

WORTHY

Written by

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INT. SAM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

THE JUDGE, mid 40s, wearing dark robes with neatly coiffed hair, organizes a stack of papers while sitting in an arm chair.

SAM, early 30s, enters through the front door, wearing ripped jeans.

SAM

Uhh. Who are you?

THE JUDGE

Oh, you're here? Finally. Shall we begin?

SAM

No, seriously. Who are you, and why are you in my house?

The Judge sighs and stands.

THE JUDGE

Very well, we can begin with introductions. I am The Judge. This is not your house, this is the After, and we're here to determine where you belong.

The Judge extends his hand and Sam slowly shakes it.

SAM

The After? After what?

The Judge raises an eyebrow and sits back in his chair.

SAM (CONT'D)

What - like the afterlife?

The Judge hums and writes a note in his papers.

THE JUDGE

Hmm. Smarter than I'd been lead to expect. Yes, like the afterlife.

SAM

So I'm dead?

The Judge clucks his tongue.

THE JUDGE

Or perhaps not. Yes, you're dead.

SAM

Then why are we in my living room?

The Judge looks around in interest.

THE JUDGE

Is that where we are? Hmm, interesting. Well, as you mortals say, this is your party. You've chosen the venue.

Sam looks around curiously before sitting on the couch.

SAM

Sure, okay. Venue for what, exactly?

THE JUDGE

Your Judgement. We'll be going through your life to decide if it was worth it.

SAM

What makes a life "worth it"?

THE JUDGE

The fact that you need to ask that does not bode well for your case.

SAM

You ask a hundred different people that question, you get a hundred different answers. Which one is right?

The Judge looks amused as he makes another note in his papers.

THE JUDGE

Right answer? There is none. It's your life. Why should you care what I think of it.

SAM

Well, then why are you here?

THE JUDGE

I'm here to keep you honest.

The Judge grins widely, revealing his teeth.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Call me the Devil's Advocate.

Sam looks startled and swallows nervously.

SAM

Okay. So I just have to prove to you that I think my life was worth living?

The Judge nods once.

SAM (CONT'D)

And if I fail?

THE JUDGE

Do you intend to fail?

SAM

No! Just curious. What are the stakes here. Is it, like, heaven or...

THE JUDGE

Hell?

Sam nods.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

No. Unfortunately, you've already leaped that particular hurdle. You were good enough.

Sam relaxes into his chair.

SAM

So, heaven or not hell. Reincarnation?

THE JUDGE

If you'd like. You can choose to opt out entirely, but we do tend to be harsher on repeat customers. Would you like to give it another shot?

SAM

I don't... Can I know the alternative first?

THE JUDGE

Purgatory.

SAM

So, like, the eternal waiting room?

THE JUDGE

If you'd like. Except your appointment will never arrive, there are no magazines to read, and the room is completely empty.

SAM

So it's nothing?

THE JUDGE

Correct. Eternal nothing. Just emptiness, and blankness.

SAM

That sounds worse than hell.

THE JUDGE

Oh, yes. Many people's personal hells are, in fact, purgatory. Now you know the stakes. Are you ready to begin the proceedings?

Sam looks briefly conflicted, before he nods to himself.

SAM

Yes, actually, I would. I lived a good life, as far as I'm concerned. I did everything I ever wanted to do, I had great friends. I like to think I was a good person.

THE JUDGE

And you made many foolish errors, I see.

Sam shifts uncomfortably in his chair. The Judge flips through some papers.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

I see here you died in a skiing accident. Were you an avid skier?

SAM

No. It was my first time, and I've always wanted to learn.

THE JUDGE

Admirable. And tell me, what sort of slope were you on?

Sam is silent.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

A black diamond, wasn't it?
Interesting learning coice. Suppose
you won't be going back. Shame,
that.

SAM

I thought I could handle it. I did
some snowboarding in college.

THE JUDGE

Which you graduated from over a
decade ago.

SAM

Alright, look, I never said I was
smart. You said I needed to be the
one who thought it was worth it,
and I don't think being smart is
what makes life worth it.

The Judge writes in his papers while Sam glares.

THE JUDGE

So you don't think learning and
growing are what make life worth
living?

SAM

No. They're important, but not what
makes a life.

THE JUDGE

So what do you think life is about?

SAM

Well, I don't think it's about what
you accomplish. I think it's about
what you intend - I know there's a
saying about paths of good intent,
but I've never really bought into
that.

THE JUDGE

And what kind of intentions do you
think are worthy?

SAM

I think if your intentions are good
and honest, you're doing it right.

The Judge smirks.

THE JUDGE

And would you say those scars were honest and good to yourself?

Sam glances down at his arms and pulls his sleeves lower to cover his scars.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Well? And the intent mattered more than the result, didn't you say?

SAM

That was different.

THE JUDGE

Was it? As far as I can tell, you already decided your life wasn't worth living.

Sam jumps to his feet angrily.

SAM

That's not--

Sam takes a deep breath.

SAM (CONT'D)

It wasn't like that. I don't... I can't say I'm proud of what I did. I know I messed up. I was in a bad place as a kid, and your right. I did decide it wasn't worth it anymore.

The Judge also stands, still grinning.

THE JUDGE

Wonderful. I'm glad you see--

SAM

No. That was before, this is now. I decided then, and I failed. But I woke up in the hospital bed the next week and decided I was wrong. That I was so miserable because I wasn't willing to go for what I wanted, to be true to myself. I am now. I got better.

THE JUDGE

You said improvement wasn't what made life worth it.

SAM

You're right. But I know better than anyone else what it is to think life is meaningless and empty, and I don't anymore. I don't wanna be dead. I want to keep living, I want to keep doing and experiencing.

Sam looks to a collection of pictures of his friends and family.

SAM (CONT'D)

But I can't, because I made a dumb mistake, and now I have to accept that. But I will *not* accept you telling me that my life wasn't worth it, because it was. It was my life, and it was the best I had, and I'm proud of it.

The judge studies Sam before sighing and holding out a hand to shake.

THE JUDGE

Congratulations, Sam. I see I can't change your mind.

Sam takes the judges hand and shakes it.

THE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Welcome to heaven.

THE END