

Death Walks Into a Bar

by

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*Nolan Nightingale is a twice produced playwright  
in his Senior Year at Susquehanna University.*

*I am kept positive by my amazing friends who  
have been happily willing to video chat, text,  
and call during these days of self isolating.*

**CHARACTERS:**

Death, you know...with the hood and all

Tim, just a guy.

**TIME:**

The End.

**PLACE:**

An abandoned bar.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

At times, the dialogue contains "/" in it. This is to  
indicate that the next line should start after that  
"/".

THE PLAY

*It is dark. We can hear someone SHUFFLING ABOUT, GULPING, then SLAMMING A GLASS on a counter. We see the FLAME from a lighter, then the RED CHERRY from a cigarette. A DOOR OPENS and then LIGHTS UP. It's an abandoned bar. At the counter sits TIM, a shabby, drunken man smoking a cigarette. He's shielding his eyes from the light. In addition to the counter, there is table with two chairs downstage. Near the door upstage stands DEATH, with the hood and scythe. DEATH has just flipped a switch. TIM, who is facing away, has not noticed DEATH yet.*

TIM

Christ! Warn a guy. They're closed, by the way. This whole place is closed. Once the rioting masses took to the streets, the whole place emptied out. Bartender wanted to get home safe so she gave me the key. Told me to close up. Everyone's losing it.

*TIM rolls his eyes.*

TIM

I just think this whole things blown out of proportion.

*TIM turns around to address DEATH.*

TIM

I'm Tim, by the way. Nice to meet you.

*TIM turns back to his drink.*

TIM

We've been through worse. It'll get better. Always does.

*TIM registers what he just saw and slowly turns back around.*

TIM

Oh. It's you. And you're dressed up like that.

*TIM grabs his glass and finishes it off.*

TIM

The cartoons had it right. Who would have guessed...

*TIM stubbs his cigarette out on the counter.*

TIM  
So, do you talk? Or do you just like to stand there  
all menacing?

DEATH  
I can talk if you'd like.

*TIM is shocked by the voice of DEATH.*

TIM  
I was expecting something lower and more masculine,  
not soft and feminine.

DEATH  
I prefer to comfort.

TIM  
So, I'm dead. Obviously.

DEATH  
No.

TIM  
Dying?

DEATH  
More accurate.

*SOUNDS of RIOTING are heard outside. TIM points  
towards the door.*

TIM  
Is that what kills me?

DEATH  
I'm not allowed say. It could alter the results.

TIM  
Is there anything I could do?

DEATH  
We could play a game.

TIM  
Like chess or something?

DEATH  
Chess, if you like.

TIM  
And if I win, I get to live!?

*DEATH shakes her head "no".*

DEATH

Just to pass the time.

*TIM crosses down to the table and sits.*

TIM

There's nothing I can do?

DEATH

No. Not really.

*TIM thinks for a second.*

TIM

Then I'll do what I want to.

*TIM digs into his pocket and pulls out a tiny squirt bottle of hand sanitizer.*

DEATH

What are you doing?

TIM

I've always wanted to know what 60% alcohol tasted like.

*TIM gets ready to squirt the hand sanitizer in his mouth.*

DEATH

What if that is what kills you?

*TIM pauses. He puts the bottle of hand sanitizer down.*

TIM

I thought you said you weren't allowed to tell me what kills me?

DEATH

Oh, it's not what kills you. I just expected more caution.

*DEATH sits down at the table with TIM.*

DEATH

You are not kind to your liver.

*They sit in silence for a second. TIM looks over*

at DEATH.

TIM

So...what's under that hood?

DEATH

A face.

TIM

But is it like a skull face or something?

DEATH

It is a human woman's face.

TIM

Oh. Nice.

*Pause.*

DEATH

Why would it be a skull face?

TIM

Everything else in your appearance matches the aesthetic.

DEATH

But skulls are creepy. The Nazis had skulls on their uniforms. I told you that I want to comfort people. I've never met anyone who said "I really wish you had a skull!"

TIM

Okay! I get the point. Sorry.

*Pause.*

TIM

Can I see it?

DEATH

What?

TIM

Your face. It might calm me down a bit.

*DEATH pulls her hood back. She is beautiful. TIM is shocked.*

TIM

Oh God.

DEATH

I thought you said this would calm you?

TIM

I-It's-It's just that you look like someone.

DEATH

Everyone looks like someone.

TIM

Yeah, but you look like someone I know. An ex.

*DEATH pulls out a tiny notebook and flips through it.*

DEATH

Sarah?

TIM

Yeah. Sarah.

DEATH

I suppose I can see it. Different noses, though. But /same eyes.

TIM

Same eyes. I love those eyes. Last time I saw them was /June 7th, 2012.

DEATH

June 7th, 2012. When she left you.

