

Death Remembered

"Murderer!" yelled the soul at death, trying to force himself back into his headless body.

"Murder: Some may call it that. I call it the natural process," as Death swung his scythe through the threads of life linking the decapitated man's body and soul. The man looked sour and disappointed as he faded away.

Death had seen this time after time. Insults, threats, bargaining, anything these souls could think of to stay a little longer. Death wondered how any soul could want to stay in that constant limbo state. The separation pain would set in after the death shock wore off, unless they moved on. Death knew this.

"How," Death for the first time thought, "could I know this?" This bothered him. "I have been here forever, have I not?" he wondered, "How can I remember the pain if I've done this forever?"

He knew he had done this forever. He'd seen the first death, and helped the boy pass on. He'd seen the man sneak up behind his brother and kill him. The murderous brother ran. The murdered brother's soul stood and looked up in wonder when he saw Death and then his body being severed from his soul. Death remembered the sadness and joy on the young man's face before he faded away. If only more passings had been like his; calm and peaceful. Everyone else wants more time or to deliver a message, or to have revenge or some other mortal trifle. It wasn't his job to bargain.

Death knew time had no hold on him. Other wise he would have to be in multiple places at once. Time was a mortal restriction. He traveled from place to place and from time to time, constantly admiring the scenery and how it changed as he wandered. His realm was earth and his only companions were the souls he occasionally escorted to the Gates. Normally they found their own way, but for those lost souls and the young, they often needed guidance.

Death had many times become a comforter for small children, those whose lives had been cut short for whatever reason, suddenly or quietly.

so to speak?
~~metaphorically?~~ 5 points

Even though Death, although as physically as able to tell, had no heart, he was not heartless. He was kind and gentle with most, and often appeared to a few people, a few hours or sometimes days to give them warning, so that they might get their priorities straight before it is too late. Somehow he had a connection, but it troubled him that from where or when, he could not tell. "How can I have a sense of relation, when I have been doing this forever?"

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He stared down at the water of a still mountain pond. He touched it with the bottom of his scythe. The waters rippled as the mist on the pond moved away. Any inspiration from the pond eluded him. He stared closer, though no reflection was seen. His thoughts turned back to his troubling questions. "Who am I to ask?" The water gave him no answer. He looked up and saw a far off ripple just continuing until it reached the edge and stopped. "As the water ripples, so is a life. It begins small, but its influence on others spreads but thins with age and then ends. Not so with me. Why am I here and if I just have been how can I have this empathy?"

He knew further self-search would just be a waste as there wasn't much of him to search. There would be one who would have the answers to his past as long as he found him at the right time.

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The tower stood tall above him. A small door was at its side. He stood at the door, and although he normally would have just walked through, he thought it polite to knock first. A young boy opened the door, looked up, and immediately slammed it shut again. Death rolled the lights in his eye sockets and knocked again. The boy stammered,

"You... You have...n...n...no...buis...ss...ness...ss...he...re...re. No...ne...ne of us are ...are...do...due... ye...yet."

"You're correct young keeper," Death said, "It's not any of your times yet. But I do have business of a more...personal matter with your master."

"Why didn't ... um... you say so!" the boy said hurriedly and opened the door. He stood behind it so he wouldn't have a chance at getting a glimpse of Death. Once was enough for him.

Death walked slowly up the stairs stepping over scrolls that had been poorly mislaid. Death continued on into a room at the top. He looked in and saw time keepers scribbling away at scrolls. All were too busy to acknowledge any form of stranger. He proceeded until he reached a room labeled Father Time. He pushed it open and there stooped the old bearded one recording. It was difficult to tell how. If you stared at the thing his hands were messing with that he was staring at so abruptly you would see him doing a different job with different tools. At times he typed at times he wrote, though he never changed pace.

Finally Time stopped and looked up, his beard wrapping around everything it could.

"My immortal friend, what can I do for you?" asked Time.

"I need to ask for a specific record," said Death.

"Unusual request coming from you," said Time. "You usually show no interest in your... 'charges'. What's so special about this individual?"

"It's me," admitted Death.

Time looked a little surprised, and said, "You realize what you read will only result in a paradox, don't you?"

"I'm not asking about who I am, but who I was."

Time looked even more surprised but a little more relaxed and said, "That's much easier. Just give me a moment, and... there!" The object he had been messing with earlier formed into an indiscernible object. "Here you are. Any particular time?"

