
We came here after college. She was  
an actress, I was a writer and the  
goal was we'd both make it.

GRIM REAPER  
That is idealistic.

The Reaper knocks Glass Joe down.

WADE  
The best gig she ever got was a  
blink and you miss it moment as  
"Waitress" on a Netflix series that  
nobody watched.

GRIM REAPER  
You watched it, right?

WADE  
Just the episode she was in. It was  
just... trash, you know?

GRIM REAPER  
Better than nothing, perhaps.

WADE  
I got real jobs and it just got to  
her after a while.

The Ref rules it's a TKO.

GRIM REAPER  
It is why famous people tend to  
stay with their own, right?

WADE

She got a job back home and I did not want to go with her. It was an ultimatum and that's it.

(beat)

The last time I talked to my mother I said I'd call my father when I was ready. If I don't make it, he's going to hate himself for it.

The next screen indicates it's a 2:45 stoppage.

Wade resets the game and quickly starts it.

Glass Joe appears.

Wade takes a deep breath and watches the timer intently.

GRIM REAPER

What are you doing?

Wade does nothing.

WADE

Wait for it.

GRIM REAPER

He is not going to block you.

WADE

It's the taunt.

Glass Joe taunts Wade's character.

GRIM REAPER

It is a waste of--

Wade perfectly times a punch to Glass Joe's stomach.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

--time.

Glass Joe goes down.

Wade chuckles.

The video game referee counts to ten.

GRIM REAPER (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

The next screen shows a 42-second knockout.

WADE  
That's technically a world record.

The Reaper looks at him oddly.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's a glitch in the system; you  
time Joe's taunt with a body shot  
and he goes down for ten.  
(beat)  
Thousands of people have tied that  
record since it came out.

The Reaper takes a deep breath.

GRIM REAPER  
You are up two to one.

WADE  
Technically I've won. You said--

GRIM REAPER  
You didn't accept my deal.

WADE  
Oh come on!

GRIM REAPER  
These are the rules.

WADE  
You've proven your point. I'll call  
my dad and make things right with  
him as soon as--

The Reaper turns and glares into Wade's eyes. His eyes turn red and glow intensely.

Wade gulps loudly.

GRIM REAPER  
You can finish the game or you can  
come with me. Either way.

WADE  
I've got to take a piss.

GRIM REAPER  
Stress, right?

WADE  
Right.

The Reaper turns his attention to the TV screen.

Wade walks towards the bathroom... and keeps walking. He shuffles into his bedroom.

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Wade walks in and spots his cell phone. He picks it up and looks at it.

He doesn't have a signal.

His fingers pull up his father on speed dial. He calls him.

Nothing.

WADE  
Worth a shot.

He puts the phone down. His eyes spot something glowing from inside his closet.

Wade wanders over and opens the closet. He looks around and spots something. His eyes open wide.

It's the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch.

A note is attached to it.

Wade picks it up and opens it.

WADE (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
Wade, I found this at a pawn shop.  
Thought you'd enjoy it. Julia.

He looks at the Grenade. Something is inscribed in it.

WADE (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
Guaranteed to destroy mythical  
beings from the ethereal plane or  
your money back.

Wade is good and pissed right now.

He walks out.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade storms back into the room.

GRIM REAPER  
You ready to--

WADE

The Holy Hand Grenade?

GRIM REAPER

I was really hoping that you would make this much easier for yourself by taking an easy way out. It would be a heroic death with a legendary weapon of the ages.

WADE

You are an asshole. I have plenty to live for and you know it.

GRIM REAPER

No you don't.

(beat)

Your ex is going to get rid of your child and someone is going to ruin your beloved Blacklist nine.

WADE

Not if I can help it.

GRIM REAPER

You are but one man, Wade.

WADE

And I can fix both of them.

GRIM REAPER

Do you change your own oil?

Wade doesn't.

WADE

That's why you pay the guys at the oil changing place.

GRIM REAPER

If you can not change the oil in your vehicle, Wade, what makes you think you can convince a studio to follow your vision or your former partner to keep a child?

Wade sniffs the air.

WADE

The pizza needs some cheese.

Wade stands up and walks to the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Wade walks in and looks into the oven.

The pizza is mostly cooked.

He opens his fridge and grabs a shaker of shredded Parmesan cheese. His hands open it up, placing it on the counter.

The Reaper walks over, looking in.

Wade puts on a pair of oven mitts and opens up the oven.

