

THE LAST LAUGH

Written by

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Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

FADE IN:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A SHOT of a wall-mounted LED FLAT PANEL showing the DIGITAL DIAGNOSTICS of a BODY.

The name on the TOP LEFT indicates as the body of: BRUCE ROBINSON.

DOCTOR KANE turns from looking at the SCREEN--

DOCTOR KANE
I'm going to be honest with you;
the prognosis doesn't look good.
Looks like it's terminal.

Standing in front of him, is--

BRUCE, 80s and frail, but lively for his age; as a SMILE slowly fades.

BRUCE
How long?

DOCTOR KANE
Maybe, a couple of months?

Bruce turns, as the reality of the news begins to set in.

DOCTOR KANE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'd begin preparing.
If you would like, we can assign a
caretaker for you.

Bruce nods.

INT. BUS

Bruce sits at a WINDOW SEAT as he blankly watches the city pass him by.

The DOWNTOWN portion of the city is bright and beautiful as you would expect from a city that has long been GENTRIFIED.

The bus leaves the downtown portion as it begins to traverse towards a portion of the city where gentrification hasn't quite arrived yet.

The bus comes to a stop at a corner.

INT. CITY OUTSKIRTS

The bus drives off as Bruce stands at the corner.

In front of him, are a GROUP OF PEOPLE loudly protesting the creeping gentrification of the neighborhood.

Bruce breathes a sigh of relief as he walks along the sidewalk towards the protestors when a WOMAN approaches him.

WOMAN PROTESTOR

Would you like to sign our petition
so we can keep the corporations out
of our city?

Bruce ignores her as he continues to pass by.

WOMAN PROTESTOR (CONT'D)

If you don't do anything, our lives
are over!

Bruce suddenly stops and turns.

BRUCE

And what exactly is your plan by
harassing people for signatures?
Do you think that will actually do
anything? Huh?

WOMAN PROTESTOR

Then, what would you do?

BRUCE

You come up with a plan. A perfect
plan. Your, little paper with
signatures, that's not a plan.
That's, work.

Bruce turns and walks away as the protestor stands dumbfounded.

EXT. APARTMENTS

Bruce slowly walks towards a modest THREE-STORY brick and mortar apartment. One of the last few in the city.

Outside, sitting on a nearby bench is--

MS PATTY, 70s, elegant and lively.

Ms Patty admires as Bruce walks towards the building.

MS PATTY

I noticed that you didn't join me for my walk this afternoon. I was starting to think that you've been seeing someone else.

Bruce gives her a tight, warm hug.

BRUCE

Ms Patty. There is nobody else that I would go walking with then you. I went downtown to visit the 'ol doctor.

MS PATTY

And?

BRUCE

Nothing to worry about.

MS PATTY

Good. I can't imagine not going on these walks without you.

BRUCE

Wouldn't miss them for the world.

Bruce turns as he enters into the building.

MS PATTY

I hate for you to go, but I love to see you leave!

Bruce laughs out loud as he gives her a little "shake" which cracks her up even more and disappears inside.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY

Bruce slowly, but gracefully makes his way up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Bruce exits the stairway as he quietly turns and makes his way down the hall until he arrives at his unit at the end of the hall.

He takes out his keys and opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT

Bruce enters a modest one-bedroom apartment flooded by natural light.

The design is simple and there isn't much clutter. In fact, the look is very sterile, almost like a hospital. Everything is where it is with purpose.

He slowly looks around and lets out a sigh.

Bruce locks the door behind him and methodically places his keys at the end of the BREAKFAST BAR and walks into--

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM

The bedroom is very plain. There's a twin-sized bed in the middle of the room flanked by side tables.

In the corner of the room, along the far edge of the wall are BOXES stacked. The only sign of clutter.

Bruce manually flicks the switch as he TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS and slowly lies down sideways on the bed.

He slowly turns to his back as he blankly stares at the ceiling as he slowly fades.

FADE TO BLACK.

The sounds of KNOCKING on the a door is heard.

FADE TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce abruptly opens his eyes to the continued sound of knocking on his front door.

Bruce closes his eyes, hoping it would go away, but the knocking continues relentlessly.

He looks at his watch. 9 AM.

Finally, he rolls over as he gets up.

INT. BRUCE'S FRONT DOOR

The front door swings open.

BRUCE

Who are you and what do you want?

MARTY, 30s, dressed in a nurse outfit stands frozen with his hand in a KNOCKING POSE.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

MARTY

Are you...

