

DEATH

A cold breeze entered the classroom, following Death who trudged to his desk.

“Hey,” I said as he sat down in his seat. He slowly looked up at me then looked back down at his desk, without a single word. I try to be friendly to him sometimes but he ignores me. I know it's not because he's mad. He is just a very silent person. He should at least be grateful that I'm trying to forgive him. I have the right to be angry with him after he attacked my uncle last year. With just one touch, he gave my uncle a heart attack. Then with an entire shove, my uncle took his last breath.

Death stood in the corner at my uncle's funeral. I gently stood up, trying not to distract anyone. I walked over to Death and stared him in the eye.

“Who invited you?” I demanded. His head hung low, watching his suit. I waited a minute for his response and it finally came.

“I visit every funeral,” he said in his long, groan-like voice, “it's the least I can do.”

“The least you can do is leave!” I said sternly. With one last scornful look, Death left.

Lately, I've been feeling bad for what I said that day. I know he didn't want to do what he did to my uncle. It was his time.

“What are you drawing?” I asked in a friendly manner. I looked over at his desk. He was sketching a gravestone with flowers on the grass in front of it. I pretended I didn't

see anything and looked away. Class was starting. Mrs. Knowledge began speaking at the front of the room. I was too cold to focus. With Death right behind me, the chills he let off were five times stronger than usual.

Later, when we were dismissed for lunch, I went with my best friends, Hope and Betrayal, to our usual table. While I was laughing about a joke Hope had made, I turned and caught Death in the corner of my eye. He was sitting at the back of the cafeteria. Nobody dared to sit in the same table as him. He was completely alone. He stared at his food, watching it slowly turn black. He then pushed his silky black hair off his eye, which he doesn't do often, and began to eat. I felt sort of guilty, knowing the right thing to do would be to sit with him. Depression came over to his table and sat down a few seats away from him. Depression had been bothering me for a few months, trying to convince me to hang out with her. I tried to push her away but she just kept coming back. It was nice to see she had made a new "friend." I continued talking with Hope and Betrayal. After a few minutes I looked back at Death and Depression and caught them holding hands. It's turns out they ended up being more than just friends.

That night as I was laying in bed, I couldn't sleep. Memories of my uncle kept flooding my head. I pictured us laughing together and playing together. I decided that I couldn't fall asleep without making a quick trip first. I got out of bed, made sure everyone was asleep, then quietly climbed out my window. I got on my bike and didn't stop pedaling until I saw the dark and misty graveyard. I left my bike on the grass and ran to the grave I had visited millions of times before. I spotted a black figure standing over my uncle's grave. It was wearing a black coat and had a pale face. I hid behind a tree and peeked out from behind it.

“I’m sorry I had to do this to you.” The voice sounded familiar, “It was your time.” I squinted until I finally realized who I was watching.

Now Death leans over and places a bouquet of flowers against the gravestone. I felt a tear slide down my cheek. Everyone in school is scared of Death because he once said, “I’m coming after all of you one day. One by one.” Now I realize that he wasn’t threatening us, he was just stating a fact. It’s true, Death will come for us all one day, he doesn’t want to and we can’t stop it, it’s just the way life works. I watch him get on his knees in front of the stone. He begins weeping. I come out from behind the tree and walk over to him. As I kneel down beside him, I wonder how hard it must be, not being able to touch anyone because you might hurt them. I figure that I’ve already lost a lot, so why not lose a little more and I put my arm around Death and weep. I mourn for my uncle who lies underneath us. I mourn for Death’s struggles. I also cry because I know that the arm that is hugging Death right now is broken.

“So this is what it’s like to touch Death,” I wonder, “Painful.”

We sit here and mourn, waiting for sunrise.