GRIM REAPER

That does not look done.

WADE

This is the key to a proper deep dish pizza.

Wade shakes Parmesan on top of the pizza.

GRIM REAPER

There is plenty of cheese in that already.

WADE

It's about that taste on top.

Wade pushes the pizza back into the oven. He closes the oven.

GRIM REAPER

It feels like that enough of that might be what actually caused you to die in the first place.

WADE

It's a Chicago thing.

GRIM REAPER

Ethereal being, remember?

Wade looks at the Reaper and chuckles.

WADE

I had this conversation with Marcus on set. I brought pizza for a short film he was in that I wrote and--

GRIM REAPER

I am not him.

WADE

You are and you aren't.

GRIM REAPER  
This is just a corporeal form.

WADE  
It would've been easier if you'd  
picked anybody else.  
(beat)  
Well, almost anybody else.

The Reaper focuses on the oven mitts.

GRIM REAPER  
Did she give you those?

Wade looks at the mitts.

WADE  
Those were from our first place.  
They were the first thing she threw  
in the cart when we went shopping  
together for the first time.

Wade stares at the pizza.

GRIM REAPER  
I think we can get a game in before  
this is done.

Wade leaves.

The Reaper follows him.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Wade sits down and pulls up Mega Man 2 on the retro video  
game system.

The Reaper sits down next to him.

WADE  
It's my turn now.

GRIM REAPER  
Do you have another trick up your  
sleeve, Wade?

WADE  
How did you not know about Glass  
Joe going down on one shot?

GRIM REAPER  
I do not have enough time in the  
day to obsess over this stuff.

WADE

Summoning Salt made a video about beating the world records. Joe is the first guy everyone ties a world record on.

Wade presses start.

GRIM REAPER

You learn the game on Glass Joe, that is all you ever do with him.

WADE

You're just pissed you lost.

GRIM REAPER

It is not cheating but it certainly feels like it.

Wade selects Heat Man.

WADE

No skips and no damage.

GRIM REAPER

That is a heck of a challenge.

WADE

I've always thought it was an easy game... it's probably because we played it too much.

Wade presses start. He plays the game expertly.

GRIM REAPER

Why Mega Man 2?

WADE

It's a perfect game. Everything that makes a Mega Man game, well, a Mega Man game comes from this one.

GRIM REAPER

But what about Mega Man 1?

WADE

It's... how do I say this... really unpolished. Mega Man 2 was just so much fun as kids because it was right on that cusp of hard and fun. You could beat but it wasn't easy.

GRIM REAPER

If you beat me, which is not easy,  
what are you going to do?

WADE

A victory dance.

The Reaper shakes his head and chuckles.

GRIM REAPER

Hopefully it is a good one.

WADE

Beating the Reaper is like punching  
out God in the game of life.

GRIM REAPER

How about after you win? The macro  
instead of the micro.

WADE

(thinking)

There's a lot of stuff I should do.

GRIM REAPER

I gather some of it is more  
important than a dance.

Wade's character gets hit by a random enemy, causing a small  
amount of damage.

WADE

I had to watch a week's worth of  
"The Maury Povich Show" for a short  
once. It was about a dance coach  
who trains guys on their "not the  
baby daddy" dance.

GRIM REAPER

That is a thing?

WADE

Oh yeah... any time Maury screams--  
(Maury Povich imitation)  
You are NOT the father!  
(normal voice)  
The guy gets five to ten seconds on  
stage to do a dance.

GRIM REAPER

What about the mother?

WADE

They always cry and sprint to the back stage area... unless they've tested a lot of guys. Then it's just indignation.

GRIM REAPER

If you have had a fundamental truth of your life changed in one fell swoop, much less in front of a live studio audience, one can imagine it would require some time to accept.

WADE

Like that you're dead and the Grim Reaper is here to escort you to the other side?

Wade's character gets to a long pit. Blocks only appear on pixel perfect jumps to the right.

GRIM REAPER

That is fair.

Wade takes a deep breath. He begins to make pixel perfect jumps in rapid succession.

WADE

I had to write a parody of "Tootsie Roll" by the Sixty-Nine Boys for Marcus to sing during it.

GRIM REAPER

No way.

Wade's fingers expertly mash buttons.

WADE

(singing to "Tootsie Roll"  
by the Sixty-Nine Boys)  
PATERNITY TEST, HE SAY NO  
OFF STAGE THAT BITCH GO  
COME ON AND DO-SI-DO  
(laughs)  
Marcus had to sing and dance to  
that for fifty bucks.

