

## **What happened to Randall?**

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Randall opens his eyes. He sees a blank wall and is disoriented while he struggles to focus. "Where?" he whispers, and then it suddenly comes back to him. "No, oh no..." he says as he realizes where he is. He hears the sound of a metal door scraping back that shakes him fully awake on the cement where he lies with only a toilet roll for a pillow.

"Chow!" someone screams. Randall doesn't want to eat, he just wants to get warm. It's so cold in the room, and they only gave him a thin jumpsuit to wear, and no blanket. There is stirring all around him. Men are waking up and rising to their feet. He notices the room is filled with shivering men huddled everywhere on the floor. Slowly they all get up and stand around frowning. "Line up! Single file!" the voice yells.

Randall curls up into a ball. If he could just go to sleep for awhile longer....the metal door slides open with a loud scrape and a bang. He sits up in reaction to the noise.

Mechanically he gets to his feet and finds a place in line, but he doesn't know why. He is stumbling blind, and nothing is sinking in, yet he is saturated with a feeling of despair. He knows he must obey orders.

The room is packed with men. Most wear the blank look of someone forgotten. When Randall reaches the door someone shoves a paper bag into his hands, and he wanders back to his spot. He looks in the bag. Inside is a piece of bologna and bread. He thinks he might be sick, drops the bag on the floor, and gagging falls into a heap.

"Get up, I said get the hell up!" Randall opens his eyes. A small woman dressed in a uniform tugs at his clothes. "Morris, Randall!" she screams at him.

"That's me." He croaks and tries to get to his feet. But he is still sick, and a wave of nausea engulfs him. "I'm sick." he whispers as he sinks back down.

"I said get up!" she mumbles something into a walkie-talkie at her shoulder. Randall doesn't move.

“I can’t move or I’ll puke.” He curls into a fetal position.

The little woman in the uniform eyes him with disgust and says, “That’s a ten-four on the one-eighty” into her shoulder, then strides purposefully out of the holding tank.

“Can I get a blanket please, it’s cold,” someone asks her as she departs but she ignores them. She slides the door closed with a bang. Randall curls up tighter and falls asleep.

“Randall Morris.” Randall tries to open his eyes. They are glued shut with mucus. He jerks into an upright position, vomits violently and lies hunched over on the floor.

“Jesus Fucking Christ, he puked on my shoes.” Three large uniformed men stand in a circle around him.

“There is no way I’m printing this junkie. They don’t pay me enough for that shit.” The one with the vomit on his shoes leaves the cell.

“On your feet. Now!” The two remaining guards each grab an arm.

“I don’t feel so good.” Randall says in a weak whisper. The two men drag Randall out into the hall. He tries to stand up one more time and then goes totally limp.

“Try sleeping it off in the drunk-tank ass hole.” One of the uniforms says as they move him to an empty cell and throw him down onto the floor.

Randall opens his eyes. The sky is blue with white wispy clouds flying slowly past his vision. Long blades of grass tickle the sides of his face and he smiles. What was it he was trying to remember? Some bad dream that seemed so real, someone wanted to take away his freedom, because of a mistake he had made.

Thank God it was just a dream! The sun beats down on his face as he rolls over into the soft grass and sighs. It was just a dream. What a beautiful day!

“This man is dead.” A tall woman in white drops Randall’s wrist that falls limp onto the floor.

“Shit.” The officer beside her says under his breath. “Lock down the unit. Nobody comes in here! Get something to cover this man with. Now!”