

DEATH NOTE

by

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Based on the Japanese MANGA entitled "Death Note"
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VERSION 2.4

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BLACK.

The pitter-patter of a keyboard.
The scritch-scratch of a pencil scribbling.

JUMP CUT TO:

A head.
Of a child.
Separated from her small body.

Tap. The image changes.

Several heads. Several children.
Their corpses lined up next to one another.
Charred.

HEADLINE:

ISIS SWEEPS ACROSS SYRIA

Scritch-scratch continues.

Browser tab changes to one marked: SEATTLE POLICE DATABASE.
Logged in ID: Captain James Yeager.

More gruesome photos of corpses. Crime scenes.
Tamer than the previous images, at least.

PULL BACK TO
REVEAL:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A bland living space. Spartan.
Various academic and athletic trophies are strewn about.
Framed certificates take up the space of the walls.

LIGHT YEAGER (17) sits at his computer desk.
Kempt. Good-looking. Finishing up his homework.
He continues looking through the stomach-churning photos.

Scritch-scratch. Tap.

Scritch-scratch. Tap.

Scritch-scratch. Tap.

A knock on his door.
His sister enters before Light gives the go ahead.

GLADYS YEAGER (14). Petite. Innocent.

GLADYS
Bro, we don't got anything in the
fridge. Can we go out and...what...
what're you doing?

Her eyes widen.

LIGHT
Homework.

GLADYS
No, Light, I mean --

Light closes the browser window.
Rises from his chair. Grabs his jacket.
Moves to the doorway.

LIGHT
If I plan on working in homicide, I'm
going to have to learn to stomach
some pretty nasty stuff. And
unfortunately, according to Dad,
there's still a world of difference
between pictures and reality. I'm
sorry you had to see that, but you
should've, you know --

He knocks on the door.

LIGHT (cont'd)
It was closed for a reason, Gladys.

GLADYS
Light, have you -- have you gotten
used to it?

The fear on her face makes his answer choice easy.

LIGHT
No.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fast-food bag on the coffee table.
Gladys eats and texts her friends.

Light watches the local news.

ANCHOR
Police have announced an arrest after
a mother and daughter were found dead
with multiple stab wounds this early
(MORE)

ANCHOR (cont'd)
morning. Authorities identified the suspect as forty-year-old Brian Mackles, who was found passed out in his truck from drinking with the murder weapon, a serrated kitchen knife. Police say Marissa Kurlek and her child Linda were leaving their home in the Queen Anne community before being confronted by --

Light loses himself. Stops chewing his food.
His eyes: Angry. Intense.

A storm rages.

Flashing images of the corpses of the mother and daughter.
Their open eyes. Filled with terror. Lifeless.

Thunder rumbles. The front door opens. Light tenses up.

POLICE CAPTAIN JIM YEAGER (50s) enters the home.
Drenched in rain. Crumpled. Worn face. Hooded eyes.
A man whose seen too much and lived too little.

JIM
You guys still up?

GLADYS
It's Friday.

JIM
Oh, right.

Jim sits at the kitchen table.
Light walks over to him and hands him the bag of fast-food.
Jim digs in. Starved.

LIGHT
Scores came in today.

JIM
As if I have to look.

Jim flashes a proud smile.

JIM (cont'd)
I don't deserve you. You know that?
The one person who did --

LIGHT
Dad...I love you. Okay?

JIM
I love you too.

GLADYS
What about me?!

JIM
You didn't bring me food.

Thunder rumbles again. Much louder than last time.

GLADYS
Jesus. The hell's God so pissed off
about?

MATCH AUDIO OF
THUNDER TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT

Thunderous roars from a crowd.
Light sinks a three.
Buzzer sounds off.

SCORE

HOME: 99

VISITORS: 60

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Light speaks to a girl. She's dialing a number on her phone.
No, saving one.

LIGHT
Call me anytime.

GIRL
(blushes)
'Kay.

Light walks off and approaches his car.

Behind Light --
A handwritten banner is placed at the school's entrance.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BULLDOGS BASKETBALL TEAM

INT. LIGHT'S CAR - NIGHT

Light drives in total silence.
A light rain begins.

Light takes in the glistening city...
As he deliberately drives to the worst area in Seattle --

EXT. SOUTH PARK - NIGHT

Grim sight. The run-down homes. The beat-up vehicles.
The trash littering the streets.

