

A Little Star
by
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PRONOUNCIATION GUIDE:

Stonychia - STOE-ny-kee-AH

Mochan - MO-ghan

Esi - EH-see

Setka - seht-KA

Urban - oor-BAN (flip the 'r')

Kushite - KUH-shiet

Nobatia - NOH-BAE-shah

CHARACTER NOTES:

BILLY is from northeast Ohio, originally. Working class town that doesn't have much left to it after the steel mill closed 30-40 years ago, mostly raised by his grandmother. High school education. In his mid-to-late 20s when he died. Fun fact: he worked at a bar called Flaming River before he died.

STONYCHIA is based off Greek myth. Don't ask me what a Greek accent sounds like, so do with that as you will. Her name is rather lyric when being pronounced, and Google translate (from English to Greek), will provide a fairly decent pronunciation of her name. Stony is one of those people who's effervescent, but is not childish, even though she has a wonder at the world around her. She knows a lot, having witnessed a lot of human history, and so is amused by most people, with very little bringing her down. Energetic, euphoric, and upbeat are all great ways to describe her, just please, do not make her childish or childlike (I know, these are very thin lines. She is not a manic pixie dream girl.)

ESI is from Nubia (modern day Sudan). In further history, she becomes Kandake of the Kushite people (that is what Nubians call their Queens, not a name). She was raised to be confident, smart, a little sassy, and a warrior.

SETKA is Egyptian and was enslaved from a very young age, to the point that he doesn't remember a time before. He's kind, a dreamer, a bit of a romantic, and rather gentle.

MOCHAN is a Celtic slave from Britania. Slight Celtic lilt to an accent wouldn't be a bad idea. Celts at this time are war-like people. Mochan was probably enslaved in the wars against the Britons and Picts which resulted in the Romans building Hadrian's Wall. I have a website that also offers a recording of how to pronounce his name, if desired.

URBAN doesn't really have a backstory. He's an artist and one of Stony's many partners throughout history. Sorry!

SOLDIER #1, #2, #3 Same as Urban, no backstory, stereotypical.

INTRO / END CREDITS VOICE - Our Narrator

INTRO

INTRO SPEAKER
(this explains what this is, title
and author, IABD)

SCENE ONE: MONOLOGUE

As close to absolute silence as we can get. BILLY speaks by himself in an empty room.

BILLY
I first died when I was 26 years
old.

It wasn't anything ridiculous, just riding my bike too fast in the rain and getting in a wreck. You know, being the idiot that I was, riding without a helmet. So, I guess you could say it was partially my fault.

Nana always hated when I didn't wear my helmet. She also hated that I had a motorcycle. What felt like seconds after I died, I woke up in 1864. Don't ask me the details of how this happened. Because I have no idea.

I do know about the girl I was dating when I died. She was a kind of quirky girl with purple hair who went by the name Winter Halliday. She was lovely.

Still is. She's also apparently immortal.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Weird, right?

SCENE TWO: STORAGE ROOM IN ANCIENT ROME

We fade up into the quiet noises of an ancient city marketplace where the first sellers are just arriving and setting up. Birds chirp.

BILLY

(huge gasp of air)

(a few beats, then
scratchy voice)

Note to self: Try to avoid being
burned alive next time.

(a few more beats, groan)

Where am I? *When* am I?

We heard him shuffle across the room. He is wearing sneakers, and the floor is dirt.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Shit. The Colosseum. I must be
in... yep, definitely ancient Rome.
Great. I don't remember anything I
learned in school about ancient
Rome.

(a few beats)

And these clothes aren't gonna
work. Apologies in advance to
whoever left their laundry hanging
outside this morning.

Street noises slowly begin to increase. We hear him taking
off jeans and a leather jacket and putting on a tunic.

BILLY (CONT'D)

All right, let's see. First thing
first, find you, Winter. As soon as
I figure out where you are. And
what you look like this time. Don't
think you've even met me yet.

(sigh)

Sounds of vendors and street noise are loud now, more people
obviously in the marketplace, including Billy himself. There
are several seconds of this louder sound before the next
line.

BILLY (CONT'D)

God, she wouldn't be in the middle
of a market like this. Artists...
yeah, artists.

ESI

Are you lost?

(after a moment,
quizzically, judging)

Well?