GRIM REAPER

I am shocked you didn't have a picture of that on your wall.

WADE

It's on his.

Wade's character is on the last block.

Wade's eyes are glued to the edge.

Wade's character makes the last jump.... and makes the ledge by a pixel.

WADE (CONT'D)

YES!

The Reaper shakes his head.

GRIM REAPER

I didn't think you'd get it.

WADE

It took me four weeks to get that jump right.

GRIM REAPER

That is a lot of time.

Wade's character faces off against Heat Man.

WADE

And you got me thinking about all the time I've wasted in my life.

GRIM REAPER

I can not give you the time you spent watching Maury Povich announcing paternity tests back.

Wade expertly mashes buttons.

WADE

That short got into a half dozen film festivals. I was at the third and met a producer. He adored it and eventually he wanted me to do a rewrite of some shitty horror film he had. That was my first paid gig.

GRIM REAPER

Was it good?

WADE

You can polish a turd but at the end of the day it's still a turd.  
 (points towards the posters)  
 It's the first poster on my wall.

GRIM REAPER

So there is a record that you were an artist. I think you can take solace in that and come with me.

WADE

No chance.

Heat Man is vanquished.

GRIM REAPER

The Blacklist nine, right?

Wade hands the Reaper his controller.

WADE

The evaluation said this was an "Oscar-caliber" script. They put it on Twitter and everything.

GRIM REAPER

You are one level away from going back to the land of the living.

WADE

You can tank it and I won't object.

The Reaper shakes his head.

WADE (CONT'D)

I'll tell everyone you put up a valiant fight and--

The Reaper quickly resets the game. He quickly pulls up Heat Man and starts the stage.

GRIM REAPER

If I can not beat you... what do you do with the new lease on life?

WADE

Patch things up with my father.

GRIM REAPER

Making things right with people is almost always the biggest regret I hear about from people.

WADE

I think of that stupid argument and it's so meaningless right now.

The Reaper's character approaches the pit.

GRIM REAPER  
They usually are.

WADE  
He told me I should come home, get  
a job and give this up.

The Reaper's character sails over it easily.

GRIM REAPER  
He probably thought he was giving  
you the best possible advice.

WADE  
I just signed an option for more  
money than he makes in a year. Part  
of me wanted to have the check sent  
to him as a middle finger.

GRIM REAPER  
I am sure he's proud of you.

Heat Man comes onto the screen.

WADE  
Ten years of writing, four years of  
college and every shit job I ever  
took to pay my rent would've been  
for nothing.

GRIM REAPER  
What about your posters?

WADE  
This is a "what have you done  
lately" sort of industry.

The Reaper defeats him effortlessly and with zero damage.

GRIM REAPER  
Two all.

The oven beeps in the background.

WADE  
I wish that was a victory meal.

GRIM REAPER  
You do not have to eat.

WADE  
It'd be wasting a good pizza.

Wade stands up and walks into the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Wade puts on the oven mitts. He carefully takes the pizza out of the oven. His hands discard the mitts, reaching into a cabinet for a pair of large plastic restaurant style glasses.

WADE

Nothing in the world beats a proper  
Chicago deep dish.

The Reaper walks in, sniffing. His eyes focus on the pizza.

GRIM REAPER

That looks more like a buttery  
lasagna than a pizza.

Wade opens the refrigerator and takes out a two-liter bottle of off-brand soda.

WADE

Anything less is just cardboard, a  
bit of ketchup and some cheese.

GRIM REAPER

That definitely will kill you at  
some point.

Wade fills up both glasses with the soda.

WADE

It technically doesn't exist right  
now, remember?

The Reaper closes the refrigerator door and opens the freezer. He takes out a tray of ice cubes.

GRIM REAPER

I prefer it cold.  
(looks at glasses)  
Do you have more... appropriate...  
glasses for this occasion?

Wade grabs the trays. He takes out some ice and puts it in each glass.

WADE

These glasses are from a Lou  
Malnati's near my folks.

GRIM REAPER

Why would you steal those?

WADE

I paid the waitress twenty bucks  
for them.

The Reaper shakes his head.

GRIM REAPER

Nostalgia?

WADE

It reminds me of home.

Wade opens a drawer and takes out a pizza cutter. He quickly  
slices the pizza up.

GRIM REAPER

Small comforts, right?

Wade turns to the Reaper.

WADE

It's the last meal I had with my  
family, all of us.

