

The lights flashed red three times before the klaxon started blaring.

"What do you have?" Rudy snapped.

Rudy was the head supervisor in dispatch. Rumor had it Michael had handed off the spot to him personally, but it was common knowledge that Michael had handled Military Affairs since the beginning, so... No one really knew for sure.

"It's a newborn, Sir. She has a four year-old brother. He'll take losing her pretty hard."

"All right then, it's an all-call. Put the system on automatic. We've got to go," Rudy told the guy at the computer.

"The new girl doesn't have her receiver yet, Sir. She's been assigned to Fred Travers, the engineer on truck one," the dispatcher said as he pushed back from his computer and disappeared with a pop.

Randy turned to Lindy. "You heard the man. Any questions?"

"How do I -"

"Just think his name," Rudy interrupted. "He's a fireman. Firemen are easy. I've got a drunk driver. Drunk drivers are very hard. Anything else?"

"No Sir."

"Good luck, Lindy." Rudy disappeared with the same pop that had swallowed the dispatcher.

Lindy didn't even mean for it to happen, but as soon as she thought the name *Fred Travers* her existence flashed from dispatch to the fire station. She found herself floating not far above a middle-aged, capable looking man with graying hair. He was in the shiny red truck seconds later. Lindy could see him through the roof of the truck and heard everyone else as they spoke around him.

It was, honestly, kind of an odd perspective for her.

"Everyone in?" He asked.

"Hit it, Fred," the officer said from the passenger seat. Everyone called the man 'Cap'.

Lindy heard Fred's thoughts as he started the truck and hit the siren. "Dear God, please help me."

*"We are here, Fred. Help is here."*

He nodded just perceptibly enough for her to notice. She watched carefully as Fred guided the truck down to the street, then straightened it out and pushed the pedal to the floor. The world flashed in front of Lindy's eyes, and she saw a vision of an SUV screaming through an intersection.

*"Slow down a little, Fred."*

Lindy could see the car coming, weaving wildly as it screamed toward the intersection. Rudy hovered above the black sedan. He looked to be working furiously to help the driver to minimize the damage he would cause by his recent decisions and actions.

"Did you see that guy?" Cap shouted. "He didn't even slow down for that light! Nice driving, Fred."

"Truck one, we request your ETA to the scene," the EMS dispatcher said over the radio.

"Dispatch, we're three minutes out," Cap said. "Do you have more information on the victim?"

“Victim is two weeks old, cyanotic, possible choking. Parents have attempted to clear-no success. Attempting CPR.”

“ETA on the ambulance?”

“It’s at least twenty minutes. Busy night, truck one.”

“*Hurry Fred,*” Lindy whispered.

Fred’s foot pushed the pedal back against the stop on the floor.

“Kevin, Randy, grab a board, the AED, and oxygen when we stop. We’re not waiting twenty minutes for a bus. We’ll get the little gal out in the truck.”

Another curtain of light fell in front of Lindy’s eyes, giving her a glimpse into the near future. Once it lifted, she whispered, “*Fred, it’s the fourth house on the right. Slow down a little, the family’s dog is about to run in front of you.*”

Things happened quickly when Fred brought the truck to a stop at the curb. Their captain abandoned the seat next to Fred and walked swiftly toward the front door of the house. Randy and Kevin weren’t far behind with medical equipment in hand.

Fred was the only person on the scene without a direct task, a position he often found unfortunate. He allowed his mind to wander to his own children for a moment. He had seen them hurt and scared, but thanks to God, he’d never had to see them through anything like this before. He still worried about them now that they were older, especially since they had families and children of their own.

“*Fred,*” Lindy whispered. “*Your grandchildren are fine. I need you to concentrate. Your part in this is not over. Please get ready.*”

Fred shook it off. He started surveying the gauges on the dashboard with his eyes and the route to the hospital with his brain. Turns, intersections, starts, stops, traffic lights, throttle response, and braking distances... He tried to think of it all, and when he got to the end, he did it again.

“We’re on our way out, Fred,” Cap snapped over the radio.

“*The door, Fred. Open the door on the right side of the truck.*” Lindy said.

He sprang out of his seat and was there in an instant. He held the board while Randy climbed inside, then handed the end up to him. Cap seemed to levitate alongside of the board, never stopping compressions on the patient’s chest. Fred held the board again as Kevin maneuvered into the crew compartment and then closed the door behind him.

“*One step at a time, Fred. Release the brakes. Lights, siren, gas pedal –*”

“Let’s go, Fred!” Cap’s shout interrupted Lindy’s calm narrative.

She didn’t have to tell Fred to focus. This part was what people like Fred did. There was now most definitely a life on the line, and the truck crew was in rescue mode.

They had it covered.

Lindy thought she could have left once the truck pulled up to the curb at the hospital. She even tried to, but thinking about headquarters the way she’d thought about Fred Travers didn’t result in her going anywhere.

She was trapped watching Fred’s now-mundane actions from above. Turn by turn, she watched as the truck pulled back into the bay at the station. The crew went about cleaning up the truck and themselves before they sat down to a meal.

It wasn't until the still of the night came that Lindy understood why she hadn't been able to leave. A gentle rain blew in, but not a single call came along with it. More of Lindy's colleagues showed up, each hovering above a bed in the silent dormitory. They could see each other, but they didn't have the time to interact between themselves.

Lindy knew there were moments humans went through that were dreadfully dark. It was a time where they remembered the things that had come before. Unfortunately, those times tended to center on the things that either went wrong, or could have, had the circumstances been even the slightest bit different. These men had seen many of those sorts of moments, and in the dark, rainy night, they were catching up to them.

She and her colleagues were offering an almost constant stream of supportive words, but more importantly, they were there. They were with the men of truck one when someone needed to remind them that their babies – the ones they had rescued, the ones they didn't, and the ones that were home in bed were all going to be okay.

Once the sun started to rise on the morning, its light made it all of the way to the truck crew. Lindy watched her colleagues start to disappear. She thought about headquarters again, and shifted away with a pop.

"What do you think, Lindy?" Rudy asked.

"Sir?"

"Your first all-call. How did it go?"

"It felt... It felt very natural, Sir," Lindy said.

Rudy smiled. "Good. You did fine. Report to the boss' office."

Lindy felt a surge of panic. "Why? What did I do wrong?"

"Nothing, Lindy."

"Then why do I have to go see God, Sir?"

Rudy realized how young Lindy really was. It was a detail that often escaped him when he dealt with the very young.

"Let me ask you something, Lindy. If we, the Guardian Angels, look out for the humans as they go through tough spots, the dark places, and the bumps in their roads, who do you think helps us as we do the same?"

Lindy's eyes widened with understanding.

"Someone is always watching and helping, Lindy. Whether it's the boss or one of us, some one is there whenever a human needs a hand. Everyone, every time."