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Where Did I Put That Dead Guy?

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The titular figure of Death, reaper of souls, and undeniable mythological phenomenon for every story and culture on earth, was quite simply, a basic-*BASIC* ass bitch. Yes, indeed. Most would describe Death as “that really really pale guy” or “that dude who can’t do his job right half the time” or simple just “super frickin’ annoying.” He was always insisting on carrying that huge scythe, although it wasn’t even necessary for his job, and knocking over decorations, office supplies, and shorter people without having the decency to pick them up. He was always wearing a big black robe even though he was just a skeleton underneath and didn’t have the ability to get cold and, most aggravatingly to his superiors, he was always getting behind on his reaping and then rushing through five hundred-thousand deaths in one day to cover it up as if they wouldn’t notice.

Death was also always late for something and never showed any respect for other people’s time. He was always scaring the shit out of people (on accident I might add), always forgetting to take the entire soul, and, on occasion, forgetting where he had put the souls in the first place. One time, during the early 2000s, he left a man by the name of Leroy Clarence after his unfortunate demise in an older gentlemens basement, in an international house of pancakes. Poor Leroy had believed he woke up in his own personal heaven and immediately began chasing a pretty waitress around with his pants down. It truly became a mess after the manager of the restaurant pulled out her handgun and fired a bullet into Leroy’s chest. He had looked confused at the bullet hole while everyone around him started screaming, and unfortunately all the residents had to be reaped before they were ripe in order to avoid them telling anybody else what they had seen.

Death’s overseers were not happy with the waste of soul crops as most of them were contaminated or not developed enough and had to be discarded. Ah yes the universe factory that washes off the sparkly bits of experience and personality from human souls to power the fabric of reality, was the place Death worked. Of course it is completely and absolutely redundant to explain that the universe factory, where Death worked, was where the old souls came in, got spa treatments, popped back out clean, and then were sent back into the universe to grow and be harvested again. Obviously there is no need to clarify any of that. Death’s bosses at the factory were simply unhappy with him and Death knew letting Leroy eat 785 pancakes had put him on very thin ice.

Now on one bright chilly day in the big busy city of New York, Death was sitting in his usual black robes watching a homeless man named Kevin OD on crack.

“One more twitch and now!” he said, spreading his bony hands in anticipation.

“Now! Annnnnnd now!”

Kevin had been dying for the past 3 minutes and Death was losing his figurative mind. Of course he had sat through longer; gunshots in the stomach, cancer, and that one lady who was buried alive in a coffin, but on this day in particular, Death had to meet with Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) in the factory. Perhaps he had messed up another soul again. Got it caught on a coat hanger or grabbed it by its neck or something, he didn’t know, but Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) told him to be in his office at #%^&%&^ sharp.

Death had lost his enthusiasm about the overdosing man and was now slouching on the sidewalk with his jaw bone in his palm. He knew Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) only ever asked to see him when there was a problem. He would always yell about the importance of reaping and maintaining the universe and then clasp his hands together behind his back, turn to look out a window into the void before jumping into his “circle of life” speech.

“When we die, our bodies become the grass, and the antelope eat the grass. And so we are all connected yada yada yada.”

Death threw his head in a sarcastic circle, a gesture he adapted after realizing he didn’t have eyes, and exhaled in annoyance. How was he supposed to know when this guy was gonna die anyways? He thought to himself,

angry with the position he was in, then he suddenly sat up and slapped his face with the bone of his hand.

“Shit!” he exclaimed. “I gotta touch him don’t I?!! God how did I forget that?!”

He shook his skull and stood up, kicking Kevin in the side. Kevin stopped shaking and his eyes rolled back in his head as a glowy golden thing sizzled out of his mouth. Death grabbed onto it with his fingers and pulled, reaching his other hand to grab some more of it. He pulled all of it out, letting it puddle at his feet and then gathered the whole soul up in his arms and huffed, some strands falling off the sides.

“God damnit!” he said, struggling to keep hold. “Ugh whatever.”

He bent his knee bones and pushed upward, shooting into the edge of reality as the blue sky and busy streets dissipated around him. Wham! Now he was zooming through nothing towards the Factory, which obviously is unnecessary to describe, and as Death was nearing its large 15th dimensional entrance he noticed his hands were completely empty.

“Shit!” he said again “Shit! Shit! Shit! Fucking shit!”

The soul must have slipped out of his arm bones when he broke through reality and now he only had @#\$\$#@###\$#@@##&&::: left before his meeting with Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen). Extremely aggravated now, Death quickly grabbed a hold of his kneecaps, pulled his feet to his head, and barrel rolled himself back into reality. Fshhhhhwoosh! He was floating over New York city again, scanning the many many streets for the golden glowy thing, but it was night now and the city’s lights had been turned on, shining many different colors all over the buildings and sidewalks. He would never be able to find the soul in time.

Making a quick decision, Death decided being late to another meeting with Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) was worse than having to clean up after a soul he could go find later. It couldn’t have gotten very far anyway, he thought and Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) might take away his scythe or SpÉédÔfl;ghT privileges again, which was something he didn’t want to risk.

He shot back through reality and landed in the lobby of the (♠) floor just as Martha looked up from her desk and said “Death? Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) will see you now,” smiling kindly.

Death gulped and pushed back his hood, brushed off his robes, straightened his stance and walked past Martha’s desk down the hallway to meet his boss.