GRIM REAPER

They do not have it out here?

WADE

It's a Chicago thing.  
(looks at the glasses)  
My folks, my brother and his  
family, me and Julia got together  
and had a couple of pizzas.  
(beat)  
I remember seeing Julia with my  
nephews and thinking how great of a  
mother she'd be.

GRIM REAPER

That is romantic.

WADE

She was quiet the whole flight  
home. I thought she was having  
second thoughts about it all.

GRIM REAPER

I take it her mind had changed.

WADE

She said that kids were nice but  
that she was OK just being  
someone's aunt.

GRIM REAPER  
What did you tell her?

WADE  
We hadn't spoken about it until she  
told me she was expecting.

Silence.

GRIM REAPER  
Is it yours?

WADE  
Wow.

GRIM REAPER  
I've had too many women tell me on  
their death bed that they lied to  
their spouse about who was the true  
parent of their children.

WADE  
She wouldn't do that.

GRIM REAPER  
You would be surprised what people  
will do when they are desperate.

WADE  
Then why would she call me?

GRIM REAPER  
Maybe you are the only one of the  
dozens of men who--

WADE  
Fuck you.

GRIM REAPER  
There is no need to use that sort  
of language continually, Wade.

WADE  
She's not that type.

GRIM REAPER  
She might have seen your big deal  
and wants it for herself.

WADE  
Keep saying that about her and I  
will hit you.

GRIM REAPER

All I am saying is that through experience... maybe she views you as hopefully the father and that you will "do the right thing" even if you are not. Down the road you would consider the child yours, even if the biology of the matter is decidedly not in your favor.

(beat)

It is a good reason to give up this video game charade and join me on the other side instead of being what the kids would call a "cuck."

WADE

I can't give up.

GRIM REAPER

Do you really want to hear the call where she tells you she is going to abort your child? Or that the child is not yours?.

WADE

I'd rather hear it then see it from the other side.

GRIM REAPER

You are ignoring the obvious.

WADE

What's that?

GRIM REAPER

What people mean when they say they do not want kids anymore when they are with someone. They forget to leave out "with you" from the rest of the sentence.

WADE

She wouldn't do that... not to me.

GRIM REAPER

How well do you know her?

WADE

Better than you.

GRIM REAPER

You would be amazed how many people regret having kids with the wrong person, at least when they meet me.

WADE

That's not something I would expect people to bring up... with you.

GRIM REAPER

People vent when they realize that their life is over. Sometimes the things people say amaze me.

WADE

What's been the craziest?

GRIM REAPER

Are you--

WADE

Yes, I'm sure.

Silence.

GRIM REAPER

(mock New York accent)

I jerked off to Goblin amputee porn, so what?

Wade laughs.

WADE

Not what I expected.

GRIM REAPER

I think if you have reached that aspect of your masturbatory habits that maybe... maybe you should read a good book instead.

WADE

That is the very end of internet porn, I think.

(beat)

I bet when that guy does he'll be begging you for one shot to take that off the internet.

GRIM REAPER

So he would not have a legacy of being in that sort of porn?

WADE

It would be an interesting legacy to talk about over dinner.

GRIM REAPER

A while ago I had to bring an older man of wealth to the other side. He said something that I found interesting about legacy and children that I think might be able to help ease your mind.

WADE

That it's not what it's cracked up to be?

GRIM REAPER

He summed all four of his children as his true legacy.

WADE

I thought he'd put up statues of himself all over.

GRIM REAPER

He thought that'd make him look like Ozymandias.

WADE

He didn't want a statue in the middle of nowhere proclaiming his greatness for no one to see?

GRIM REAPER

He said you can leave things like that with a signature on a check. I think he meant it was cheap.

WADE

Those statues are never cheap.

GRIM REAPER

How much of a legacy do you leave about yourself if it is as simple as write a check?

WADE

What if you fund a hospital that winds up with the cure for cancer?

GRIM REAPER

He would not get the credit... it would be "look what this doctor did with all that rich guy cash."

WADE

Did he try to buy some more time off of you?

GRIM REAPER

We enjoyed an expensive bottle of whiskey and several cigars before I escorted him away.

WADE

Makes this look rather quaint, huh?

GRIM REAPER

For him they were as cheap as that pizza probably was.

WADE

Perspective, right?

The Reaper looks at the pizza.

GRIM REAPER

Right.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

The Grim Reaper and Wade are seated at the table.

The pizza is mostly done.

