

## Where Do We Go From Here?

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by [thisaintmacys](#)

## Summary

Eight years have passed, making Rick Grimes one of the first men at Grady Memorial Hospital to wake up from a coma that he had slipped into, after being shot while on duty. While struggling with rehabilitation, physical therapy, and getting his life together - he also has to deal with his newfound fame. Along with meeting the people that talked to him and influenced his dreams for the first time.

Warning: I won't say what it is but there are comic spoilers in this story. It's a big part of the story and a big arc later in the comics; just a heads up. Also, yes, Negan is kind of crossed over with Denny from Grey's Anatomy here but he's still Negan. He's just kind of a blend of the characters so he's nicer and more charming than a sociopath.

## Notes

I do not know much about comas; I know there have been cases where people were left in the ICU for years, expected to never wake up, only to finally awaken after nearly 20 years. Long comas can be survivable but it's incredibly rare; please, excuse any medical errors here is all I ask. Thanks.

Rick's chest heaved as he exhaled deep breaths of air, his eyes had opened and he was inside an empty hospital room, all alone. No Lori, no Shane, no Carl by his side - just himself inside the room much like in the dream except it was early morning. The sun had just risen from what Rick could tell; there was snow outside but the sun was shining over magenta and tangerine painted skies. It was a little after 8 in the morning. "**Carl?**" Rick called out, panicked, knowing that where things left off - he had a son named Carl that had grown into a young man before passing away inside his own personal brand of Hell. "**CAARRL?**" Rick called out once more, feeling warm tears hit his cheeks as he waited for a response from literally anyone but all he got was a response from a nurse. Yet, she looked all too familiar to him, and like she popped right out of his dreams.

"*Michonne?* Is 'at you?" Rick asked as he looked up at the mahogany skinned beauty; she smiled sweetly down at him. Her lips colored bright purple as she brushed aside her dreads, which were draped over her shoulder. She was every bit as beautiful as he had dreamt she was when he was inside that coma for the last few years.

"Yes, Rick, it's me! I'm one of your ICU nurses; I've been on duty for you for the last five years. I refused to leave you because I had a feeling this day would come," Michonne happily spoke though her words were soft, hardly above a whisper, before another nurse came walking through the door. It was someone he didn't recognize from his dreams, night terrors, whatever they were as he was locked deep within that coma. "I can't believe you know who I am from just my voice alone; you must have powerful imagination in that mind of yours."

At least he knew his dreams were influenced somewhat by reality and what was going on around him but - what about his son? Carl? **Was he okay?**

"Is... Lori, Shane, and my son Carl okay?" Rick asked, sounding hoarse as he spoke the words coming from his lips. "Do I have *a daughter?*" Rick added. Michonne smiled sweetly then moved to sit down with Rick by the edge of the end of his bed.

"Well, neither Lori nor Shane have been around; only Carl and Judith come by frequently. Carl was just here the other day eating a Big Cat while playing with his sister, until she got cranky. I'll make a call, okay? He's listed as your new first emergency contact." Michonne explained as gently as she could; she didn't want to break it to him that Judith clearly didn't belong to him and that Lori had married Shane, thinking Rick would never wake up. They were, after all, one week from signing a DNR for Rick if he was to code at any time.

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Michonne left the room and Rick looked up at the white tiles of the ceiling above. He wondered about the others he had met in his dreams. Daryl, Merle, Dale, Glenn, Beth, Maggie, Hershel, and even Negan. There were so many people but before he could do much else, he heard a man clear his throat from across the way, with arms crossed over his chest. A grimace making way across his face from the pressure of his large arms on his chest. "Mind keepin' it down? I hate bein' woken up like that." Negan stated, Rick felt his blood run cold for a moment.

"I get it, *it's a big fuckin' deal* that you're finally awake but that kid of yours will be back as quick as he hears the news! He missed you. man."

"Why would it be a big deal?" Rick asked, it then hit him that Carl was an emergency contact and that meant he had aged far past ten - even *past sixteen*.

"You've been out for **eight years**, brother! You're about to make some headlines!" Negan exclaimed, laughing only to grimace in pain and smack the button to dispense more morphine into his system. "Damn, second heart surgery in six months, it sucks but what can I do? My diet was totally FUBAR after I lost my wife Lucille." Negan commented, he was thinking out loud mostly but he wanted to explain himself to Rick, too. "What the hell were you dreamin' about, anyway?"

"Where I left off in the dream, Carl had been bitten by something we called **walkers**; they were walking corpses that had a virus we all were infected with, and if we got bit we would turn to one of them. Carl - he got bit, he shot himself, so I wouldn't have to do it for him and I woke up right after dreaming of burying him." Rick answered, Negan raised his eyebrows and nodded in response to the words, to him that was really messed up.