Light brakes at a stop sign.
He sees two grown men fighting on a front lawn.
One of the them smashes a beer bottle over the other's head.

Light pulls out his phone. Dials 911.

LIGHT

Yes, hello? There are two guys
fighting on the lawn of a house on
South Donovan and 7th. South Park.
One of the suspects is shirtless, red
shorts. Yeah, he just smashed a
bottle over the other guy's head.
Other guy's wearing a blue t-shirt.
Both black. The house...

Light drives forward, squinting to see --

LIGHT (cont'd)

Number of the house is 98108.

Red shorts catches Light staring.
He throws what's left of his broken bottle at Light's car.
Light slams down on the gas and speeds off.

EXT. MCDONALD'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Light uses a wet napkin to clean off the beer from his car.
A scratch left behind on the door.

LIGHT

Shit...

Light enters his car.
Fiddles with a black box set on the passenger seat.
A police scanner.

BEAT.

Static.
Then nothing.
Until --

OFFICER (O.S.)
Suspect with red shorts is in
custody. Medical currently attending
to second suspect. Over.

Light smiles. Shuts off the scanner. Drives away.
Rain begins to pour down by the bucketful.
Lightning streaks against the black sky.

Thunder rumbles.

EXT. YEAGER HOME - NIGHT

Modest, but cleanly. Neat lawn. Dull color. Normal.

Light pulls up to the driveway.
Exits his car with the police scanner.

He walks to the door and the porch light turns on.
Fiddles with his keys.

Thunder rumbles.

Behind Light: Something falls on the street.
Light stops dead when hears the soft thud.
He turns around.

Nothing. Nothing except --

A black book lying in the middle of the street...

Light just stares at it for a long beat.

Light leaves his keys in the door and puts down the scanner.
He walks out into the street.

He looks around suspiciously.
As if the book's owner might be hiding somewhere.
Watching him.

But there's no one about. No neighbors. No cars.
The lights of the houses on the block are all off.

Light kneels down.
Picks up the book.
Cover's black. No. Wrong side.

He flips it. Light chuckles.

D E A T H N O T E

INT. LIGHT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Light sits at his desk, studying the notebook.
He flips through it. Touching the pages. Dry.

LIGHT

Weird.

Lights flips to the first page.

LIGHT (cont'd)

How to use....the human whose name is
written in this notebook will die...

Light chuckles as he flips through the pages.

LIGHT (cont'd)

This note will not take effect unless
the writer is thinking of the
person's face when writing their
name. Therefore, people sharing the
same name will not be affected.
If the cause of death is written
within the next forty seconds of
writing the person's name, it will
happen. If the cause of death is not
specified, the person will simply die
of a heart attack. After writing the
cause of death, details of the death
should be written in the next six
minutes and forty seconds.

(beat)

Huh. Okay.

Light grabs a pencil.

LIGHT (cont'd)

Lemme see, who deserves the first
death?

(thinks)

Wow. No easy choice. Okay, let's just
go with the most obvious.

Light writes down a name: *Kim Jong-Un*.

LIGHT (cont'd)

Now...how should I kill you, you fat
fuck? Hmm.

(writes)

Raped by internment camp prisoners

(MORE)

LIGHT (cont'd)
with -- with a shovel...in downtown
Pyongyang...and then torn to pieces
by a pack of raptors before being
Atomic Breath'd and Kamehameha'd by
Godzilla and Goku.

Light can't contain his laughter.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Christ, I'm fucking retarded. Hmm.
Alright, who's next?

Light Googles: *The Leader of ISIS*.
Result: *Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi*.

Light goes to Google Images.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Okay. What should I do with you? You
know what? Why don't we keep it
simple?
(he writes)
Shit on by Jack Nicholson and Tom
Hanks...flayed alive by Jason
Voorhees, Freddy Krueger and Mike
Myers. Wait, no.

He erases Mike and replaces it with Michael.
Laughs again.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Ah fuck. I wonder who came up with
this shit.

Light Googles: *Death Note*.
He looks through page after page of results.

Nothing.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Well then...looks like we got an
original copy.