Marty checks his SMART-WATCH.

MARTY (CONT'D)

... Bruce Robin...

BRUCE

Bruce Robinson. Yeah, that's me and you still haven't answered my question.

Marty sticks out his hand.

MARTY

I'm Marty and I'm your assigned caretaker.

BRUCE

Caretaker? For what? Assigned by whom?

MARTY

You were diagnosed with a terminal illness and I was sent by the hospital to help take care of you.

BRUCE

I don't need help. I can take care of myself.

Bruce shuts the door.

MARTY (O.S.)

I understand that this can be a very difficult time, but if anything, I'm here to be a helper. Most of the time, you won't even notice that I'm there.

The door slowly opens.

BRUCE

What kind of help?

MARTY

Get your medicine, help with grocery shopping. Stuff like that. As time goes by, you will notice that it will gradually become physically taxing to do even menial tasks, so, I'm here to help with that.

BRUCE

How often are you supposed to be here?

MARTY

For now, I'll check in about twice a week and go from there.

BRUCE

And do I have to pay you? What's going on with that?

MARTY

It's all been taken care of.

BRUCE

By social services?

MARTY

Something like that.

BRUCE

Okay.

MARTY

Is there anything you would like me to do today?

Bruce thinks for a second.

BRUCE

Well, I plan on going back to sleep, so if you can go away, that would be nice.

MARTY

Really?

BRUCE

No, you can stand over my bed and watch me sleep like a creeper.

MARTY

What? Seriously?

BRUCE

No. Go away. There's nothing today.

MARTY

Okay. I'll check back in a couple of days.

EXT. APARTMENTS - DAY

Bruce and Ms Patty arrive back in front of the apartments from their mid-morning walk.

Bruce slowly makes his way over to the bench and sits down.

MS PATTY

Bruce. Your pace has gotten really slow today. What's going on?

BRUCE

Nothing. Just feeling a little tired today.

MS PATTY

You sure?

BRUCE

Yeah. Nothing to worry about it.

MS PATTY

Okay...

BRUCE

I'm going to go take a nap. Maybe that will do it.

Ms Patty watches with a concerned look as Bruce turns and leaves as he now walks slower than usual.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY

Bruce stands at the bottom of the steps as he looks up at the stairs in front of him.

He takes the first step up and pauses at the first step.

BRUCE

What's going on today?

He then raises his foot to go up the second step when his foot gets caught on the step as he begins to lose his balance.

He quickly reaches for the RAILING and his hand SLIPS OFF THE HANDRAIL and he tumbles forwards.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce wakes up and he sees white all around him. He looks around and he's sitting inside a sleek, futuristic hospital room.

BRUCE

Where am I?

MARTY (O.S.)

You're at the hospital.

Bruce looks over and Marty is sitting at his bedside.

BRUCE

How did I get here?

MARTY

Nobody knows exactly what happened, but the paramedics found you at the bottom of the stairs of your apartment.

BRUCE

Why am I still here?

MARTY

Doctors say that you broke your leg in the fall. Looks like you won't be living on the second floor any more.

BRUCE

So, what's going to happen?

MARTY

I already spoke to the apartment manager. Found a unit on the ground floor. You're allowed to move in right away.

BRUCE
How can I move in?

MARTY
Don't worry about it. I can get a couple of helpers and we'll move your stuff in while you're still in the hospital. Doctors want to make sure that you don't develop any, complications.

BRUCE
What do you mean?

MARTY
Sometimes. When, older people fall, their body is so frail, that something as simple as falling down and breaking a bone can lead to something more permanent, oftentimes, death.

BRUCE
Oh.

MARTY
Yeah. But, it's a precautionary thing. Just give me your card and I'll move your stuff into your new place so by the time your out of here, you'll be good to go.

BRUCE
My card?

MARTY
Yeah. To your apartment.

Bruce laughs.

BRUCE
My place is, old school. I still use keys.

Marty's jaws drop.

MARTY
What? They still have those in the city?

BRUCE
One of the last.

INT. BRUCE'S NEW APARTMENT- LIVING ROOM - DAY

The keys jiggle as the FRONT DOOR opens and Marty guides Bruce inside his new ground-floor apartment.

Bruce looks around and sees his furniture exactly in the same place as it was in his old place and smiles.

BRUCE
Exactly as it was before.

Marty closes the front door and places the key at the end of the BREAKFAST BAR.

MARTY
Well, I kind of figured you to be the anal-retentive type.

BRUCE
Why do you figure that?