BILLY

(thrown)

You speak Eng- Never mind. Of
course you don't. I'm speaking
Latin.

ESI

Excuse me?

BILLY

Uh... Sorry. Yeah, I'm looking for
a woman.

ESI

Aren't you all?

(snort)

I'm not a prostitute.

BILLY

Oh! I didn't... I mean... I'm not
looking for..."

ESI

(slight laugh)

I didn't think so.

(beat)

Tell me about this woman of yours
while we walk. I have errands to
run.

BILLY

Thanks. I'm looking for this girl.

Sound of marketplace will gradually get quieter throughout
the scene, though won't totally disappear.

ESI

Name?

BILLY

Billy.

ESI

(looking at him strangely)
What kind of a name is that?

BILLY

Mine?

ESI

(snort)
I meant your girl's name. But I
guess that's OK.

(feeling it out)

Billy...

(normal)

I'm Esi. Are you from out of town?

BILLY

(smirking)

You could say that.

(sincere)

It's nice to meet you, Esi. You
from Rome?

ESI

No, I'm a Kushite.

BILLY

A what?

ESI

(chuckle)

You're from one of those northern,
barbaric tribes, aren't you? Don't
worry, we Kushites are the southern
savages.

(teacher mode)

You know where Egypt is? I'm from
right under that. My people are the
Kushites, but I'm from the Kingdom
of Nobatia.

(beat)

So, back to this girl. What's she
like?

BILLY

(quickly)

Beautiful. And very interested in the arts. She's usually around intellectuals or explorers. People doing interesting things.

ESI

What's her name?

BILLY

(after a long beat, sigh)

I'm not sure.

ESI

(judgmentally)

Don't tell me you're one of those young men who've fallen for a woman you can't have?"

BILLY

(chuckle darkly)

You could say that.

ESI

(rolls eyes, then-)

Well, what does she look like?

BILLY

(carefully)

Beautiful...

ESI

Such as?

BILLY

(not sure)

I...

ESI

(accusatory)

You don't know this girl, do you? You haven't even met her.

BILLY

(earnestly)

I have! It was just... a long time ago. I doubt she remembers me.

ESI

(sigh)

Well, if you're going to come with me, might as well make yourself useful. Carry this.

Sound of growling stomach.

ESI (CONT'D)

Here. I took my breakfast on the go with me today. You look like you could use some food.

BILLY

Thanks.

ESI

Are you a slave also? Master not taking care of you?

BILLY

(around food)
No, just a fool.

ESI

Aren't we all?

BILLY

(carefully)
You're a slave?

ESI

Yes. Got taken from home in a raid. Ended up in Egypt for awhile before I was sold up here. Spoil of war.

(shrugging)

Maybe one day I'll get back home.

BILLY

I get that. I'm far from home also, with no way to get back. Won't ever see my family again.

ESI

They dead, too?

BILLY

(sputtering)
What-? Why would...? What makes you...?

ESI

My family's dead. Are yours also?

BILLY

(with relief)
Uh, yeah. All de-, well, they aren't alive.

ESI
So what are you doing in Rome?

BILLY
I'm looking for someone.

ESI
(smirking)
Yeah, that girl that you don't know
her name or what she looks like.
Good luck.

BILLY
(chuckles)
I need all the help I can get.

SETKA
(timid, amused)
Have you found another stray, Esi?

ESI
(faux annoyance)
Two does not account for using the
term 'another.' Setka, this is
Billy. He's new to Rome.

SETKA
(polite)
Nice to meet you, sir.

BILLY
No need to call me sir.

SETKA
(surprised)
Aren't you a free man?

ESI
(smirking)
He's one of those northern
barbarians. He's carrying my
basket, so he can't be that bad.

BILLY
I promised I'd help. But I should
be on my way when you're done.

ESI
Nonsense. You need to find this
mystery girl. I'm done. We'll walk
past some of the intellectuals'
homes on our way back. Maybe you'll
get a clue.

BILLY
I'd appreciate it.

SETKA
(uneasily)
Mystery girl?

ESI
(teasing)
You'd love it, Setka, romantic that you are. He's in search of a mystery girl, but he doesn't know her name or what she looks like. Besides the fact that she's beautiful.