Light flips through some more pages.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Woops...
(reads)
The conditions for death will not be
realized unless it is physically
possible for that human or it is
reasonably assumed to be carried out
by that human. Looks like you lucked
(MORE)

LIGHT (cont'd)
out, Kimmy...and uh...whatever the
fuck your name is...Oh well.

Light stares hard at the book.
He goes elsewhere...lost in contemplation.

Finally, he remembers --

He writes down a name: *Brian Mackles*.

LIGHT (cont'd)
If only...

Light tosses the book in his trash receptacle.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Shame this stupid fucking state
doesn't have the balls to just cut
your fucking throat.

Light turns off the light --

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

The rain from the previous day continues.
Lighter than yesterday, at least.

Light cooks breakfast for himself.
He takes his food into the living room.

He walks past the refrigerator. There's a note:

*Dad's working all night. Shouldn't be in until noon.
I'm sleeping over at Jenny's. Rooting for ya!*

Light turns on the TV. Puts on the news.
While he watches, he pulls out his phone.
He starts to text the girl from last night when --

NEWS ANCHOR
Police have released a statement
regarding the death of Brian Mackles,
the man accused of the double
homicide of Marissa and Linda Kurlek:
*At this moment we have no reason to
suspect that there was foul play of
any kind involved in the death of
Brian Mackles and absolutely not with
the involvement of one of our
officers. As far as we know, Mr.
Mackles simply died of a **HEART
ATTACK.***

Words drown out as the blood from Light's face drains.

INT. LIGHT'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Light bursts into his room. Sweating. Panicking.
He needs to get rid of that fucking book *NOW*.

As he looms over his garbage bin, he tries to calm down.
He lifts his chin closes his eyes and whispers to himself.

LIGHT
It's just a fucking coincidence. It's
a fucking coincidence. Not possible.
Not possible. Not possible.
Coincidence, that's all it is. Calm
down. It's okay. Everything's okay.

He reaches down and grabs the notebook. He drops it.

LIGHT (cont'd)
SHIT! NO! FUCKING RELAX! Oh god...

He picks it up again. He stares at the cover.
In horror. Fear. Awe.

He stuffs the notebook in his backpack.

EXT. YEAGER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He runs out of the house and gets in his car.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Abandoned and dilapidated.
Light brakes in front, exits his car and sprints right in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Light sets the Death Note down on the floor.
He pulls out matches. Lights one. He kneels.
He lights up the book. And it **BURNS**.

LIGHT
It was just a book. Thank god. Thank
fucking god!

Light lets out a laugh.

LIGHT (cont'd)
I'm such an idiot. It was a
coincidence. It was a coincidence.

As Light gets up...the flames die down.
The book is unscathed.

A long beat as Light only looks on in horrified disbelief.

Light loses it and attempts to tear the book in half!
The cover's too tough. No use. He starts tearing out pages.

He starts tearing them out at a frantic pace...

LIGHT (cont'd)
No...No...This isn't possible...

Light's pulled out enough pages for five notebooks.
But the book looks no different than it did seconds ago.

LIGHT (cont'd)
It's -- it's a prank. That's all it
is. It's a prank. It's a joke. A
fucking joke. Jesus Christ...No...

INT. LIGHT'S ROOM - LATER

Light sits at his desk. The Death Note is in front of him.
He opens it. Pulls out a pen. Writes down a name.

Charles Manson

Light closes the book and goes onto numerous news websites.
He waits.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - LATER

Jim Yeager walks through the front door of the house.

JIM
Hello! Anybody home?!

LIGHT (O.S.)
Just me, dad! Gladys'll be home in an
hour! Lunch is in the microwave!

JIM
Thanks, Light!

INT. LIGHT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Light's sitting at his desk.
Writing.

Scratch-scratch. Scratch-scratch.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jim eats his food when his cell rings.

JIM

Hello?

VOICE (O.S.)

Autopsy report's in, Jim. You need to
get down here, now.

JIM

I just got in --

VOICE (O.S.)

I know, Jim. But you need to see this
and hear this in person.

JIM

Alright, I'll be down there soon. Let
me finish my lunch --

VOICE (O.S.)

Now, Jim.

Jim scribbles a note. Puts it on the fridge.
He walks out of the house.

INT. LIGHT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Light continues writing.
His head obscures the view of his computer screen.

He moves his head for a moment
The screen's now visible.
The face of a man with a swastika on his forehead.