MARTY
It takes one to know one.

Bruce nods.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Anything else?

BRUCE
No. I think that's it for today.

Marty turns to leave, but slowly turns back around.

MARTY
Oh yeah. While we were moving, in one of the boxes in your bedroom, I noticed some clown stuff. What's that about?

Bruce smiles as if brought on by an endearing memory.

BRUCE
I used to work as a clown in the circus.

MARTY
Really? So, do you know any magic tricks?

BRUCE
A couple.

MARTY
Can you still do them?

BRUCE
It's been years, but once you learn
the tricks, they never really go
away.

MARTY
Do you mind showing me one now?

BRUCE
Sure. You got a dollar?

MARTY
What's a dollar?

BRUCE
Oh yeah. That's right. Well, how
about a piece of paper?

MARTY
Uh...

BRUCE
Never mind.

Bruce looks around the room when he POINTS at a DECK OF
CARDS.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Give me that. Those cards.

Marty retrieves them and hands it to Bruce.

MARTY
I haven't seen playing cards in a
long time. Not since when I was a
kid.

Bruce takes the cards and begins to expertly shuffle the
cards in one hand as Marty observes, amazed.

MARTY (CONT'D)
How did you...

Bruce continues to shuffle the cards as he spreads them
evenly on his hand and offers it up to Marty.

BRUCE
Pick a card, any card.

Marty looks at the cards.

MARTY
Like, grab it?

BRUCE
Yeah. Pick any card and take it
out and look at it. Memorize it.

Marty looks at the cards and picks a card and looks at it.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Look at it, but make sure that I
don't see what card it is.

Marty carefully guards the card as he looks at it: KING OF
HEARTS.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Did you memorize it?

Marty nods.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Good.

Bruce combines the cards and shuffles a couple of times and
spreads the cards facedown on his hand again.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Now, take that card and slide it in
anywhere in the deck.

Marty does and Bruce takes the cards and begins to shuffle
them over and over again as Marty marvels.

Bruce then takes the cards in one hand and with his other
hand begins to slap the deck over and over again as a CARD
begins to slowly slide out.

MARTY
No way...

The card slowly continues to slide out until it's halfway out
and Bruce slides the deck out in front of him and eyes it.

BRUCE
Is that your card?

Marty quickly takes the card and takes a look: FOUR OF
SPADES.

Disappointment falls upon Marty.

MARTY
No.

Bruce is puzzled.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Maybe, it's been a while?

BRUCE
What about behind you. In your
back pocket, perhaps?

MARTY
What?

Marty slowly reaches inside his back pocket when he FEELS
SOMETHING.

A look of SHOCK comes upon him as he slowly takes SOMETHING
from his back pocket.

A CARD.

He slowly turns it around and looks at it: the KING OF
HEARTS.

MARTY (CONT'D)
How?

BRUCE
Magic.

MARTY
That doesn't even make sense! How
did you do that?

BRUCE
Trade secret. A true magician
never reveals his secrets.

EXT. APARTMENTS - DAY

Bruce and Marty are sitting outside on the bench as Ms Patty
walks by.

MS PATTY
You going to join me, Bruce? You
can bring your friend along.

BRUCE
No. Not today. Maybe, next time.

MS PATTY
Your loss.

Ms Patty exaggerates her hip movements as she walks away.
Marty quickly looks away as Bruce laughs.

BRUCE

So, Marty. Tell me. Is there a Ms
Patty in your life?

MARTY

Well, there is this one girl.
She's a lab technician.

BRUCE

How do you know this girl?

MARTY

She volunteers down at the soup
kitchen every month.

BRUCE

And?

MARTY

I don't know.

BRUCE

Have you talked to her?

MARTY

Yeah. But, it's just that. I
don't know if she's interested.

BRUCE

Well, you're not going to know
unless you do something.

MARTY

Were you ever, married?

Bruce laughs. A different laugh.

BRUCE

Once. A long time ago.

MARTY

What happened?

BRUCE

She passed away.

MARTY

I'm sorry.

BRUCE

No, no. That's okay.

MARTY

What kind of person was she?

Bruce looks off into the distance.

BRUCE

She was a very beautiful person.
Not just on the outside, but
inside. I would do anything for
her.

MARTY

Do you miss her?

BRUCE

When you love someone so much and
suddenly they're not around. You
start to go crazy.

MARTY

Did you ever meet anyone after?

BRUCE

Yeah. For a while, but it just
never really worked out.

MARTY

How come?