The glasses are empty.

WADE

I forgot how good that tastes.

GRIM REAPER

That is thick enough to kill me.

BARK!

Wade turns and sees Raylan at the front door, leash in mouth.

WADE

Now?

BARK!

GRIM REAPER

You know, he really does not need to go to the bathroom.

WADE

If I don't take him out he'll shit on the carpet.

GRIM REAPER

It is not--

WADE

Do you know what game you want to play for the final round?

GRIM REAPER

Not yet.

WADE

I've got every single NES game ever on that thing. You can pick one out and I can walk my dog.

GRIM REAPER

That is... acceptable.

Wade grabs the leash. He and Raylan exit.

The Reaper grabs a controller and goes through the game list.

**EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Raylan tugs at his leash.

Wade shakes his head.

WADE

What's your problem?

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

Don't say that.

BARK!

WADE (CONT'D)

I took a chance because I thought I could win. Now I'll play it safe, beat this guy and you'll get some treats out of it.

Raylan stops and looks down.

Wade's eyes follow his. He spots a business card lying on the ground. Wade picks it up and looks at it.

WADE (CONT'D)

(reading)

Get out of Death free. Terms and conditions apply.

(looks around)

Are you kidding me?

The Reaper appears.

GRIM REAPER  
You sure you don't want to use it?

WADE  
We've got one game left.

GRIM REAPER  
That card--

WADE  
Terms and conditions.

The Reaper looks around.

GRIM REAPER  
You played me even. You can brag to everyone about it.

WADE  
I'll do it in the land of the living, thank you.

The Reaper shrugs and disappears.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Reaper sits on the couch. He cycles through the games and lands on "Pro Wrestling."

Wade and Raylan walk in.

Raylan sprints over to his dog bed and lies down.

Wade walks over and sits down next to the Reaper.

Wade grabs a controller and stares at the screen.

GRIM REAPER  
Welcome to the final game.  
(beat)  
No King Slender, in case you wanted to be a cheap about it.

WADE  
That'd be too easy.

GRIM REAPER  
A competitive game about a fake "sport" is sort of charming.

WADE

You sure you don't want to look again?

GRIM REAPER

Pro Wrestling it is.

Wade groans. He selects a two player game.

Both men cycle through the roster of characters.

WADE

It is weird that pro wrestling games are the only thing about that industry where you don't know who the winner is beforehand.

GRIM REAPER

Can you believe people used to think it was real?

Wade chooses Hayabusa.

WADE

I always used to ask people if they thought pro wrestling as real when they tried to convert me to whatever God they were hustling.

The Reaper settles on Starman.

GRIM REAPER

How are you going to explain this to people... if you win?

WADE

No one would believe me.

GRIM REAPER

You could have a moment where you find faith, if you want.

WADE

I'm a good writer but not that good.

GRIM REAPER

Most people find their faith at a dark moment in their life.

WADE

Usually it's because they need something to replace the bottle.

GRIM REAPER

That is a little unfair.

WADE

My dad is a big football guy and his favorite player was Michael Irvin. He grew up in Miami when the U was really good at football. The old man was a total super fan up until Irvin got caught with cocaine and hookers by some cops. Guess what Michael Irvin does?

GRIM REAPER

Go to jail?

WADE

He screams "do you know who I am" and then, months later, magically finds God as he gets out of how many felonies.

GRIM REAPER

Plenty of people find him when they are at their lowest.

WADE

It's just a little too coincidental for me. Someone fucks up and then "yay, I'm cured with the power of the almighty" is just too much.

GRIM REAPER

There is nothing wrong with having faith, especially with what you know right now.

Wade looks around and then to the screen.

WADE

Yeah.

GRIM REAPER

This decides it all.

The game starts. Both men's characters are on the screen.

The two begin mashing buttons, trying to get an advantage.

WADE

I keep thinking of how many times I should've met you already.

Wade's character hits a pile driver on the Reaper. An alarm goes off inside the game.

GRIM REAPER

I am certain it made you appreciate the moments you did have.

WADE

Life has a way of making you think that way, at least, until you tell yourself that it was just a small overreaction and you can live your life again like normal.

Wade quickly mashes buttons. His character goes for a pin.

The video game referee counts.

1!

2!

3!

Wade stands up and pumps his fist emphatically.

WADE (CONT'D)

Suck it, Death!

Wade does a dance that looks like he's riding a horse while slapping its ass.

GRIM REAPER

Sit down, please.