HEADLINE:

CHARLES MANSON DEAD AT 81 FROM HEART ATTACK

The browser tab changes to Google.

LIGHT
Gonna need some help now...

The Death Note is open.
The two pages visible are filled to the brim with names.
A rousing, operatic score starts up as MAIN TITLES BEGIN.
Light writes name after name. A man possessed.
Browser Tab: FBI'S MOST WANTED.
Every name written down without hesitation.
Members of Al-Qaeda.
He writes.
Members of ISIS.
He writes.
Light researches the priests covered by The Boston Globe.
He writes.
High-ranking officials of the North Korean government.
He writes.
Then, onto prisoners.
Light shows no mercy.
Page after page, he writes the names.
Murderers. Rapists. Child molesters.
Hardened criminals with names and faces publicly available.
Intercut are the criminals in their cells.
Talking, exercising, reading, crying and laughing...
And finally, clutching their chests.
Death after death after death after death after death.
And Light keeps writing.
His writing hand moves with the fluidity of a conductor.
The maestro reaches the peak of his...
Beautiful symphony of death and justice.
The pen is placed on the desk. The Death Note is closed.

The music dies down.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Captain Jim Yeager stares at an X-ray.
Sheer shock on his face as he speaks to the CORONER.

JIM

That's fucking impossible...

CORONER

Look at the curvature of the arteries. No blockage. You hear about a guy collapsing out of nowhere, grabbing at their chest, you expect to see plaque stopping up the airways.

JIM

Maybe you missed something --

CORONER

I've been doing this for over two decades, Jim. You think I didn't double-take in confusion? That I wasn't under the impression that I made a mistake when I came across this? I double, triple, quadruple-checked. I've never seen anything like this. Heart failure occurs because of poor health and it takes time -- time to build up. Hearts don't just freeze and collapse in on themselves outta the goddamn blue. It's not a virus. There was no sign of any infection. Jim, this isn't natural.

JIM

Then what caused it?

CORONER

I don't have a clue. I just wanted you to be the first to know.

Jim's phone rings. He answers.

JIM

Captain Yeager speaking.

(beat)

What?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Light and Gladys watch the news.
CNN's 24/7 coverage of the mass criminal heart attacks.

Light's calm, nonchalant.
Gladys is tense. Gripped in terror.

Light speaks on the phone.

LIGHT

I understand, sir. Yeah, she's fine.
We're about to grab a bite in a
minute. Okay. Love you too. Good
luck. Bye.

GLADYS

Light, what do you think's going on?

LIGHT

I dunno, Gladys. But I think you were
right.

GLADYS

Huh?

LIGHT

God must have been pretty pissed,
after all.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The POTUS is at his desk. Waiting.

A young man walks in and keeps the door open for --

WATARI (50s), weathered but dignified and sharply dressed.
The Japanese man strides in and pulls out a laptop.
He sets it on the president's desk.

A large "L" fills up the screen.
A filtered voice emanates out --

L

Hello, Mr. President.

INT. LIGHT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Light enters his room.
Locks the door behind him.
Approaches his computer desk.

Lightning flashes.

Light stops dead in his tracks.

At the far end of the bedroom, there is a figure.
Lightning flashes again. Revealing features.
Tall. Pale. Hellish red eyes. Frightening teeth.

Although initially startled, Light maintains his composure.

LIGHT

Man...did you have to show up so soon?

BEAT.

LIGHT (cont'd)

Well? You just gonna stand there?
Do it already. Kill me. Take my soul.
Do whatever you need to do. Just do it quickly.

The figure lets out a terrifying sound.
Laughter.

FIGURE

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
You humans and your fantasies.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
Relaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaax, child.
I don't have interest in your
worthless life or soul.
For now, at least.

The figure raises its hand.
Light's backpack is ripped from his grasp.
Floats in mid-air. The zipper opens.

The notebook levitates out.
The pages flip. The figure looks through them.
Another laugh.

FIGURE (cont'd)

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
As for your soul, seeing as how
you've written down so many names, I
have to wonder if you even have one.

The notebook closes. Flies back to Light.
Light is stunned.

LIGHT

You're gonna let me keep it?

FIGURE

Sure. I don't see why not.
Besides, I've got a spare.

The figure points to the Death Note strapped to its hip.

LIGHT

What's the catch?