BRUCE

We were just really different
people. She was in love with me
but, I just didn't feel the same.

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT- BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bruce flushes the toilet and goes to the sink to wash his
hands when his HAND suddenly begins to SHAKE UNCONTROLLABLY.

He tries to force it to stop, but it gradually gets worse.

INT. BRUCE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marty enters as he sets the keys on the breakfast bar.

MARTY

Bruce. I'm here.

Silence.

Marty freezes.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Bruce? It's Marty.

Marty walks down the hallway when he sees a LEG stick out of the BATHROOM.

He RUSHES over.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT- BATHROOM

Marty enters and sees Bruce lying on the bathroom floor in the FETAL POSITION.

Marty shakes him.

MARTY
Bruce! Are you okay? Bruce!

Bruce is unresponsive as Marty reaches for his SMART-WATCH and presses a BUTTON.

BEEP.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Call ambulance.

SMART WATCH
Calling ambulance.

MARTY
Come on Bruce, stay with me.

FADE TO BLACK.

The CONSTANT BEEPING of an EKG MACHINE is heard.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Bruce gradually opens his eyes and looks at the EKG Machine bedside.

MARTY (O.S.)
How are you feeling, Bruce?

Bruce looks over and sees Marty slowly getting up.

BRUCE
How did I get here? What happened?

MARTY

I came in the morning and you were lying unconscious in the bathroom.

BRUCE

Okay. Well, I'm up now. Let's go.

MARTY

I'm sorry, Bruce. You suffered a stroke. The doctors are recommending that you be moved to an assisted living facility.

BRUCE

Old folks home? Forget it!

MARTY

Bruce. You live by yourself. If you have another episode, it could be fatal.

INT. HOSPICE CARE FACILITY- ROOM - DAY

A room that barely fits the two twin-sized beds with a small window in between.

Bruce sits up in his bed. He looks over and sees PEDRO, a decrepit old man lying on the bed across from him.

Pedro breathes laboriously as he struggles to get up and looks over at Bruce.

PEDRO

What's the matter, old man?

BRUCE

Don't call me that.

PEDRO

Then, what should I call you?

BRUCE

Nothing.

PEDRO

Okay. Mr. Nothing.

BRUCE

Stop it.

PEDRO

How are you doing, Mr. Nothing?

Bruce shoots him a look as Pedro bursts out in laughter that's cut short by him struggling to breathe.

Bruce glares at Pedro as he gets up and leaves the room.

PEDRO (CONT'D)
I'll see you later, Mr. Nothing.

INT. HOSPICE CARE FACILITY- ROOM - NIGHT

Everything is quiet as Bruce lies in bed sleeping, when suddenly Pedro violently wakes up as he struggles to breathe.

Bruce wakes up and looks over to see Pedro flailing his arms as he struggles to breathe.

Bruce turns the other way as Pedro continues.

Suddenly, Bruce turns and slowly gets up.

As he does, he slowly reaches over and grabs his PILLOW as he slowly approaches Pedro.

Bruce stands above Pedro, who reaches out to him.

BRUCE
Shh...

Bruce raises his pillow and with both hands, he slowly brings it down TOWARDS PEDRO, who looks at him wide-eyed.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPICE CARE FACILITY- ROOM - DAY

Bruce's eyes open as he gets up to TWO VOICES.

He looks up and sees two HOSPICE AIDES standing there, who notice Bruce as he gets up.

HOSPICE AIDE 1
Oh. We're sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

BRUCE
What are you doing here?

HOSPICE AIDE 1
Your roommate, Pedro.

BRUCE
What about him?

Bruce looks over and sees an EMPTY bed that's already been made-up.

HOSPICE AIDE 1
He passed last night over complications.

BRUCE
That's terrible.

HOSPICE AIDE 2
He had a respiratory issue. He didn't have much time.

BRUCE
So, what happens next?

HOSPICE AIDE 1
We're going to have to find you another roommate.

BRUCE
In the same room?

HOSPICE AIDE 1
Is that a problem?

BRUCE
I got so close to him. I don't think I'm comfortable staying here.

HOSPICE AIDE 1
I'll bring it up to management. We'll see what we can do.

BRUCE
Thank you.

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Marty helps Bruce lie down on his bed.

MARTY
I don't know what you said or did to get back here, but it worked.

Bruce tries to smile as Marty helps him in.

BRUCE
I'm feeling tired. Even more than usual.

MARTY

It's your cancer. It's slowly
weakening your body. That means
you don't have much time left. If
I were you, I'd start calling your
family.

