

Setup

Introvirgo

Victoria was eight or nine years old. She wandered the house looking for the family.

"Mommy?" She called out and climbed the stairs to where the bedrooms were. Surely she'd find someone there.

Indeed. She found mommy. Sitting on the bed in tears with a tissue in one hand and a small box gift wrapped in the other.

"What's wrong?" Victoria climbed onto the bed next to her.

"Oh nothing. Just tired. Hey, can you do me a favor? Can you bring this to Ken? It's his Christmas present, the new iPhone" her mom handed her the box.

"Ok" Victoria rappelled down the steps to the den to where Ken was, who as of a month ago was now her stepfather.

Ken was resting in the hospital bed that replaced the couch in the living room. He laid mostly upright but didn't quite seem awake.

"Hey Ken, do you wanna see your new iPhone?"

She placed the box under his fingers by his side. They twitched but didn't move to grab the box. His skin, usually flush with warmth, was now pale like his

eyes. He mumbled something she couldn't understand.

"Sorry, what'd you say?" She asked.

It sounded like his tongue was stuck or his lips were glued together.

Victoria had known him for all eight of her years but she hadn't seen him like this before, and she started to panic...

"Okay. I hope you like it"

Even as a child, a sorrow started to creep into her heart that grew more as she saw his energy leave him day by day. So, she sat at the edge of the bed carefully not to harm his limbs that no longer moved.

She opened the box and swiped through the setup for the iPhone- narrating aloud to fill the silence.

"It says I need a cell phone number... but I only know the house phone number" she was stumped. She looked back to Ken and guided his fingers to the screen. He raised a finger to type a cell number. Success!

"Sweet! We're all done" she saw a slight smile from him. This was the most she'd seen him move.

"Maybe we can download a game to play tomorrow" She placed the phone on a table next to his bed and leaned in for a hug.

A tear or two fell when she hugged his body; his limbs were unable to respond to the embrace.

In loving memory of Ken Beavers