The screen changes.

Wade is up, 1-0.

WADE

I beat you--  
     (hip thrust)  
 --fair--  
     (hip thrust)  
 --and square.

GRIM REAPER

It's two of three falls.  
     (points to screen)  
 In two player mode, the default is to win two of three.

Wade looks at the screen.

WADE

That's horse shit. I won.

GRIM REAPER

These are the rules. Since we did not specify if it was best of one, or best of three, we have to default with the game's rules.

WADE

It's a technicality!

GRIM REAPER

I laid out the rules, fair and square, before we began.

Wade sits down and picks up his controller.

WADE

Yeah, yeah.

The Reaper presses start.

GRIM REAPER

How long do you think before you go back to living a normal life?

WADE

I think it all depends on how much of this feels real once I wake up.

The Reaper's character quickly gets the upper hand.

GRIM REAPER

This is very real.

WADE

What happens if I win?

A loud beep comes from the game.

GRIM REAPER

You wake up.

The Reaper goes for the pine

WADE

And I remember all of this.

1!

GRIM REAPER

Correct.

2!

Wade furiously mashes buttons.

3!

The screen changes.

It's tied, 1-1.

WADE

Damn it!

Silence.

The two men look at their controller and then at the screen.

Wade presses start.

Wade's character quickly gets the upper hand. He goes for a special move... and misses.

GRIM REAPER

That is super hard to hit.

WADE

It was right there.

The Reaper's character hits a series of moves in a row.

Wade's breathing becomes shallower, more intense.

The Reaper's character hits a special move. He pins Wade's character.

The referee counts off the three count.

1!

Wade mashes buttons furiously.

2!

Sweat pours down Wade's face.

3!

A bell rings.

The screen changes.

The Reaper has won.

GRIM REAPER

A winner is me.

Wade tosses the controller as hard as he can across the room. It disappears as soon as it leaves his hand. He grabs the Reaper's controller off his hand and pulls up a random game.

WADE

One more.

The Reaper taps Wade on the shoulder.

GRIM REAPER

You lost fairly.

Wade selects it.

WADE

Double or nothing.

The Reaper grabs the controller from Wade and tosses it aside.

GRIM REAPER

You can be proud of your effort.

Wade looks at the front door. Hints of white light appear behind it.

WADE

I want to sell my soul to the devil. Right now.

GRIM REAPER

That time is over.

WADE

I can't die. Not like this.

GRIM REAPER

None of what happens next is no longer your choice. You can take some solace in that fact.

WADE

There has to be another way.

GRIM REAPER

I told you the rules--

WADE

Fuck your rules!

GRIM REAPER  
 --in the beginning. I gave you five  
 equal, unaltered chances to beat  
 me. You did not.

WADE  
 Fuck you!

The Reaper stands up and walks to the front door.

GRIM REAPER  
 I understand you are angry.

WADE  
 This is hardly fair!

More beams of light appear behind the front door.

WADE (CONT'D)  
 I don't deserve to die... not now.

GRIM REAPER  
 Life and death... rarely are fair.

WADE  
 I have things to do.

The door is half lit with white light.

GRIM REAPER  
 And they have to remain undone.

WADE  
 There has to be a way--

GRIM REAPER  
 No.

WADE  
 Please?

All but the top right corner of the door is fully lit up.

GRIM REAPER  
 You can take up your grievances  
 with Saint Peter.

WADE  
 It was close.

Blinding white light illuminates the door fully.

GRIM REAPER  
Your moment is completed. It is  
time for you to come.

Wade looks at the Reaper.

WADE  
You can't let it end like this.

GRIM REAPER  
I will and I must.

The Reaper transforms back into the first version we saw.

Wade looks at the door. He sighs in acceptance.

WADE  
Any spoilers?

The Reaper shakes his head.

Raylan walks up to Wade.

Wade bends over and pets his dog.

Wade looks around the room, for the final time. His eyes  
focus on Raylan. Tears come down his face.

WADE (CONT'D)  
I didn't put any food out for him  
before I went to sleep.

The Reaper looks at Raylan and then back at Wade.

GRIM REAPER  
Someone will take care of him.

Raylan sprints up to the Reaper. He sits down next to him.

WADE  
He's one of God's creatures. It's  
my job to make sure he's taken care  
of, even after I'm gone.

GRIM REAPER  
That is out of your hands now.

The Reaper opens the door.

White light pours into the room, blinding Wade.

FADE OUT.