"Go a little later, towards my...end."

Time waved his hand a little until he came to the time he wished and said, "I think this may be what you're looking for."

Death glanced and began watching. As he watched, memories came hauntingly back to him.

Letum sat there on the bench, watching the ripples on the lake. He could feel the cold breeze off of it. Mist rolled over and the sky remained overcast. Depression and sadness filled him as he sat watching the tide roll back and forth. A young boy sat beside

him shivering a little. He got up and faced the hospital behind him, taking the boy by the hand and guiding him forward.

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He sat by her bed watching her lay there, fighting for life with every breath she took. He was unsure how she had managed to hold on for so long. He guessed it had been for their son's sake. He hoped for both his sake and Calvin's sake. He knew he couldn't raise him alone.

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The happiness at bringing her home weeks after her remarkable recovery seemed to express itself in all the world around them. The sky was clear, and the flowers in bloom. He saw her carrying little Cal in her arms and taking him out to their backyard and playing with him. He just sat there on their back porch and leaned against a post, sporting a wearied, yet relieved smile on his face.

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He kissed his son and wife goodbye and got into his car, Calvin waved to him in his three year old fashion. He smiled to himself and drove off, out of their little suburb town, towards his work.

* * *

He sat tensed and frustrated waiting for this spiteful light to change green. His mind wandered back to his son, now enjoying a preschool, feeling nostalgic for his childhood. A loud blast went out from behind him. He hit the gas pedal, not realizing, the car behind him only honked out of frustration for the light. He looked to his side and only caught a glimpse of a silver SUV.

* * *

He laid there in pain, wanting desperately to keep moving. He needed to hold on for his young family's sake. But he was unable to feel below the slowly creeping cold...

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He watched the firemen lift the car off his body, as tears ran off his spiritual essence. He screamed to let him stay, but none heard.

* * *

He watched as they closed the lid on his casket, as his wife cried quietly and his son looking confused and worried at seeing his mother cry. Slowly everyone left as they covered the casket with dirt. He felt more indescribable pain, yet not unbearable or excruciating, throughout him. He knew it was too late for him.

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The pain got worse by every moment, He screamed, yet no one heard...

* * *

Death looked up. Time watched him, and without waiting for the inevitable question answered anyway, "You were stuck. There was no Death at that time to release you. This will sound very paradoxical, but it's the truth. If Death had released you, you as Death, could not have existed, and all would experience the same torment you went through.

Death thought, and asked, "Why am I here though?"

Time answered, "You are in a state of limbo, neither alive nor dead. Your soul was not safely severed. The links died as your body decayed, but you were never released

to move on. You were given this job to assist those to move on, and promised that you too would move on eventually.”

Death stared down at his scythe, remembering when an angel had handed him it, then later the cloak. He remembered the words spoken to him, though none would understand.

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An old woman lay on her death bed as death approached. He sat beside her for a few hours in mortal time until she awoke and stared at him. “Don’t worry,” he said quietly. She stared confused, and then a smile broke upon her withering lips. “I recognize that voice. I know you, Letum.” She drifted back to sleep.

Footsteps were heard on the floor outside the room and they looked up. An older gentleman opened the door. Death knew his own flesh and blood anywhere. Calvin walked forward and sat by his mother holding her hand as she calmly, and quietly pulled herself out of her body.

— Letum's
(Death)
son, right?

She smiled at him, and offered her hand as he cut her strands quietly. She stared at him for a few moments, and asked, “Are you coming?”

He replied tenderly, “Soon.”

She smiled and faded away, looking more and more beautiful as she faded.

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Death sat there watching a young man pull himself out of the ruin of his long sought after plane. The young man had always wished to see the world, and he had nothing holding him down back home, but on his maiden voyage, his plane crashed.

Death looked at him for a moment and asked, "Do you still wish to see it?" The man looked up and nodded, confused.

Death walked with the soul of the man and said, "Your death was much more preferable. You didn't have to wait long for your body to waste away." The young man stared down at his fiery feet.

"I only experienced the separation pain for a little while, but no one should have to go through what I did, for any length of time."

Death looked at him for a moment, and said, "I think you're ready."

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They sat facing the tomb stone. Thin strands, almost invisible to even the immortal eye, were linked to Death and the ground beneath. Death handed over his cloak and scythe and said only two words, "I'm coming."

Good!