

The Day I met Death



WAITING FOR THE WANDERER by MICHAŁ KLIMCZAK

It was a regular day. Nothing out of the ordinary.

Another soul passed over.

Sad, profound and beautiful

Now the family, devastated. How do you tell a loved one they are dead, that you did all you could and now they are gone?

You just do.

You offer solace and shoulder to cry on. You explain there was no pain, it was peaceful.

You offer your heart in their grief.

You answer questions and offer advice on the next step if needed.

At some point, you need a break away from everyone. The staff, the family, the death. You don't get it, too much work to still be done.

Yes a normal day at work.

Blessed, privileged and drained.

Exhausted, I go to sleep.

I wake to find myself staring up at Death.

He was silently watching me.

It was bizarre because although I was staring up at him, I could see my whole room laid out before me. I could see my husband's body and my body lying in our bed.

The lamp was on.

I was watching him, watching me.

He was massive, and his head touched the 12-foot ceiling.

I wasn't scared; he emanated an absolute power and a finality that I find hard to describe.

He held a staff /scythe and was hooded.

His face was void. I could have stared into that void, forever.

There was peace there.

*At this point my head was swimming. All I kept hearing in my mind
“was wake up and breathe”.*

*I was at some point; I think I was holding my breath. It felt like his robe
was enfolding me and I was suffocating.*

It would have been a good death

*I didn't want to wake up. I wanted to stay in his presence. I never took
my eyes off him.*

Next thing I was bolt upright and gasping for air.

Well what do you expect, when death is near?

There was no lamp on and I was like, what just happened?

It wasn't dream, it was real, I had just met death.

This happened over 15 years ago.

*What was his message? You know what, every time I think I've figured it
out. I know I really haven't.*

I'm not supposed to.

All I know, death is a constant in this life.

And I know he will be there when it's my turn.

That was my first encounter with Death in a such a physical, all senses tuned in, visceral way and I shall never forget it.

He is still around me, albeit in a not so dramatic way! I sense his energy when he is near. Usually in times of grief.

He brings comfort, solace and understanding of the death and dying process.

He enfolds those grieving within his arms and offers peace.

He is the Gatekeeper from this life to the next.

All-encompassing from life to death and beyond.

Words: Rebecca Walker 2013

Addit: The reason I share this story is for a couple of reasons, I have written it out a few times and toned it down for some, to be more palatable.

It will never leave me as it was a profound moment in a snapshot of time. The truth is even though it wasn't scary to me or sinister. It could be easily interpreted as such.

I've had night terrors before and sleep paralysis, this was completely different.

Death's power is absolute, no fucking around.

You can get jaded and faded when you witness Death in a palliative setting (or any medical/trauma setting) to the point where you harden, so you don't feel.

It can happen gradually and sometimes you are even unaware of it.

A lot of us cope with dark humor (I don't know anyone that actively works in these surroundings, that doesn't have a dark sense of humor to be honest).

Some detach, some ignore and often compartmentalize. A bit of self-preservation. It can also be considered as compassion fatigue

*Compassion fatigue is characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion and a profound decrease in the ability to empathize.

To read more on compassion fatigue [Compassion fatigue](#)

Medically we have ways to know when death is imminent by the pathophysiology of the body breaking down, however the medical profession can't give a time and most never will.

You can assume when it's close, by symptom's present. However, time is irrelevant, and we will just tell the family to spend as much time as possible with the dying person.

It really is in between space and time when death is present.

I may sense Death differently than most (not saying I'm special) just different. So, when he comes calling on me personally, I have to pay attention to my own perceptions and reactions.

The way I interact and my own agenda. Be accountable. That's my relationship with Death, not everyone's will be.

Some may say I had a bad dream, be dismissive or say it was an initiation. I just know what I felt and saw.

I know when he is around and can see him around people. I usually trust this before my medical background

He does command respect and at the time of this visit, I maybe needed a reminder of the infinite?

Bec 2021