TIM

Yeah. That would be when. That little book, does it tell you why she left? She never explained herself to me.

DEATH

Does it matter?

TIM

No, I suppose not.

*TIM gets up and walks back over to the counter. He reaches behind it and pulls a bottle out. He pours himself another glass. He looks at the glass. Looks at the bottle. Drinks from the bottle.*

TIM

Do you drink?

DEATH

No.

TIM

Would you like to?

DEATH

I don't think I can. Granted, I've never tried.

*TIM walks over to the table with his bottle and the glass. He pushes the drink into DEATH's hand.*

TIM

Give it a go.

*DEATH takes a drink. She starts coughing.*

DEATH

Is this what it feels like to taste disgust?

TIM

Yeah.

DEATH

Why do you drink this?

TIM

You stop tasting it if you drink enough.

DEATH

Well, I'll refrain from drinking anymore.

*DEATH puts the glass down.*

TIM

So how does the whole dying thing work?

DEATH

That's a complicated question. Do you mean the process of actually dying or do you mean is there an afterlife?

TIM

There's no afterlife. I know that.

DEATH

If you insist.

TIM

Wait, is there?



DEATH

Not allowed to say. I can tell you about the process of dying, though.

TIM

Lay it on me. Will my life flash before my eyes?

DEATH

A moment will.

TIM

What constitutes a moment?

DEATH

Anything from a second to an hour. It varies.

TIM

That hardly seems fair.

DEATH

If any of this were fair, they wouldn't need me to bring people through it.

TIM

And what happens after the moment?

DEATH

Then you fade out.

TIM

What does that mean?

DEATH

You keep feeling like there's less of you until there's none of you.

TIM

Does it hurt?

*DEATH looks down at the ground.*

TIM

Death, does it hurt?

DEATH

In your case, it will.

TIM

What is my case?

*DEATH considers for a moment.*

DEATH

It's close enough that it doesn't matter anymore. Your appendix is about to burst. All the rioting outside and the lack of people in here to help you means that there's no way help can get here to save you. You're going to spend the next 24 hours in delirium from the pain...and then you're going to die.

*TIM starts smiling.*

TIM

That's it? I can beat that. I'll just go run to find help.

*TIM gets up.*

DEATH

Be my guest.

*TIM starts running for the door. He doubles over in pain right before he gets to it.*

DEATH

I wouldn't have told you if you had the time to change it.

*TIM turns towards DEATH, leaning up against the door. He slides down until he's on the ground. DEATH walks over, scythe in hand.*

TIM

Even with you telling me, it hurts more than I thought.

DEATH

I'm sorry, Tim.

TIM

What will my moment be?

DEATH

We'll find out together.

*TIM starts crying.*

TIM

I don't want to die! Please! Please, find somebody else.

DEATH

It has to be you.

TIM

This was preventable!

DEATH

Most are.

*DEATH begins to raise her scythe.*

TIM

Wait! One more question! Is this really it? Is the world ending?

DEATH

I don't know. Everything's too uncertain.

*DEATH swings the scythe down. BLACKOUT.  
SPOTLIGHTS on DEATH and TIM on opposite sides of  
the stage. TIM seems weirdly peaceful now.*

TIM

Oh! I know this! It's /the first date!

DEATH

The first date. Where you met Sarah.

TIM

Some friends had set us up on a blind date. They thought that we'd be perfect for each other.

DEATH

And you were for a little while.

TIM

Three years, to be exact.

DEATH

Two years and 11 months to be even more exact. You brought her /flowers.

TIM

I brought her flowers. And I /took her dancing.

DEATH

You took her dancing.

*DEATH take the robe off to reveal a beautiful,  
shimmering dress. DEATH has now become SARAH.*

DEATH/ SARAH  
Are you Tim?

TIM  
Yeah. I take it you're Sarah.

DEATH/ SARAH  
So, dancing? Bold move. Most guys would be afraid of looking stupid.

TIM  
Most guys can't dance like me.

*DEATH/ SARAH laughs.*

DEATH/ SARAH  
Cocky. I like that.

*TIM extends a hand.*

TIM  
Shall we?

*They both dance in place as if they are dancing with each other. Classy music is playing.*

DEATH/ SARAH  
You were not kidding.

*TIM smirks.*

TIM  
No, I'm a very serious man.

*As they dance, they get closer to each other. Eventually, they swirl into each other, now actually dancing together.*

TIM  
Sarah?

DEATH/ SARAH  
Yes?

TIM  
I think we make a good dance team.

*TIM spins DEATH/ SARAH away. He is alone again, beaming.*

TIM

And that was when I knew I loved her.

*TIM'S SPOTLIGHT FADES OUT SLOWLY.*

DEATH

Goodbye, Tim.

*DEATH'S SPOTLIGHT FADES OUT SLOWLY. END OF PLAY.*