

House md

Season 2 episode 2

Autopsy

This episode is all about what make life worth living even in the face of death

Synopsis

Andy is a nine year old girl with terminal cancer. She is seen at the beginning of the episode singing Christina Aguilera's *Beautiful* as she puts on a wig and smiles at herself in the mirror. But she has a frightening hallucination and has to go to hospital where she becomes Dr House's patient.

Dr House is not just bothered about her condition but about why she is so brave, helping her mother cope with the worry and fears about her illness and comforting her. Dr House doesn't believe that a nine year old can be that brave and thinks it's a symptom of disease.

During one procedure where Dr Chase is performing the tests, Andy says she has never kissed a boy and wonders what it would be like. Dr Chase says there is plenty of time for that, but Andy says she may die without ever having experienced kissing a boy. She asks Dr Chase to kiss her. Dr Chase says no at first, but changes his mind and kisses her gently on the lips. Back in the office, the team speculate whether Andy has ever been sexually molested which Dr Chase denies saying that he believed her when she said she'd never been kissed. Dr House is cynical and says she's learned how to manipulate people from being abused then correctly guesses that Dr Chase kissed her when she asked. Dr Foreman and Dr Cameron recoil in horror, although Dr Chase tries to explain that 'it wasn't sick'.

As Andy's problems worsen, Dr Wilson has to tell her that she is going to die imminently. Dr House says he wants to see how she reacts and is told by Wilson to go to hell. Nonetheless he watches closely as Andy consoles her devastated mother.

Eventually, House works out a risky and complex procedure to give Andy another year of life. It involves cooling her body, stopping her heart and removing half her blood before 'restarting' her. Dr Wilson explains the risk and the realities of the operation to Andy's mother but does not tell Andy. Dr House disagrees and thinks Andy should be told. He tells Andy that it is her decision to have the surgery and all the suffering that goes with it, and if she just wants it all to be over, he will find good reasons to tell her mother that they could not do the operation. Andy says that she will put up with anything to stay with her mother a bit longer. Dr House continues to ask her if she really wants the rest of her short life to be like this, but she insists. She starts to cry and says she wants to do what she can to live, even if it involves suffering, because her mother needs her and Andy loves her.

The operation is a success and Dr House discovers that Andy's bravery is real, not a symptom. He has to admit that he was wrong and that people can be self-sacrificing and endure pain for those they love. When Andy is ready to go home, Dr Wilson comes to collect him to say goodbye to her, but

House stalls. Wilson suggests that House should learn a bit of Andy's positive outlook on life and stop wallowing in misery. If Andy could steal a kiss from Chase, why can't House do something to bring some love into his life? House reluctantly joins the goodbye party. Andy hugs all the doctors. Chase gives her some tickets to the Natural History Museum and she gives him a hug and a kiss. House says *he* won't kiss her no matter what, but she just smiles at him and gives him a hug too. House doesn't know what to do. Andy tells him that it's a beautiful day outside and that he should go for a walk. He indicates his cane and says he's not one for walking.

Yet at the end of the episode we see House listening to *Beautiful*, the song from the beginning of the episode, this time sung by Elvis Costello. He comes to a motorcycle shop and admires the bikes. When the shop salesman offers a deal, he immediately says no, but then changes his mind and asks for a test drive. We see him driving at speed on the bike out into the beautiful countryside, enjoying the freedom and the grass, trees and fields.

Excerpts to watch:

Andy asks Dr Chase to kiss her

Dr House asks Andy if she would prefer to die now and not suffer any more

Andy 'dies' and is brought back to life

Dr Wilson suggests that Andy knows more about how to live than House

Andy leaves the hospital

Dr House takes off on the motorbike

Some questions:

How did you react when Dr Chase kissed Andy?

What does this episode tell us about the 'purpose' of life?

How did you feel about Andy's decision to have the surgery?

What do you think Dr House learned during this story?

'I am beautiful, no matter what they say, and they can't bring me down'. What do you think about the positive and negative attitudes to life shown in this episode?

Some bible passages

John 10.7-10; John 11.1-16

Luke 17.33

Psalm 100