SETKA
She must be fair, then. That's what all the Romans find beautiful.

ESI
(smirking)
And wear the finest silks, because she must be wealthy.

BILLY
Probably. Are there any men who've taken consorts or paramours?

ESI
(snorted)
Don't you mean, are there any who haven't?

(pause)
That way is where a lot of the intellectuals and artisans live. Perhaps she'll be there.

BILLY
Thanks for your help. I really appreciate it.

ESI
(genuine)
You're welcome. I won't stand in the way of love, or of people finding their own way. We all have that right. Good luck, Billy the Barbarian.

Noise fades to silence.

SCENE THREE: THE FOUNTAIN

As we bring audio back up, we hear a fountain nearby, a few random people coming in and out of sound, though nothing distinct, and not nearly as active as morning. No birds, but we do hear crickets. It's evening.

Sound of Billy flopping to the ground.

BILLY

(big sigh)

Well, that was a long and fruitless day. Note to self, tunics chafe, and sandals cause blisters. Big ones.

(let breath out tiredly)

A few beats, then...

STONY

(gleeful laugh)

BILLY

(low)

Winter?

Sound of Billy rising to his feet, wincing and a small exclamation of pain as he stands on the blisters.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(louder)

Miss!

STONY

(a bit defiant, but not rude)

Sir?

(after several beats, more insisently)

Sir?

BILLY

Oh, um, my name is Billy. I've been looking for a little star, fallen from the night sky.

STONY

(slowly, cautious but calm)

Billy... And how do you know such things?

BILLY

I know you. We've met before. Just not yet.

STONY

(sharply)

A time traveler?

BILLY

(as if calming a scared animal)

One with no choice in the matter. But you are the constant factor wherever I go.

STONY

(surprised)

Me?

BILLY

What's your name?

STONY

(without hesitation)

Stonychia.

BILLY

(snort)

Can I call you Stony?

STONY

(suspicious again)

Why?

BILLY

Stony is much easier to say. And to give someone a shortened name is an endearment where I'm from. It means I care about you.

STONY

I don't even know you.

BILLY

(earnestly)

But I know you. I know you're a star who left her sisters behind in the night sky, looking for grand adventures. I never remember the name of the constellation, but I know it's Greek or something.

I know that you love the arts.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

I know that you love to surround yourself with intellectuals, and explorers, and artists, and musicians.

I know you've seen more than I've ever hoped to see. I know you love adventures and learning new things. And I know you have a big heart, and will do anything for those you love.

STONY

(after a long beat,
grudgingly)
Pleiads.

BILLY

(confused)
Excuse me?

STONY

The Pleiads. The Seven Sisters. That is my family. The daughters of Atlas that fled to the sky to get away from Orion the Hunter.

BILLY

(excitedly)
That's right! I still don't quite remember the whole story, but I know they're all stars. And I know you used to be one, too, but were bored and left. You were forgotten from the myths. The eighth star.

STONY

(a few more beats)
You look tired. Do you need lodgings for the night?

BILLY

(emotional, but trying to
restrain himself)
I do.

STONY

Come with me.

Footsteps, noise of a metal gate being swung open. All noises fade.

SCENE FOUR: STONY'S HOUSE

Slowly, sounds fade in. This time it's just birds and nature noises, no people. Maybe we hear a slight breeze blow through.

BILLY
(groans as he stretches
awake)

Sound of knees creaking as he stands, then we hear him pad across a stone floor and into another room. Outside noises fade as he does, though we may still occasionally hear a small, far away chirp.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(surprised, not too loud)
Oh!

Quicker feet padding into another room.

MOCHÁN
Sir?

(small beat)
Mistress has informed me she had a guest staying with us. She and the Master aren't up yet, but I have breakfast prepared.

BILLY
(first is knowingly
because he just walked in
on them)
I know. I mean, breakfast would be great. Thanks. What's your name?

MOCHÁN
Mochán, sir.

BILLY
Thank you, Mochán.

MOCHAN
Come.

We hear Billy's bare feet and Mochán's sandales walking a little further. Sound of stomach grumbling.

BILLY
This looks wonderful, Mochán!

MOCHAN
Very good, sir.

Sound of Mochán's sandals walking away, we hear Billy begin eating, which continues throughout scene. After a few seconds, we hear a couple of pairs of bare feet pad in.

