

## **Author Note**

*Ryan pushes a cart through Wal-Mart, checking items off a list.*

Ryan: Let's see... soda... video card... pens... Wait a minute! I'll need something to test the pens on. I better get some paper.

*A notebook falls off the shelf next to him.*

Ryan: That'll do!

*Later:*

Ryan: All right, now to take these pens for a test run. I think I'll write down someone's name.

*Dramatic music starts playing as Ryan prepares to write. He slowly pulls the pen away from the notebook, and the music stops.*

Ryan: ... It's probably nothing.

*The music resumes as Ryan writes in the notebook.*

*Somewhere completely different:*

Gannon: Either I slept on my arm funny, or that's a heart attack.

*Gannon collapses.*

Gannon: Yep. Definitely a heart attack.

*Slightly later:*

Ryan: Well, that's all the pens.

*He looks out a window, where a street covered in corpses can be seen.*

Ryan: Huh.

*Ryan shrugs.*

*Later still:*

Ryan: So, uh, whenever I write in the notebook, people die. Is that normal?

Andrew: Hmm... are you familiar with the show "Death Note?"

Ryan: Nope.

Andrew: It's awesome! There's this guy called Light, and he takes a potato chip... and eats it! Best. Show. Ever.

Ryan: Uh... OK...

Andrew: Then let's get watching.

*Ryan sits down, resting his heels on the edge of the chair.*

Ryan: By the way, do you have any cake?

Andrew: Uh, are you sure you haven't seen the show?

Ryan: Yeah. Why?

Andrew: ... No reason.

*After watching every episode of Death Note:*

Ryan: So, if a shinigami is supposed to appear to someone who has a death note, then why haven't I seen one yet?

*Andrew takes a bite out of an apple.*

Andrew: Beats me.

Ryan: What I didn't know is that there are all these rules. I mean, you'd think it's pretty straightforward – write down someone's name and they die, but no, there's all these strings attached.

Andrew: It's a notebook that can kill people. What more do you want?

Ryan: A notebook that can make bagels?

Andrew: Yeah, you're thinking of a Bagel Note. Completely different things.

Ryan: What am I supposed to do with this, then?

Andrew: Wipe out the world's criminals, setting yourself up as the leader of a personality cult that rules over the new world order?

Ryan: Hmm... I know what to write! "Karen Traviss... one year from now... after making a genuinely good book, without any Boba Fett worship."

Andrew: Oh, I forgot to tell you, if the actions you write for someone are impossible, they just die of a heart attack.

Ryan: Oh. That kind of sucks.

Andrew: Those are the rules. Oh, and you can trade for the shinigami eyes, you know.

Ryan: Yeah, but I don't want to give up half my life just to see how long people have to live. That's pointless.

Andrew: That's all right, because I have shinigami eyes.

Ryan: You- what? You? How?

Andrew: Unfortunately, the shinigami I got them from had really bad vision, so I can only see whether someone will die in the next ten minutes.

Ryan: That kind of defeats the purpose of knowing someone's lifespan ahead of time, doesn't it?

Andrew: You're telling me. However, my eyes do glow red sometimes, and that's pretty sweet. Except when it's dark and people mistake me for a cat and shoot at me. Or they think my eyes are bike reflectors and they try to run me over. Then I tell them how long it'll be until they die, except I'm bluffing, since I don't really know.

Ryan: Sometimes I question your sanity.

Andrew: Man, so do I.

*One year later:*

Andrew: Hey, this new Karen Traviss novel is surprisingly good.

Ryan: Too bad she died.

Andrew: Really? I wonder- oh. Ohhhhhh...

Ryan: Crap.