He stopped outside the door and cleared his throat then knocked slightly, rocking back and forth on his toes. He heard a voice say

“Ah yes Death, right on time. Please come in,” and opened the door, stepping into the room and into Joaquin’s (pronounced Wa-keen’s) gaze.

He was sitting in a big red swivel chair, his long obsidian hair cascaded over his shoulders and legs to drape onto the floor, and smiled brightly at Death as the skeleton stepped into the room.

“Well well,” he said “#%^&%&^ exactly! I’m quite surprised, please have a seat”

Death hesitantly took the seat in front of him and shifted on his tailbone, uncomfortable with Joaquin’s (pronounced Wa-keen’s) new enthusiasm.

“I suppose you want to know why I called you in here today?” Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) said, steepling his fingers on the desk in front of him.

“Yeah I guess,” Death said.

“You can wipe that concern out of your eyeholes Death, I’m not here to chastised you,” Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) laughed.

“I’m here to congratulate you!” he said.

“Really?”

“Yes. I’ve been really impressed with your work lately. I don’t think you’ve missed a single soul in the past ten years and better yet, you haven’t let the mortals on to what we’ve been doing.”

Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) leaned back in his chair.

“Usually we have to throw away a couple hundred souls from your mistakes, but our reality fuel harvest has actually been increasing! Quite an improvement I must say.”

He raised his eyebrows in appreciation when he said the last bit and waited for Death to respond.

“Wel- uh..well thank you sir?” Death stuttered.

Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) got up from his chair and continued

“You see work like this is how this factory runs..” he walked to the side of the office and turned around, clasping his hands behind his back. Death slouched a little in his chair relieved, but also prepared for the speech that would follow.

“Everything the light touches is our kingdom, from the leaping antelope to the...”

Suddenly a shimmery glowy glob slid out from under Joaquin’s (pronounced Wa-keen’s) long hair that trailed across the floor. Death jumped in his chair covering his mouth before he could swear in surprise and looked quickly to see if his boss had noticed. Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) was still transfixed on the beautiful view of

nothingness somewhere out the window and the glowy soul rolled away from the mess of hair laying on the floor, which moved with each adjustment Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) made to emphasize his point

Death edged forward carefully in his chair and hissed at the blob, motioning it to come towards him. It stopped rolling and turned around lazily, seeing the black clad figure waving at it.

“Psssst get over here!” Death said frantically as Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) took a dramatic step to his left causing his hair to whip across the floor.

“...one immortal beings soul is another immortal beings business investment”

Death jumped forward and snatched up the golden glowy thing right as a wave of hair swept over where it had just been laying. He hurriedly sat back in his chair and stuffed the soul underneath his robes as Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) turned around to look at him.

“Are you listening to me Death?”

“Hmhhh mmm yeah yes of course, capitalism and everything yeah.”

Death held his arms across his chest tightly as the soul wriggled underneath his robes. It was a good thing he didn't have a face or else he would never have gotten away with a lie. The long haired man turned around to the window again, satisfied with the answer and continued his speech. Now the glowy blob was winding its way around Death's spine, mumbling words into his ears and trying to grab a hold of one of his bones.

“Quite it, will you?” Death hissed again as it's mumbling got louder.

“CrACK!” it shouted suddenly. Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) whipped around and frowned at the seated skeleton before him.

“What was that?” he asked, eyeing the suspicious looking skeleton suspiciously.

“I didn't say anything,” Death replied nonchalantly and crossed his arm bones over his robes to disguise the obvious movements from underneath.

Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) scoffed.

“Oh so I'm hearing things now, is that it?” He took a step closer to Death and crossed his arms now too.

“I know I heard something, now tell me what you said, Death.”

Death leaned backward and replied with the sass of someone not hiding the soul of a dead crack addict underneath his clothes.

“I. Didn't. Say. A-ny-thingUH.”

“smOke CrACK!” the soul said. It wriggled out from Death's robes and onto the desk, picking up random office supplies and licking them questionably as the two beings watched it in shocked silence.

“Is that,” Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) said slowly, “a soul?”

“I-I uh don't know what you are talking about,” Death finished convincingly, sitting back into his chair and looking up at the ceiling. The soul lifted up a stapler and tilted its head.

“Crack?” it asked. Joaquin (pronounced Wa-keen) pinched the bridge of his nose between his thumb and index finger and exhaled.

“Get it out of my office and go put it where it belongs,” he sighed.

“Hey man I'm not resp-” Death tried to interject.

“Just do it!”

The soul picked up a pencil and tossed onto the floor before looking up at the skeleton.

“Crack?” it asked again.

Death pushed back his chair passive aggressively, rolling his head again and picked the little thing up his arms.

“Make one fricken mistake.....you don't fly around all day....” he grumbled as he shuffled out the office, the door closing behind him.

“God he just doesn't understand, it's hard to keep track of these guys.”

He walked past Martha's desk and out into the hallways.

“I'm good at what I do, nobody else can do what I-” he stopped in his tracks and looked down into his arms. His bony hands were completely empty. Death whipped around to look behind him and on the ground and then shook his silky robes up and down frantically hoping to shake anything loose.

“GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!” he cried as he patted down his pockets, finding only three paper clips, the holy grail, a mango flavored juul pod, and the concept of time.

“HOW DID I LOSE HIM AGAIN?!”

Death turned quickly on his heel bone and stormed back down the hallway towards Joaquin's (pronounced Wa-keen's) office for the second time that ~(^u^~).

He was for sure going to take the Scythe away this time.