STONY
(bright)
Good morning.

BILLY
(swallowing)
Morning!

STONY
Have a good night's sleep?

BILLY
Yes, thank you.

STONY
(dismissive)
Happy to help.

(mischevious)
This is my partner, Urban. Though I think you already know that?

BILLY
(gulp)
Um... nice to meet you, Urban.

URBAN
(warm)
And you.

STONY
Urban is a writer, creating beautiful poetry and amazing plays.

URBAN
(humble)
Not so amazing.

Hear Urban and Stony taking food as well, and their activity continues throughout scene.

URBAN (CONT'D)
I wasn't aware Stonychia had friends coming to stay. But then again, I'm rarely told what she's been doing.

STONY
 (laughing)
 I just know everyone!

URBAN
 (grinning)
 You do.

(to Billy)
 I'll have Mochán bring some clothes
 up to your room. Stonychia said you
 don't have any?

BILLY
 I don't. I'd appreciate being able
 to use any you have.

STONY
 (sniffing, innocent)
 You should go to the baths.

URBAN
 Yes. I'm sure you'd like a chance
 to relax after your travels?

BILLY
 (slowly)
 I would like that.

Sounds of eating fade out.

SCENE FIVE: STONY'S LIVING ROOM

URBAN
 Welcome back, Billy. How did you
 like the baths?

BILLY
 (lying)
 They were... fine.

(changing the subject)
 You have a very nice home.

URBAN
 Thank you. I am lucky. My plays
 have been quite popular at the
 local theatre.

Sound of feet padding in.

STONY
 (overdramatic sigh)

We hear Stony fall against a cushion.

URBAN
Stonychia? Busy day?

STONY
Very, and unsuccessful.

BILLY
(curious)
Unsuccessful? Your painting?

STONY sits up with a groan.

STONY
No, my painting is going well.
Today, I was looking for the slave
woman from the southern part of the
Empire. I have some information for
her.

URBAN
An impossible task.

BILLY
Do you know anything about her? A
name or something?

STONY
She goes by the name Esi. A common
enough name among the desert
people.

BILLY
I met a woman named Esi when I
first arrived her. Said she was a
slave.

STONY
(surprised)
You did?

BILLY
Yeah. She helped me find your
street.

STONY
(very eager)
Can you find her again?

BILLY
Uhh... Yeah. I mean, I can try.

STONY
 (grinning)
 Wonderful! How do we find her?

BILLY
 ...Well, I met her in the market my
 first morning here. I guess we
 could backtrack and find her that
 way.

STONY
 (making plans)
 Then we'll set out early tomorrow
 morning.

SCENE SIX: THE MARKETPLACE

Fade in on same marketplace sounds as before, loud, the
 morning has already started and the place is busy. Continues
 throughout scene.

BILLY
 Why do you need to find Esi?

STONY
 Apollo wants to help her.

BILLY
 (shocked)
 Apollo? Like the god?

STONY
 (bemused)
 Of course, the god. My sisters and
 I were companions of his sister,
 Artemis. I befriended him just as
 my sisters did other gods.

BILLY
 Befriended? I don't know much about
 the Parthenon-

STONY
 (interrupting)
 Pantheon. I'm Greek.

BILLY
 (slowly, processing)
 You're Greek? I thought you were a
 star?

STONY

(snort)

I am, but my sisters' stories are told by the Greeks. Right now, I am Greek. And I know what you are about to ask. Yes, I have been Apollo's lover at times. But we are better as friends. I prefer the company of humans like Urban. Or, apparently, you.

BILLY

(curious, and a bit
jealous)

So, what does the great god Apollo want you to do with Esi?

STONY

(cryptic)

He wants her to fulfill her destiny.

BILLY

Which is?

STONY

(shrugging)

His business, not mine.

BILLY

(sigh)

Are gods always this vague?

STONY

(laughing)

Yes. Especially Apollo.

BILLY

Do you serve him often?

STONY

Mostly I paint for his temples. Occasionally, I'll dance while he plays his lyre. We have fun. I'm not a servant or a slave to him. But I also know that if he asks for my help, there is a reason for it.

BILLY

And you're never curious as to what it is? That doesn't sound like the woman I know.