Bruce silently looks out the window.

MARTY (CONT'D)

I can help you, if you'd like.

Bruce slowly turns to him.

BRUCE

There's nobody.

MARTY

Nobody? Not even one person?

Bruce shakes his head.

MARTY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Bruce.

BRUCE

Don't. It's all my fault.

Silence falls on the room.

Suddenly, a smile comes across Bruce's face as he turns to
Marty.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I had a friend once. Long time
ago.

MARTY

Oh. How did you guys meet?

BRUCE

Work-related. You ever meet one of
those people where you know right
away that you'd become friends for
life? He was one of those.

MARTY

Tell me about him.

BRUCE

He was quiet. Usually kept to
himself. We met and we just hit it
off. He had a weird way of showing
love, but he had a rough childhood.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
But, in the end, he was the closest
I got to anybody.

MARTY
Sounds like a great guy.

BRUCE
He was.

MARTY
What happened to him?

BRUCE
I don't know. One day, he just
disappeared. Haven't heard from
him since.

Bruce struggles as he leans back.

MARTY
Rest.

Bruce lies down as he slowly closes his eyes as Marty exits.

INT. BRUCE'S LIVING ROOM

Marty goes to the table and picks up an ENVELOPE and takes
out the letter inside.

He reads the letter silently when he suddenly taps the side
of his SMART-WATCH.

BEEP.

MARTY
Call GDWP.

SMART WATCH
Calling GDWP.

EXT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marty approaches the apartment as Ms Patty sits outside on
the bench.

MS PATTY
Marty!

Marty smiles as he comes over.

MARTY
How are you doing Ms. Patty?

MS PATTY
How is old Bruce doing?

MARTY
Any day now. He's gotten so weak,
he can't get out of bed.

MS PATTY
I miss him so much.

MARTY
I'm going to see him right now.
I'll ask if it's okay for you to
come in.

MS PATTY
Please do.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S LIVING ROOM

Marty enters and locks the door behind him.

MARTY
Bruce. I'm here.

Nothing.

Marty walks down the hallway--

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM

Marty opens the door and Bruce is lying in bed.

He now struggles to breathe.

BRUCE
Marty...

Marty rushes over to his side.

MARTY
Bruce. I'm here!

BRUCE
I... want... to... say...

Marty waits in anticipation.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Thank... you...

MARTY
Thank you. For what?

BRUCE
For... being... here... For...
being... my... friend...

Marty check his pulse as he looks at his watch and calculates.

He shakes his head.

Bruce slowly lifts his arms as he gingerly grabs Marty's hand and pushes it away.

Bruce slowly shakes his head.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
It's... okay...

MARTY
Hang in there, Bruce...

Bruce slowly turns his head towards the sunlight shining through the window.

He soaks in the sun as he slowly closes his eyes and breathes his last.

Bruce's chest stops moving as he Marty suddenly goes into hyper-drive; checking Bruce's pulse and checking his pupils.

Nothing.

Marty takes a step back and let's out a sigh.

He taps the side of his SMART-WATCH.

BEEP.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Send coordinates to the coroner and
schedule a pick-up.

SMART WATCH
Sending coordinates and scheduling
a pick-up.

Marty stands as he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a SMALL FLASH-DRIVE SIZED DEVICE and presses a BUTTON.

SMART WATCH (CONT'D)
Incoming call, unknown number.

Marty taps the side of his SMART-WATCH.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARTY INSIDE THE BEDROOM and a HIDDEN MAN.
(we only see his mouth).

MOUTH
Is it done?

MARTY
Confirmed. Patient deceased. Time
of death, 1345.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM

The room is dark, and there are MULTIPLE SCREENS laid out all displaying different items. On one of the screens is the DIGITAL SCAN OF BRUCE. On another screen is the NEWS with the logo of GOTHAM NEWS in the top corner.

On one of the screens is a FILE.

The MOUSE clicks on the FILE and it expands.

The CONTENTS of the file show VARIOUS OTHER FILES named with familiar names: KILLER CROC, POISON IVY, MR FREEZE, PENGUIN, etc...

Besides all the names are the same word "DECEASED". All of them, except for one file in particular.

He clicks on the file: JOKER.

He opens the file and the picture of BRUCE is shown. He clicks up top and types: DECEASED.

He closes the file.

We now see more of the identity of the Mouth, and it's an old, grizzled man.

MOUTH
Thank you, Marty. Good job.

MARTY
It was a pleasure, Mr. Wayne.

FADE OUT.