Negan took a moment to think about his words before replying; he decided to go with genuine, blunt honesty. "Yeah, that's fucked up but Carl's alive. He's not really a kid, he's a man now and all but I've known him the last couple years I spent in this room off and on with you. Closest thing I could get to a private room here at Grady Memorial, anyway." Negan confessed, the morphine began to hit and the man had a pleased look wash over his face. "Alright, I need to nap this shit up, don't hesitate to wake me if Carl brings food. He usually brings me a salad or something." Negan commented, Rick didn't know what to think of the man but he was a character for sure and seemed pleasant enough despite looking rough around the edges.

Rick grew silent as he waited. Time passed, one hour then two, and then Carl came rushing through the door to see an awake but very fragile, thin Rick laying on the hospital bed. Michonne was watching with happy tears in her eyes from the background as she saw them reunite. Carl couldn't even speak, all he could do was cry as he held his dad in his arms for the first time in years, his body shaking as he cried into the shoulder of his father. "I can't believe you're alive, Dad. What brought you back?" Carl asked, his ocean blue irises locked onto his father's cerulean blue hues. Rick, with a bittersweet and slightly tearful smile moved his good arm to place a hand on his son's cheek, before finally giving him the answer.

"I got to the part in the dream, nightmare, whatever you want to call it where you had died on me. You got so sick and then you were gone and I had to see you again, Son, I needed to." Rick admitted to Carl, feeling tears fall onto his cheeks without a care in the world, while Carl sat down beside him.

"*You came back for me?*" Carl asked, thinking about the freak out he had back several months prior, just before Michonne returned to nursing at Grady. She had become a good friend to him, a positive figure within those walls, as well as Negan - despite his foul mouth and eccentric behavior at times. "I'm sorry if you heard any of my rants; I was so hurt that I didn't think you would even make it to see me go to prom, graduate, or even meet Judith. I have to pick her up from school in a little bit then I'll bring her by - before I contact Mom." Carl

apologized and explained himself in a ramble, Rick nodded slowly. He was in pain and it was starting to really show.

"I'll get you some medication for that!" Michonne spoke up from the doorway as she watched the young man she had befriended over the years and grew to love like her own, too. He needed a motherly figure after all that wasn't just Lori after all she had learned from being around her. "Dilaudid will have to work, you're going to be in agony while getting used to your prosthetic arm and feeling ghost pains." Michonne added, putting a shot into his IV a few moments after she returned. Carl patiently watched.

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"I can't wait to attend med school; it's gonna be lit as fuck!" Carl excitedly exclaimed, beaming as Michonne let out a laugh then shook her head at the young man.

"Language!" Rick scolded.

"Easy, Captain America; he's an adult - he can cuss all he wants since he's all grown up. He turned eighteen last month, right? January second, right?" Negan commented then turned his attention to Rick's medication. "Also speaking of dilaudid; why is Rick getting the good shit while I'm laying here still feeling this chest wound?" Negan continued.

"Finnegan, enough! I'll lower your medication to oxycodone and then Vicodin before you know it. Don't test me, I'll tell them you're ready for the vicodin now!" Michonne teased, Negan laughed then grimaced once more as he put his hands up.

"You win but please - it's NEGAN not FINNEGAN. You know I consider you a friend, Nurse Michonne; come on, now!" Negan teased as he corrected her on his name.

"Uh-huh, you only like me because I give you the *good stuff*. Lay back and sleep would you, you have another half hour till lunch and I'm not cleaning up your puke again if you get nauseous from the medication. I can only do so much." Michonne commented as she left the room, after sweetly patting Rick's good shoulder and telling him it was nice to finally get to meet him.

Carl waited until Michonne was gone and Negan was sleeping again to tell Rick the news. "Dad, uhm, I know you knew Mom was pregnant before you got shot and she was. She had a baby girl, Mom and I named her Judith Richelle, after my favorite teacher and you." Carl spoke softly, there was a distance washing over Carl's expression, as he thought about how to tell his father the news.

"When was she born?" Rick asked curiously, he was starting to figure things out for himself now.

"Two months after you were shot - November 21st, 2010." Carl replied, rubbing the back of his neck where his long shaggy hair would have been laying had this been Rick's dream, but instead he was looking at a clean cut young man with a small amount of facial hair.

"She ain't mine, is she?" Rick replied; Carl shook his head.

"No but Judith loves you; you're her dad. Since Shane... and all," Carl drifted off to breathe out a heavy shaky sigh of air from his lungs.

"Shane *what*?" Rick questioned.

"He was killed in the line of duty not long after Judith was born; we always said you were her dad because she didn't have a chance to know Shane." Carl explained, Rick looked up at the ceiling and swallowed hard at the news, Carl awkwardly turned to look at the clock and realized it was mid-afternoon. Just after lunch time and he could go get his half-sister from school to bring her to see Rick.

"I'm going to let you rest and take this news in while I go get her from Kindergarten; I'll be back with her after I call Mom to tell her where we are. So she doesn't flip out on me."

"Thank you, Carl. I can't wait to meet her!"

"You're welcome, Dad."

"I love you, Kiddo."

"Ain't a kid anymore... but I love you, too. Always will."

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