STONY

(laughing)

You're amusing. I can see why I'd like you. And you're right. I always ask too many questions of him. There are times when he simply can't tell me. I respect that from him. He especially doesn't trust Eros and hates that I adore the little, winged beastie.

BILLY

Eros?

STONY

The Romans know him as Cupis. He's a god of love.

BILLY

Ah, I know who Cupid is.

STONY

(snort)

Why doesn't that surprise me?

(quick beat)

Do you see her?

BILLY

I haven't yet.

STONY

(sigh)

BILLY

(after a beat)

Why do you wear the veil?

STONY

It's what Romans do. The women without the veils over there are prostitutes. All other women cover themselves for modest purposes.

(smirking)

Personally, I like the sun on my skin. But since I am Urban's companion, I do not want my actions to reflect poorly on him. It's bad enough that many men harass him about my paintings.

BILLY

Why don't they like you painting?

STONY

Painting is a man's job. I should be spinning or weaving. That's women's work and respectable. All Roman women should spin and weave. I don't have the patience for that.

BILLY

How-

(stops himself)

Wait, that's the man that was with Esi.

(calling loudly)

Setka!

SETKA

(after a couple beats)

Good morning, sir. Mistress.

BILLY

Morning Setka. We're looking for Esi. Is she here?

SETKA

She is. I was on my way back to her. Come, this way.

Several seconds of just crowd noises.

BILLY

There she is.

STONY

(small laugh)

You are unbelievable!

Kiss - peck on the cheek - sound. Several more seconds of crowd noise.

ESI

(grinning)

You've found your lady, Billy the Barbarian?

STONY

(measuring her)

You're Esi?

ESI

(slow, respectful)

I am, ma'am.

STONY
You're Esi of the Kushite people?

ESI
(verge of defiant)
I am. Now a slave to the Romans.
Why do you want to know?

Next few lines are somewhat rapid-fire.

STONY
Who's your master?

ESI
I am owned by the gens Manlia.

STONY
(snort)
Of course you would be. Who?

ESI
Marcus Major.

STONY
(snorted)
Good. Good.

BILLY
Will you please explain what you're
going on about?

STONY
I hate the Manlia son, Marcus
Major. He's a jerk.

(to Esi)
I have been sent by a friend of
mine, a benefactor of yours, to get
you out of here.

ESI
(blanching)
Me?

STONY
Yes. There is a ship on the Tiber
that will connect you with one
going to Egypt. Then you can travel
up the Nile and return to your
home.

ESI

Why? No one in Rome wants to end slavery. Why would you be helping me escape?

STONY

Because your benefactor wants to see you do more with your life than be a slave.

ESI

Why should I trust you?

STONY

My friend is a god. Not one of your gods, but a god nonetheless. And even if you die trying to leave, it has to be better than being stuck serving Marcus.

BILLY

(surprised)

Wait, no one said anything about death or dying!

ESI

(ignore Billy)

You're right. I'll go with you. On one condition. Setka goes with me.

SETKA

(sputtering)

I... what?

STONY

He's not part of the agreement.

ESI

(stubborn)

I'm not going without him. You may be Greek, but I'm from just as powerful of a kingdom. I have my pride. I don't have to bow to you.

STONY

Your kingdom fell apart almost a century ago.

ESI

And yours fell to the Romans long before.

STONY
(amused)
They did.

(after beat)
He can come. Are you locked up at
night?

ESI
We're not.

STONY
Good. Tomorrow evening at midnight
go to the warehouse near the Tiber.
Now we should get moving before you
get in trouble for being late or
we're noticed.

ESI
We'll see you then.

Fade out crowd noise.

SCENE SEVEN: WARHOUSE

Sound of river water, crickets throughout scene.

BILLY
(murmuring)
I hope they got out OK.

STONY
(loud whisper)
Shh! Here they come.

Sound of two pairs of sandals approaching rapidly.

STONY (CONT'D)
(hiss)
Did anyone see you?

ESI
(quietly)
I don't think so.

STONY
Come on. We need to get moving.

Sound of all four walking, less urgent, but still purposeful.

SETKA
Where are we going?

STONY

In this warehouse.

Sound of them entering, wooden crates and clay jars being opened, clothes pulled out.

ESI

(gasp)

Are you stealing?