FIGURE

Nothing too big. I just have to follow you around until the day you die. That'll be the same day I write your name in my notebook. Oh, and one more thing: Humans who use the notebook cannot enter the afterlife.

LIGHT

Never believed in one anyway. So, if you're not bothered by my asking: Why me?

FIGURE

Heh. Don't tell me you think you're special or something. You have the book because you found it. Simple as that.

Light doesn't buy that for a second.

LIGHT

Then why's it written in English?

FIGURE

It's the most popular human language
in the human world.

LIGHT

'Course. Lucky it didn't fall in Antarctica. Why did it fall to begin with, by the way? You just that clumsy or --

FIGURE

I was bored. I flew up high and just let it fall into a populated area. Figured you humans could provide me with some entertainment for a little while. And I got a really good feeling that you, in particular, are gonna deliver a fuckload of it.

НА

LIGHT

What are you? Where are you from?

FIGURE

We go by many names. Demons. Devils. Ghouls. Monsters. My personal favorite: Shinigami. As for where I'm from, let's just say you'll find out soon enough.

LIGHT

Right. I don't suppose you have a name.

FIGURE

You don't plan on writing my name down, do you?

LIGHT

Could I?

The figure smiles.

FIGURE

No. Shinigami don't have names. But, the last human I encountered called me Ryuk. I quite like that. What do you think?

LIGHT

Fine. Ryuk it is.

Knock on the door.

GLADYS

Light! Miss Obenna dropped by some apples! You want one?

LIGHT

Sure, I'll be down in a sec!

GLADYS

No worries! I brought you a couple.

LIGHT

Shit. Do me a favor and hide, will ya?

RYUK

No need. Only people who have touched the Death Note can see and hear me.

LIGHT

Thank god.

RYUK

You're welcome.

Light shoots a stunned look at Ryuk.

RYUK (cont'd)

Kidding.

Light turns on the light switch.

He opens his door and accepts the apples from Gladys.

GLADYS

Light, has dad texted you when he'll be home?

LIGHT

Shouldn't be later than ten.

GLADYS

Perfect! I'll start cooking now!

LIGHT

Hold up, who said anything about you cooking? I don't need you burning us alive.

GLADYS

Calm down! I'm taking Home Ec. I'm not a moron, Light.

She runs off.

RYUK

Yeah, give your sister some credit, Light. Sure, we can't all be as smart as you, but don't be so patronizing.

Ryuk's been standing behind Light the whole time. He snatches the two apples out of Light's hands.

LIGHT

Christ, you look like Michael Jackson's corpse.

Ryuk gorges the fruit.

RYUK

Wow. Forgot just how great these tasted. Would you mind buying some more?

LIGHT

Sure. Just do me a favor and keep quiet.

RYUK

I already told you, the only people who can hear Shinigami --

LIGHT

I know. I just find your voice irritating.

RYUK

You're a bit of a dick. You know that, right?

LIGHT

Whatever.

RYUK

(smiling)

I like you. **HEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEH**
So, what are you planning to do now?

LIGHT

Write more names. What else?

Light pulls out a black box from his backpack.

RYUK

Really? Don't you want to give it a rest for a while? Seems to me that you've killed enough people to have every criminal on this planet shitting themselves.

Light grabs his Wi-Fi router.

He takes it apart and creates adjustments.

LIGHT

And I wanna keep it that way. I've haven't killed anyone in a while and that's unacceptable. People need to know that what happened wasn't just one isolated incident. It was divine judgment. They need to know that anyone who dares to do wrong in this world is going to pay the price.

(finishes modding the
router)

Alright, let's get started.

Light opens up a browser tab.

Local news channel sites from all over the country.
Light also turns on the television.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Ryuk, every single one of these rules
in the notebook -- they're completely
correct, right? You don't need to
revise any of them? Particularly the
one about ripping pages out of the
notebook?

RYUK
Everything should be up to snuff.
Including the rule about being able
to write names on torn pages, yes.

LIGHT
Good.

Light tears out a page.

LIGHT (cont'd)
Ryuk, are Shinigami ambidextrous?

RYUK
No, I don't think so. Least I'm not.

Light grabs a pen with his right hand.
He grabs a pen with his left hand.
He writes.

LIGHT
Well, I am.

RYUK
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
You're somethin' else, kid.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA