

Chapter One

Bright sunshine lit up the room, waking me from a sound sleep. I never heard the alarm sound. Good thing I didn't oversleep. I would not want to be late on the first day of my new job. I wonder why I don't smell the usual breakfast that mom should be cooking by now. I'll go have my shower, then go down and check. Maybe she is getting a late start.

After my shower, and getting dressed, I head downstairs for breakfast. I turn the corner at the bottom of the stairs, and enter the kitchen to find it empty. I'm scratching my head and trying to figure out where everyone could be. Usually dad is sitting at the table finishing up reading his morning paper. My sister should be sitting in her highchair eating breakfast.

The kitchen looks the same as when I went to bed last night. No dishes in the sink, and cleaned up as always, at the end of the day.

I head out to the garage and see if dad's car is in it. I get to the door, and notice that all the coats are still hanging on the rack near the garage door. Even the car keys are in place. I open the door to the garage and see our car is still there. I'm perplexed right now. Where is everyone. Is this some sick joke they are playing on me? It's not April first.

Next, I go outside and take a look around. Then I realize I need to get to the bus stop in the next half hour and get to work. I don't want to get fired on the first day. I'm just going to walk to the bus stop, and I'll call back home when I get to work and settled in. I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation where my family has gone.

I arrive at the bus stop and then realized I haven't seen one single car passing by. I have not seen any cars on my mile walk to the bus stop. That's odd. Where the hell is everyone? I sit myself down on the bench and wait for the bus. It should be here in about fifteen minutes. Thirty have gone by and no bus. I also wonder why no one else is waiting.

After an hour and no bus ever arrived, I decide to go back home. Maybe my dad can give me a ride. I walk back home and again I don't see one car, or any people on the way back home. Strange, I think to myself as I walk up the front sidewalk to the front door of our house. I already have my keys out, and proceed to open the door.

In the house, I call out for Dad, and then discover the house is still empty. By this time, I'm exhausted trying to get a grip on what's going on around here. I check the garage one more time to see if the car is still there. I decide to call my Uncle James to see if he knows what's going on. He lives just a few blocks down the street. I pick up the phone and dial his number. After five rings, it goes to voicemail. I leave a brief message, and hang up.

Not getting anywhere with finding out what is happening, I go up to my room and lay on the bed. After a few minutes I fall fast asleep.

Next thing I know I hear mom calling me down for breakfast. I think to myself, that must have been a dream yesterday. I take a look at the clock and discover I was only asleep for twenty minutes, so it's not the next day, I'm still working on the same day. I just took a short nap. I yell down to mom and say I'll be right there.

Downstairs I tell mom what happen, and try to explain I came down and found no one in the house, and I went to the bus stop and found no bus arrived. By this time, mom, still working on getting breakfast finished, looks at me, and simply says, are you getting enough sleep? Then she says I better hurry and get ready to head to the bus, and get to my first day at the new job. I tell her, mom, I tried that yesterday, or was that earlier this morning. I'm confused.

I tell mom goodbye, then head out the door to the bus. This time cars are flying by, and people are walking behind and in front of me on the sidewalk. I chalk it up to being tired, and don't think anymore about it, the rest of the day. I arrive at work and check in with HR to start my new job. The day goes smooth, and before I know it, the clock shows time to head home.

The ride home only takes about twenty minutes. I know I will dread the walk home from the bus when it really gets cold out, and snowing. On the walk home, I find myself thinking about the strange episode of not finding anyone in our house, or the bus that never showed at the bus stop. I just can't figure out when that happen. I just remember waking up from what I thought was a short nap, and finding everything normal again. I'm almost afraid to go to sleep tonight.

I walk in the kitchen to find mom cooking dinner and dad reading a book in the living room, just right off the kitchen. Dad yells to me, asking how my first day at work went. I go in and sit beside him on the couch. I tell him about my uneventful day at work. I don't even bother telling him about my thinking I was downstairs and no one being home. He would just think I was crazy. Mom calls us in for dinner and we both head in and sit down. My sister is fussing in her highchair because mom can't feed her fast enough.

After dinner we all go into watch TV and dad continues to read his book. Soon he heads off to bed, saying he's getting up early because he has to be at work a few hours early tomorrow. I try to stay up and finish the movie we are watching, but my head keeps bobbing, so I tell mom I'm heading up to bed. She says she won't be far behind. I walk up the stairs and stop by the bathroom to get ready for bed.

Doesn't take me long to fall fast asleep. I wake up a few hours later to find my room shining bright from the full moon outside my window. I get up and close the curtain so I can fall back to sleep. Morning soon arrived and I jump out of bed and head to the bathroom to take care of business, and brush my teeth. I go down the hallway to the stairs and proceed to the kitchen. To my relief, everything is as it should be. Mom at the stove, sister in her chair and dad reading the newspaper. I was expecting to find an empty room. I finished breakfast and told everyone to have a good day, as I walked out the door on my way to the bus.

I arrive at work to see my boss sitting behind my desk, as I enter my office. I say hi to him and he tells me to sit down. He hands me an envelope and says congrats as he gets up to shake my hand. I open it up to find a letter stating that I've been given a raise of three thousand dollars. Wow, I'm thinking to myself, this is only my second day, and already I get a raise. I sure like this gig. I ask my boss how I could get a raise after only being on the job for one full day. He turns in my direction and gives me a strange look. Boy, we've been working you way too hard. We give raises to our most productive employees after the first year. Your year was up last month. In my head, this is my second day on the job. What's happening to me, I ponder in my mind.

I finish my day, and walk to the bus stop for the ride home. At home, I show the letter to my mom and dad, and they can hardly believe I got such a big raise. My dad pipes up and says he never gets that big of a raise, and then ask kidding if there are any openings at my work. I ask Dad how long I've been on my new job. He replied, new? Son you have been on the job over a year, and your mom and I are very proud of you for lasting this long. Now I'm really mixed up. Why do I still have in my mind that I just started two days ago.

Heading up to bed when mom stops me and ask if she could pack my lunch for tomorrow. I tell her sure, that would save me some money, not having to buy it at work. I did just get a nice raise, but I want to save my money for to buy a car. I'm already tired of riding the bus. I turn off the lights, and close the curtains to keep the brightness of the full moon from lighting up my room while I try to sleep.

The sunlight creeps in through my closed curtains, indicating another day is about to begin. Following the same routine, I make my way to the bathroom to perform my usual ritual. I'm glad it's Friday, and now the beginning of Fall. Still have many warm days to walk to the bus. I hear a lot of commotion downstairs so I make my way in that direction. It's coming from the living room, so that will be my first stop on the way to breakfast. I hear mom's voice call out, and she's telling me it's about time you got up, sleepyhead. Then I hear her say, this is the first time you have slept late on a Christmas morning.

At that point, hearing what just came out of her mouth, I fall to the floor, and must have passed out cold. Next thing I know, dad is caring me to the couch, and mom has a cold rag on my forehead. It takes me a few minutes to regain my composure, and open my eyes. Dad is asking me what the heck is wrong with me. I can't even find the words to explain what is going on. Upstairs, it's Friday in September, and now I find down here, it's freaking Christmas! I pass out again being over whelmed with the current situation. I come to once more and smell the aroma of pine from the Christmas tree that I found myself now staring at. I hear mom and dad asking each other what the heck is going on with me.

Finally I get to my feet and try to explain to my parents what I'm experiencing. I tell them I just woke up, to it being, what I thought was just another normal day. I ask them why it wasn't Friday in September anymore, and why is it suddenly now Christmas day. They both gave me a absurd look, and ask if maybe I hit my head a few minutes ago, when I fell to the floor. I spoke up and said the reason I must have passed out, was because I heard mom reference Christmas morning, and the fact that this was the first one I slept late on.

They both said, well, honey it is Christmas day. Why do you think it's still September? Because when I woke up, upstairs, it was a Friday in September. Mom pipes up and says maybe we should call a doctor. I think he hit his head pretty hard, and now can't remember what time of year it is. Dad laughs and thinks I'm just making it all up to get attention. He's simply wrong, because I know something very strange is going on in this house, or is it the whole world. Maybe I'm going crazy. At any rate, I need to figure it out. No telling what day it will be when I wake up tomorrow.

I can't wait until this nightmare of a day ends. If this is really Christmas day, then I won't be able to enjoy it, as I have in the past. Last Christmas I remember was very normal and on the correct day, not in September, as it seems to be this year. At least in my mind it is. I wonder when I'm suppose to go back to work?

Mom is calling everyone to dinner. The house is full with Aunts, Uncles, and cousins. Most we never see during the year, just when we have Christmas at our house. At least the dinner will be good, even if this day has turned out to be Christmas, and not my usual go to work day. We will be opening presents after we eat. I wonder if I got anyone their gifts? If I didn't, maybe that will prove to them that for me, it's not Christmas. One can only hope.

Dinner and gift opening is over with, and most everyone has left. I tell mom I'm going to bed, and tell everyone else goodbye. See you next year, I say to them. Under my breath, I say that who knows when next year will be. I might wake up tomorrow and it will be Christmas all over again. Hey, isn't there a movie about just that. I'm laughing to myself, and hoping the movie doesn't come true in my life. I go upstairs and jump right into bed, clothes and all.

I'm awoken by a knock on my bedroom door, and dad telling me to hurry up and get downstairs. First thing that comes to mind, is what will I face on this day, when I get downstairs. Will it be Easter day, Forth of July, maybe Christmas day 1976? Who knows at this point. Dad knocks one more time, and then yells for me to step on it, so I won't be late for work. Now, that a sign of normality. When I get downstairs, I take a fast peek at the calendar on the kitchen wall. According to the calendar, I'll be going to my Third day at the new job. What a relief, or is it.