

Death Preview

By ALR

I'm...falling. Why am I falling? Where am I? It's so dark. I can't feel anything. Am I...

He awakes in a small boat, just big enough for him to be outstretched. His limbs are just barely missing the edges of the boat. He sits up and inspects his body. A simple white T and some gray sweatpants with no socks or shoes is what he wears. He reaches for his face and notices he doesn't have his glasses on; and yet despite that, his vision is still clear. A vast black sea surrounds them. The sky is a bright gray, making it difficult to discern if the sun sitting at the horizon is in the state of sunrise or sunset. And yet, it reminds him of the feeling of twilight. There is a faint breeze, but the water is completely still, so he's unsure of where the wind is coming from. The only movement he can discern is the gentle swaying of the boat. After looking around, he finally notices a young girl in an all white nightgown that goes down to her feet. Her hair is long and curly, extending all the way down the back, with more wrapped in a tight bun on the back of her head. Long bangs fall on either side of her expressionless face. She stairs ahead, gently pushing the boat forward with a large oar.

"Whe-" he begins, but is immediately cut off.

"Dead." Her voice perfectly matches her features, with its soft tone somehow reverberating clearly in his ears. Almost as if she was directly next to him.

"Wait...what?" He waits for a response but doesn't receive one. "You're kidding." He begins to chuckle. "I mean I was just asleep. Like...I know I've been in the hospital for a while, but I felt fine. I was fine. I can't be..."

"Put your hand to your heart. See for yourself." Her tone never changes, and she never takes her eyes off of what's in front of her. Something is holding her gaze.

He is hesitant at first, but he slowly moves his hand to his chest. Despite how scared he is, despite how quick he's breathing, he had already figured it out before touching his chest. He never heard the pounding in his ears that accompanies those feelings. Still, he gently touches his chest. That touch turns into an intense and desperate grasp. Grasping for what isn't there. "My heart... My heart! It isn't...!" He begins clawing at his shirt, making holes in the fabric. He wanted to claw into

his chest, to rip his ribcage open and force his heart to beat if he had to, but he knew it was all in vain.. “No way...I’m...” With the truth unavoidable, he begins to sob.

Hours must have passed before the man begins to relax. But an underlining sense of dread begins to form as well. “I really am dead...” He finally says.

“Correct.”

“Then,” he pauses, afraid of the answer. “Am I being taken to...”

“No.”

Her answer startles him. “You don’t even know what I was going to say.”

“You were going to say, ‘Am I being taken to hell?’ correct?”

He flinches. “Was it that obvious...”

“People like you who hold regrets of not helping those they could almost always assume they’re going to hell. In one form or another. At one point in their life.”

Her answer made him shiver. Was that what it was? He thinks to himself. “I sort of just...”

“Whether it’s true or not doesn’t matter.” She interjects.

“Excuse me?” He looks around and sees nothing but still water and the gray sight before him. The only color coming from the bright orange sun still halfway down the horizon. “I don’t understand.”

“You see death as the end. That is incorrect.”

“Then what is it?” The dread he feels slowly increases.

“It is a path. A path you walked before and a path you now must walk again.” Her tone had a slight hint of authority to it. What’s more, the words she speaks sound familiar to him. But he knows that’s impossible. Or so he believes.

He looks at her, trying to understand. “I’ve ‘walked’ down this path before? You mean I’ve died before?”

“No. You’ve simply forgotten. It’s fine, you aren’t meant to remember the path.”

“Why?” His curiosity is now beginning to take hold as his own situation slowly unravels before him.

“Why indeed.” For once her answer wasn’t monotone, but one filled with a desire to learn the answer herself. “Every human walks the path twice, but it is not the only way to reach where you’re going. It is just the main route.” Her voice is back to its monotone sound.

“We all use this path twice?” He thinks on her words.

“Have you not yet figured it out? Try not to overthink it. It is a simple answer.”

He continues to think. “If I’m going back to where I came from...and death is me returning, and I’m guaranteed to use this path twice...” at once it clicks in his head. “My birth...”

“Correct.”

“Then...we ‘come’ from somewhere else when we’re born?”

She goes to answer, but she pauses and he notices. “Look into the water.”

“What?”

She finally averts her gaze and looks down into the water. “Look into the water.”

With nothing else to do, he follows her gaze and leans over the edge of the boat, peering into the black water below. This decision came with instant regret as his brain feels like it’s being torn apart instantly. For the split second he looked into the water, a vast amount of memories and information flooded his brain at once. It’s so much information. Far too much. He falls back, clutching his head to where his nails are digging into his skull. As his blood drips down his fingers, he tries desperately to catch his breath. “What...the hell was that?!” The memories and information begin to fade, but the pain still lingers.....