

Time of Death...

The set is almost completely black because we are meant to perceive this from the speaker's perspective. However, there are hospital sounds coming from all directions, and nurses and doctors will move throughout the aisles.

The cast will also be the CHORUS providing the beeping sound that PATIENT responds to.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: Awareness returns in tune to the steady beeping coming from somewhere near my head. But that awareness tells me nothing.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: All I perceive is darkness, and the soft beeping sound. Its steadiness is both annoying and reassuring at the same time.

NURSE shines a pen light in PATIENT'S eye, as a soft blue spot appears over her.. It's just enough light that we can discern that PATIENT is in a hospital bed.

NURSE: (recording notes): Female Jane Doe brought in approximately five minutes ago by EMT's. Showed faint signs of responsiveness in ambulance. Pupils are reactive, but sluggish. Pulse is weak.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

NURSE: I'm pretty sure you can hear me. The doctor is coming. Try to hold on.

CHORUS: Beep Beep Beep.

PATIENT: There is a soothing voice coming from somewhere outside... outside me, I think.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

DOCTOR: Miss.... Can you hear me? I'm Emily Evans, a resident here. We're trying to help you. If you can hear me, wiggle your toes.

NURSE: She's been mostly non-responsive since they brought her here.

DOCTOR: I know... but sometimes it's a shock reaction. (to PATIENT) Can you wiggle your toes?

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: I make a great effort and think I have wiggled the toes the sweet voice asked me to. I like the sweet voice. The other is more efficient. Not sour. Kind of bland.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

NURSE: Anything?

DOCTOR: I thought I saw a twitch. But... look monitor her vitals and report to me every five minutes. See if you can find her family.

The blue light dims, but remains over the PATIENT.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: I see only blackness. I dimly recall voices asking me to do things. I remember a red light in my eye, but now I am not certain if my eyes are closed or open. I attempt to blink but I'm not sure I actually did it. Nothing changes.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: There is no time. There is nothing but me. I might have been here five minutes or five days or five hours. Time merges. It slips. I cannot catch it.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

PATIENT: The past and future meld. I hear the soft beeping from Outside, but now I also discern a sort of whirr-click. I hold my breath to try and identify it, and alarms go off.

NURSE: Doctor... doctor, come quickly. She stopped triggering the vent. Crash in curtain one!

DOCTOR: No. Don't. Her husband called. She was a terminal cancer patient.

NURSE: (crossly) Was? She's not dead yet. It might have just been a spasm.

DOCTOR: Her husband is on the way, but he said she has a DNR.

NURSE: Can't we keep her alive until he can come say goodbye?

DOCTOR: Run the code.

NURSE: Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR: (checking cellphone) The husband is five minutes out.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

PATIENT: Okay, I understand now. I'm in a hospital. There was a crash. I was thrown from the car. The whirr-click was a ventilator. I saw them on reruns of *ER* once, a long time ago. Or yesterday. I can't quite...

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

PATIENT: Oh, god. I remember now. I was coming back from my last chemo appointment. They said I couldn't be treated anymore. "Palliative care only." I have a tube in my throat... they think I'm in a coma. (pause) Am I? Oh... pain...

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep
Beep. Beep. Beep.

PATIENT: My husband... he's been such an angel. I want... God, I want to see him.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

PATIENT: So... tired. George. I want George.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

A man, GEORGE, enters and looks around. He's obviously been told where to go. The DOCTOR intercepts her. A soft yellow spot illuminates their conversation.

DOCTOR: Mr. Franklin, your wife came in with serious injuries including a bad head injury. We took steps to reduce the swelling, but the best we could do was keep her alive until you made it here. You said she has a do not resuscitate order... ?

GEORGE: Becca wouldn't want to be like this. Tied to machines and trapped in her own head.

DOCTOR: We'll monitor her through the night, but she almost crashed once. If it happens again, what are your wishes?

GEORGE: Don't... don't bring her back. Her live lately has been so much pain. Today they told her they couldn't treat anymore... only make her comfortable. Do you know... she didn't... she didn't do this to herself?

DOCTOR: No. It wasn't a suicide attempt. She was hit by a drunk driver who ran a red light. He didn't make it.

GEORGE: God... what a ... she wanted to die with dignity when it was time. Not all broken and bruised.

DOCTOR: Unfortunately, we cannot control fate. But you're here. She's not alone.

GEORGE: Can I sit with her?

DOCTOR: Yes. And talk to her. She'll hear you. I'll send the nurse back in a few minutes.

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

GEORGE goes to sit on the side of PATIENT'S bed. The yellow spot goes out. Dim blue light is left.

PATIENT: George is here. I can't feel him. I sort of hear him. He's talking about Goodbye. Oh, god. George. I'm sorry. I was supposed to have more time than this.

GEORGE: Becca, honey. I'm here. You've been... you've been horribly injured. They don't think you'll last the night. I'm here, though. I'm holding your hands. You're so cold. Oh, love. I know this isn't how you wanted to go, but if you're being called to cross over, please know, I send you with love. You're not alone. And you are loved.

PATIENT: George, oh George... I love

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep

PATIENT: I can see... I see light. Oh, soft, warm light. George, can you see it... No, I guess you can't. I think. I think I'm supposed to go to it. Ohh. Who knew oblivion could feel so peaceful?

CHORUS: Beep. Beep. Beep. Beeeeeeeeeeep.

GEORGE: (alarmed) Nurse! Doctor! The beepin... it's...

The blue light fades out.

CHORUS: Beeeeeeeeep.

The lights come up. PATIENT has clearly died, but GEORGE remains on the side of the bed. NURSE and DOCTOR rush in.

NURSE: I'm sorry, sir. She's gone.

DOCTOR: I'm very sorry for your loss, sir. Nurse, note this: time of death... 21:32 hours.

The DOCTOR leaves.

NURSE: Would you like to stay with her for a little longer? I'll give you some privacy.

GEORGE: Yes... yes please.

NURSE draws a privacy curtain around the bed, and the lights fade to black.

END.

Sent from my iPhone. (Poorly typed with thubms.)