STONY

(smirking)

Yes, but that's because no one will know where these clothes from. Now you don't have to worry about anyone recognizing you as a slave purchasing clothes above your station.

ESI

(reluctantly)

You're right.

Sound of ESI and SETKA getting dressed over next lines. At one point, SETKA falls over.

STONY

I know I am. There are from a wealthy family that has more than enough money. Don't feel bad about taking what you need. I hope these fit.

Take this. I've packed this with some food that will last you at least a few days.

And here. I've put a few coins in this one. But that will only get you so far. So this pouch has some jewelry and accessories. Nothing too fancy, but they're all well-made, most are solid gold or silver. You can say that your father or someone made them and used to sell them. Just be careful. They're good pieces. Don't let anyone try to tell you they're not.

BILLY

(uncomfortable)

Stony...

STONY

What?

BILLY

(sighing)

Nothing.

STONY

Esi, can you read at all?

ESI

A little Latin. Not a lot, though.

STONY

This is a simple map of the area,
down to Egypt. Here.

Sound of map being handed over.

ESI

This looks familiar.

STONY

(grinning)

That's because I took it from
Marcus Major. I thought it was a
bit of poetic justice.

ESI

(laugh)

It is rather poetic.

SETKA

Shh! Outside!

We hear the clanking of soldiers outside, muffled voices,
can't make out what they're saying. After a few beats, sound
of lid being knocked off a pot.

SOLDIER #1

(from outside)

Who's there? We know you're here!

STONY

(hissed)

Run!

We hear the four pairs of sandals scurrying away, soldiers
giving chase.

SOLDIER #2

Thieves!

SOLDIER #3

Stop!

SOLDIER #2

Those two are Manlia slaves! I know them!

SOLDIER #1

Who are the other two?

STONY

Go, go, go!

SOLDIER #3

Stop!

BILLY

Stony! Do it!

STONY

(determined, yelling)

Close your eyes!

Sound of star suddenly shining bright, high-pitched whine. Crescendos for a few seconds, then fades out quickly. Guards double over in agony and fall over.

BILLY

(grunt of pain and surprise)

STONY

I told you to close your eyes, Billy. I thought you said you knew I was a star?

BILLY

(grousing)

Knowing and seeing you actually being a star are two different things.

STONY

That wasn't even that bright.

Sound of guards coming around and rising.

BILLY

(urgently)

Take Esi and Setka to the ship. I'll lead the guards another way.

STONY

Billy...

BILLY

Don't 'Billy' me. Take them and find me later.

STONY

Roman guards aren't known for their restraint. If they catch you...

BILLY

(snarky)

Story of my life. I'll be fine. I'll meet you back at the house.

Sound of a kiss.

STONY

Be careful.

Sound of three pairs of feet moving away quickly. Hear guards stumbling around.

SOLDIER #3

There's one of them!

BILLY

Go!

Sound of Billy running, guards give chase. This continues for several seconds, guard running fading out.

SOLDIER #1

Got him!

BILLY

(scream of pain)

We hear Billy hit in the end with blunt end of sword, falling.

SOLDIER #1

Where'd they go?

BILLY

Where's who go?

SOLDIER #1

Tell me and I won't hurt you again.

BILLY

I don't know what you're talking about.

Sound of stomping on elbow, bone breaking.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(yells)

SOLDIER #3
Tell us. We heard someone say the
name 'Manlia.'

BILLY
(wheezing)
I don't know who that is.

SOLDIER #3
How do you not know one of the
oldes families in Rome?

BILLY
I'm not from Rome.

SOLDIER #1
Obviously one of those barbarians.

SOLDIER #3
So a slave?

BILLY
I'm not a slave.

Another stomping, another bone breaking.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(howl of severe pain)

SOLDIER #1
(growling)
Did I talk to you? Now, where did
they go?

Sound of another soldier approaching.

SOLDIER #2
(out of breath)
Sir! We can't find them! It's like
they disappeared!

SOLDIER #1
(growl of frustration)
At least we got you.

BILLY
No you don't!

Hear BILLY turn to run, then hear sword pierce flesh. BILLY groans heavily and falls.

Heavy breaths, soldier's words fade out to indistinct murmuring, then only hear the breathing. After a few seconds, the breathing stops.

END CREDITS